Ph.D. Comprehensive Exam

Information and Reading List

Dept. of Philosophy
Marquette University
General Information about the Ph.D. Comprehensive Examination

The Purpose of the Examination: To ascertain whether and to what extent the student (1) has mastered the various areas of the history of philosophy and its problems and (2) has developed a scholarly and integrated stance on some of the main problems in philosophy.

General Structure of the Examination: The exam will consist of five parts, four of which are to be written and the remaining one oral.

a. Written: A three-hour examination on each part according to the following schedule:

   1. **Problems in Ancient and Medieval Philosophy**: five questions in each area (total of ten questions); four questions must be answered, including at least one from each problem area.

   2. **Problems in Modern and Contemporary Philosophy**: Three areas: Modern Philosophy; 19th and 20th Century Continental Philosophy; and 19th and 20th Century Anglo-American Philosophy. Four questions in Modern Philosophy; Three questions in 19th and 20th Century Continental Philosophy; Three questions in 19th and 20th Century Anglo-American Philosophy (total of ten questions). Four questions must be answered, including at least one from each area.

   3. **Systematic Problems: Metaphysics, Epistemology, Philosophy of Science, Philosophy of Language, and Logic**: five questions in metaphysics, four questions in epistemology, and three in philosophy of science/philosophy of language/logic (total of twelve questions). Four questions must be answered, including at least one from metaphysics and at least one from epistemology.

   4. **Systematic Problems: Ethics, Social and Political philosophy, Aesthetics**: Five questions in ethics, four in social and political philosophy, and three in aesthetics (total of twelve questions); four questions are to be answered, including at least two from ethics and one from either of the remaining areas.

b. Oral: A 50-75 minute examination before a three-person Examining Committee. This is part V of the Comprehensive Exam. The other four parts are written. It will be graded in the same manner as the
four written parts, that is, as a single independent component of the Comprehensive Exam.

At the time a candidate signs up for the Ph.D. comprehensive examination, the candidate must consult with the Director of the Graduate Program to receive approval by the Director for his or her choice of area(s) for the oral part [part V] of the exam. The committee for the oral examination will ordinarily be the committee which graded the written part which is within the area of specialization chosen by the candidate for the oral. For example, if a candidate chooses Ancient Philosophy as his or her area to be examined on the oral, then the Problems in Ancient and Medieval Committee [part I] will conduct the oral examination. The Graduate Director may appoint a separate committee for the oral if the Director believes none of the four committees in place for the written exam is appropriate to question the candidate for the oral given the candidate's approved area(s) of choice. Questions will be restricted to the chosen area(s). During the actual exam it will be the responsibility of the committee chair to determine the appropriateness of questions.

c. The Examining Committees for parts I and II will construct their respective part of the written examination from the Ph.D. Reading list in the history of philosophy. Note that the history of philosophy reading list is required, the systematic reading list is recommended.

d. Additional Regulations and Guidelines

The examinee must have completed 80% of his/her course work and must have fulfilled both language requirements before attempting the Comprehensive Examination. All Ph.D. students should take the Comprehensive Exam no later than the end of the semester following the completion of their course work and foreign languages.

The Comprehensive Examination will be offered twice a year, usually in September and March. Students who wish to take the exam must notify the Philosophy Department at least one month before the date of the initial part of the exam. Each committee for all five parts will consist of three persons.
The written parts of the examination must be completed within a twelve-day period. Parts I and II will be taken the first week. Parts III and IV will be taken the second week. The time, date, and room for parts I-IV will be posted at least 28 days before the date for part I. Ordinarily, there will be at least a five-day interval between the first two parts of the exam and parts three and four. The fifth (oral) part must be taken no later than 14 days following completion of part four. The results of the oral (part five) will be given to the examinee following its completion.

The examinee must pass all parts to pass the Comprehensive Examination. A mean grade of BC [2.50 on a 4.0 GPA scale] is the passing grade for each part. No more than one grade on each part may be below a BC.

If two parts or fewer are failed, those parts only are required to be retaken, and may be retaken only once. If three, four or five parts are failed, then the whole exam must be retaken and may be retaken only once. The candidate may retake the exam at the next scheduled time it is offered. However, the second attempt must occur within one calendar year after the first attempt has occurred. A second failure of a part or parts constitutes a second failure of the whole exam. If this is the case, the person ordinarily will not be allowed to continue in the program.

