Exam # 3 begins with soul-body & destiny (including the discussion of these issues in ancient Greek thought, the Hebrew Bible and the New Testament, and early Christianity), science and religion, religious diversity & truth, and concludes with the section on the meaning of life.
Date of the exam:   Thursday, July 26

Be able to identify and locate the following names and concepts

Homer & Plato on soul, body & destiny
Sheol
resurrection & immortality in the Hebrew Bible
Oscar Cullmann on the comparison of the death of Socrates & the death of Jesus
Oscar Cullmann on immortality vs resurrection   meaning, historical origins, nature of the human person, spatial vs temporal, natural vs supernatural
3 possible interpretations of the late Hebrew Bible & the New Testament notion of resurrection   immediate resurrection, intermediate-state resurrection, extinction-recreation resurrection
4 positions on the mind/soul-body problem   substance dualism (Plato, Augustine, Descartes), matter-form dualism (Aquinas, neo-Thomists), reductive materialism (Crick), & nonreductive physicalism (Barbour, Murphy)
Francisco Ayala’s list of anatomical & behavioral differences between humans and their closest relatives
Ayala’s comparison of biological and cultural evolution (endosomatic & exosomatic; slow & fast; directionless & directed)
Francisco Ayala on the relationship between biology & ethics
Nancey Murphy’s nonreductive physicalism
Hick’s three stories used to argue for the possibility of retaining personal identity as a resurrected person
“psycho-physical unity” (Hick)
resurrection of a transformed person (Hick)   Paul’s   soma pneumatikon
Maurice Lamm’s top-down argument for resurrection
Gould’s NOMA
Pius XII & John Paul II on evolution & soul
Herbert Spencer & Social Darwinism
the naturalistic fallacy (David Hume & G.E. Moore)
sociobiology   Social Darwinism   laissez-faire economics
the P (Priestly) and J (Yahwist) creation stories in Genesis
Haught   hierarchy of explanations; God’s humility, self-giving, & suffering love; beauty; original sin
John Scopes & the Scopes trial (1925)  
William Jennings Bryan

two senses of “theory” in referring to Darwin’s theory of evolution

Creationism & Scientific Creationism (or Creation Science)

The three basic positions on the issue of many religions and truth → exclusivism, inclusivism, & pluralism

Rahner’s “anonymous Christians” & “anonymous Christianity”

self-centredness & Reality-centredness (Hick)

Hick’s distinction between Real an sich & Real as humanly experienced

three positions on the meaning of human life → (1) nihilistic, (2) secular or humanistic, & (3) metaphysical or religious

Friedrich Nietzsche  Albert Camus  the myth of Sisyphus

Richard Hare  Pierre Teilhard de Chardin  noosphere

Omega point

Teilhard de Chardin’s 3 attitudes toward life → pessimistic, hedonistic, & enthusiastic

Teilhard de Chardin’s 3 forms of happiness → tranquility, pleasure, and growth

Sample essay questions

1. What is the distinction between immortality and resurrection? What is the historical source of each of these concepts? What idea of human nature is each of these connected to? Do you think one can be a Christian (or Islamic, or Jewish) and hold a monistic (unitary, or in Hick's language, "psycho-physical unity") view of the nature of the human person?

2. Nancey Murphy favors a multi-level approach to the soul-body problem? Explain her position? How does she characterized the relationship between levels of reality in which mental, or ethical, or religious experiences are involved? What does she mean by emergent properties? Why does she propose that the notion of a “disembodied soul” is not central to Christianity?

3. What is the problem of resurrection, immortality and personal identity? Is this problem more acute for immortality or resurrection? Explain. How does John Hick propose to show that the retention of personal identity in resurrection is intelligible?


5. What reasons does Richard Dawkins give for rejecting NOMA? What are some of Dawkin’s criticisms of Pius XII’s and John Paul II’s position on evolution and the soul? Do you think these criticisms are justified? Defend your answer.

6. Evolution seems to threaten human dignity or specialness. How do Francisco Ayala and John Haught address this issue? Do you think their responses are adequate? Defend your position.
7. Evolution appears to conflict with the Genesis stories of origins. How might this conflict be resolved? In your answer, discuss the current, mainstream biblical hermeneutics of Genesis.

8. Three claims made by contemporary religious critics of evolution are: (1) that evolution eliminates or at least depreciates God’s role in creation; (2) that the evolutionary process seems to be directionless and meaningless and this conflicts with the idea of a providential God; and (3) that evolution implies an ethic of competition, struggle, and aggression and these values are contrary to Christian values. Choose any two of these three supposed conflicts between science and Christianity and give Haught’s response to them. Do you think that Haught’s position on the two issues you choose is adequate? Defend your position.

9. Rahner argues that there are two reasons why exclusivism is not acceptable for the Christian—a theological and a moral reason. Explain these two reasons. What doctrine of Christianity makes pluralism unacceptable to Rahner? Explain. What is Rahner’s version of inclusivism?

10. What is John Hick’s version of religious pluralism? What commonality does he propose exists among all religions in the moral realm and with respect to the notion of ultimate Reality? What is his justification for religious pluralism? Finally, what is his criterion for grading religions? Offer your own critical evaluation of Hick’s pluralism and his grading criterion.

11. When Nietzsche’s madman cries out, “Whither is God?... I will tell you, ‘We have killed him . . . ,'” what does Nietzsche mean? How can one kill God? What, according to Nietzsche, are the consequences of our killing God? Do you agree with his analysis? Discuss.

12. What is Camus’ answer to the meaning of life? How does he use the myth of Sisyphus to dramatize his answer? Do you find his answer acceptable? Discuss.

13. What are Teilhard’s three forms of happiness and what argument(s) does he offer for the type that he defends? What correspondence does he find between the type of happiness which he defends and Christianity? How does Teilhard de Chardin’s position on the meaning of life differ from Nietzsche and Camus?