

Constructive Studies Qualifying Exam:
Issues in Contemporary Theory

The goal of the exam is to familiarize students with a range of key issues in contemporary theory. The exam will provide students with the requisite tools for sophisticated engagement with religious texts and practices while at the same time enabling them to reflect on the ways in which the study of religion contributes to contemporary theoretical debates.

In consultation with an examiner or examiners, students will be expected to choose four areas from among the following conceptual categories. Normally five works will be required in each of these four areas. Those interested in particular theoretical movements (e.g. psychoanalysis, feminist theory, queer theory) are encouraged to construct lists that cover the requisite four conceptual areas and provide a broad overview of the theoretical tradition. The conceptual categories for the exam are set; the book lists provided below, however, are exemplary rather than definitive. You will notice a number of authors and individual texts easily fit within more than one rubric (in fact, many more so than are noted here). This overlap may be reflected in exam questions and in your answers.

1. signification/discourse/semiotics

J. L. Austin, How To Do Things With Words

Roland Barthes, Empire of Signs

----- Mythologies

Emile Benveniste, Problems in General Linguistics

Pierre Bourdieu, Language and Symbolic Power

Judith Butler, Excitable Speech: A Politics of the Performative

Stanley Cavell, Philosophical Passages: Wittgenstein, Emerson, Austin, Derrida

Michel de Certeau, Heterologies : Discourses on the Other

The Mystic Fable: The Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries

Gilles Deleuze, Proust and Signs

Jacques Derrida, Of Grammatology

----- Writing and Difference

----- Margins of Philosophy

Shoshana Felman, The Scandal of the Speaking Body

Michel Foucault, The Order of Things: An Archeology of the Human Sciences

The Archeology of Knowledge and the Discourse on Language

Jürgen Habermas, The Theory of Communicative Action

Luce Irigaray, Le langage des déments

----- Parler n'est jamais neutre

----- Sexes et genres à travers les langues: Éléments de communication sexuée

Roman Jakobson, On Language

Fredric Jameson, The Prison-House of Language: A Critical Account of Structuralism
and Russian Formalism

Julia Kristeva, Desire in Language

----- The Revolution in Poetic Language
Jacques Lacan, Écrits: A Selection
Benjamin Lee, Talking Heads: Language, Metalanguage, and the Semiotics of Subjectivity
Charles Sanders Peirce, Selected Writings, ed. Philip P. Weiner (selections)
Ferdinand de Saussure, Course in General Linguistic

2. agency/subjectivity

Giorgio Agamben, The Coming Community
----- Infancy and History: Essays on the Destruction of Experience
Georges Bataille, Inner Experience
----- Guilty
Simone de Beauvoir, The Second Sex
Seyla Benhabib, Situating the Self: Gender, Community and Postmodernism in Contemporary Ethics
Seyla Benhabib, Judith Butler, Nancy Fraser, and Drucilla Cornell,
Feminist Contentions: A Philosophical Exchange
Homi Bhabha, The Location of Culture
Judith Butler, Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity
----- Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of "Sex"
----- The Psychic Life of Power: Theories in Subjection
Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia
Frantz Fanon, Black Skin, White Masks
Sigmund Freud and Josef Brauer, Studies on Hysteria
Sigmund Freud, "The Aetiology of Hysteria," Standard Edition, Vol. 3
----- The Ego and the Id
----- The Interpretation of Dreams
----- "Mourning and Melancholia," Standard Edition, Vol. 14
----- "On Narcissism: An Introduction," Standard Edition, Vol. 14
Michel Foucault, Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison
----- Ethics Subjectivity and Truth : Essential Works of Foucault, 1954-1984 Vol.1
----- The History of Sexuality: An Introduction, Vol. 1
----- The History of Sexuality: The Use of Pleasure, Vol. 2
Ian Hacking, Rewriting the Soul: Multiple Personality and the Sciences of Memory
Luce Irigaray, An Ethics of Sexual Difference
----- I Love to You: Sketch of a Possible Felicity
----- Speculum of the Other Woman
----- Sexes and Genealogies
Alexander Kojève, Introduction to the Reading of Hegel
Julia Kristeva, Powers of Horror
Jacques Lacan, Écrits : A Selection
Saba Mahmood, Politics of Piety : The Islamic Revival and the Feminist Subject
Friedrich Nietzsche, On the Genealogy of Morals
Jean-Paul Sartre, Being and Nothingness (selections)

