

Doctoral Qualifying Examination Topics

Judaism and Christianity in Antiquity (JCA)

Students concentrating the JCA area must choose three JCA topics. One and only one of these must be from group B. Students not concentrating in the JCA area must choose one topic from group A only. Each topic presupposes the student's familiarity with basic critical questions pertaining to the topic, familiarity with the relevant literature, and methods for its interpretation.

Group A

1. The Torah/Pentateuch
2. 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
6. The synoptic Gospels and Acts of the Apostles
7. Johannine literature
8. Pauline literature
9. Hebrews and the Catholic Epistles
10. Early Judaism

Group B

11. Introduction to the Old Testament
12. Introduction to the New Testament

Historical Theology (HIS)

Students concentrating the HIS area must choose three HIS topics. Students not concentrating in the HIS area must choose one topic.

1. History of the Church and of Christian thought to 451
2. Greek patristic and Byzantine thought from Nicaea to the fall of 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
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

Systematic Theology/Theological Ethics Area (SYS/ETH)

Students concentrating the SYS or ETH area must choose three SYS/ETH topics, including at least one from group A and at least one from group B. Students not concentrating in the SYS or ETH area must choose one topic from either group. Each of topic is meant to indicate an area of focus for the student's research and for the examination questions. Its title is not necessarily restrictive.

Group A

1. Systematic theology of a major contemporary figure or school, for example:
 - a. Hans Urs von Balthasar
 - b. Karl Barth
 - c. Liberation theology
 - d. Bernard Lonergan
 - e. Henri de Lubac
 - f. Jürgen Moltmann
 - g. Reinhold Niebuhr
 - h. Wolfhart Pannenberg
 - i. Karl Rahner
 - j. Matthias Joseph Scheeben
 - k. Paul Tillich
2. Theological foundations: Sources, methods, and fundamental concepts. Choose one of the following subtopics:
 - 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: Relation between contemporary and classical formulations
4. Christology. Choose one of the following subtopics:
 - a. Significance of the Jesus of history
 - b. Doctrine of the Incarnation
 - c. Spirit Christology
 - d. Ascending and descending Christologies
 - e. Cross and resurrection
 - f. Soteriology
5. Pneumatology: Relation between contemporary and classical formulations
6. Grace, Sin, Redemption. Choose one of the following subtopics:
 - 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 of the following subtopics:
 - a. The nature, foundations, and mission of the Church
 - b. Ecclesiological significance of baptism and Eucharist
 - c. Teaching authority of the Church
 - d. Ecumenical theology
 - e. Sacraments, moral life, and spirituality
8. Creation, providence, eschatology: Twentieth-century interpretations and classical formulations
9. Religious pluralism: Theologies of religious pluralism and interreligious dialogue

Group B

10. Christian social ethics: Theology and application. Choose one of the following subtopics:
 - 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 (TAS) and Healthcare Mission and Ethics (HME)

The student concentrating in TAS or HME must choose examination topics in consultation with his or her adviser and applying the following selection criteria:

1. A topic in the student's primary theological discipline, typically systematic theology or theological ethics.
2. One topic in each of the student's two minor theological disciplines, typically Judaism in Christianity in Antiquity and Historical Theology.
3. A topic testing the student's competence in the allied discipline of his or her choosing, to be determined by the student in consultation with a faculty member in that discipline and the chair of the student's examination board.
4. A comparative topic testing the student's understanding of the interrelationship between theological research and the allied discipline of his or her choosing concerning issues such as methodologies, major figures, and challenges spanning disciplinary boundaries, to be determined by the student in consultation with a faculty member

Proposed topics relating to the student's allied discipline must be approved by the Graduate Committee during its standard evaluation of the student's DQE application.