

Final Exam Study Guide

Phil 308, Philosophy of God, Dr. T. Hoffmann

Time & Place: Thursday, December 13, 1:30–3:30pm, McMahon 318 (our regular classroom)

This exam is comprehensive – however, considerably more weight will be given to the topics covered after the Midterm exam than to those covered before the Midterm exam.

You should know the gist of the following texts (see Phil 308 web-site)

- Texts # 1–15, # 17–18, # 20–21, #23 on the website (= all texts except # 16, # 19, & # 22)
- Handouts # 2–3, # 4 (only the first page, the “first argument”), # 5

The questions of the study guides are designed to help you to prepare the exam, but they are not the only questions that might be asked in the final exam.

In addition to the topics in study guides #1–2, there are the following topics or questions:

1. DIVINE ATTRIBUTES

Aquinas on Divine Knowledge

- How does Aquinas argue that God has knowledge of “other things than himself” (i.e., of creatures)? What is the difference between (1) knowing a thing “in itself” and (2) knowing a thing “in another” (i.e. by means of something different than the thing known)? Does God know a creature (1) “in itself” or (2) “in another”? Is the principle by which God knows a creature (1) the creature or (2) his own divine essence? (*ST* Ia.14.5, T14*)
- Compare Aquinas’s position on divine knowledge of things other than himself with Aristotle’s view in *Metaphysics* 12.9 (T3)
- In which way does God’s knowledge resemble that of a craftsman (“artificer”)? (*ST* Ia.14.8, T14)
- Is God’s knowledge the sufficient cause or a necessary cause of the existence of things? What role does the divine will play in God’s causing (i.e. creating) things? (*ST* Ia.14.8, T14)

Aquinas on Divine Omnipotence

- According to Aquinas, how do the concepts of what is “possible according to someone’s power” and what is “possible absolutely” differ? (*ST* Ia.25.3, T15)
- According to Aquinas, what are the things God cannot do? Why is God unable to do them? (*ST* Ia.25.3, T15)

2. GOD AND HUMAN FREEDOM

Leibniz on Theodicy

- What does the word “theodicy” mean?
- In what terms does Leibniz describe the difficulty of theodicy? (T17, p. 1)

* T14 = Text Handout #14, posted on http://faculty.cua.edu/hoffmann/courses/308_1078/308.html

- How does Leibniz solve the problem of reconciling divine power, knowledge and goodness with the existence of evil? (T17, p. 1–2)
- Rather than creating a world where there is evil, would it have been better if God had either not created any world at all or if he had created one without evil? (T17, p. 1–2)
- What is true liberty? (T17, p. 3)
- Is freedom compatible with necessity? Is a will praiseworthy to which it is natural to choose well? (T17, p. 4)
- According to Leibniz, why is God free, even though he can only choose what is best? (T17, 3–4)

Boethius on Divine Foreknowledge and Human Freedom

- Why must we admit that human beings have freedom of will? In other words, why would “the structure of human affairs collapse” if there is no free will? (T18, p. 2–3)
- How does Boethius (or “Lady Philosophy”) define “eternity”? (T18, p. 5) How does eternity differ from time (the “continual”)? (T18, p. 5–6)
- How does the notion of “the eternal present” help to solve the dilemma between God’s foreknowledge and human freedom? (T18, p. 7)
- ~~Why is it that free human decisions are necessary from the point of view of divine knowledge, but free when viewed by themselves (T18, p. 7–8)~~

3. HUMAN NEEDS AND GOD

Feuerbach

- What does Feuerbach mean by saying that God as a morally perfect being is nothing else than the “realized idea” of morality (*EC [Essence of Christianity]* ch. 3, T20, p. 1)
- What does Feuerbach mean by saying that the fundamental dogmas of Christianity are “realized wishes of the heart”? (*EC* ch. 15, T20, p. 3–4)
- How does Feuerbach “define” religion? (*EC* 1st ¶ of ch. 20, T20, p. 4–5)

Giussani

- Explain Giussani’s key idea that “the world in its impact with the human being functions as a sign, ‘demonstrates’ *something else*, demonstrates ‘God.’” (T21, p. 115–16)

Benedict XVI

- Explain the key idea that our “great hope” surpasses all our “greater and smaller hopes” and that our great hope can only consist in God. (*Spe salvi* 30–31, T23)

4. GOD AND REASON

- According to Benedict XVI in his *Regensburg Address*, what is at risk when God is separated from reason? (T1, ¶ 3–7)
- What is at risk when reason is separated from an openness to God? (T1, ¶ 13–16)
- What does Benedict XVI mean by the “modern self-limitation of reason”? (T1, ¶ 11)
- Why does he advocate to “broaden our concept of reason and its application” (T1, ¶ 15–16)