



# Governance in Dark Times: Practical Philosophy for Public Service

*Camilla Stivers*

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With the rush of calamitous events in recent years—the September 11 terror attacks, the Iraq imbroglio, and hurricanes Katrina and Rita—Americans feel themselves to be living in dark times. Trust in one another and in the government is at low ebb. People in public service face profound challenges to the meaning and efficacy of their work. Where can a public servant turn for a public philosophy to sustain practice?

Inspired by Hannah Arendt and several other philosophers, *Governance in Dark Times* is the first book to explore the philosophical and value underpinnings needed to guide public servants in these times. Featuring down-to-earth discussions of such issues as terrorism, torture, and homeland security, it suggests ways for people in government to think more deeply, judge more wisely, and act more meaningfully. Camilla Stivers argues that the most urgent requirement in dark times is re-kindling what Arendt called "the light of the public," and offers practical steps for public servants to create spaces for citizen dialogue and engagement in public life. Ideas like "governance of the common ground" and "public service as social hope" will spark discussion and encourage renewed dedication to the work of governing.

Grounded in the author's more than thirty years of teaching and administrative practice, *Governance in Dark Times* urges public servants in clear, jargon-free prose to reflect, to understand the world we live in, and to act responsibly, both individually and with fellow citizens.

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