

LANGARA COLLEGE

Philosophy 1140: Philosophy of Religion

Practice Final Examination

Section A Answer **two** of the following questions. Each answer should require about 150 words (1/2 to 1 page, *double spaced*). [This section is worth 30%.]

1. Summarise one version of the cosmological argument for the existence of God.
2. Summarise the evidentialist challenge to religious belief, and Blaise Pascal's response to it.

3. In *Where the Conflict Really Lies*, Chapter 9, Alvin Plantinga writes (p. 266):

Modern Western empirical science originated and flourished in the bosom of Christian theism and originated nowhere else. ... This is no accident: there is deep concord between science and theistic belief.

Summarise one or two arguments that Plantinga gives for this view.

4. Explain why the existence of religions is (at least initially) puzzling, from the point of evolutionary psychology. Briefly outline two evolutionary explanations of religion, such as the 'adaptationist' and 'byproduct' theories.
5. Theists attack naturalism on the grounds that it is (allegedly) unable to account for certain features of human experience. List a few of these features, then pick one of them and give one argument that naturalism cannot account for it.

Section B Answer **two** of the following questions. Each essay should be about 400 words (two or three pages long, *double spaced*). [This section is worth 70%.]

6. Can religious beliefs be rational, in the absence of cogent arguments that firmly establish those beliefs? Support your claim with arguments, and deal with objections. [You may refer to, but don't repeat at length, anything you may have said in answer to Qu. 2.]
7. Is science, on the whole, supportive of religious belief? Or does science weaken or undermine religious belief? Or is science neutral concerning religion? State your thesis clearly and argue for it. (Consider objections if you have space.) [You may refer to, but don't repeat at length, anything you may have said in answer to Qu. 3.]
8. Religious moralists sometimes claim that secular moral systems are all deficient in some way, for example that they lack 'grounding' in objective moral facts, or that secular morality provides no objective norms, and instead rests on subjective human preferences. Explain this objection as clearly as you can, and respond to it, from a secular perspective. Is the religious moralist right? Justify your answer.
9. Is the existence of evil a serious problem for theism? Summarise the argument from evil (for the non-existence of the theistic god), distinguishing between the deductive and evidential versions. Consider the strongest objection(s) to the inductive version, and evaluate them.
10. Can one ever take religious experiences, or (apparent) miracles, as evidence for spiritual realities? Support your claim with arguments.