

Plotinus to Pico Study Guide (Fall 2017)

The exam will probably consist of four essays, chosen from some slightly larger set of questions. You will be allowed to consult the relevant primary texts while writing your essays.

1. Compare and contrast **Platonism, Aristotelianism, and Neo-Platonism** — i.e., how are they similar and how are they different?
2. **What is time**, according to Augustine?
3. How do Augustine and Aquinas understand **creation and God's relation to creation**?
4. Describe the **movement of Greek thought** to the Christian West, and the points of agreement and conflict that Christianity found with Plato, Aristotle, and Neo-Platonism.
5. What is the **problem of universals**, and why was it important? Be able to describe the problem and the possible solutions.
6. Be able to discuss the relationship between **faith and reason**, as understood by as many of the following as possible: Augustine, Averroes (Ibn-Rushd), Maimonides, Aquinas, and Ockham.
7. What is **negative theology**? What arguments support this?
8. Discuss the concepts of knowledge, personal survival, and the Agent Intellect for **Avicenna** (Ibn-Sina).
9. How does Aquinas argue against “those who say that the existence of God, being self-evident cannot be demonstrated”?
10. Be able to describe and critique Aquinas attempt to prove **God's existence**.
11. Why does **Ockham** emphasize divine omnipotence, and what does this omnipotence imply?
12. Discuss **Meister Eckhart's** understanding of the relationship between God and humans.
13. What is **Pico della Mirandola's** understanding of the place and status of human beings?