

Comprehensive Exam Questions 2007

The list of exam questions are divided into five sections, corresponding to departmental distribution requirements. Philosophy majors are responsible for the first four listed items. Philosophy majors who have chosen a concentration in religious studies must substitute Religious Studies for one of the other areas. The following set of questions is the basis for the B.A. comprehensive exam. Questions in each of the above sections are updated periodically to reflect recent course offerings in the department. Working with their advisor, students should narrow the list to twelve questions, three from each of four areas. Students must formally submit this final list to their advisor. Four of these questions will appear on the comprehensive exam, one from each area. Students will be given three hours to complete the exam. The student's advisor, a reader from the department and an outside evaluator will grade the exam. Students should work closely with their advisor in generating their individual list of questions, taking into account course work and specific areas of interest.

WESTERN PHILOSOPHY

1. What are some of the significant differences between concepts of nature found among the philosophies of ancient Greece and those of the European Renaissance?
2. What is Martin Heidegger's critique of the tradition of Western philosophy?
3. What are Nietzsche's criticisms of the tradition of Western morality and philosophy?
4. Discuss Hegel's master / slave dialectic in the *Phenomenology of Spirit*. How does it influence Sartre's treatment of desire in *Being and Nothingness*?
5. What critique of philosophy is to be found in the later writings of Ludwig Wittgenstein?
6. What response did Immanuel Kant give in the *Critique of Pure Reason* to Humean skepticism?
7. By what reasoning did Descartes justify the existence of the world external to consciousness?
8. What is Augustine's analysis of the nature of religious faith?
9. What is Thomas Aquinas' analysis of the difference between material and immaterial substance?
10. What is the postmodern critique of the tradition of Western philosophy found among contemporary French philosophers?
11. What were the major themes of Pre-Socratic philosophy?
12. What are the major themes of Christian mysticism during the Middle Ages?
13. What are some of changes in the concept of time in the history of Western thought?
14. What are some of the changes in the concept of motion in the history of Western thought?

15. Explain Hume's three principles of association of ideas and their function. What are Hume's critiques of causality and self-identity?
16. What is George Berkeley's argument against the existence of being independent of mind?
17. Sketch Plato's theory of knowledge, distinguishing knowledge from opinion, and also indicating the role of recollection and the Forms as well as Plato's arguments for them. What is Aristotle's critique of Plato's epistemology?
18. What is the critique of the Western intellectual tradition made by feminist philosophy?
19. What are some of the arguments for and against the claim that a machine can be constructed that has the capability of consciousness and thought?
20. What are some prominent theories concerning the relationship between language and the world?
21. Using a figure from three eras, discuss philosophy's understanding of Eros.
22. Using a figure from three eras, discuss the relationship of truth and power.
23. What is the difference between the epistemologies of Plato and Aristotle?
24. What contribution did monotheism make to the scientific movement of the past three centuries?
25. Describe Plato's ideal state, including the roles of the guardians, soldiers, and craftsmen. Explain why they do what they do. How do they make the state just?
26. Discuss Heidegger's notions of authenticity and inauthenticity.
27. Discuss Merleau-Ponty's critique of Descartes' mind / body dualism.
28. A. N. Whitehead once remarked that the tradition of Western philosophy consists of a series of footnotes to Plato. Write an essay either supporting or refuting that large generalization.
29. Discuss the ontological argument for the existence of God as set forth by Anselm and/or Descartes, and the criticism of the argument made by Immanuel Kant.
30. What did Immanuel Kant mean by the term "synthetic a priori" and what were its consequences for his theory of knowledge?
31. Discuss the origins of existential philosophy in Kierkegaard as a reaction against the idealism of Hegel.
32. Pragmatism is said to be the first (and only) philosophy that carries the label "made in America." What is distinctive about pragmatic philosophy and who are its major representatives?

