

STUDY GUIDE

M.A. COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION

M.A. Program: History of Christianity

The purpose of this exam is to evaluate each student's *comprehensive* knowledge of the History of Christianity. In their answers, students should be prepared to...

- o Explore the historical context of the church in a particular period (Early, Medieval, Reformation, or Modern) thereby showing an awareness of characteristic practices, concerns, figures, and events in a concentrated manner.
- o Offer insight into the ways in which contextual factors relate to the historical development of Christianity across periods (i.e., showing development from at least one period to another by looking at intellectual, social, political, economic, racial, gender, and/or cultural factors).
- o Identify key figures of the History of Christianity and present their lives and thought with attention to their contextual significance in thought and action.
- o Engage with historiography over interpretations of historical events and consider the methodological approach of history as a Christian and a historian.
- o Offer insight into how developing biblical interpretations and theological ideas shaped Christianity and were influenced by the historical context.
- o Exhibit a critical eye in the analysis of primary source texts with attention to key terms, ideas, context, and the significance of the document for the History of Christianity.

Students will have 6 hours in order to complete a total of 6 essay questions. In addition to meeting the above objectives, answers should...

- o Be clearly organized and written (i.e., providing an introduction, topic sentences, transitions, and a conclusion)
- o Provide 1.5 or 2" spacing for your essay questions.
- o Persuasively argue your position with strong supporting and *specific* historical evidence.
- o Touch on every period of the history of Christianity over the course of the 6 essays (i.e., marks taken off for excluding a period from analysis).

NOTE: Concentration students in particular will need to highlight their comprehensive knowledge of the range of Christian history beyond their specific focus in Christian history.

- o Make sure that the evidence you are providing from the historical account clearly and directly answers the question.

o Avoid repetition of information across answers in order to reveal the full range and breadth of knowledge that a student has achieved

NOTE: Students should keep that in mind when selecting their questions from the options provided. The repetition of information will not be counted more than once.

o Be sure to engage with theology in the theology questions.

o Infuse your writing with information – dates, figures, and terminology (along with brief definition).

o Show a wide breadth of knowledge in terms of historiography (avoid relegating your grasp of historiography to one question or section, but it should be evident throughout).

The format of the four-part exam will proceed as specified below:

Section I. “The Historical Development of Christianity”

The first section of the exam will test the student’s knowledge of “The Historical Development of Christianity” in two parts (I.1 & I.2).

I.1 (Choose 1 question): The first part of this section will test student understanding of historical development during one period of Christian history, namely the Patristic, Medieval, Reformation, and Modern eras. Students are expected to be able to provide depth of concentrated knowledge of the characteristic practices, concerns, key figures, and significant events of one period.

I. 2 (Choose 2 questions): The second part of the first section will ask students to explore the development of Christianity as it related to social, political, economic, racial, gender, cultural, and intellectual factors. Students will be required to show develop from at least one period to one other period. Part of that work will include identifying and exploring notable turning points within Christian history.

Section II. “The History of Biblical Interpretation & Theology”

(Choose 1 question): The second section of the exam will test the student’s knowledge of how interpretations of scripture and the development of theological understandings related to the historical context and shaped Christianity.

Section III. “Historical Methodology”

The third section of the exam will test students’ grasp of the methodological approach to history as Christians by exploring the following question: “Outline and evaluate various competing perspectives regarding whether or in what way Christian historians should go about the task of writing history differently from secular historians.”

Section IV. “Textual Analysis”

For the final section of the exam, students will be expected to write a textual analysis of 1 Gobbet (i.e., a prominent excerpt from a historical document). Answers should identify the author, title, and era of the text as well as expound upon the ideas within the passage and contextualize those ideas appropriately. Attention to scriptural allusions and references is also necessary when applicable.

STUDY GUIDELINES

Preparation for the exam will require review of the core course classes. The attached bibliography should also provide assistance in identifying areas where further study is needed. Each student taking the exam needs to meet with the degree coordinator to ensure they are fully prepared for the requirements of the exam. The degree coordinator will schedule a group meeting to that end a few weeks prior to the exam date.

For the exam, it is recommended that you will have read or at least be familiar with the structure and argument of many of the books that are listed. You are responsible in this manner for the texts that appear in the bibliography below whether or not they were assigned in your classes.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Textbooks:

- González, Justo. *A History of Christian Thought*, vols. 1-3, 1987.
_____. *The Story of Christianity*, vols. 1-2, 1985.
Kee, Howard, et. al. *Christianity: A Social and Cultural History*, 1998.
Olson, Roger E. *The Story of Christian Theology*, 1999.
Raitt, Jill, ed. *Christian Spirituality*, vols. 1-3, 1988.
Sunquist, Scott and Dale Irvin. *History of the World Christian Movement*, 2007.

1) Early Christianity:

- Brown, Peter. *Augustine of Hippo*, 1969.
Hall, S. G. *Doctrine and Practice in the Early Church*, 1991.
Kelly, J. N. D. *Early Christian Doctrines*, 1978.
McGuckin, J. A. *The Westminster Handbook to Patristic Theology*, 2004.
Stark, Rodney. *The Rise of Christianity*, 1996.
Trevett, Christine. *Montanism: Gender, Authority, and the New Prophecy*, 1996.
Wilken, R. L. *The Spirit of Early Christian Thought: Seeking the Face of God*, 2003.

