Department of Theology

Doctoral Qualifying Examination Topics

Biblical Area

All scripture majors must choose three topics. One of these must be either #9 or #10, but not both. Those not majoring in Scripture choose one topic area from #1 through #8, but not #9 or #10.

1. Torah/The Pentateuch
2. The Prophetic Literature of the Old Testament
3. Wisdom Literature in the Old and New Testament
4. Canon, Text, and Inspiration
5. The Apocalyptic Movement and Its Literature
7. Johannine Literature
8. Pauline Literature
9. Introduction to the Old Testament
10. Introduction to the New Testament

Each of these topics presuppose the following knowledge:

a) the basic introductory questions in the topic area chosen;
b) the method of exegeting this kind or group of texts;
c) familiarity with texts of this type or group.

Historical Area

All majors in Historical Theology must choose three topics. Non-majors choose one.

1. The History of the Church and of Christian Thought to 451
2. Greek Patristic and Byzantine Thought from Nicea to the Fall of the Byzantium (325-1453)
3. Syriac Christianity
4. Augustine of Hippo
5. Medieval Theology: Anselm to Ockham
6. Thomas Aquinas and His Contemporaries
7. Martin Luther and John Calvin
8. Sixteenth-Century Confessional and Conciliar Statements [why limited to 16th??]
9. Church, State, and Religious Liberty after the Reformation
10. The Enlightenment and Pietism
11. Romanticism and Theology
12. Nineteenth-Century Liberalism and Modernism and Their Impact
13. Twentieth-Century Theological Developments
Systematics Area

All majors in Systematic Theology must choose three of the eleven topics, including at least one from Group I and one from Group II. Non-majors choose one topic. The subtopics are meant to designate a specific focus for the student’s research and for the examination questions. They are not necessarily restrictive.

**Group I**

1. The Systematic Theology of a Major Contemporary Figure or School. Choose one, for example: von Balthasar, Barth, de Lubac, Liberation Theology, Lonergan, Moltmann, Reinhold Niebuhr, Pannenberg, Rahner, Scheeben, and Tillich.

2. Theological Foundations: Systematic Theology and Theological Ethics (Sources, Methods, and Fundamental Concepts). Choose among:
   a) Use of Scripture in Systematic Theology and Ethics
   b) Possibility of Natural Theology
   c) Revelation, Scripture, and Tradition
   d) Faith as a Presupposition of Theological Method
   e) Contemporary Understanding of Theological Method
   f) Religious Language: Symbol, Analogy, and Myth
   g) Relationship between Moral Theology and Moral Philosophy
   h) Church, Community, and Moral Theology

3. The Trinity: The Relation between Contemporary and Classical Formulations

4. Christology: Choose one of the specific topics:
   a) Significance of the Jesus of History
   b) The Doctrine of the Incarnation
   c) Spirit Christology
   d) Ascending and Descending Christologies
   e) Cross and Resurrection
   f) Soteriology

5. Pneumatology: The Relation between Contemporary and Classical Formulations

6. Grace, Sin, Redemption: Choose one:
   a) Original Sin and Grace: Relation between Twentieth-Century Interpretations and Classical Formulations
   b) Justification: Catholic and Protestant Understandings
   c) Grace and Nature, Knowledge and Faith

7. Church and Sacraments: Choose one:
b) Ecclesiological Significance of Baptism and Eucharist  
c) Teaching Authority of the Church  
d) Ecumenical Theology  
e) Sacraments, Moral Life, and Spirituality


Group II

10. Christian Social Ethics: Theology and Application: Choose one:
   
a) Peace and War  
b) Economic and Social Justice  
c) Family and Society  
d) Church and State

11. Freedom, Sin, Conscience: Twentieth-Century Interpretations and Classical Formulations

12. Protestant and Catholic Ethics: Contemporary Perspectives

Theology and Society

The student, with his/her adviser, selects primary areas of concentration for the DQE corresponding to the following three criteria:

**Criterion one:** Topics which test the student’s competence in the allied discipline. These topics would be developed by the faculty person in the allied discipline in conjunction with the TAS committee.

**Criterion two:** Topics which test the student’s competence in systematic theology. Topics developed by the systematics area would be acceptable.

**Criterion three:** Comparative topics which deal with the interrelationship between theology and the allied discipline concerning such issues as methodologies, major figures, major problems which cross the disciplinary boundaries.

After the Graduate Committee has approved the TAS Committee’s topics, the student will then choose three. One topic will be generated from criterion one. The other two topics may be generated either from criterion two or three.

(Revised 11/27/2013)