33. What were the main themes that characterized the earlier and later phases of Wittgenstein's philosophical career?
34. Discuss the major developments in the empiricist approach to epistemology in Locke, Berkeley and Hume.
35. Discuss what Heraclitus meant by saying that you cannot step into the same river twice. What were some of the opposing positions among the Pre-Socratics? Discuss this question in terms of the one and the many, or the temporal and the eternal.
36. Explain how the Epicureans, the Stoics, and the Skeptics each sought to achieve happiness.
37. For Aquinas, what are the relationships between eternal law, natural law, divine law, and human law?
38. Explain the role of clarity and distinctness in Descartes' quest for certainty.
39. In the Leviathan, Hobbes argues that the natural state for human beings is one of war. According to Hobbes, how do we get out of this state of war? What criticism could be made of Hobbes' concept of a natural state?
40. Leibniz believed that the universe was totally filled with monads. Why did he believe this?
41. Locke argued that the mind is a blank slate from birth. What are the implications of such a claim and what are arguments against it? Discuss his distinctions among primary, secondary and tertiary qualities and how these distinctions influence concepts of perception and reality.
42. Describe Hegel's concept of God, and why he identifies God as history. What criticism by other nineteenth-century thinkers were made of Hegel's concept?
43. Explain how capitalism functions, citing the roles of property, business organizations, markets, competition, and the profit motive. Consider the factors that favor a capitalist economy and those that count against it.
44. Give Kant's categories of the understanding and explain their function in human reasoning.
45. In his Essence of Christianity, Ludwig Feuerbach offers a projections theory of religion. Explain this theory.
46. Discuss the concept of "soul" in Western philosophy, noting as many distinct views of the concept as you can, and the philosophers who were associated with each view.
47. Discuss the central philosophical idea associated with Pythagoras, how it distinguishes his thought from that of his Milesian naturalists, and how it prepares the way for Platonic idealism. Explain the distinction between syntax and semantics and how Searle uses this distinction to argue against strong AI.

48. Explain how a common law system, like that of the United States, relies more on inductive reasoning than civil law systems like that of France.
49. Why is public documentation of legal arguments so critical in the legal system of the United States?
50. Explain the functionalist theory of mind using the two versions of the Turing Test as an illustration.
51. Explain Frank Jackson's knowledge argument from "What Mary Doesn't Know". Does his argument successfully disprove physicalism? Argue for your answer.
52. What does Locke and Rousseau believe about the natural state of human beings, the purpose of the social contract, and the system of governance? Compare and contrast their viewpoints.
53. Explain Marx's view of dialectic materialism and offer some criticism.
54. Why does Derrida question the emphasis upon authorial intent in the process of interpretation?
55. What does Locke and Rousseau believe about the natural state of human beings, the purpose of the social contract, and the system of governance? Compare and contrast their viewpoints.
56. Explain Marx's view of dialectic materialism and offer some criticism.
57. Why does Derrida question the emphasis upon authorial intent in the process of interpretation?
- 58.1. Compare the theories of change given by Heraclitus and Parmenides. Does either of them provide an acceptable theory? Why?
59. Discuss the view of Protagoras from the fragments and particularly Plato's reconstruction in the Theaetetus. Critically assess the legitimacy of his view (particularly in light of classroom discussion).
60. Explain Socrates and Euthyphro's discussion of piety. With special reference to the dilemma reached, provide a solution to their issue, or at least explain why some solutions don't work.
61. Explain Socrates' view of civil disobedience (Crito, Apology). Responding to his view, in which circumstances do you believe (or not) that civil disobedience is morally acceptable?
62. What is the soul? Explain Plato's theory of "recollection" from the Phaedo and Meno, and its bearing on belief in the nature of the soul and its immortality.
63. What is the nature of love? Explaining the various views presented in the Symposium, explain why you think Diotima's speech does or does not help us to know Eros.
64. What is the function of the Forms in Plato's philosophy? [This is the most general question].

4. From the discussion of the arts in the Republic X, account for Plato's theory of the nature of art. Do you agree?
65. Explain Aristotle's categories. How are they an advancement (or not) on the theories of his predecessors?
66. Explain Aristotle's four types of cause (or "explanation"). Show how an analysis of some topic could benefit from such an approach.
67. What is the soul, as conceived using Aristotle's first principles and theory of substance?
68. What is the role of eudaimonia (or happiness) in Aristotle's ethics? How is it manifested in our lives?
69. Explain the moral stance that agreement provides the source of morals, and some consequences of that stance (as defended by Hobbes). Argue whether or not you believe that morality has such a source.
70. Explain Descartes' theory of the nature of physical and mental substances, and of human persons. Argue your stance on whether his dualism is an acceptable view.
71. What is the role of God in the philosophy of Descartes, in all its manifestations? Defend the merits or weaknesses of the role God is intended to play.
72. Between Spinoza and Leibniz's theory of substance, there are intriguing differences. Explain their theories. Does either theory of being offer an acceptable account of what is? Which, if either, offers a better view of what it is that makes us what we are?
73. Explain Locke's theory of substance, particularly in relation to his distinction between primary and secondary qualities.
74. Explain Berkeley's idealism: is he correct in his rejection of matter?
75. What is Hume's theory of causal relations? Is he correct about how things happen?
76. Explain Hume's theory of personal identity.
77. Explain Kant's theory of Space and Time: do they provide his defense of transcendental idealism with adequate justification?
78. Kant argues that the Categories are needed to explain the possibility of our experience: explain and evaluate his theory. Does our experience follow such principles?
79. Kant argues that the consequences of an action do not establish the moral status of that action. Upon examining his argument for this view and the alternative that he proposes, defend your own stance on the source of morality.

GLOBAL PHILOSOPHY

1. What criticisms of Confucianism were made by the early philosophers of ancient China such as Chuang Tzu, Lao Tzu, Mo Tzu and Hsun Tzu?
2. What themes in the Vedas and Upanishads of ancient India dominated the thinking of the later schools of Hindu thought?
3. What are some the important differences between Theravada and Mahayana Buddhism?
4. What is the controversy between the Rinzaï and Soto schools of Zen Buddhism over the nature of meditational practice?
5. What are the differences between the Confucian concept of governmental rule and those of Plato and Aristotle?
6. What are the differences between concepts of nature found in Confucianism, Taoism, and the Yin Yang school, and the Pre-Socratics, Plato and Aristotle?
7. What are the major differences between Buddhism and Hinduism in ancient India?
8. What were the major transformations of Buddhism as it moved out of India into China and Japan?
9. What similarities are found in the concept, or lack of it, of the soul in the traditions of Hinduism, Buddhism, and Jainism?
10. What is the difference between Western and Eastern concepts of separating religiosity and secularism?
11. Describe the doctrinal differences between Mahayana and Theravada Buddhism with reference to the role of the Arhat and the Bodhisattva.
12. Explain the technique and purpose of the Hindu practice of Yoga.
13. Discuss both Buddhism and Confucianism as a response to human suffering and conflict.
14. Compare the importance of the self or ego for Eastern and Western philosophy.
15. For Confucianism, are human beings essentially good or evil? In either case, how does one act well?
16. Explain the Hindu concept of deity.
17. How is Islam related to Judaism?
18. Differentiate the Sunnis, Shiites, Sufis, and Wahhabis.
19. How does archaeological evidence substantiate or discredit the biblical record?

20. Wellhausen says that the Mosaic history is the starting point for the history of Judaism, not the history of Ancient Israel. Explain.
21. Describe the process and problems of Hellenism among the Jewish people at the time of Alexander the Great, Antiochus IV, and Jesus of Nazareth.
22. Compare and contrast the approaches of Strauss, Schweitzer, and Bultmann to the Gospels and the life of Jesus.
23. List the criteria for the third quest of the historical Jesus. (Make sure to explain the relationship between the synoptic Gospels and the development of separate sources in composing the answer).
24. Discuss Paul's theology.
25. Discuss what the church said about Jesus Christ at Nicea and Chalcedon.
26. Differentiate the Catholic, Lutheran, Reformed, and Anabaptist concept of the sacraments, emphasizing baptism and the Lord's Supper.
27. For Barth the Word of God is the basis of the church's speaking. Explain.
Karl Marx (1818-1883) argued that religions arise as an escape from poverty and social oppression. Consequently, he thought that when social problems were eliminated, religions would die away. What arguments and examples would you give for and against this position?
28. It is commonly said that religion is a "crutch" to help an individual deal with pain, overcome loneliness, or create meaning in life. Is this a fair assessment? What examples would you give for and against such an argument?
29. Review characteristics of ancient Egyptian, Mesopotamian, and Persian (Zoroastrianism) religions and trace their manifestations in Judaism.
30. Explain the standing of women in the Jewish Bible. To what degree did the Hebrew scriptures ameliorate the condition of women, and to what degree did they reinforce a patriarchal society?
31. According to Martin Luther, what are the three walls in the Roman Catholic Church, and what arguments does Luther use to "demolish" them? Why do you think Luther failed to reform the Roman Catholic Church?
32. How do you explain the statement: "Islam did not arise out of the history of a covenant with God, as is the case with Judaism?"
33. Based on Islamic beliefs, where does Muhammad stand in relation to previous prophets? How do Muslims view Jesus, why do Muslims refute the divinity of Jesus (and the Trinity), and why is experiencing God a problem in Islam? How do these views and beliefs affect a meaningful, productive Christian-Muslim dialogue, or do they?

34. Some scholars argue that Islam in America has become (or will become) a major religion like Christianity and Judaism. Do you agree or disagree? Discuss.
35. Compare the Islamic doctrine of Jihad with the “Just War” theory. How are they similar? How are they different?
36. Describe Sufi beliefs and practices and discuss how they differ from those in mainstream Islam.
37. Describe Shi‘i beliefs and practices and discuss how they differ from those in mainstream Islam.
38. In Indian society, was the Buddha a liberal, a conservative, or a radical? Give examples to support your answer. What considerations beyond the Buddha’s personality and teachings may have contributed to the success of Buddhism, and why? What Buddhist teachings could be most difficult to practice in North America, and why?
39. The basic nature of human beings has been one of the great topics of discussion throughout the history of China. Is human nature good or bad or somewhere in between? What were the Chinese views on this matter? Discuss.
40. How does the *Bhagavad-Gita* present and answer the problem of war? What is your critique of its answer? How may its answer be applicable to peoples of other cultures and other religions?
41. What do you think are the most important reasons for the rise of new religious movements in recent times? How adequate is the term *new religious movement* in your view? What are its strengths and weaknesses?
42. How do you see feminism changing traditional religions over the next hundred years? What are your predictions for the state of the world’s religions in 2100? Offer support for your predictions.
43. What are some of the important similarities and differences between Sufism and Zen Buddhism.
44. How do Confucianism and Buddhism differ in what they contribute to Japanese culture?
45. Describe the Buddhism of Kukai. What part of it makes sense to the Western mind and what part does not?
46. What are the similarities and difference between Pure Land Buddhism and Zen Buddhism?
47. How does the notion of Kami make a statement about the relation between humanity and the universe?
48. In what ways is esoteric Buddhism comparable to the indigenous religions of Japan?
49. What is the contradiction that Shinron thought found in Buddhist practice and how did it seek to solve the problem?

50. How is surrender (Shinjin) understood as a process that brings spiritual enlightenment.
51. What are the meditative and practical features of Dogen's version of Buddhism?
52. How does the theory of upaya (expedient means) affect our understanding of Japanese philosophy. What are some of the most important elements of the allegory of the burning house from the Lotus Sutra?
53. What is the nature of Dukkha (suffering, stress, etc) and how according to the 4 Noble Truths can it be overcome.
54. What is the nature of the 7th and 8th stages of the Eight Fold Path and how are what do the analogies of the pot stand and the raft tell us about both?
55. What is the relationship between Wabisumi (the life of wabi) and sabi and what kind of seeing does sabi express?
56. Analyze some of the Haikus of Basho and show how they illustrate important concepts in Japanese Philosophy.
57. In the Surangama Sutra what is the reasons for rejecting the common sense claim that the mind is inside the body?
58. What insight does Basho's experience of the Frog and the Pond and Hsiang-yen experience of the tile and the bamboo give into the nature of Satori?
59. What is the difference between the poem of Hui Neng and the poem of Shen Hsiu, as far as the nature of meditation is concerned, that the Fifth Patriarch would give the insignia of his office to Hui Neng.
60. What do the Basho's experience of the Frog and the Pond, Hsiang-yen experience of the tile and the bamboo, and Shih-pei's enlightenment experience after hitting his toe have in common? How are their insights different?
61. What insight does the Surangama Sutra gives us into the Satori of Basho, Hsiang-yen and Shih-pei?
62. How is Dogen is the image of a moon reflected in a dewdrop an analogy for meditation?
63. For Dogen meditation as an activity is a contradiction of what meditation is - to try to stop the mind is itself an activity of the mind and so it is like trying to wash off blood with blood or like trying to lift your body off the ground by pulling on the straps on your boots. Discuss passages from the reading assignment that gives insight into how Dogen understands meditation and overcomes the contradiction of understanding mediation as an activity?
64. What is the difference between the ordinary conception of time and Dogen's conception of time?

65. The Heart Sutra adds a new dimension to the discussion of the nature of meditation and marks the conceptual difference between earlier Hinayana Buddhism and later Mahayana Buddhism. How does the koan , Joshu's Mu, express the same concepts given expression in the Heart Sutra.

66. What was wrong and what was right about the answer which Hakuin gave to Shoju, when Shoju asked "What is Mu". And Hakuin answered by saying "There is nothing to get hold of." Why did Shoju painfully twist Hakuin nose and call him a "...dead monk in cave?"

67. Why is the gateless barrier of Zen Buddhism gateless?

VALUE STUDIES/MORAL THEORIES

1. Discuss the concept of evil in the ethics of Plato, Aristotle, Epicurus, Zeno (the Stoic), and Augustine.

2. Explain how we decide whether acts are right or wrong according to utilitarianism, distinguishing John Stuart Mill's version from Jeremy Bentham's.

3. State how the good will and duty function in Kant's basic moral principle, the categorical imperative, and illustrate how this principle separates right from wrong acts. 4. The Stoics argued that the good life was the "apathetic" life. What did they mean by that claim?

4. For Aristotle, what was the connection between the condition of "happiness" and the practice of "virtue?" How does this principle separate right from wrong acts?

5 . Identify and compare the following two basic ethical principles: 1) Kant's categorical imperative, and 2) Mill's utilitarian principle.

6. Both Stoic thought and Christian thought make major use of the concept of Logos. Discuss their respective understandings of Logos, and the ethical consequences in both cases.

7. According to Aristotle's Ethics, ethical behavior is based on our highest function as human beings. Explain this intuition using Aristotle's divisions of the soul.

8. Explain the difference between rule utilitarianism and act utilitarianism.

9. State W.D. Ross' theory of prima facie duties and give examples of some of these duties. Explain how this theory addresses important problems of Kantian and utilitarian ethics.

10. Evaluate the desirability of a genetic screening program in the U.S. for some disease like Huntington's, Tay-Sachs, sickle-cell anemia, or cystic fibrosis. Consider the objective of such a program, its cost and benefits, the extent to which it would be voluntary or mandatory, whether and how it would protect the autonomy of those tested, and the implications of a reliable pre-natal test for the disease.

11. Distinguish active from passive, and voluntary from non-voluntary euthanasia. State two arguments for

euthanasia and two against, carefully describing the circumstances in which euthanasia is being considered.

12. How does John Dewey distinguish traditional morality from reflective? Explain how moral theory arises according to Dewey. What conditions must be satisfied if people are to be morally responsible for their acts? Which acts have and which lack moral significance?

13. Give examples of morally acceptable and unacceptable practices of personnel management in job description and screening, skills tests for screening, polygraph testing, promotion, discipline and discharge. In each case explain why the one practice is justified and the other not.

14. Discuss the ethical aspects of an analysis of sexual harassment in the workplace.

15. What factors must be present for people to agree on John Rawls' two principles of distributive justice (don't forget the veil of ignorance)? State the two principles, and illustrate how the maximum principle yields a distribution different from the utilitarian.