DGS’s unofficial note: All questions on Parts 1 and 2 should be answerable on the basis of the readings for those sections (although it certainly may be both possible and appropriate to bring in other readings with which you are familiar). Accordingly, these readings are required. The readings for Parts 3 and 4 are recommended readings. Basically, you should be familiar with key issues and philosophical strategies for dealing with these issues. You should be able to outline alternative arguments, show their merits and demerits, and to take and defend a philosophical position of your own. The reading list is meant to be an aid in preparing for this, but the readings are not required. You may well find the background you need elsewhere.
Ph.D. Comprehensive Exam Reading List

Part I: Ancient & Medieval

A. Required Selections in Ancient Philosophy


Aristotle (recommended edition: *The Complete Works of Aristotle*: The Revised Oxford Translation. Edited by Jonathan Barnes, Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, c1984): *Categories* 1-5; *Posterior Analytics* 1.1-10, 13; 2.1-2,19; *Physics* 1.1, 1.7-9, 2.1-3. 3, 3.6, 4.11, 5.1, 8.1-6, 10; *De Anima* 1.1, 2.1-7,11-12; 3.1-10; *Metaphysics* 1.1-3.1; 4.1-3, 5.7, 12; 6.1; 7.1-8.6, 9.8; 12.1, 6-10; *Nicomachean Ethics* 1-2.7; 3.1-5; 6-7.5; 8.1-3; 10.4-9; *Politics* 1.1-2.5; 7.1-3


B. Required Selections in Medieval Philosophy*
Anselm: *Proslogion* 1-4. (A recommended edition is *St. Anselm’s Proslogion With a Reply On Behalf of the Fool* by Gaunilo; trans. M. J. Charlesworth.)  
Al-Ghazali: Selections from *Deliverance from Error*, Hyman & Walsh pp. 267-283.  
William of Ockham: All the selections assembled in Hyman & Walsh, pp. 653-700.  
*“Hyman & Walsh” refers to Arthur Hyman & James J. Walsh, Philosophy in the Middle Ages. The Christian, Islamic, and Jewish Traditions, 2nd edition, Hackett.*
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**Part II: Modern and 19th & 20th Century Philosophy**

**A. Required Selections in Modern Philosophy**

Descartes: *Meditations* (recommended edition: trans. John Cottingham, either in *The Philosophical Writings of Descartes* or in *Meditations on First Philosophy with Selections from the Objections and Replies*. Also dependable is the translation by Donald A. Cress in Hackett).

Hobbes: *Leviathan* I and II.


Locke: *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (Hackett abridged edition by K. Winkler)

Berkeley: *Principles of Human Knowledge*, including the Introduction.

Hume: *Treatise of Human Nature*, Introduction and Book I.

Kant: (1) *Critique of Pure Reason*, (through the Transcendental Dialectic) (recommended edition: trans. Paul Guyer & Allen W. Wood; the translations by N. Kemp Smith and by W. Pluhar are also acceptable); (2) *Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals*, Preface, I - III. (Trans. Lewis White Beck)

Hegel: *Phenomenology*: Preface, Introduction, Sense-Certainty, Lordship and Bondage, The Unhappy Consciousness, and Absolute Knowledge. (A recommended translation with commentary (without the Preface) is: *Hegel’s Phenomenology of Spirit: Selections*, translated and annotated by Howard P. Kainz. A recommended translation with commentary of the preface is found in W. Kaufmann, *Hegel: Reinterpretation, Texts, and Commentary*. A recommended translation of the whole work is the one by J.B. Baillie,
The Phenomenology of Mind. An online version, in a translation by A.V. Miller, is also available.
Mill: Utilitarianism; On Liberty, chaps 1, 2, 4.