----- Existentialism is a Humanism
 Kaja Silverman, On the Threshold of the Visible World
 Gayatri Chakravarty Spivak, The Post-colonial Critic : Interviews, Strategies, Dialogue
 (selections)
 Charles Taylor, Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity
 Trinh T. Minh-ha, Woman, Native, Other: Writing Postcoloniality and Feminism
 Slavoy Zizek, The Ticklish Subject: The Absent Center of Political Ontology

3. power/authority

Lila Abu-Lughud, “The Romance of Resistance: Tracing Transformations of Power
 Through Bedouin Women,” American Ethnologists 17 (1990): 41-55
 Giorgio Agamben, Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life
 Amy Allen, The Power of Feminist Theory
 Louis Althusser, Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays
 Hannah Arendt, The Origins of Totalitarianism
 Michèle Barrett, The Politics of Truth: From Marx to Foucault
 Jessica Benjamin, The Bonds of Love: Psychoanalysis, Feminism, and the Problem of
 Domination
 Maurice Bloch, Ritual, History and Power
 ----- Prey Into Hunter: the Politics of Religious Experience
 ----- From Belssing to Violence: History and Ideology in the Circumcision Ritual of
 the Merina of Madagascar
 Pierre Bourdieu, The Logic of Practice
 ----- Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste
 Wendy Brown, States of Injury: Power and Freedom in Late Modernity
 Judith Butler, The Psychic Life of Power: Theories in Subjection
 Judith Butler, Ernesto Laclau, Slavoj Zizek, Contingency, Hegemony, Universality:
 Contemporary Dialogues on the Left
 Chaturvedi, Vinayak, ed., Mapping Subaltern Studies and the Postcolonial
 Michel Foucault, Abnormal: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1974-1975
 ----- Discipline and Punish: The Birth of a Prison
 ----- The History of Sexuality: An Introduction, Vol. 1
 ----- Power: Essential Works of Foucault 1954-84, Vol. 3
 ----- Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972-1977
 Nancy Fraser, Unruly Practices: Power, Discourse, and Gender in Contemporary Social
 Theory
 Sigmund Freud, Civilization and Its Discontents
 ----- Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego
 Antonio Gramsci, The Prison Notebooks
 Ranajit Guha and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, eds., Selected Subaltern Studies
 Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, Empire
 Saidiya V. Hartman, Scenes of Subjection: Terror, Slavery, and Self-Making in
 Nineteenth-Century America
 Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno, Dialectic of Enlightenment
 Fredric Jameson, The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act

Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, Hegemony and Socialist Strategy: Towards a Radical Democratic Politics

Bruce Lincoln, Authority: Construction and Corrosion

Rosalind O’Hanlon, “Recovering the Subject: Subaltern Studies and Histories of Resistance in Colonial South Asia,” Modern Asian Studies 22 (1988): 189-224

Rosalind O’Hanlon and David Washbrook, “After Orientalism: Culture, Criticism, and Politics in the Third World,” Comparative Studies in Society and History 34 (1992): 141-67

Gyan Prakash, “Writing Post-Orientalist Histories of the Third World: Perspectives from Indian Historiography,” Comparative Studies in Society and History 32 (1990): 383-408

Gyan Prakash, “Can the ‘Subaltern’ Ride? A Reply to O’Hanlon and Washbrook,” Comparative Studies in Society and History 34 (1992): 168-84

Edward Said, Orientalism
----- Culture and Imperialism

Gayatri Chakravarty Spivak, “Can the Subaltern Speak?” in Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture, ed. Cary Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg

Slavoj Zizek, The Sublime Object of Ideology

4. bodies/practices

Talal Asad, Genealogies of Religion: Discipline and Reasons of Power in Christianity and Islam
----- Formations of the Secular: Christianity, Islam, Modernity

Catherine Bell, Catherine Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice

Leo Bersani, The Freudian Body: Psychoanalysis and Art

Susan Bordo, Unbearable Weight: Feminism, Western Culture, and the Body

Pierre Bourdieu, The Logic of Practice

Judith Butler, Gender Trouble : Feminism and the Subversion of Identity
----- Bodies That Matter : On the Discursive Limits of « Sex »

Mary Carruthers, The Craft of Thought: Meditation, Rhetoric, and the Making of Images, 400-1200

Michel de Certeau, The Practice of Everyday Life

Lennard Davis, Enforcing Normalcy: Disability, Deafness, and the Body

Lennard Davis, ed., The Disability Studies Reader

Michel Foucault, Michel, Discipline and Punish
----- The History of Sexuality: An Introduction, vol. 1
----- The History of Sexuality: The Use of Pleasure, vol. 2

