

**Ph.D. Comprehensive Exam in Public Administration
Spring 2012**

Answer three of the following questions in 4.5 hours, avoiding duplication between answers where possible. Remember to demonstrate a comprehensive command of the literature by discussing the scholars and/or movements that are relevant to each response. Good luck!

1. U.S. public administration in the 20th century was marked by a series of administrative reforms. Write a short essay in which you identify the most important reform movements that took place between 1900 and 2000. Describe the historical context behind each reform and why you believe the reform to have been especially relevant to the field of public administration. Conclude your essay with a short discussion of the similarities and differences across the reforms that you selected.
2. Public services are increasingly provided by networks of government, nonprofit, and/or for-profit organizations. The 'network' approach to service delivery stands in stark contrast to historical models that relied only on government agencies to provide services. What are the benefits and drawbacks to the use of networks for the provision of public services? What are some of the most important unanswered questions about networks in public administration?
3. Dating from around 1975, the federal courts have sometimes been called "new partners" in public administration. What are the main aspects of the contemporary role of the courts in public administration? What are the consequences of the new partnership for public administrative theory and practice?
4. Evaluate the overall quality of research methods in the public administration literature. Identify the primary strengths and weaknesses in public administration research today. Use relevant research to illustrate the strengths and weaknesses that you choose, and be sure to explain why you have selected these areas as particularly strong or weak. What recommendations would you make to the next generation of public administration scholars to improve the quality of research methodology? Explain the logic behind your recommendations.
5. Although a number of disciplines have influenced the intellectual development of public administration, the most contentious contributions have arguably been made by the field of economics. How has economics shaped the field of public administration over the past century? Describe what you consider to be economics' most important contributions, and try to identify examples that have moved the field forward as well as examples that have held it back.
6. Frederickson and Smith suggest that a theory should be "parsimonious and elegant," which they define as a theory's ability to "account concisely for the phenomenon under study by using tightly ordered internal logic" (2003: 230). On a scale ranging from "low" to "high," they assess Public Management Theory as being particularly "low" in parsimony and elegance. Do you agree? Why or why not? Be sure to cite existing research in writing your response.