



Old Western Culture

A Christian Approach to the Great Books

Year 3: Christendom

Unit 3

The Medieval Mind

Aquinas and Dante



A ROMAN ROADS MEDIA *Video Course*

Exam Answer Key

*Please Note: This exam may be periodically updated, expanded, or revised.
Download the latest revision at www.RomanRoadsMedia.com/materials
Version 1.0.0.*

NOTES FOR PARENT OR TEACHER

GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS:

- Have the student answer all questions in full sentences.
- Exam should take 45 to 90 minutes. Do not allow more than 2 hours.
- Feel free to allow the student more paper, or to type the answers on a computer.
- This is a closed-book exam. If typing the answers, no Internet access allowed.

POINT SYSTEM

This exam consists of ten questions, valued at 8–12 points each, for a total of 100 points.

Two extra credit questions are worth 5 points each. If a student answers correctly to all questions, as well as the bonus questions then he or she will have scored 110%. Partial credit (e.g., 5/10 points) may be given if the student correctly answers part of the question, but misses some important elements. Points lost on the main exam can be recouped by answering the bonus questions correctly.

HOW TO GRADE

Because the exam consists of essay questions, it will be both harder to answer and harder to grade compared to multiple choice exams. However, it allows the student to think through what he has learned in a deeper and more meaningful way and aids in long-term retention and more useful application. For example, you will find that a student who is required to answer essay questions will more easily integrate what he has learned into his general knowledge and able to use it in informal conversation.

Since these are not multiple choice, *answers will vary*. This answer key provides sample correct responses for each question, but it is very possible that a varying answer may still be correct. If you have followed along with the video and interacted with your student throughout the term, you should be able to determine if a certain variation on the answer is a correct one. If you are truly not sure, sit down with your student and figure out the correct answer together. You can also submit questions by sending an email to info@romanroadsmedia.com.

Also, we purposefully created short and concise answers in this answer key. We expect most student answers to be longer, though this is not a requirement. Many of these questions could be an entire paper topic, and we would encourage students display as much of their knowledge as they can on the paper. This is also why we encourage the parents or teacher to allow the student to type out the answers.



HOW TO STUDY FOR THE TEST

Have your student read through his or her notes from throughout the term as general preparation, as well as study the answers from the workbook questions. These questions will be familiar to the student who has worked through all questions in their workbook.

THE A AND B EXAMS

This course includes two exams, designated A and B. Although there is some overlap, many of the questions will be different, but equivalent. These tests may be used in a couple of ways. One way is to use exam A as a practice exam, open or closed book, and exam B as the graded, closed-book exam. Exam B could also be used as a “second chance” exam if exam A didn’t go as well as the student had hoped.

There is flexibility here, and the parent or teacher is free to choose if and how to use the extra exam.

“MY STUDENT IS HAVING TROUBLE GETTING 100%!”

This can prove a frustration with essay exams. One thing to watch out for is that there *is* variation in correct answers. Read the “How to Grade” note in the previous page for more information on this.

Another issue is that we have culturally grown accustomed to 100% being the norm for a “good student” and believe that less than 100% indicates a crucial deficiency. But 100% in the classical Latin system is “SCL” (*Summa Cum Laude*), which means “with highest praise.” In the Latin system of grading, SCL is reserved for the student who goes beyond the call of duty, and often even teaches the teacher something. In a system where “good” is 100%, going beyond the call of duty is not incentivized, and good students do not progress. So do not worry if your student gets an 85% —in the Latin system that’s a CH, or *Cum Honore*, with honor —and should be received as such.

QUESTIONS?

If you have any questions, feel free to email us at info@romanroadsmedia.com. We love to hear from our parents and teachers, and look forward to serving you in any way possible!



The Medieval Mind

Exam A Answer Key

ESSAY QUESTIONS

1. Why were Aquinas and Dante the greatest figures of the high Middle Ages? (12 pts)

Aquinas was the greatest theologian, while Dante was the greatest poet. But their greatness extends far past the Middle Ages. Aquinas is a master theologian in all of history, and Dante a master poet. Aquinas in his theology and philosophy and Dante in his poetry created a scholastic and systematic summary of important knowledge as seen by their time.

2. How does Aquinas define faith? (10 pts)

Aquinas defines faith this way: "Faith is a certain foretaste of that knowledge which is to make us happy in the world to come."

3. For Aquinas, what was theology about? What does it mean to really understand a thing? (10 pts)

Theology for Aquinas is about looking at the nature of things, primarily in the light of their causes. For Aquinas, to really understand a thing is to study its cause or causes. The ultimate cause of everything is God.

4. According to Aquinas, what are all actions and movements of every creature and being directed to? What is their end or goal? (10 pts)

According to Aquinas, all actions and movements of every creature are directed to the divine goodness as their end.

5. Where does Aquinas say that final happiness and misery reside? (10 pts)

Aquinas says that final happiness and misery can not be found in this life, because everything in this life is a means to an ultimate end. Even painful circumstances can be an agent of good toward a man who receives it well, and even a good circumstance can be an agent of evil to a man who uses it poorly. So ending in happiness or ending in misery can only be seen after this life ends. Everything in this life only leads along the way to one or the other ending.

