

CHRISTENDOM GRADUATE SCHOOL MA COMPREHENSIVE EXAM INFORMATION

The comprehensive exam is the culmination of the student's work for the Master of Arts degree in Theological Studies. It examines the student on his knowledge from the required courses and from readings in the Graduate School Bibliography, and on his ability to synthesize this knowledge and to discuss and explain it. Students should be prepared to give relevant, complete, and well-organized answers to questions. Candidates must have completed all required courses and must have resolved all incompletes in order to register for the exam. Students who are not sure of their status may check with Heidi by calling the office or emailing her at hkalian@christendom.edu.

The exam has two parts, the written exam and the oral exam, which are taken on different days at the Alexandria campus. The first part of the written exam, taken from 10 am until noon, covers the core curriculum. Students answer one question in philosophy (from a choice of at least two) and three questions in theology (from a choice of at least five). There is a break from noon until 1 pm for lunch: students are encouraged to bring a lunch with them. The afternoon portion of the written exam contains three essays, from a choice of at least five, on topics in the student's concentration. **Students are encouraged to bring laptops for the written exam, and will use college computers if they do not have laptops.** They may also bring a Bible (with no writing in it) for reference during the exam, if they wish.

For the oral portion of the exam, each student is examined by a panel of at least three professors for about one-half hour, on various topics from the core curriculum, the Bibliography, and the student's concentration.

The whole exam (written and oral combined) is graded "pass" or "fail" by the panel of professors, and the student is notified of his grade in writing within a few days. Students from far away may contact the Registrar to schedule the written portion of their exams within a day or two of the oral portion to avoid a long stay in Virginia.

Students who wish to register for the comprehensive exam may do so by submitting the registration form and fee to the Registrar at least six weeks before the scheduled exam. The form is found on the Graduate Student Resource Center of the website, at <http://www.christendom.edu/graduate/resources.php>.

Studying for the comprehensive exam should focus on class notes, old exams, textbooks, and the Bibliography. Comps study groups have proved helpful to comps-takers in the past. If you would like the names and emails of other students preparing for comps, or a copy of the review questions & answers developed by a '05 comps study group, please contact Stephanie at: spacheco@christendom.edu. Below are some suggestions of topics to study.

COMPS STUDY AID

Suggested topics to study for comps (N.B.: list is NOT exhaustive – other topics may also be asked, but these are topics which have frequently been asked in the past.)

Faith & reason

Theology - definitions

Inspiration

Revelation

Scripture & Tradition

Trinity

Catholic Biblical hermeneutics/exegesis (from Dei Verbum)

Sacraments

Magisterium – various acts, type of assent owed to each, infallibility

Christological heresies, councils

Resurrection

Canon of scripture

Papal primacy

Grace

Justification

Conscience

Relativism

Proportionalism

The moral act

Sin

The Church

Priesthood

Vatican II