Second-Year Comprehensive Examination Reading Lists

At the conclusion of the second year of study, Ph.D. students will be examined in one area of specialization as defined by their major field. Three options are possible: early, medieval, and modern. The following bibliographies will provide the basis for each exam. The purpose of the second year exam is to assess students’ fluency with the larger scholarly discussion within the area of specialization.

Hence, the focus is on secondary texts, which presumes the primary texts of the first year exam. To prepare for the exam, students should be prepared to address the following aspects as related to the texts on the respective bibliographies:

1. Author: How do particular authors fit into the general historiographies of the period? In other words, how does the author map (i.e., academic training, religious affiliation, other publications, etc.)?
2. Audience: for whom is the text written and why?
3. Argument: even if lacking a clearly defined thesis, what is the text’s argument?
4. Approach: what are the historiographical, methodological and theological rationales that provide the foundation for the arguments?
5. Assessment: how does one critique the text (e.g., evidence, argument(s), method(s), structure, translations, critical apparatus, conclusion(s), etc.)? Has the author overlooked something? Misread evidence? Made unsubstantiated assumptions? Does the argument support the conclusion?
6. Advancement: how does the text change the understanding of the topic? How does the argument move the conversation of historical theology forward?

At least three professors within the area of specialization will administer and grade the exams. Faculty will create the exam questions within the framework of six aspects above. Students will have a total of four hours within which to respond to their choice of two of the three questions. The exam can be divided up over one work week (five days), and must be scheduled in the first or second week of April. The targeted outcome from the second year exam will be a confident fluency with the designated area of specialization that will be needed for 1) dissertation research, 2) future teaching, and 3) job interviews.
I. Early Christianity:


**Note:** You are responsible for two essays (one in French and the other in German) that pertain to your research interests. Please confirm your essays with your examination committee.
II. Medieval Christianity:


III. Modern Christianity:


Note: As a supplement to the following required reading, students must select an additional 500 pages of text from at least three secondary sources of their own choosing. These supplemental texts are to be approved by their directors.