16. Compare and contrast the use of moral reasoning in Aristotle and Kant.

17. Describe paternalism, and give examples of paternalistic behavior. Consider two arguments for and two against paternalism.

18. Name three philosophical "materialists" who nonetheless had definite ethical philosophies. How did each derive ethical categories and viewpoints from a materialist starting point?

19. Discuss the difference between Ross' *prima facie* duties and actual duties. Compare and contrast Ross' theory to purely deontological and consequentialist theories.

20. Is morality an outdated, metaphysical concept in postmodern times? Why or why not?

21. Is rationality a necessary and / or a sufficient condition for moral action? for consideration as being worthy of moral consideration? Why or why not?

22. What is the relationship between the individual and the community, between desire and the law? Is desire inevitably in conflict with moral behavior?

23. How is technology increasingly challenging our Enlightenment ideals of: who is a person with moral value and obligation? what is a good quality of life for the moral person? what is the person's place within the social world? what is the person's place within the natural world?

24. Do human beings have free will, or are our actions determined? Are we responsible for our actions if we are not free to choose them?

25. Define the concepts of autonomy, beneficence, and paternalism. Discuss the role these concepts play in questions of medical ethics; develop your ideas in the context of a specific decision scenario.

26. Discuss several of the ethical implications of reproductive technology. Be sure to present pro and contra

viewpoints, as well to give voice to feminist concerns.

27. Is "mental illness" a disease or a societal value judgment?

28. . Explain Plato's theory of the parts of the soul and the virtues of the state. Why do you believe (or not) that this is a plausible theory?

29. Explain and assess Aristotle's account of the good life, in both the realm of practice and the realm of intellect. Argue why you believe that he is right (or wrong).

30. Discuss Aristotle on the virtues of character in relation to the function of man. Is he right?

31. Explain the Epicurean view of the good life: does it present a plausible account?

32. Explain the Stoic view of the good life: does it present a plausible account?

33. Explain Aquinas' view that morality is formulated according to natural law, including some of the details thus formulated.

34. Explain the moral stance that agreement provides the source of morals, and some consequences of that stance (as pointed out by Hobbes). Argue whether or not you believe that morality has such a source.

35. Hobbes argues that in order for morality to occur, a civil power must be invested with the authority of determining the morals of the community. Explaining Hobbes' view, argue the merits of his conclusion.

36. Explain the different formulations of the Categorical Imperative, defended by Kant. Does 'universalizability' provide a good criterion for moral rules? Argue for your stance on this issue.

37. Kant argues that the consequences of an action do not establish the moral status of that action. Upon examining his argument for this view and the alternative that he proposes, defend your own stance of the source of morality.

38. Explain Mill's moral stance that consequences provide the criteria of moral behavior, and the controversy which such a view answers. Argue whether or not you believe that morality has such a justification. Is Utilitarianism the best answer for how morality is created?

39. Explain and justify the different formulations of the greatest happiness principle, defended by Mill. Do they provide a good standard for moral rules? Argue for your stance on this issue.

40. What is virtue according to Aristotle and what reasons could be given for saying that virtue ethics is superior to rule based ethics?

41. In the Republic by Plato in the famous story of Gyges, Glaucon argues that the only motive for acting justly is the fear of punishment. What arguments can be made against Glaucon?

CRITICAL THINKING

1. In Mill's book *On Liberty*, what are the only justifiable reasons for restricting a person's action? Why?
2. What was Francis Bacon's conception of the scientific method and how does it differ from the methods of contemporary science?
3. What are the differences in methods of reasoning in Socrates, Sextus Empiricus, Hegel, Euclid, and the empirical sciences?
4. State and illustrate the Socratic method of questioning, explaining why it is of such importance to Socrates.
5. In the *Meditations*, Descartes uses a systematic doubting process to expose beliefs which are subject to doubt. Explain systematic doubt as used by Descartes.
6. Philosophers such as Ayer claim that moral language is merely expressive. What is their point? How does this differ from traditional accounts of moral language?
7. Is logic equivalent to reason? Is logic equivalent to thinking?
8. How does scientific reasoning differ from reasoning in the humanities?
9. What is the difference between structuralism and post structuralism and how does the distinction impact our understanding of reasoning?
10. What is the difference between descriptive and performative utterances for Austin and what are the implications for philosophy?
11. What is the significance of Saussure's principle of the arbitrary nature of the sign.
12. How does Barthes' claim of the death of the author affects how we understand the nature of reasoning?

