God & Persons (PHL 320 N)
Study Guide for Exam # 2
Summer 2007

Exam # 2 begins with miracles, includes the problem of evil (suffering), and ends with, but includes, religious experience.
The exam is on Friday, July 20

Be able to identify and locate the following names and concepts

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
Robert Russell’s derterminer of indeterminacies & Pannenberg’s field model of the God-universe relationship
theodicy moral & natural evil
5 classic theodicies → (1) evil is an illusion; (2) God is limited; (3) karma theodicies; (4) harmony theodices; (5) free-will theodicies.

Stoicism Manichaeanism
Buddhism → thirst, karma, nirvana
St. Augustine (354-430) → free-will theodicy, privatio boni, the 2 falls
John Hick’s soul-making theodicy Iranaeus (c.125-c.202)
epistemic distance
C.S. Lewis & his theodicy as presented in Shadowlands
Barry Whitney’s aesthetic anthropodicy & theodicy
process philosophy Alfred North Whitehead & Teilhard de Chardin
John Haught’s theodicy
three attributes of God which Haught emphasizes ↔ humility, self-giving, suffering & promising love

Haught’s comparison of the classical conception of God with the process conception:
classical ↔ power, glory, distant, impassible, direct control
process ↔ humble, self-limiting, present, passible, persuasion

Richard Swinburne’s taxonomy of religious experiences → public-normal, public-unusual, private-normal, private-unusual
kinds of religious experience
knowledge by acquaintance vs knowledge by inference
Teresa of Avila ➔ two arguments for the authenticity of her religious experiences

William James ➔ traits of mysticism

Richard Swinburne’s use of the principles of credulity & testimony to defend the veridicality of religious experiences

the parity thesis & modest parity thesis (Geivett)

Sample essay questions

1. 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 analysis of testimony about miracles.

2. 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?

3. 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?

4. How does Augustine's theodicy fit into the typology of five theodicies? What is Augustine's theodicy? Make sure you discuss his position on both moral evil and natural evil. Offer your critical evaluation of his theodicy. (You may use some of Hick's criticisms.)

5. Discuss and explain John Hick's theodicy by addressing the following questions. What role does evolution play in his theory? What role does human freedom play in his theory? How does he address the problems of the intensity and apparent maldistribution of evil in the world? What role does eschatology play in his theory?

6. Compare the theodicy of Augustine with Hick’s on the following points: (1) the role of human freedom, (2) the role of the two falls, and (3) the role of eschatology.

7. What is Barry Whitney’s aesthetic theodicy? What does he mean when he says that it is really an anthropodicy rather than a theodicy? How does he proposes that his theory can be combined with a theodicy, and what are the main points of his combined theodicy? Offer some brief critical comments on Whitney’s theodicy.

8. Why does Darwin’s theory of evolution seem to exacerbate the problem of evil? How does Haught propose rethinking the conception of God and of the God-universe relationship in order to “justify” the evil which exists in the evolutionary process and in the present universe?

9. What, according to William James, are the principal traits of mysticism? How does Teresa of Avila’s account of her experiences match up with James’ traits? What is James's position on the "authority," that is, the "warrant for the truth" of mystical experiences? Critically evaluate James's position on the latter question.
10. What is the principle of credulity and the principle of testimony and how does Richard Swinburne (discussed by Geivett) uses these to defend the veridicality (genuineness) of religious experiences? What are some objections to this defense of religious experience (mention at least two). What is your position on the veridicality of religious experiences? Briefly defend your view.

11. How does Geivett propose reworking the principles of credulity and testimony and the parity thesis in order to defend the authenticity of religious experience? Do you agree with his revised argument for the authenticity of religious experience? Defend your position.