

Ph.D. Comprehensive Exam in Public Administration
Fall 2016

*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 is frequently said to rest on three or four “normative pillars”: efficiency, economy, effectiveness, and, according to some scholars, social equity. Some contemporary contributors to the field of public administration contend that these putative pillars are “hollow” or “weak,” lacking sufficient normative analytic justification for “pillar” status from among the vast number of public values that are relevant to public administrative theory and practice, being meaningless in the absence of context, and sometimes conflicting with one another and requiring inadequately specified tradeoffs. Analyze the strengths, weaknesses, and utility of any one of these “pillars” as a partial foundation for public administrative theory and practice.
2. In the 1990s, several articles in *Public Administration Review* called on contributors to the academic field of public administration to define and focus on “The Big Questions of Public Administration.” Echoing this sentiment, Christopher Pollitt recently claimed that “Public Administration is losing the big picture, and influence too.” Identify a “big question” in public administration and explain why it is both “big” and central to the field today.
3. The year is 2030. You are a new Professor of Public Administration at a leading American university and have been asked to speak on a panel for PhD students on the following topic. Compose an essay on the topic that you will use for this purpose: In the late 20th century, an influential reform movement known as New Public Management swept public administration scholarship and practice. Why was it so influential? How did it affect our field? And why did it die?
4. Public administration today is really about managing across boundaries. Explain why that is the case. Identify two examples of this phenomenon. Then explain how they shed light on the implications of this phenomenon for contemporary governance and accountability.
5. Consider this tweet: “Want to #nudge kids to eat more fruit? Make it easier to eat, e.g. by serving apples sliced rather than whole...” This tweet was sent regarding a pilot study by a group of researchers at Cornell University’s Food and Brand Lab. Evidence from eight schools found that fruit consumption jumped by more than 60 percent when apples were served sliced. Pen an essay that discusses how the field of behavioral economics is informing our *understanding* and the *way we study* policy implementation.