Exam # 1 begins with the general introduction to the course, includes the existence of God, religious faith and reason, and as much as we cover in class on miracles.

Be able to identify and locate the following names and concepts. You should be able to identify and connect authors of the readings with the positions they defend.

- the subdisciplines of philosophy → epistemology, metaphysics, ethics, logic, historical studies, philosophy of studies (be able to say something about each)
- religion & theology & philosophy of religion → Emile Durkheim’s df. of religion
- Freud's explanation of religion
- Marx → Feuerbach & alienation caused by religion, the alienation of work and of religion
- Roger Trigg → religious realism, the context & content of religion, scientific naturalism
- Ninian Smart's six dimensions of religion
- a priori arguments & a posteriori arguments → ontological & cosmological arguments
- functions of arguments for God’s existence → arguments which propose to establish God’s existence; arguments which propose to show the rationality of belief in God’s existence
- the Middle Ages → Anselm of Canterbury, Thomas Aquinas
- a temporal series of causes vs a dependent series of causes
- *Summa Contra Gentiles* & *Summa Theologiae* → Aquinas’s version of the design argument
- William Paley's version of the design argument
- Darwin's *Origin of Species* (1859) & the Darwinian theory of evolution
- Stafford Betty & Bruce Cordell's version of the design argument
- Vesto Slipher → Abbé Georges Henri Lemaître
- Edwin Hubble's 1929 discovery → red shift & the Doppler effect
- the age of the universe & the age of life → The Anthropic Principle (Robert Dicke)
- the Scientific Revolution → the two book metaphor
- Richard Taylor’s contingency and necessity argument for God’s existence
- The Principle of Sufficient Reason
- Alvin Plantiga → Reformed epistemology, properly basic
- the three principal positions on the faith-reason relationship → fideism, strong rationalism, & critical rationalism
- "What has Athens to do with Jerusalem?" → Tertullian
- August Comte & the Law of Three Stages → Blaise Pascal & the wager
- Sören Kierkegaard → objective & subjective knowing, risk & dread
- William Clifford → Ibn Rushd (Averroes)
- Blaise Pascal & the wager → William James & the right to believe
- James’s 3 areas in which the will is justified in going beyond compelling logic & evidence → ethics, personal
relations, & religious belief-systems

James’s 3 conditions which must be met to justify the will going beyond compelling logic & evidence (a “genuine option”) ➔ forced, lively, & momentous

C.S. Lewis ➔ the rescuers stories & religious faith as trust

the Enlightenment David Hume on miracles

the foundationalist view of miracles

Richard Dawkins on miracles

the apologetic use of miracles

Spivey & Smith ➔ df. of miracles, 3 types of N.T. miracles, relationship between miracles & faith, eschatology & the Kingdom of God

Nichols ➔ df. of miracles, closed & open conceptions of nature

Pannenberg’s field model of the God-universe relationship

Sample essay questions.

1. What is the difference between religion, theology, and the philosophy of religion?

2. Emile Durkheim and Sigmund Freud’s accounts of religion have been labeled “reductionist.” What does this mean? Present a statement of each of their reductionist explanations of religion. Then offer a critique of each account.

3. Marx connects religion to both psychic projection and to the alienation of labor. Explain. Then offer a critical evaluation of his positions.

4. What is Roger Trigg’s criticism of social scientific (and tacitly of psychological) accounts of religion? In your discussion, include his distinction between content and context, and his discussion of religious realism (including what he means by this phrase).

5. Compare and contrast Anselm’s argument and Aquinas’s second argument (the first one we considered) for the existence of God on the following points. (1) What are their starting points? (2) How do they move from their starting points to God? (3) What are the strengths and weaknesses of their positions?

6. Present Aquinas’s or Paley’s version (one only) of the design argument. Why does Darwin’s theory appear to undermine the argument? How might the argument be salvaged in the faced of Darwin’s theory? Do you think one or some of these salvaging strategies are successful? Defend your answer.

7. Compare Paley’s design argument for God with Betty and Cordell’s design argument. Which of the arguments do you think is stronger and why? What value do Emerton and Polkinghorne propose that the anthropic principle and design argument generally have with respect to the question of God’s existence?

8. What is the datum for Richard Taylor’s argument for God from contingency? How does this starting point differ from Aquinas’s second argument and Betty and Cordell’s first argument? What fundamental principle does Taylor use in constructing his argument? Do you think this principle is justified?

9. What does Plantiga mean when he states that the existence of God is “properly basic”? How does he explain those who do not believe in God? Critically evaluate his position.

10. What is Kierkegaard’s position on the role of reason in religious faith? Kierkegaard is often classified as a Fideist. What does this mean and do you think that this classification is appropriate? If Kierkegaard is a Fideist, would you classify him as a strong or weak Fideist? Offer a brief critical evaluation of Kierkegaard’s position.
11. Briefly present William Clifford’s argument against religious faith and Pascal’s defense of religious faith using the wager. Then critically assess each position.

12. William James argues that one sometimes has the “right to believe” (is rationally justified in believing), even though the beliefs may go beyond the bounds of compelling evidence and logic. In what areas and under what conditions does James assert that the acceptance of such beliefs is justified? Why are they justified?

13. How does C.S. Lewis respond to the claim that religious faith is obstinate in clinging to beliefs even in the face of contrary evidence whereas science is not? What justification does Lewis offer for the special character of religious faith? What is Lewis’s position on the nature of religious faith?

14. For most of us, the source of our knowledge of miracles is the testimony of others. What is Hume's criticism of such testimony? Critically evaluate his criticisms of testimony about miracles.

15. Compare the Humean account of miracles with the Spivy-Smith account of miracles in the New Testament. Include the following in your discussion: the definition of miracles, the existence of miracles, the foundational (or apologetic) role of miracles for religious faith, and the symbolic role of miracles. How could one decide between these two accounts?

16. How does Terence Nichols propose reconciling miracles, including modern miracles, with the scientific perspective on nature? What connection does he draw between miracles and a closed and open conception of nature? Finally, how does he propose explaining miracles which seem to be completely beyond natural processes – e.g., Jesus’ walking on water and his resurrection?