

**Ph.D. Program in Public Affairs, With an Emphasis on Community Development**  
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**Study Guide for the Comprehensive Exam in  
Community Development Theory and Practice**

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*Revised: May 13, 2016*

**Disclaimer**

Please be advised that the purpose of this guide is to facilitate students' preparation for the comprehensive examination in Community Development Theory and Practice. The study questions herein are not necessarily actual exam questions.

## **DESIGN OF THE COMPREHENSIVE EXAM**

The Community Development Theory and Practice (CDTP) exam is given on the first Friday of October. It consists of several essay questions on the current state of knowledge in the field, as indicated by the literature, including the broader body of work on community participation, community organization and community work that have run alongside the notion of community development. The exam integrates and consolidates material from the core curriculum; thus, students are required to demonstrate analytical thinking and mastery of key texts, ideas, theories and concepts, and to apply theoretical insights to community development research and problems. The exam structure – the number of questions and the time allotted to answer them – may vary from year to year; therefore, students should consult appropriate faculty for details about the exam in the semester before it is to be given. The exam is ‘open book’ and ‘open notes’ but not take-home. Students will usually have a choice of questions to answer.

## **PREPARATION FOR THE COMPREHENSIVE EXAMS**

Preparation for the CDTP exam includes coursework and when possible, group study.

*Coursework:* As noted above, the CDTP exam tests students’ knowledge of the field as indicated by the literature, and specifically, material from the core curriculum. However, the exam is not a test (or re-test) of individual coursework. Rather, students should select and approach their courses as tools for accessing different aspects of community development theory and practice of most interest to them. Students are urged to write course papers that will help them prepare for the exam.

*Group Study:* Students report that their independent efforts to study for the exam together have helped them to integrate and articulate their thinking, and enriched their education overall. Therefore, the program recommends that students form their own independent study groups to prepare for the exam.

## **GRADING OF THE COMPREHENSIVE EXAMS**

Each student’s essays are graded anonymously and independently by at least three members of the Comprehensive Exam Committee. Differences in outcomes are resolved by consensus among the graders. Some of the factors considered in grading the exam include: demonstrated breadth and depth of knowledge, comprehension and critical appraisal of the relevant literature, the capacity to use theories and concepts to assess issues and problems in the field, logical organization and clarity of the answer.

Students are notified of their final grades as soon as possible after taking the exam. Students who do not pass are encouraged to review the Ph.D. Program Advising Guide for the relevant pass/fail policies, and to contact the Chair of the Comprehensive Exam Committee for next steps.

## STUDY QUESTIONS

The study questions below are designed to help students organize their thinking about community development theory and practice, and to provide guidance on what to expect regarding the scope and scale of questions asked on the actual exam.

### *How Communities Develop: History, Policy and Politics*

Over the last forty years, community development has been transformed from a small-scale endeavor to a mainstream set of practices and institutions.

1. What intellectual perspectives dominate the theory and practice of community development? Please identify the principal thinkers in understanding the meaning of community as a foundation for the inter-disciplinary field of community development. What kinds of frameworks do these thinkers argue for with respect to community development?
2. What role does community development play in both the larger political economy and in the daily lives of ordinary people? How can development improve or empower communities that lack power and resources to be places of support and opportunity? Is there a right way to displace people? Does wealth building always have to be achieved at the expense of poor people?
3. What constitutes the community development movement today? Describe the different strands of this movement (or movements?) and their ability to effect systemic change. In your view, what is the most important institutional vehicle to emerge from the community development movement in the United States? What are the key challenges and the historical failures of this movement?
4. Discuss the intellectual origins, political frustrations and recurring patterns of federal urban and community development policy. What challenges does federal policy pose to the community development movement?
5. What roles do race, class, and gender play in community development? Give examples.
6. How has structural racism shaped the debate on community development in the post-war period of the United States? Provide a race-conscious framework for addressing urban poverty and community-building. How should the voices of people of color be incorporated into discourses or initiatives involving community development?
7. How can communities effectively organize and assert themselves to affect positive results for their children, families and neighborhoods? What kind of framework is needed (what does the literature say)? How can low-income communities create the social capital needed for movement-building?
8. Identify and describe the forces that limit choice in housing and community location. Explain how and why an “uneven geography of opportunity” by race and class continues to persist. How

does uneven geography impact the social and economic prospects for people in American cities and suburbs?

9. In developing concepts and a vocabulary for community economic development, scholars have also developed several tools for analyzing how communities can develop their economic resources. Briefly describe and analyze these tools and their strengths and weaknesses. What is the contribution to knowledge about community development?

10. A great deal has been written about the appropriate role that community economic development entrepreneurs and innovators serve in influencing social policy makers, and other public and private actors and entities, such as businesses, nonprofit organizations, churches and the like. Discuss the literature on this subject and analyze how social entrepreneurs and innovators use their social, human and intellectual capital to support community development and sustainability.

