

Theology Midterm Study Guide

Format

- Part 1: objective: 35 Questions (matching, multiple choice, true/false, fill-in, short answers, definitions); 70 points
- Part 2: paragraph essays: 3 Questions (1-2 paragraph answers, about ½ page each, from three sets below chose one from each set and answer it); 30 points
- 1 index card is allowed

Sample Essay Questions

- Set 1
 - Analyze and evaluate the life of a College Student in terms of Sartre's Existentialism (for example, or alternatively, any of the theories we covered in class).
 - Evaluate Capitalism, or "the Economy", or some major aspect of American culture today (ex2: immigration, government, pop culture), or your academic major from any two of the following three standpoints: Marxism, Christianity, Darwinism
- Set 2
 - What are the main theo-logical similarities and differences between Judaism, Christianity and Islam (i.e. with respect to "God") and those three in general with any of the other of the "12 Theories"?
 - Compare Confucianism, Christianity, and Darwinism on: a) What the universe is; b) What people are; c) What the problem is; d) What the solution is.
- Set 3
 - Re-evaluate the so-called "Dark Ages" from the common understanding of the term to one now based now on Jaki's chapter on the matter. How was Christianity involved in the creation of science?
 - How is the Book of Genesis misunderstood (at times) by science and religion? What are the consequences of this misunderstanding? How should Genesis be understood?

Confucianism: The Way of the Sages

- Kung Fu-Tzu (551 B.C.)
- Confucius = first teacher
- Deals with chaos
- Human society has learned and re-learned that everyone deals with chaos and major problems at some point
- Theory of the universe
 - A moral universe (right and wrong, ways to act and ways not to act)
 - Fate—have to deal with it
 - Can be moral in a bad situation, can be moral in a good situation
 - Two great forces
 - Decree of Heaven: where we act virtuously
 - Destiny/ fate: where we accept
 - Tao: the way of the stages

- Sages is someone like Abe Lincoln—great figures from the past, you'll never meet him but it's how you should act
- Theory of human nature
 - Humans have access to the Ultimate Reality of the Heavens
 - Capacity to cultivate virtue and live in harmony with the Decree of Heaven
 - We can all become Sages, although this is very rare
- The problem and its diagnosis
 - Social discord, chaos, anarchy (ending in “human soup”). 5 main reasons for this:
 - Attachment to profit
 - Lack of filial piety (when children don't respect their parents)
 - Word/ action connection not trusted
 - Ignorance of the way of the sages
 - Lack of benevolence
 - People are selfish (Jupiter, cows, and trees don't have problems)
 - Some groups say the problem is that everyone thinks there is a problem
- The prescription (cure)
 - Correct the 5 ways things go wrong:
 - Do for nothing—do right because it is right
 - Filial piety-- be a good family member; respect parents
 - Rectification of names (and keeping your word)
 - Education (and “study”) and observe the rites and traditions
 - Excellence in benevolence—be human-hearted

Upanishadic Hinduism: The Oldest Formalized Religion on the World?

- Upanishads= texts from northern India @ 7th/ 8th c. B.C.
- They are “secret teachings” passed down through the generations and becoming in that way a religion
- Universe: looks like it's all different kinds of things, but there is really one sense of Being
- Brahman
 - The single unifying principle
 - The ground of all things
 - That which all comes, and to which all returns
 - The underlying real that is everywhere present anyway, despite if we can see it or not
 - It is in a sense beyond expression and direct knowledge
 - Energy is everywhere
 - It is in a sense beyond expression and direct knowledge
 - Main concept of Hinduism
 - Unifying center of everything; reality underneath all appearance
- Atman (Atman-Brahman)
 - The Self of Brahman; the Self behind selves; the knower behind knowing; the perceiver behind perception
 - Atman is Brahman (and Brahman is Atman)

- o The mind of Brahman
- Theory of human nature
 - o All life and all living things interconnected
 - o Life is a series of births, deaths, re-births
 - o There is a kind of eternal circle; eternal returns (cf. Jaki later)
- Problems: ignorance and suffering
 - o We think we're one thing but really not
 - o Don't understand part of one thing
- Prescription
 - o Acquire "special knowledge" (via meditation, various paths to God(s))
 - o Let go of attachments
 - o Let go of desire (desire is the cause of suffering)
 - o Meditation and yoga practices
 - o Live your life and be good to other people
- Karma: the moral law of the Universe (we are not so free as we might think)
- Reincarnation: a series of births and rebirths
- Moksha: final release from the cycle
- Paths to God
 - o 'Yoga's'
 - o Through your work, love, psychophysical exercises
 - o Ultimately: let go of attachments and illusions; let go of desire (the cause of suffering)

Plato: The Rule of Reason

- Metaphysical background
 - o Theory of forms
 - o Theory of the real
 - o The "good" is the ultimate form
- Theory of human nature
 - o Dualist view (body-mind/ soul)
 - o Parts of the soul: appetite, spirit, reason
 - o To know the good . . . then we would obviously do it; theory of knowledge (the allegory of the cave)
 - o Moral aspect: a good society, a just society is one according to forms of justice, courage, etc
 - o The know the Good is to become Good
- Diagnosis of the problem: disharmony in the soul and in society (where justice is a harmony)
 - o 3 parts of the soul; three types of people
 - o Justice: right balance, well-ordered soul or society (from the republic)
 - o Reason should rule
 - o 5 kinds of imperfect society
 - Aristocracy (rule of the best)
 - Timarchy (rule of honor/ fame)