# Study Questions for Midterm Exam

PHILO 4373 Christian Apologetics
William A. Dembski, Spring 2008

The midterm exam, which will take place March 7, 2008 from 9:25 – 10:40 am, will cover the chapters assigned in the syllabus of Dembski and Richards's *Unapologetic Apologetics* (foreword, preface, chs. 1, 4, 5, 7–13), all of C. S. Lewis's *Miracles*, and all of Phillip Johnson's *Reason in the Balance*. The exam is closed book and closed notes. The questions as given here track (roughly) the order of presentation in the respective books.

DEMBSKI & RICHARDS:

1. Who are the "truthful traitors" and "loyal liars"? Is there a third option?

2. What is an inoculation (be able to give dictionary definition) and how can apologetics be conceived as a form of inoculation?

3. What is Jude 3? What is the Vincentian Canon? Is the Vincentian Canon still valid?

4. How does the Hebrew view of truth differ from the Greek correspondence view? What is the Hebrew word for truth and what does it signify?

5. What are the physical content, theoretical content, regulative core of a worldview? What are the physical core, theoretical core, and regulative core of a worldview? How do "content" and "core" differ? Be able to illustrate these concepts.

6. What is an error? What would it mean to say that Scripture is in error? Does Scripture err?

7. How might naturalism in biblical studies lead to faulty conclusions about the Bible?

8. What is Gregory of Nazianzus's axiom? How is it relevant to a male savior saving women?

9. Is the Bible a patriarchal book that denigrates women? If not, why not? How does feminism elevate women's experience above the Bible?

10. If people growing up had a bad experience with their fathers, why shouldn't we soften the father-language about God to include gender-neutral and feminine language to describe God?

11. What is universalism and particularism in relation to salvation? What is the best Scriptural argument for universalism that you know? What is Pascal's wager? How does Pascal's wager apply to the universalism debate?

12. Who was Charles Darwin? What is Darwinism? Can a Darwinian be a Christian? Explain. What is theistic evolution?

LEWIS:

1. Why did the one person that Lewis knew who claimed to have seen a ghost disbelieve in ghosts?

2. How does Lewis define miracle? What does he mean by nature and supernature(al)? What do miracle and nature mean in terms of their Latin etymology?

3. Lewis argues that naturalism is self-referentially incoherent – that in asserting it one defeats any justification one can give for its truth. Assess that argument.

4. What are the two definitions of "because" that Lewis considers? Be able to give an example of each use.

5. Is mind simply a function of brain processes? What is the problem for Lewis if that were the case?

6. How, if at all, does one justify morality on naturalistic principles?

7. Were people in olden times more likely to buy miracles than they are now? Were they just more gullible? Explain

8. Why is the immensity of the universe supposed to undercut our belief in miracles?

9. Does nature operate according to laws? What is a law of nature? Do miracles *violate* laws of nature? Is there a better way of describing what happens to laws of nature when God performs a miracle?

10. What is a metaphor? Can theological language avoid metaphors? Do metaphors nonetheless give us valid insights into theological truths?

11. Is it always more probable that someone was lying than that a miracle actually took place? Explain

12. What is the “Grand Miracle” as Lewis calls it? How does it relate to the myths of death and rebirth throughout the ancient world?

13. What are miracles of the old creation? Be able to give an example.

14. What are miracles of the new creation? Be able to give an example.

JOHNSON:

1. What is naturalism? How does metaphysical naturalism differ from methodological naturalism? (Note especially the appendix of Johnson’s book.)

2. Is the opposite of naturalism supernaturalism? Explain.

3. What is the “blind watchmaker thesis”? Who is the principal proponent of that thesis?

4. Who is Dean Kenyon? Why is he significant in the cultural controversy over naturalism?

5. What is America’s established religious philosophy? What role does modernism have in it? What are the five points that according to Johnson render modernism so appealing?

6. Why does liberalism tend toward relativism and permissiveness?

7. What is theistic realism? Is this a legitimate Christian option? Is it the only Christian option? Why?

8. Who is Stephen Hawking? What does he mean by a theory of everything?

9. What is the mind-body problem? How did Francis Crick resolve the mind-body problem? Is his resolution of it an acceptable Christian option? Explain.

10. Briefly outline Darwin’s theory of evolution? What are some of the scientific problems with this theory? Is this theory reconcilable with Christian theism?

11. What is theistic naturalism? Who are some of its principal defenders? What is its appeal? What are its faults?

12. Theology used to be called the queen of the sciences? Does Johnson want to reinstate theology in that role? What are his reasons one way or the other? Is it a good idea for theology to become “the governing discipline” of all other disciplines? What form might this take?

13. Who is Richard Rorty? Describe briefly his philosophy of neo-pragmatism. Does this philosophy admit that there is an objective reality accessible to everyone? Why or why not?

14. What is the difference between reductionism and emergence?

15. How does natural law in the sciences differ from natural law in ethics? How can natural law in ethics be grounded in Christian theism and God's design-plan for humanity?

16. What is the naturalistic alternative to natural law? Where does this alternative lead?

17. How does an educational philosophy based on naturalism differ from one based on theistic realism?

18. What is viewpoint discrimination? Compare the academic freedom cases of Phillip Bishop and Henry Schaefer? Why did Schaefer fare better that Bishop?

19. What is a "culture war"? Is the Carper-Sears case a model of how to resolve the culture war, at least in some limited instances? Explain.