### ***Research and Applications of Community Development Theory and Practice***

1. Demonstrate what you have learned about effectively designing a research project in community development. Identify and describe:

a) a research question that you consider important to community development theory and practice, and explain why it is;

b) a theory that would allow you to situate your research within the existing community development field;

c) the research methods you would use, including any instrumentation such as survey or other data or evidence gathering method.

d) major research design provisions, such as comparison groups or statistical control variables you would use in regression analysis.

e) the type of data you would collect and how you would analyze it.

2. Identify the similarities and differences in approaches to quantitative and qualitative research designs appropriate to community development questions. For example, compare and contrast philosophical assumptions, and the meaning of key elements of social research such as: variables, validity, generalizability, hypothesis, and reliability, as used across these different methodological approaches. What are some of the similarities and differences involved in collecting data for studies using qualitative versus quantitative methods of analysis?

3. What is action research, and what are some of the effects of action research on community development practice, and community development project design and implementation? How would you utilize action research to help you understand the process of community learning? Describe the steps taken and why each is important. Will the action research process improve learning? How do you know?

4. Discuss how, why and when you might use 1) content analysis; 2) interviewing; and 3) survey research in community development research.

5. You are conducting a case study of the use of eminent domain and community development in Camden City. Why a case study? What evidence needs to be documented in order to show that a proposed redevelopment area meets statutory blight criteria? Does the neighborhood survey on which a blight designation is based have to be conducted by licensed planners? Does the redevelopment plan have to be signed and sealed by a licensed planner? What combination of legal notices is appropriate or necessary in order to satisfy a court that community members have been adequately notified about the redevelopment process? Under what circumstances, if any is the use of eminent domain to support a private use justified? And under what circumstances if any is the displacement of residents and businesses justified?

6. Describe how you would go about planning and executing an impact study of reinvestment strategies designed to improve Camden City. What should be the role of local civic leaders, foundations, partners, government, and stakeholders in protecting the rights of citizens in a city like Camden? How would you propose to solve the many challenges posed by poverty, segregation, disinvestment and deindustrialization? What issues would you tackle first? What models of best practices would you adopt? Elaborate.

## RECOMMENDED READINGS

The literature cited below provides students with a breadth of scholarship on community development, and it will be updated or changed from time to time. Some of it is used in the core curriculum courses and some amplifies or applies key ideas and theories in additional ways. Students should read selectively, guided by subjects and questions taken up in the core courses, the study questions above, and students' own developing interests in the broad inter-disciplinary field of community development theory and practice.

Carolyn Adams, "The Meds and Eds in Urban Economic Development," *Journal of Urban Affairs*, 25(5) (2003), 571-88

Saul Alinsky, *Rules for Radicals* (New York: Vintage Books, [1971] 1989)

John Atlas, *Seeds of Change: The Story of ACORN, America's Most Controversial Antipoverty Community Organizing Group* (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 2010)

Jeffrey M. Berry, with David F. Arons, *A Voice for Nonprofits* (Brookings Institution, 2005)

Jeffrey M. Berry, Kent E. Portney and Ken Thomson, *The Rebirth of Urban Democracy* (Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution, 1993)

Eugenie Birch and Susan M. Wachter, ed., *Growing Greener Cities: Urban Sustainability in the Twenty-first Century* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008)

Gloria Bonilla-Santiago, *The Miracle on Cooper Street: Lessons from an Inner City* (Bloomington IN: Archway Publishing, 2014)

Xavier de Souza Briggs, *The Geography of Opportunity* (Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution, 2005)

Robert A. Caro, *The Power Broker: Robert Moses and the Fall of New York* (New York: Vintage, 1975)

James DeFilippis, Robert Fisher, Eric Shragge, *Contesting Community: The Limits and Potential of Local Organizing* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2010)

James DeFilippis and Susan Saegert, eds., *The Community Development Reader* (New York: Routledge, 2007)

Peter Dreier, John Mollenkopf and Todd Swanstrom, *Place Matters: Metropolitcs for the Twenty-first Century*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Rev. Ed. (Lawrence, Kan.: University Press of Kansas, 2004)

Ronald F. Ferguson and William T. Dickens, *Urban Problems and Community Development* (Washington D.C.: The Brookings Institution, 1999)

Susan S. Fainstein, *The Just City* (Cornell University Press, 2010)

Ronald F. Ferguson and William T. Dickens, *Urban Problems and Community Development* (Washington D.C.: The Brookings Institution, 1999)

Robert Fisher, ed., *The People Shall Rule: ACORN, Community Organizing, and the Struggle for Economic Justice* (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 2009)

Gerald E. Frug, *City Making: Building Communities without Building Walls* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999)

Archon Fung, *Empowered Participation: Reinventing Urban Democracy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004)

William Landes Foster, Peter Kim, and Barbara Christensen, "Ten Nonprofit Funding Models," *Stanford Social Innovation Review* 25 (Spring 2009)

John I. Gilderbloom and R.L. Mullins, Jr., *Promise and Betrayal: Universities and the Battle for Sustainable Urban Neighborhoods*, (Albany: SUNY Press, 2005)