6. Why must Dante go through all of Space (Hell, Purgatory, and Heaven)? (10 pts)

Because Dante is lost, he must regain his perspective and understanding of the universe and himself in relation to God. In order to do that, he must see the consequences of sins in Hell, the consequences of repentance in Purgatory, and the consequences of union with God in Heaven.

7. According to Dante, what four unexpected things are responsible for Hell? (8 pts)

According to Dante, justice, wisdom, power, and love are responsible for Hell.



8. Who are the three greatest sinners in Dante's cosmology? Who did they betray, and what is their punishment? (10 pts)

Judas Iscariot betrayed Christ, and Brutus and Cassius murdered Julius Caesar. They are lodged in the mouths of Lucifer, who chews them infinitely.

9. From Dante's perspective, what is Purgatory? What separates the torments of Purgatory from those of Hell? (10 pts)

Purgatory, according to Dante, is the place where not the penalty, but the stain of sin is purged in the afterlife. The difference is that those in Purgatory know they are going to Heaven and have some sort of community and are singing praises and hymns.

10. What does Dante tell us about the Ninth Heaven, the Primum Mobile? (10 pts)

Dante tells us that this central heaven is in the mind of God which kindles the love that turns the universe, and pours movement outward so that the rest of universe moves around it.

EXTRA CREDIT

11. How does Aquinas explain God governing man's will? And how does Aquinas reconcile this with freedom of choice? (5 pts) (BONUS FOR EXTRA CREDIT. 5 Pts.)

Aquinas says that natural things have tendencies inherent in their nature, and that will is a thing inherent in God that resides in man. ("the act of the will is from God alone, for He alone is the cause of a rational nature endowed with will.") In this way Aquinas reconciles God moving a man's will, with freedom of choice. He says "Therefore, if God moves man's will, this is evidently not opposed to freedom of choice, just as God's activity in natural things is not contrary to their nature."

12. What does Virgil say drives all human behavior? (5 pts)

Virgil says all human behavior is driven by love—even vice or wickedness is driven by some kind of misdirected love.



The Medieval Mind

Exam B Answer Key

ESSAY QUESTIONS

1. What was the intended purpose of the *Summa Theologica*? (12 pts)

Aquinas says the *Summa Theologica* was a work made for beginners to prepare themselves for college. This work was meant for freshmen to have read through to prepare them for classes with Aquinas.

2. How did the rediscovery of Aristotle's *Logic* in the 11th century give rise to a rebirth of scholastic efforts in all areas of knowledge? (10 pts)

Logic is a tool by which we can organize our knowledge and learn to think validly, which skills equip us to understand and grapple with everything in the world around us.

3. For Aquinas, what was theology about? What does it mean to really understand a thing? (10 pts)

Theology for Aquinas is about looking at the nature of things, primarily in the light of their causes. For Aquinas, to really understand a thing is to study its cause or causes. The ultimate cause of everything is God.

4. How does Aquinas define evil? (10 pts)

Aquinas says that evil is the privation of perfect being; a thing is called evil if it lacks a perfection it ought to have.

5. What does Aquinas say is the function of providence? (8 pts)

Aquinas says "the function of providence is not to destroy, but to save the nature of the beings governed."

6. According to Aquinas, how can we become more like God? (10 pts)

According to Aquinas, learning, fulfilling our capacity to know, is part of how we become more like God.

7. Why must Dante go through all of Space (Hell, Purgatory, and Heaven)? (10 pts)

Because Dante is lost, he must regain his perspective and understanding of the universe and himself in relation to God. In order to do that, he must see the consequences of sins in Hell, the consequences of repentance in Purgatory, and the consequences of union with God in Heaven.



8. According to Dante, Who truly rules Hell? (10 pts)

God is the King of Hell—the prisoners do not rule the prison, but the warden does. Satan is the lowest inmate, not a King. God does not abandon Hell to be ruled by Satan.

9. As what shape did Dante portray Hell? (10 pts)

He portrayed Hell as an inverted cone, with the narrow bottom of the cone at the center of the earth, and the top of the cone under Jerusalem. The rings slowly descend toward the center of Hell.

10. What ideas do we inherit from the Scholastic mindset? (10 pts)

Scholasticism was an attempt to organize and gather together into a systematic and coherent whole all of human knowledge, using logic and rhetoric. The Christians in that age pursued these goals because, as they pointed out, God is the creator of all things and all things are connected by being created by Him.

EXTRA CREDIT

11. How does Aquinas explain that God's permission of evil is still consistent with his divine goodness? (BONUS FOR EXTRA CREDIT. 5 Pts.)

Aquinas explains that without evil, certain things would not "be governed by divine providence in accord with their nature;" basically that smaller evils in good things are preferable in God's design to the greater evil of not being ultimately perfected by Him. He says "if evil were completely excluded from things, much good would be rendered impossible. Consequently it is the concern of divine providence, not to safeguard all beings from evil, but to see to it that the evil which arises is ordained to some good." Aquinas basically says that God's purposes are all toward more good, and his permission of evil is only as it lends itself towards His desire for more and greater good.

12. In Dante's cosmology, what is the main difference between Purgatory and Hell? (BONUS FOR EXTRA CREDIT. 5 Pts.)

In Dante's cosmology, the torments are similar in Purgatory and Hell; the attitude of the sinners in each is the main difference.