Moira Gatens, Imaginary Bodies: Ethics, Power, and Corporeality

Elizabeth Grosz, Volatile Bodies: Toward a Corporeal Feminism

Pierre Hadot, Philosophy as a Way of Life

Judith Halberstam and Ira Livingston, ed., Posthuman Bodies

Drew Leder, The Absent Body

Marcel Mauss, « Body Techniques, » in Sociology and Psychology: Essays (trans. B. Brewster)

Maurice Merleau-Ponty, The Phenomenology of Perception (selections)

----- The Visible and the Invisible
 David Mitchell and Sharon L. Snyder, eds., The Body and Physical Difference
 Cary Nederman, "Nature, Ethics, and the Doctrine of Habitus: Aristotelian Moral
 Psychology in the Twelfth Century," Traditio 45 (1989-1990): 87-110.
 Friedrich Nietzsche, On the Genealogy of Morals
 Mary Poovey, Making a Social Body: British Cultural Formation, 1830-1864
Public Culture 35 (2001). Special issue, "The Critical Limits of Embodiment:
 Reflections on Disability Criticism."
 Dorothy Roberts, Killing the Black Body: Race, Reproduction, and the Meaning
 of Liberty
 Elaine Scarry, The Body in Pain: The Making and Unmaking of the World
 Kaja Silverman, Male Subjectivity on the Margins
 Rosemarie Garland Thomson, Extraordinary Bodies: Figuring Disability in American
 Culture and Literature
 Linda Williams, Hard Core: Power, Pleasure, and the "Frenzy" of the Visible
 ----- "Film Bodies: Gender, Genre, and Excess," Film Quarterly 44 (1991): 2-13
Zone 3-5 "Fragments for a History of the Human Body" (selections

5. sex/gender

Simone de Beauvoir, The Second Sex
 Judith Butler, Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of "Sex"
 ----- Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity
 ----- Undoing Gender
 Judith Butler and Joan Scott, eds. Feminists Theorize the Political
 Hélène Cixous, Stigmata: Escaping Texts
 Hélène Cixous and Catherine Clément, The Newly Born Woman
 Hélène Cixous and Jacques Derrida, Veils
 Nancy Chodorow, The Reproduction of Mothering: Psychoanalysis and the Sociology of
 Gender
 Patricia Hill Collins, Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the
 Politics of Empowerment
 Angela Davis, Women, Race, and Class
 Dorothy Dinnerstein, The Mermaid and the Minotaur: Sexual Arrangements and Human
 Malaise
 Mary Ann Doane, Femmes Fatales: Feminism, Film Theory, and Psychoanalysis
 Anne Fausto-Sterling, Sexing the Body: Gender Politics and the Construction of
 Sexuality
 Sigmund Freud, Beyond the Pleasure Principle
 ----- "The Dissolution of the Oedipus Complex"
 ----- Three Essays on Sexuality
 ----- "Some Psychological Consequences of the Anatomical Distinction Between the
 Sexes" (1925), in SE 19
 ----- "Female Sexuality" (1931), in SE 21
 ----- "Femininity" (1933), in SE 22
 Moira Gatens, Imaginary Bodies: Ethics, Power, and Corporeality

GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies 4: 2 (1998). Special issue, "The Transgender Issue."

Donna Haraway, Simians, Cyborgs, and Women: The Reinvention of Nature

Heidi Hartmann, "The Unhappy Marriage of Marxism and Feminism: Towards a More Progressive Union," in Women and Revolution, ed. Lydia Sargent

Gilbert Herdt, ed., Third Sex, Third Gender: Beyond Sexual Dimorphism in Culture and History

bell hooks, Ain't I a Woman: Black Women and Feminism

----- Feminist Theory from Margins to Center

E. Ann Kaplan, ed., Feminism and Film

Suzanne Kessler, Lessons from the Intersexed

Jacques Lacan, Seminar XX: Encore

Diana Leonard and Lisa Adkins, eds., Sex in Question: French Materialist Feminism

Reina Lewis and Sara Mills, eds., Feminist Postcolonial Theory: A Reader

Juliet Mitchell, Psychoanalysis and Feminism: A Radical Reassessment of Freudian Psychoanalysis

Toril Moi, What is a Woman? And Other Essays

Oyewùmí Oyèrónké, The Invention of Women: Making an African Sense of Western Gender Discourse

Denise Riley, "Am I That Name?": Feminism and the Category of "Women" in History

Gayle Rubin, "The Traffic in Women: Notes on the 'Political Economy' of Sex," in Toward an Anthropology of Women ed. Rayna R Reiter. New York: Monthly Review Press, 1975.

----- "Thinking Sex: Notes for a Radical Theory of the Politics of Sexuality," in Carole S. Vance, eds., Pleasure and Danger: Exploring Female Sexuality (Boston: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1984), pp. 267-319.

Joan Scott, Gender and the Politics of History

Kaja Silverman, The Acoustic Mirror

----- Male Subjectivity at the Margins

Hortense Spillers, Black, White and Color: Essays on American Literature and Culture

Sue Thornham, ed., Feminist Film Theory: A Reader

Monique Wittig, The Straight Mind

6. sexuality/desire

Malek Alloula, The Colonial Harem

Georges Bataille, Erotism: Death and Sensuality

----- The Tears of Eros

Leo Bersani, The Freudian Body

----- "Is the Rectum a Grave?" in AIDS : Cultural Analysis, Cultural Activism eds. Douglas Crimp and Leo Bersani

----- Homos

Daniel Boyarin et al, eds., Queer Theory and the Jewish Question

Daniel Boyarin, Unheroic Conduct: The Rise of Heterosexuality and the Invention of the Jewish Man

Devon Carbado, Black Men on Race, Gender, and Sexuality: A Critical Reader

Patricia Hill Collins, Black Sexual Politics: African Americans, Gender, and the New Racism

Arnold Davidson, The Emergence of Sexuality: Historical Epistemology and the Formation of Concepts

Tim Dean, Beyond Sexuality

Tim Dean and Christopher Lane, eds., Homosexuality and Psychoanalysis
Diacritics 24, 2/3 (1994). Special issue. "Critical Crossings."
differences 6, 2/3 (1994). Special issue, "More Gender Trouble: Feminism Meets Queer Theory."

Carolyn Dinshaw, Getting Medieval: Sexualities and Communities, Pre- And Postmodern

Lee Edelman, No Future: Queer Theory and the Death Drive
 ----- Homographesis: Essays in Gay Literary and Cultural Theory

Michel Foucault, The History of Sexuality: An Introduction, Vol. 1

Sigmund Freud, Three Essays on Sexuality
 ----- "Dissolution of the Oedipus Complex"
 ----- Fragment of a Case of Analysis
 ----- Beyond the Pleasure Principle

Diana Fuss, ed., Inside/out: Lesbian Theories, Gay Theories
GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies 9: 1/2 (2003). Special issue, "Desiring Disability: Queer Theory Meets Disability Studies."

David Halperin, Saint Foucault: Toward a Gay Hagiography
 ----- How to Do the History of Sexuality

John C. Hawley, ed., Postcolonial, Queer: Theoretical Intersections

Rosemary Hennessy, Profit and Pleasure: Sexual Identities in Late Capitalism

Abdul Jan Mohamed, "Sexuality On/Off the Racial Border: Foucault, Wright, and the Articulation of 'Racialized Sexuality'" in Discourses of Sexuality, ed., Domna Stanton

Mark Jordan, The Silence of Sodom: Homosexuality in Modern Catholicism

Jeffrey Kripal and T. G. Vaidyanathan, eds., Vishnu on Freud's Desk: A Reader in Psychoanalysis and Hinduism

Jacques Lacan, Seminar XX: Encore

Teresa de Lauretis, The Practice of Love: Lesbian Sexuality and Perverse Desires

Stephen D. Moore, God's Beauty Parlor: And Other Queer Spaces in and Around the Bible

Richard Rambuss, Closet Devotions

Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire
 ----- Epistemology of the Closet
 ----- Tendencies

Valerie Traub, The Renaissance of Lesbianism in Early Modern England

Michael Warner, ed., Fear of a Queer Planet: Queer Politics and Social Theory

7. race/ethnicity

Elizabeth Abel, Barbara Christian, Helene Moglen, eds., Female Subjects in Black and White: Race, Psychoanalysis, Feminism

Victor Anderson, Beyond Ontological Blackness: An Essay on African American Religious and Cultural Criticism

Kwami Anthony Appiah, In My Father's House: Africa in the Philosophy of Culture

Les Back and John Solomos, eds., Theories of Race and Racism

Robert Bernasconi and Tommy Lee Lott, eds., The Idea of Race

Robert Bernasconi et al, Race and Racism in Continental Philosophy

Robert Bernasconi, Race (Blackwell Readings in Continental Philosophy)

