

Dear Students:

For the MPA Comprehensive Examination, you will be tested on all of your required public administration (PA) courses and you need to check with your concentration adviser to ascertain what concentration courses you will be tested on during this exam. There are several important tasks you can do to aid you in your exam preparation and taking the exam. The exam tips I provide below work for both required PA courses as well as concentration courses.

First, to prepare for this exam, start by constructing a work schedule, in which you include the time frame will allot yourself for exam preparation. I start my preparation with the courses that will prove the most challenging and work from there to the courses that cause me the least challenge/worries.

Second, if you do not have an annotated bibliography for each course, then I recommend you go to Google or some search engine and do a search for “annotated bibliography.” If you are able to provide parenthetical citations in your exam question responses that come from items you read for a particular subject area, this will help you on the exam. In other words, review all the texts and articles you read by course and create your annotated bibliography by course. Please note, I am not recommending you reread everything, I am recommending that you know the authors that you read by each course and the year of their work so you can use them as evidence to support any claims or arguments you present in your comprehensive examination essay responses. I reiterate, the ability to cite authors you have read (name of author or authors and year of their work) is a plus when providing evidence because it demonstrates that you have mastered the literature—that is if you use the authors' work appropriately in your essay.

Third, I recommend that you review all of your midterm and final exams that you took for each course that will be on the exam, especially the essay questions. Pay particular attention to what the professor said regarding your essay. In addition, if you had the choice of several questions, yet did not have to answer all of them, then I would go back to the questions that you did not answer and prepare an outline for each. You may want to visit with your professors to get some additional comments to go along with mine that are provided in this document.

Finally, the biggest problem students run into regarding the comprehensive the exam is simply the fact they do not answer the questions or they write too little when answering the questions. Please bring scratch paper with you, and use the scratch paper to outline your answer for each essay question before writing it-- please note you will only have one question given to you at a time, so when you get the question, take time to think about it, write an outline, then write your essay using your outline as the guide. Ensure that you include an introductory paragraph in which you tell the reader the content, importance, and purpose of your essay. Also, ensure you have a concluding paragraph in which you recap the essay.

If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact me (Phone: 256-782-5687; E-mail: dkrejci@jsu.edu). I wish you a very pleasant day.

Best Regards,

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