RELIGIOUS STUDIES

1. Contrast conceptions of God in Christianity, Islam, and Judaism.
2. What are the differences between the status and interpretation of scriptural writings in the traditions of Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, and Judaism?

3. Discuss the "mystery religions" in the ancient world, and what influence they had on the interpretation of Jesus that Paul formulated in his letters.
4. Explain the place of the Koran in Islam.
5. What is involved in a historical-critical analysis of scripture, especially as it relates to the Jewish and Christian Bibles?
6. Explain the central role of the covenant in Judaism.
7. What are some of the issues and who are some of the persons associated with the grace / free will dispute as it developed in the history of Christianity.
8. Compare and contrast Agape with Eros and Philia.
9. How would you go about giving the central characteristics of any religion? What makes something a "religion?"
10. Compare and contrast the approaches of Strauss, Schweitzer, and Bultmann to the Gospels and the life of Jesus.
11. What is, in your judgment, the proper relationship between philosophy and theology in establishing the boundaries of "faith" and reason?
12. Islam claims to be more purely monotheistic than either Judaism or Christianity. On what grounds does it make this claim?
13. What impact did the Enlightenment and its continuing influence have on religion and the study of religion in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries?
14. Explain the place of ritual in religion as ritualizing relates to human rites of passage and to annual liturgical calendars.
15. Discuss Nietzsche's critique of Christianity. Compare his figures or Dionysus or Zarathustra with the figure of Christ.
16. Why are myths so typically important to religions? What sets these stories apart from other types of stories? Compare and contrast the tragic and the Biblical (Adamic myths) or the cosmic (cyclical) renewal and gnostic myths.
17. Explain the role and impact of Paul in early Christianity.
18. What are Augustine's ideas concerning church and state, and how do these ideas effect such institutions in the present age?

19. What are the differences between a scriptural and an oral tradition?
20. Can one believe in God without believing in metaphysics? Why or why not?
21. Explain Luther's doctrine of "sola fides." What led him to this doctrine, and how did this impact his attitude toward the Catholic Church?
22. Explain Paul Tillich's notion of the ground of being, and how Christ functions as a symbol for the ground of being.
23. Citing the works of contemporary feminist theologians such as Mary Daly, Rosemary Rudford, and Elizabeth Schussler Fiorenza, illustrate recent attempts to describe God in feminine terms.
24. Define "gnosticism," and discuss how it challenged the interpretation of Jesus in the early Christian movement. What position did orthodox Christianity take in response to the gnostic challenge?
25. Discuss the concept of "Messiah" in Judaism, and why the Christian claim of Jesus as Messiah was a "stumbling block to the Jews."
26. What was the Arian controversy about, and how was it conceptually resolved in the creed formulated at Nicea?
27. In world religions, are there any contexts in which one can be deeply religious and an atheist at the same time? Explain.
28. In *Forgotten Truth*, Huston Smith writes about "the primordial tradition" as the point on which all religions agree. Discuss this tradition and evaluate Smith's claims about it from your own point of view.
29. Discuss the notion of North American Pan-Indianism, particularly as a response to the interaction of indigenous cultures and the dominant culture. Be sure to note at least two major examples of Pan-Indianism in the last century. Describe two of these movements in some detail. In your estimation, who would more likely to be more open to these movements, the Lakota or the Zuni? Explain why.
30. In *God is Red*, Vine Deloria is critical of much of the literature published in recent years on Native Americans. Succinctly summarize his objections to at least three different books. On the basis of this summary, state in general terms Deloria's problem with this literature. Tell why you agree or disagree with Deloria's criticism of this literature. Finally, discuss whether you think his criticism is helpful or harmful to the Native American cause.
31. Discuss whether you think that Native American artifacts and remains should be preserved in the Smithsonian and other museums as a witness to future Americans of the life of the indigenous peoples of this continent, or whether all such items should be returned to Native Americans to be disposed of in the traditional manner.
32. Describe in detail Vine Deloria's comparison in *God is Red* between the reaction of the dominant culture

to the Civil Rights movement of the sixties and the Native American political movement of the seventies. He offers an imaginative scenario that highlights these differences. Please recount at least four incidents in this scenario. Explain why you think this scenario is effective or offensive.