Edward Glaeser, *Triumph of the City: How Our Greatest Invention Makes Us Richer, Smarter, Greener, Healthier, and Happier* (New York: Penguin Press, 2011)

J. David Greenstone and Paul Peterson, *Race and Authority in Urban Politics: Community Participation and the War on Poverty* (New York: Russell Sage, 1974)

Robert Halpern, *Rebuilding the Inner City: A History of Neighborhood Initiatives to Address Poverty in the United States* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995)

John Hannigan, *Fantasy City: Pleasure and Profit in the Postmodern Metropolis* (New York: Routledge, 1998)

Chester Hartman and Gregory D. Squires, eds., *The Integration Debate: Competing Futures for American Cities* (New York: Routledge, 2009)

David Harvey, "The Right to the City," *New Left Review* 53 (October 2008): 23-42 (see also, Henri Lefebvre, "The Right to the City," in Eleonore Kofman and Elizabeth Lebas, trans. and ed., *Henri Lefebvre, Writings on Cities* (Malden, Mass.: Blackwell, 1997), 147-159)

Arnold Hirsch, *The Making of the Second Ghetto: Race and Housing in Chicago, 1940-1960* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998)

Ronald J. Hustedde and Jacek Ganowicz, "The Basics: What's Essential about Theory for Community Development Practice?," *Journal of the Community Development Society* 33, no. 1 (2002): 1-19

David L. Imbroscio, "Shaming the Inside Game: A Critique of the Liberal Expansionist Approach to Addressing Urban Problems," *Urban Affairs Review* 42, no. 2 (2006): 224-48

Jane Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (New York: Modern American Library [1961] 2011)

Paul Jargowsky, *Poverty and Place: Ghettos, Barrios, and the American City* (New York: Russell Sage, 1997)

Peniel E. Joseph, ed., *Neighborhood Rebels: Black Power at the Local Level* (Palgrave, 2010)

Ira Katznelson, *City Trenches: Urban Politics and the Patterning of Class in the United States* (New York: Pantheon, 1981)

John Kromer, *Fixing Broken Cities* (New York: Routledge, 2009)

Loretta Lees, Tom Slater, and Elvin Wyly, *Gentrification* (New York: Routledge, 2008)

Nicholas Lemann, "The Myth of Community Development," *New York Times*, January 9, 1994

Paul C. Light, *The Search for Social Entrepreneurship* (Brookings Institution, 2008)

John Logan and Harvey Molotch, *Urban Fortunes: The Political Economy of Place* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1987)

Peter Medoff and Holly Sklar, *Streets of Hope: The Fall and Rise of an Urban Neighborhood* (South End Press, 1999)

Don Mitchell, *The Right to the City: Social Justice and the Fight for Public Space* (New York: Guildford Press, 2003)

Myron Orfield, *Metropolitics: The New Suburban Reality* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution, 2002)

Marion Orr, ed., *Transforming the City: Community Organizing and the Challenge of Political Change* (Lawrence, Kan.: University Press of Kansas, 2007)

Michael Leo Owens, *God and Government in the Ghetto: The Politics of Church-State Collaboration in Black America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007)

Paul E. Peterson, *City Limits* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981)

Rhonda Phillips and Robert H. Pittnam, eds., *An Introduction to Community Development*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. (New York: Routledge, 2014)

Walter W. Powell and Richard Steinberg, eds., *The Nonprofit Sector: A Research Handbook*



Wendell Pritchett, *Brownsville, Brooklyn: Blacks, Jews, and the Changing Face of the Ghetto* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003)

Douglas Rae, *City: Urbanism and Its End* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005)

John Restakis, *Humanizing the Economy: Co-operatives in the Age of Capital* (New Society Publishers, 2010)

David Rusk, *Cities Without Suburbs* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993)

David Rusk, *Inside Game, Outside Game: Winning Strategies for Saving Urban America* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution, 1991)

Sean Safford, *Why the Garden Club Couldn't Save Youngstown: The Transformation of the Rustbelt* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009)

Mae Shaw, "Community Development and the Politics of Community," *Community Development Journal* 43, no. 1 (2008): 24-36

William Simon, *The Community Economic Development Movement: Law, Business, and the New Social Policy* (Duke University Press, 2002)

Randy Stoecker, "The CDC Model of Urban Development: A Critique and an Alternative," *Journal of Urban Affairs* 19, no. 1 (1997): 1-22; see, also debate with Rachel Bratt and W. Dennis Keating

Thomas Sugrue, *The Origins of the Urban Crisis* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996)

Catherine Tumber, *Small, Gritty and Green: The Promise of America's Smaller Industrial Cities in a Low-Carbon World* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2011)

Thad Williamson, David Imbroscio and Gar Alperovitz, *Making a Place for Community: Local Democracy in a Global Era* (New York: Routledge, 1995)

William Julius Wilson, *When Work Disappears: The World of the New Urban Poor* (New York: Vintage, 1997)

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