

School of Public Affairs  
American University  
Comprehensive Doctoral Examination in Public Administration  
September 8, 2006

Answer **THREE** questions in 4.5 hours. Try to minimize overlap in your answers.  
***If you answer question 4 do not answer question 7.***

1. Most federal management reform efforts have emphasized the role of the executive branch rather than either the Congress or the courts. Discuss the consequences of this approach and alternative ways of dealing with it.
2. Despite the extensive use of the term "accountability" it is not a concept that is easily defined. Identify at least three writers about accountability and analyze the strengths and weaknesses of their approaches.
3. In a recent article, a scholar wrestles with the question of whether New Public Management represents a new paradigm in public administration, or whether it is more accurately described as an incremental development in the ongoing history of public administrative reform. Drawing on the relevant literatures, present arguments for both sides of this issue. Then, take a stand – what do you think? And why?
4. The study of networks has become an important sub-field in public administration and public management scholarship. Describe how the study of networks adds or detracts from our understanding of the critical issues in public administration, public management, and democratic governance.
5. Normative controversies have long-raged over political control of the bureaucracy. More recently, this issue has been addressed by empirical studies of political control over the bureaucracy. In an essay addressing major themes in the literature, summarize the normative arguments regarding how much political control over the bureaucracy should exist and the empirical findings to date about how much political control over the bureaucracy actually exists.
6. Discuss how, why, and with what implications economic theory has affected the study of public administration in the United States. What are the strengths and weaknesses of economic approaches? Would you say that economic theory has, on balance, improved our understanding of public administration? Why or why not?
7. Discuss the contributions, strengths, and weaknesses of any three of the following to theory building in public administration: decision theory, principle-

agent theory, network theory, public choice theory, interest group mobilization theory, institutionalism, neoinstitutionalism, feminist theory, and constitutional-democracy.

8. One leading scholar critiquing the state of policy implementation research has mischievously argued that anyone introducing a new concept should be required to eliminate two existing concepts. Why would he make such a claim? In responding, be sure to address the level of theoretical development in policy implementation that has taken place during the first, second, and third generations of implementation research.