

## Guide for Comprehensive Examination in the History of Philosophy

The Department of Philosophy has set up two levels of examinations, the Comprehensive Examination in the History of Philosophy for the degree of Masters of Arts and the Preliminary Examinations for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. The Comprehensive Examination must be passed before the student may submit or defend a thesis. The Preliminary Examinations must be passed before the student can submit a prospectus to the dissertation committee.

The purposes of these two levels of examinations are different. The Preliminary Examinations test the breadth of the candidate's command of the major areas of philosophy as a discipline and mastery of the thought of a major thinker. The Comprehensive Examination guarantees that the Masters candidate has assimilated certain basic positions and touchstone arguments in the history of western philosophy up to the end of the nineteenth century. Some selections from the Asian traditions are also included.

A general knowledge of the history of philosophy is necessary before pursuing advanced graduate work. The list of readings for the Comprehensive Examination does not require command each philosopher's thought. This would be expected at the doctoral level. This list includes those elementary works that are usually encountered in by those pursuing the undergraduate major in philosophy. Thus, *Kant's Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals* is included rather than *The Critique of Practical Reason*, which appears in the reading list for the Preliminary Examination in Value Fields. In some cases, small selections from larger works are included. The Comprehensive Examination is a test in basic philosophical literacy necessary for further work. For example, the examinee may be asked to contrast Plato's middle theory of Forms with Aristotle's doctrine of *ousia*, but not to discuss the problems of the theory of Forms in the later dialogues or the problem of the genesis of Aristotle's concept of *ousia*. On the other hand, the examinee's answers must demonstrate direct knowledge of the primary texts, not secondhand accounts derived from histories of philosophy, however useful these works may be in helping the candidate prepare.

The examination is divided into four parts: Ancient Philosophy, Medieval Philosophy, Modern Philosophy and Nineteenth Century Philosophy. The examinee is required to answer one question from each section. The number of questions to choose from in each section may vary.

It is recommended that first year student in the graduate program take courses that would facilitate studying for this examination. For example, taking courses surveying the thought of Plato, Aristotle, and the Medievals or focusing upon such major works as *Kant's Critique of Pure Reason* would be helpful. If the student has not previously had a course in the history of ancient philosophy, modern philosophy or the nineteenth century, it might be useful to sit in on Philosophy 304, 305, or 306 when they are offered.

At the beginning of the fall semester, the student should also get a list of the courses that will be offered in the spring and plan accordingly. Aside from whatever classes the student may take, a regular course of private study of these texts throughout the first year is expected. The candidate then should plan to review notes and material over the summer and be prepared to take the Comprehensive Examination at the beginning of the second fall semester.

## Comprehensive Examination in the History of Philosophy (updated 2003)

### I. Ancient Philosophy

Philip Wheelwright, *Presocratics*: Milesians, Heraclitus, Eleatics, Pythagoreans, Atomists, Sophists.

Plato, *Apology, Crito, Meno, Phaedo, Symposium, Republic*

Aristotle, *Categories, Physics (I-II), Metaphysics (I, VII-IX, XII), Nicomachean Ethics*

The Upanishads: *Mandukya (I, 55-56); Chandogya (I, 64-77); Brhadaranyaka (I, 77-89)*  
(I = Sources in Indian Philosophy, ed. Radhakrishnan and Moore)

*Dharmapada (I, 292-322)*

Confucius, *Analects (C, 18-48)* (C = Sources in Chinese Philosophy, ed. Chan)

Mencius, *Mencius (C, 51-83)*

Lao Tzu, *Tao Te Ching (C, 139-76)*

### II. Medieval Philosophy

*The Bhagavad Gita* (Chapters 1-6; I, 102-26)

*Milindapahna (I, 281-84)*

Elmer O'Brien, *The Essential Plotinus, (Enneads I.6, III.8, V.9, VI.9)*

St. Augustine, *Confessions (X-XI), On Free Choice of the Will*

St. Anselm, *Proslogion and Reply to Gaunilo*

St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* Part I, Question 2 (The Existence of God), Question 83 (Free Choice)

### III. Modern Philosophy

Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan* (Part I: 1-5, 11, 13-15; Part II: 17-21, 29-31)

Rene Descartes, *Discourse on Method, Meditations*

Baruch Spinoza, *Ethics* (Book I)

Leibniz, *Monadology*

John Locke, *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (Book I: 1-2; Book II:1-8, 21-23, 32-33; Book IV: 1-6, 9-12, 16-18); *The Second Treatise of Government*

George Berkeley, *Three Dialogues Between Hylas and Philonous*

David Hume, *Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, *Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals*

Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason* (A and B Prefaces through the Transcendental Analytic, Book I), *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals*

#### **IV. Nineteenth Century**

G.W.F. Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Spirit* (Preface, Sense-Certainty, Lordship and Bondage, Absolute Knowledge)

Karl Marx, *The Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts* (Wages of Labour, Estranged Labour, Private Property and Communism, The Meaning of Human Requirements, The Power of Money), *The Communist Manifesto*

John Stuart Mill, *Utilitarianism*, *On Liberty*

Soren Kierkegaard, *Fear and Trembling*

Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Genealogy of Morals*

C. S. Peirce, "The Fixation of Belief," "How to Make Our Ideas Clear," "What Pragmatism Is," "Issue of Pragmaticism"

William James, *Pragmatism*, "The Will to Believe"