



Southeastern
Baptist Theological Seminary

Ph.D. in Apologetics and Culture Entrance Exam Study Guide

The Ph.D. Entrance Exam in Apologetics and Culture will consist of essay questions in two parts, each part approximately 3 hours in length.

The exam will be closed book, so you will not be allowed to use any resources other than the writing instruments you bring with you and the writing paper and instructional materials that will be provided in your exam folder.

Applicants are expected to be prepared to write for 90 minutes on any of the following questions. Essays will be assessed according to the following criteria:

Relevance and Argumentation

- Students should give careful attention to the question and outline refined arguments. Student should incorporate & critically interact with relevant resources related to the field.

Writing Mechanics

- Students' responses should be intelligent, and precise. Reasonable arrangement of paragraphs and ideas should enhance a reader's understanding. Responses should be focused, and vocabulary varied. Responses should contain very few grammar, spelling, and punctuation errors.

Awareness of Relevant Scholarship

- Students should show awareness of seminal sources, major figures and pivotal events related to the field and incorporate and properly interact with resources related to the question.

Section: Culture

Books

Schaeffer, Francis A. *The God Who Is There*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, (30th University Edition, 1998). Note: Any edition is acceptable after 1982. Available on Amazon

Machen, J. Gresham and Bauder, Kevin . *Christianity and Culture*. CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2011. (originally published by Machen in 1913) Available on Amazon

Questions:

1. One aspect of the discussion regarding Christianity and culture is whether Christianity as a subculture should have as its goal to overtake the parent culture by competing with the parent culture or create its own culture giving those captivated by the parent culture an alternative culture based on a Christian worldview. Explain your view and defend your understanding of the cultural mandate. Your answer should include a discussion of whether the main aim of Christian cultural artifacts should be to evangelize or to produce art which exhibits truth, goodness, beauty and unity. Also include in your discussion an explanation of the phrase: “Christ is Lord of all of life” as it relates to this question.
2. What is meant by Francis A. Schaeffer and C. S. Lewis when they use the term “pre-evangelism” and in what ways would this give an approach for speaking meaningfully to our culture. In light of that, what is your understanding of the following statement regarding speaking to the non-believer: “The truth that we let in first is not a dogmatic statement of the truth of the Scriptures, but the truth of the external world and the truth of what man is himself”. Develop your answer along the lines of the human intuitive longing for meaning, peace, love and eternity as well as discuss why reality is an effective place to begin with the unbeliever who is made in the image of God.
3. Define what you understand the term “culture” to mean and explain the difference between the terms/phrases “world”, “culture” and “the spirit of the age”. Discuss J. Gresham Machen’s three models of the relationship between Christianity and culture; then give what you believe to be the strengths and weaknesses of each in light of scripture concluding with a defense of your own view of the relationship between Christianity and culture with scriptural support. Your answer should include a discussion of the concept of ‘reclaiming culture’.

Section: Issues in Apologetics

Books

William Lane Craig. *Reasonable Faith: Christian Truth and Apologetics*. 3rd Edition (Wheaton:

Crossway Books, 2008.

Questions

1. State the six steps of Plantinga's ontological argument. Further, what intuitive warrant is there for the first premise of the ontological argument? Finally, what response can be offered to the objection that the ontological argument is question-begging?
2. Give from memory the three steps of the moral argument. Distinguish moral values from duties. What does it mean to say that moral values and duties are objective? If naturalism is true, why does it seem that moral values and duties do not exist? Explain the distinction between moral ontology and moral epistemology and the significance of this distinction for a moral argument for the existence of God. Finally, how can the theist respond to the Euthyphro dilemma?
3. In asserting that no amount of evidence could ever establish a miracle, what factor did Hume overlook? How does this factor come to expression in the probability calculus? How is the following slogan false in light of probability calculus: "Extraordinary events require extraordinary evidence"? Why can it not be assumed that the intrinsic probability of a miracle is terribly low? How would the inclusion of the fact of God's existence in one's background knowledge affect the intrinsic probability of a miracle claim? What should you say to someone who claims that in order to study history, one must presuppose that miracles do not happen? Why are Hume's "in fact" arguments not insuperable?

Section: History of Apologetics

Book

Khaldoun A. Sweis and Chad V. Meister, *Christian Apologetics: AN Anthology of Primary Sources* (Zondervan, 2012), ISBN: 978-0310325338

Questions

1. Aquinas, Leibniz and Craig have all offered a version of the cosmological argument. Briefly describe each of their arguments and then show what they have in common and how they differ from each other. Then, offer a critique of each argument noting the strengths and weaknesses of their approaches.
2. William Paley, Michael Behe, and Robin Collins use specific details of the physical world to argue that God (or an intelligent designer) exists. Discuss each of their arguments, noting the unique features of their approach. What are their strengths and weaknesses and do they hold any value for apologists today? Also, can Behe's approach be classified as a design argument for God's existence?

3. Anselm and Plantinga have argued from the concept of God to his actual existence. Outline each argument, offering explanation for each of their premises. Do either of these arguments “work”? Why or why not?

Section: Apologetic Methodology

Book

Steven B. Cowan, Gen Editor. *Five Views on Apologetics*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 2000.

Questions

1. Some theistic arguments are *a priori* and others are *a posteriori*. Summarize (but do not spend time evaluating) an example of each kind of argument. What are the strengths and weaknesses of an *a priori* approach to Christian apologetics? Similarly assess the *a posteriori* approach. (Note that the strengths and weaknesses can range over philosophical, cultural, and practical issues.)
2. The ‘minimal facts’ approach to arguing for the resurrection of Christ has become popular in our day (cf. Habermas, Craig, Licona). What is supposed to be the main strength of this method of argument? Explain at least two potential weaknesses, and evaluate if they are in fact weaknesses.
3. Some ‘presuppositionalist’ apologists think that in some important sense we must ‘start with Scripture’ in our apologetic. They believe they have good theological and philosophical reasons for doing so. Critically evaluate this approach. Are there different ways to ‘start with Scripture,’ and does this matter for apologetic method?