



Philosophy of Religion

The Ph.D. Entrance Exam in Philosophy of Religion 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.

Reading List:

Allen, Diogenes and Eric O. Springsted. *Philosophy for Understanding Theology*, 2nd ed.
Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2007.

Peterson, Michael, William Hasker, Bruce Reichenbach and David Basinger. *Philosophy of Religion: Selected Readings*, 4th ed. New York: Oxford University Press, 2009.

Questions:

Theistic Arguments:

1. Explain and evaluate Anselm's Ontological Argument in light of Gaunilo's critique. Then critique Plantinga's version of the ontological argument.
2. Discuss the moral argument for God's existence as presented by Robert Adams, and evaluate this argument in light of Natural Law.
3. Discuss the arguments which theists have traditionally advanced in favor of theism. In so doing, be sure both to articulate clearly and to evaluate carefully each of the arguments discussed.

Problem of Evil

4. Discuss J. I. Mackie's view of the problem of evil and Plantinga's response. Evaluate the effectiveness of Plantinga's response to Mackie.
5. Define and then discuss the Greater-Good theodicy pointing out possible weaknesses and strengths and in particular how you would answer the objection that this theodicy logically ends up with God being the source of evil. Your answer should include discussing whether or not such a view would make the fall a necessary part of God's plan for humanity.
6. Discuss the evidential problem of evil, articulating and evaluating what you take to be the most important responses to it.

Metaphysics

7. Discuss omniscience by articulating and responding to the problem of freedom and foreknowledge.
8. Discuss Plato's view of reality and its compatibility with Christian ontology.

Epistemology

9. Discuss the problem of religious diversity, articulating what you take to be the major views of how such diversity ought to inform one's understanding of religious truth.

10. Explain and critique the epistemological value of religious experience. You should give attention to William Alston's view on this subject.

Miracles

11. State the core facts (sometimes referred to as minimal facts) argument for the resurrection as presented by Gary Habermas and then discuss the strengths and weaknesses of this approach particularly Habermas's prospective/retrospective argument.
12. Define a biblical view of miracles and give four objections to miracles. Then provide a cogent argument defending a biblical view of miracles against each of the four objections.