2) Medieval Christianity:

- Bell, David N. *Many Mansions: An Introduction to the Development and Diversity of Medieval Theology, East and West*, 1996.
Evans, G. R., ed. *The Medieval Theologians*, 2001.
McGinn, Bernard. *A History of Western Christian Mysticism*, vols. 1-4, 1999.
Reid, Patrick V. *Readings in Western Religious Thought II: The Middle Ages Through the Reformation*, 1995.
Jolly, Karen. *Tradition & Diversity: Christianity in a World Context to 1500*, 1997.
Brunn, Emilie Zum and Georgette Epiney-Burgard. *Women Mystics in Medieval Europe*, 1989.

3) Reformation Christianity:

- Benedict, Philip. *Christ's Churches Purely Reformed: A Social History of Calvinism*, 2002.
Gordon, Bruce. *Calvin*, 2009.
Oberman, Heiko A. *Luther: Man Between God and the Devil*, 1989.
Ozment, Steven. *When Fathers Ruled: Family Life in Reformation Europe*, 1983.
Pettegree, Andrew, ed. *The Reformation World*, 2000.
Steinmetz, David. *Reformers in the Wings*, 2001.
Williams, George H. *The Radical Reformation*, 3rd ed., 2000.

4) Modern European Christianity:

- Brown, Callum G. *The Death of Christian Britain*, 2001.
Coffey, John. *Persecution and Toleration in Protestant England 1558-1689*, 2000.
Ford, David, ed. *Modern Theologians*, 1997.
Larsen, Timothy. *Crisis of Doubt: Honest Faith in Nineteenth-Century England*, 2006.
Martin, David. *Pentecostalism*, 2001.
McLeod, Hugh. *Secularisation in Western Europe, 1848-1914*, 2000.
Sorkin, David. *The Religious Enlightenment*, 2009.

5) American Christianity:

- Bremer, Francis J. *The Puritan Experiment: New England Society from Bradford to Edwards*, 1995.
- Hatch, Nathan O. *The Democratization of American Christianity*, 1989.
- Marsden, George M. *Fundamentalism and American Culture*, 1980.
- _____. *Jonathan Edwards: A Life*, 2003.
- Marsh, Charles. *God's Long Summer: Stories of Faith and Civil Rights*, 1999.
- Noll, Mark A. *America's God: From Jonathan Edwards to Abraham Lincoln*, 2002.
- _____. *The Old Religion in a New World: The History of North American Christianity*, 2002.
- Wacker, Grant. *Early Pentecostals and American Culture*, 2001.

6) World Christianity:

- Barrett, David. *World Christian Encyclopedia*, 2nd ed., 2001.
- Bednarowski, Mary Farrall, ed. *Twentieth-Century Global Christianity. A People's History of Christianity*, vol. 7, 2008.
- Hastings, Adrian, ed. *A World History of Christianity*, 1999.
- Jenkins, Philips. *The Next Christendom: The Coming of Global Christianity*, 2011.
- _____. *The Lost History of Christianity*, 2009.
- _____. *The New Faces of Christianity: Believing the Bible in the Global South*, 2006.
- Miller, Donald E. and Tetsunao Yamamori. *Global Pentecostalism: The New Face of Christian Social Engagement*, 2007.
- Sanneh, Lamin and Joel A. Carpenter. *The Changing Face of Christianity: Africa, the West, and the World*, 2005.

7) Historiography:

- Bauman, Michael and Martin I. Klauber. *Historians of the Christian Tradition: Their Methodology and Influence on Western Thought*, 1995.
- Bebbington, David. *Patterns in History*, 2000.
- Fea, John. *Confessing History*, 2010.
- Marsden, George. *The Outrageous Idea of Christian Scholarship*, 1998.
- McIntire, C. T., ed. *God, History, and Historians*, 1977. 7 | Page

EXAM POLICY

The comprehensive exam is offered by the BITH department twice during the academic year, in October and March. It is not offered in the summer for August graduates of the Master of Arts programs, so students completing requirements and anticipating graduation in August should be prepared to take the comprehensive exam in March.

Students should not attempt to take the exam until they have had the opportunity to complete all the core course requirements. The exam must be passed within the 5-year deadline in order to earn the degree by traditional students and within the 7-year deadline for MPPM students.

If a semester or more has passed since the student's last enrollment in the Graduate School, the student should submit a Supplementary Application to the Graduate Admissions department in order to become eligible to register for BITH 692, *Comprehensive Exam*, in the semester of their choosing. The comprehensive exam fee is \$25.

Once a student has registered for BITH 692, s/he will be informed of study guides, exam dates and locations, special instructions, proctor agreements, and any additional information by the graduate BITH department office coordinator. It is the student's responsibility to verify that the graduate BITH department has all necessary contact information, including an email address, to be used for communication purposes.

If the student decides to withdraw from the exam that semester, s/he must drop it from their registration for that semester in the Registrar's Office no later than 2 weeks prior to the exam date. No refund is given after the second week of the semester.

Furthermore, it is the student's responsibility to communicate to the department no later than two weeks prior to the exam date that they have withdrawn from the comprehensive exam for that semester, or if they qualify for special accommodations due to *documented* special needs or learning disabilities. The documents for special needs must be on file in the Registrar's Office. Failure by the student to withdraw before the deadline of two weeks prior to the exam date results in the exam being recorded as an "F" for that attempt.

Students may attempt the comprehensive exam for their master's program only twice. A student failing their first attempt may retake the exam only at the announced time in the following semester. All students who fail the first attempt will be expected to retake the *entire* exam on their second attempt and not just the sections missed. Failure to pass the comprehensive exam on the second attempt results in failure to have the master's degree conferred. Students that fail or withdraw from the comprehensive exam will be precluded from participating in commencement activities for that academic year.