

## Philosophy 23: Exam 4

Using the course retrospective and any other materials from the course answer #1 or #2 and #3 or #4. Can be done in approximately 6-8 pages total for the exam. Keep it to no more than 10 pages.

1. Having arrived at this point in the semester, what do you think is at the core of religious experience and what is the relation of this to any claims people make about their religions? Briefly recount how each of the following played a role in your thinking pro or con: Eliade, Kingsley, Miller, Taliaferro, New Atheists, Guerriere, Buddhism. (*Not required* but take a look at the introduction to Steinbock's: **Phenomenology and Mysticism** and see if it helps things jell a bit more about all this) (3-4 pages)
2. What value does the thinking of the new atheists have? What are the limits and drawbacks? Do you think Guerriere improves the debate or radically changes it by arguing that "In the end, the only tenable positions are theism and nontheism: critical experience and the lack of it." "The lack of an experience is not the experience of a lack." What does this mean and why does it purportedly show that agnosticism and atheism are uncritical and untenable? According to Guerriere, why do speculative arguments for or against theism fail in principle? How would the new atheists and Guerriere agree about much of religion in that Guerriere says religion is subject to fraud, superstition, mystification, ideology, illusion, etc. (falsity for/in/of Religion)? Yet Guerriere like Miller is a theist. Why should their arguments give pause to both theists and atheists that they are missing something? (*Not required* but take a look at the introduction to Steinbock's: **Phenomenology and Mysticism** and see if it helps things jell a bit more about all this) (3-4 pages)
3. A) Briefly state the central features of Buddhism, Four Noble Truths, 8-fold path, three characters of reality, and dependent origination (simply state what this is, not its complexity). What is the basic condition or need found in all religions and how is Buddhism a response to this? (1-2 pages)  
B) In one or two sentences each for most of these, but no more than a paragraph, answer the following:
  1. What is the Buddhist view of faith and supernatural revelation? How would faith be an obstacle to nirvana or liberation?
  2. How are nirvana, critical thinking, and objective fact related?
  3. What was the Buddha's stance on metaphysics and theory?
  4. In what way does Buddhism see truth as ambiguous (theory of two truths)? (What are conventional truth and convenient designators versus objective truth?)
  5. The idea of karma is historically intrinsic to Buddhism. Is it philosophically or religiously intrinsic? Would it be possible to reject it without giving up Buddhism?
  6. What is the significance of Buddhism's "atheism" or "polytheism"?
  7. What does "I" refer to? What are the five skandhas? What is it we mistake for a self?
  8. What is the paradox of liberation?
  9. What is the relation of philosophy and meditation in Buddhism?
4. What is existential suffering as opposed to physical pain and emotional suffering? Why is that the core issue? What is the relation of this to the doctrines of no self (anatman) and impermanence (anicca)? Why is the claim that the self is a fiction central to Buddhism and to liberation and what are the central arguments that the self is a convenient designator? How does this provide the basis for Buddhist ethics? (3-4 pages)