B. Required Selections in 19th and 20th Century Continental
Nietzsche: Genealogy of Morals (recommended: trans. W. Kaufmann & Hollingdale)
Kierkegaard: Fear and Trembling (all available translations are acceptable).
Husserl: Cartesian Meditations (trans. D. Cairns)
Heidegger: Being and Time, sections 1-4, 18, 25-27, 29, 31-34, 38, 40, 44, 50-53, 57, 60, 62. (In the translation either of Macquarrie or Stambaugh)

C. Required Selections in 19th and 20th Century Anglo-American
James: Pragmatism
Ayer: Language, Truth, and Logic (2nd ed.). (Introduction, Chapters 1 and 2)
Frege: “On Sense and Reference.” In: Translations From the Philosophical
Writings of Gottlob Frege, ed. by Peter Geach and Max Black, Oxford, Eng.: Blackwell, 1980
Russell: The Problems of Philosophy.
Quine: (1) “Two Dogmas of Empiricism.” In: From a Logical Point of View; (2) Word and Object, Chap. 2

Recommended Secondary Literature: Modern
Cambridge Companions (one for each philosopher on the list); Descartes, Hobbes, Leibniz, Spinoza, Locke, Hume, Kant, Hegel, Mill
F. C. Copleston, A History of Philosophy, vols. 4, 5, 6, 7(1)

Recommended Secondary Literature: 19th and 20th Century Continental
Cambridge Companions for Marx, Nietzsche, Husserl, Habermas, Heidegger, Sartre, Foucault, Kierkegaard.
F.C. Copleston, A History of Philosophy, Vol. 7 (2) (Kierkegaard, Nietzsche).
Vincent Descombes, Modern French Philosophy (Merleau-Ponty, Foucault, Derrida).

Recommended Secondary Literature: 19th and 20th Century Anglo-American
Cambridge Companions for Wittgenstein, William James
John Smith, The Spirit of American Philosophy (Peirce, James, Dewey)
John Passmore, A Hundred Years of Philosophy (Russell, Moore, Ayer, Austin, Wittgenstein)

Suggested Reading Lists for Ph.D. Comprehensive Examination, Parts III & IV
Part III: Systematic Problems: Metaphysics, Epistemology, and Philosophy of Science; Philosophy of Language, and Logic
(Please Note: All readings for Parts III and IV are suggested, not required.)
A. Metaphysics
Jaegwon Kim, *Philosophy of Mind*
Robert Sokolowski, *The God of Faith and Reason; Foundations of Christian Theology*

B. Epistemology
Keith Lehrer, *Theory of Knowledge*
Paul Moser, and Arnold Vander Nat, eds., *Human Knowledge: Classic and Contemporary Approaches*


C. Philosophy of Science, Philosophy of Language, and Logic
Robert Hollinger, A. David Kline, E. D. Klemke (Eds), *Introductory Readings in the Philosophy of Science* (3rd ed.)
R.I.G. Hughes, *A Philosophical Companion to First Order Logic*
Ernest Nagel and James R. Newman, *Gödel’s Proof*
Any good standard logic text of the sort used in Phil 001 such as Hurley, *Logic*; Kelly, *Art of Reasoning*; or Copi, *Introduction to Logic.*

Part IV. Systematic Problems: Ethics, Political Philosophy, and Aesthetics

A. Ethics
Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 2nd edition
J.J.C. Smart and Bernard Williams, *Utilitarianism. For and Against*

Alan Donagan, *The Theory of Morality.*

John Finnis, *Natural Law and Natural Rights,* Part II


Peter Singer, ed., *A Companion to Ethics*

Anthony J. Lisska, *Aquinas’s Theory of Natural Law. An Analytic Reconstruction*

### B. Political Philosophy

John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice,* part I (complete) and sec. 82

Robert Nozick, *Anarchy, State, and Utopia,* chapters 1-7

Iris Marion Young, *Justice and the Politics of Difference,* chapters 1, 5, 6

Michael Sandel, *Liberalism and the Limits of Justice*


Ronald Dworkin, “Taking Rights Seriously,” in *Taking Rights Seriously*


Nancy Tuana and Rosemarie Tong, eds., *Feminism and Philosophy: Essential Readings in Theory, Reinterpretation, and Application,* chapters 1, 2, 5, and 9

Thomas Gilby, *Between Community and Society. A Philosophy and Theology of the State*

### Philosophy of Law

*(Following traditional practice, questions in this area may appear either in the section IV.A on Ethics or IV.B on Political Philosophy)*