33. Visions play an important role in many religious traditions. Visions may arise spontaneously in the visionary, or may be produced by various techniques, such as fasting, self-mutilation, sleep-deprivation, or the ingestion of hallucinogenic substances. Discuss the place of visions in at least two distinct religious traditions, such as the Zuni and the Lakota or Buddhism and Christianity. Are visions genuine encounters with a spiritual dimension of existence or merely hallucinations? Is there a qualitative difference between a vision that comes spontaneously or one that is induced by one of the techniques described above? Are visions generated by psychedelic substances less genuine as spiritual experiences than other kinds of visions?

34. Using examples drawn from at least two traditions, explain the significance of the symbolism of the circle, the center, and the sacred directions in indigenous cultures.

35. Is there a core mystical experience common to all religions or does the character of mysticism vary from tradition to tradition?

36. What is the relation of the apophatic and the cataphatic ways in mysticism? Which do you think is the ultimate approach? Be sure to refer to the writings of various mystical writers as you answer this question.

37. A classic Hindu saying is, "The Real is one, though the sages name it differently." Do you agree with this statement? Why or why not? Please use specific illustrations from at least two religious traditions to bolster your argument.

38. Describe in detail the similarities and differences between the four major varieties of Hindu yoga.

39. Jesus was a Jew. In recent decades, Jewish and Christian scholars have been attempting to recover Jesus as a Jew. Recount at least four recent scholarly attempts at portraying the Jewishness of Jesus.

40. Nondualism is a central notion in many religions. Explain this concept, giving examples from a number of religious traditions. Choose a specific theme of religions and show how nondualistic and dualistic religions differ on this point.

41. Discuss John Hick's attempt to solve the problem of religious pluralism. Discuss both the theological and the philosophical elements of his approach.

42. Is there only one true religion? Are all religions one? Are any religions true? Does it make sense to use the word true with respect to religions?

43. Discuss the significance of sacrifice in religion. Describe at least two different kinds of sacrifice from two religious traditions. Is sacrifice essential to religion?

44. Offer a definition of religion and defend it against two other standard definitions of religion.

45. Discuss in detail the difference between the Indian conception of reincarnation and the traditional African conception of blood reincarnation.
46. Discuss in detail, using examples, the difference between the hunting religion of the Wind River Shoshoni and the agricultural religion of the Zuni. Taking a more general perspective, indicate what these two different indigenous cultures share in common as expressions of indigenous North American religion.
47. Explain the Hindu concept of deity.
48. How is Islam related to Judaism?
49. Differentiate the Sunnis, Shiites, Sufis, and Wahhabis.
50. How does archaeological evidence substantiate or discredit the biblical record?
51. Wellhausen says that the Mosaic history is the starting point for the history of Judaism, not the history of Ancient Israel. Explain.
52. Describe the process and problems of Hellenism among the Jewish people at the time of Alexander the Great, Antiochus IV, and Jesus of Nazareth.
53. List the criteria for the third quest of the historical Jesus. (Make sure to explain the relationship between the synoptic Gospels and the development of separate sources in composing the answer).
54. Discuss Paul's theology.
55. Discuss what the church said about Jesus Christ at Nicea and Chalcedon.
56. For Barth the Word of God is the basis of the church's speaking. Explain.
57. Differentiate the Catholic, Lutheran, Reformed, and Anabaptist concept of the sacraments, emphasizing baptism and the Lord's Supper.
58. What were the main points of conflict for the Protestant reformers in their confrontations with Roman Catholicism and with each other?