Celia Brickman, Aboriginal Populations in the Mind: Race and Primitivity in Psychoanalysis

Hazel Carby, Reconstructing Womanhood: The Emergence of the Afro-American Woman Novelist

Anne Anlin Cheng, The Melancholy of Race: Psychoanalysis, Assimilation, and Hidden Grief

Rey Chow, Ethics After Idealism: Theory, Culture, Ethnicity, Reading

----- The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism

----- "When Whiteness Feminizes . . . : Some Consequences of a Supplementary Logic," differences 11 (1999/2000): 137-68

Critical Inquiry 12 (1985). Special Issue, "'Race', Writing, and Difference."

W. E. B. Dubois, The Souls of Black Folk

Frantz Fanon, Black Skin, White Masks

----- The Wretched of the Earth

Martin J. Favor, Authentic Blackness: The Folk in the New Negro Renaissance

Paul Gilroy, Against Race: Imagining Political Culture Beyond the Color Line

----- The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness

Stuart Hall, "Gramsci's Relevance to the Study of Race and Ethnicity," Journal of Communication Inquiry 10 (1986): 5-27

Saidiya V. Hartman, Scenes of Subjection: Terror, Slavery, and Self-Making in Nineteenth-Century America

Christopher Lane, ed., The Psychoanalysis of Race

Lisa Lowe, Immigrant Acts: On Asian American Cultural Politics

Anne McLintock, Imperial Leather: Race, Gender, and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest

Charles Mills, From Class to Race: Essays in White Marxism and Black Radicalism

----- Blackness Visible: Essays on Philosophy and Race

Michael Omi and Howard Winant, Racial Formation in the United States

Craig Prentiss, ed., Religion and the Creation of Race and Ethnicity

Kalpna Seshadri-Crooks, Desiring Whiteness: A Lacanian Analysis of Race

Ann Laura Stoler, Race and the Education of Desire: Foucault's History of Sexuality and the Colonial Order of Things

----- Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power: Race and the Intimate in Colonial Rule

Howard Winant, The New Politics of Race

8. class/social stratification

Louis Althusser, For Marx

----- Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays

Kevin Bales, Disposable People: New Slavery in the Global Economy

Etienne Balibar, Masses, Classes, Ideas: Studies on Politics and Philosophy before and After Marx

----- Race, Nation, Class: Ambiguous Identities

----- We, the People of Europe?: A Reflection on Transnational Citizenship

Pierre Bourdieu, Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste

Dipesh Chakrabarty, Rethinking Working-Class History

Teresa L. Ebert, Ludic Feminism and After: Postmodernism, Labor, and Desire in Late Capitalism

Michel Foucault, Remarks on Marx: Conversations with Duccio Trombadori, R. James Goldstein and James Cascaito

Nancy Fraser, Justice Interruptus: Critical Reflections on the "Postsocialist" Condition

Nancy Fraser and Axel Honneth, Redistribution or Recognition: A Political-Philosophical Exchange

Antonio Gramsci, The Prison Notebooks

Rosemary Hennessy, Materialist Feminism and the Politics of Discourse

Rosemary Hennessy and Chrys Ingraham, eds., Materialist Feminism: A Reader in Class, Difference, and Women's Lives

bell hooks, Where We Stand: Class Matters

Fredric Jameson, Postmodernism, Or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism

----- A Singular Modernity: Essay on the Ontology of the Present

Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, Hegemony and Socialist Strategy: Towards a Radical Democratic Politics

David Lloyd and Lisa Lowe, eds., The Politics of Culture in the World of Capital: Worlds Aligned

Georg Lukács, History and Class Consciousness

E. San Juan, Beyond Postcolonial Theory

Jacques Rancière, The Philosopher and his Poor

E. P. Thompson, Making of the English Working Class

Robert C. Tucker, The Marx-Engels Reader

Max Weber, "Class, Status, Party," in Essays in Economic Sociology, ed. Richard Swedberg

Cornel West, Prophesy Deliverance: An Afro-American Revolutionary Christianity

----- "Black Theology and Marxist Thought" and "Black Theology of Liberation as Critique of Capitalist Civilization," both in Black Theology: A Documentary History, ed. James Cone and Gayraud Wilmore

Raymond Williams, Culture and Society, 1780-1950

----- Resources of Hope: Culture, Democracy, Socialism

12/1/04