Andrew Altman, *Arguing About Law: An Introduction to Legal Philosophy*


Anthony J. Lisska, *Aquinas’s Theory of Natural Law. An Analytic Reconstruction*

### C. Aesthetics

Stephen David Ross, ed., *Art and Its Significance,* third edition

Susan L. Feagin and Patrick Maynard, eds., *Aesthetics*

Supplement: A List of Typical Topics

For Part III:

A. **Metaphysics**: free will, determinism, fatalism; universals and particulars; God: nature and existence of; causation, first cause, teleology, chance; substance, essence, matter; problem of evil; existence of the external world; the mind/body problem, the soul, immortality; human nature, personhood, personal identity, freedom; identity of physical objects, qualities; space, time, infinity; realism, anti-realism, idealism, materialism, empiricism; nature of the mental; Being vs. beings; History of Being, oblivion of Being; Being and becoming; appearance and reality; being and thinking; Being and the ought

B. **Epistemology**: analysis of knowledge; truth, theories of (correspondence theory, etc.); foundationalism, coherentism, reliabilism; phenomenalism; scepticism; theory of abstraction; social epistemology; memory; testimony; belief; epistemic justification; a priori knowledge; introspection; perception; induction (Hume’s problem and the “new riddle”); naturalized epistemology

C. **Philosophy of Science**: explanation and prediction; confirmation; the science/non-science distinction; the observational/theoretical distinction; scientific realism vs. scientific anti-realism; the nature and structure of scientific theories; theoretical reduction; relativism and paradigms; induction; inference to the best explanation; objectivity, values and theory change; science, teleology, and functionalism; the relation of science to metaphysics (e.g., the void, atomism, etc.)

D. **Philosophy of Language**: meaning; intention; convention; reference; speech acts/performatives; proper names; propositional attitudes; private language; fictional discourse; metaphor; intensionality/extensionality; demonstratives and indexicals; analyticity

E. **Logic and Philosophy of Logic**: the laws of contradiction, the excluded middle, and identity; logical paradoxes; the viability of modal and deviant logics; logic and ontology; existential import; Russell’s theory of types; Russell’s theory of descriptions; Gödel’s theorems; logical truth; the justifiability of deduction; the nature of proof; mathematics, logic, and set theory: their relations
For Part IV:
A. Ethics: psychological and rational egoism; realism and relativism; deontology; consequentialism; utilitarianism; natural law theory; virtue theory; issues in business ethics; bioethics; nuclear deterrence theory; abortion; euthanasia; affirmative action; the principle of double effect and various applications of it; environmental ethics; sexual ethics; the ethics of war and peace; methods of justification in ethics, e.g., coherentism and foundationalism.

B. Political Philosophy: social contract theory; anarchism; conservatism; socialism; libertarianism; liberalism; communitarianism, Marxism; feminism; multiculturalism; theories of political obligation; autonomy; democracy; distributive justice; liberty; equality; property; power; theories of rights; welfare; the state; efficiency; totalitarianism; secession and nationalism; federalism; republicanism.

C. Philosophy of Law (Following traditional practice, topics in this area may appear either in the section IV.A on Ethics or IV.B on Political Philosophy): theories of law e.g., natural law theory, legal positivism, law as integrity, critical legal studies, critical race theory, formalism, legal realism, the economic approach to law, feminist jurisprudence; philosophical issues in criminal law, e.g., theories of punishment: retributivism, deterrence theory, rehabilitation; criminal liability; philosophical issues in civil law: e.g., torts, property; philosophical issues in constitutional law, e.g., liberty and its limits: speech and privacy; race, equality, and the constitution.

D. Aesthetics: definition of a work of art; nature and evaluative import of forgery; censorship; metaphor; the logic of fictional discourse; ontology of fictional characters, objects, etc., definition of literature; the role of the author’s/artist’s intentions in interpretation/evaluation; validity in interpretation; the ontology of art; feminism and art; multiculturalism and art; general canons of aesthetic evaluation; the nature of beauty; the aesthetics of nature; definition of aesthetic experience; the nature of aesthetic properties; aesthetic relativism; the relation of aesthetic judgment to moral judgment; cognitive and affective theories of aesthetic value; the justification of aesthetic interests; the relation of art to the aesthetic; the nature of pictorial representation.