

**Ph.D. Comprehensive Exam in Public Administration**  
**Fall 2011**

*Answer **three** of the following questions in **4.5 hours**, avoiding duplication between answers where possible. Remember that responses should demonstrate a comprehensive command of the literature by citing a sufficient number of scholars/studies in each question. **Good luck!***

1. Lynn, Heinrich, and Hill (2001) wrote that “public policies and programs in the United States and elsewhere are being administered through complicated webs of states, regions, special districts, service delivery areas, local offices, nonprofit organizations, collaborations, networks, partnerships, and other means for the control and coordination of dispersed activities.” Compare and contrast this governance structure to the traditional model of a government-operated, top-down bureaucracy. What are the benefits and drawbacks to each approach to providing public services? Ground your answer in the public administration literature, drawing upon relevant theory and/or empirical research.
2. Many organization theorists take a “generic” approach to their research, arguing that their findings and arguments can be applied to organizations across the for-profit, nonprofit, and government sectors. Other scholars have argued that government organizations operate in a distinctive environment that differs from that of for-profit and nonprofit organizations in important ways. With which of these perspectives do you agree? Why? Include in your response the primary strengths and weaknesses of both approaches.
3. In 1926, Leonard White wrote that “administration is still an art, but the ideal of transference to a science is both feasible and worthwhile.” Eighty-five years later, do you agree? Specifically, is it *feasible* for public administration to be a science, and even so, is it a *worthwhile* pursuit? Your response should reference some of the key arguments that have been offered over the years on each side of this ongoing debate.
4. Explain the comparative merits of the New Public Administration and New Public Management. Explain the basic premise behind each movement, the primary scholars associated with each, and the historical contexts in which the movements took place. In your opinion, which of the two movements has had greater influence in the field? Why? Be sure to cite relevant research in responding to the question.
5. 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?
6. In his first inaugural address, Thomas Jefferson said that “though the will of the majority is in all cases to prevail, that will, to be rightful, must be reasonable. The minority possess their equal rights, which equal laws protect, and to violate it would be oppression.” The tension between majority rule and minority interests noted by Jefferson’s speech remains unresolved, but some have argued that a representative bureaucracy can work to accomplish both goals at the same time. Do you agree? Why or why not?