First-Year Comprehensive Examination Reading Lists

At the conclusion of the first year of study, Ph.D. students will be examined in each of the three historical periods: early, medieval, and modern. The following bibliographies, each of which includes approximately 2000 pages of primary text and a selection of secondary texts, will provide the basis for each exam.

The purpose of the first-year exams is three-fold, to assess students’ familiarity with:

1) The major historical and theological issues, events, and figures of each period.
2) The broad historical and theological themes that bring cohesion to each period and separate one period from the next.
3) The historiographical tradition associated with each period of study.

Each exam will be developed by the instructor(s) of the relevant survey course and will consist of three questions. One exam question will touch on a theological theme presented by the various texts listed below, one question will deal with an issue of historiography appropriate to the period, and the third will be crafted at the discretion of the instructor(s).

Students will have a total of two hours within which to respond to their choice of two of the three questions for each of the three periods. Hence, the length of the entire exam is six hours, which can be divided up over one work week (five days). First-year exams must be scheduled in the second or third week of April.
I. Early Christianity:


II. Medieval Christianity:


Rabanus Maurus [attrib.]. The Life of Saint Mary Magdalene and of Her Sister Saint Martha: A


III. Modern Christianity:


