

1. What is “philosophy of religion”? How does it differ from comparative religion?

This is the kind of question that can be answered with the “genus/species” model: what is the “genus” to which philosophy of religion and comparative religion both belong? What specific differences are there between them?

2. Contrast the two currently dominant worldviews: naturalism and theism.

The operative word for this question is “contrast”; it can best be tackled by a short description of both worldviews, then explaining a list of the differences between them.

3. What are the various “species” of theism?

Obviously, another “genus”/species question.

4. What did Karl Marx mean by his claim: “Religion is the opiate of the people”?

This is a “What does it mean?” question. What the examiner is looking for is more than just the normal, superficial explanation of what an “opiate” is. What was the social setting in which Marx said this? How were opiates used and viewed in his society?

5. What is “irreducible complexity” and why is it key to the claims of “intelligent design”?

Another “definition” question. The second part of the question asks you to locate the topic *irreducible complexity* in the argument used by advocates of “intelligent design”. The important word is “key”: it plays a *central* or “key” role in that system of thinking.

6. What potential scientific problems are generated by the claim of “irreducible complexity” in natural systems?

The word “problems” is a trigger-word for naming and explaining possible *results* of this position in one area: “scientific”; i.e. what are possible consequences in the realm of natural science?

7. Contrast the possible place of “intelligent design” in the scientific *discussion* with teaching it in the scientific *canon*.

“Contrast” calls for explaining the place “intelligent design” could have in science *discussion* vs. the role it could have in the *canon* of a scientific discipline. (Of course, you have to know the difference between the “discussion” and the “canon” of a particular field!)

8. Do religious assertions make “statements”? Defend your answer.

To answer this question you need to clarify briefly what philosophers mean by “statements” and then state whether or not you think religious assertions fit that category and explain the reason for your answer.

9. What does the statement by Willard Van Orman Quine mean: “No entity without identity!” What implications does it have in philosophy of religion?

This question is asking for a *definition* (What does... *mean*?) and the possible impact that has on some area in philosophy of religion.

10. Explain briefly the issue of the “coherence” of a worldview as it relates to theism and naturalism.

Define what “coherence” means in respect to a worldview – then explain what impact that could have on theism or naturalism.

11. Explain briefly the difference between the *univocal*, *equivocal* and *analogical* use of language in “God-talk”.

The *genus* is “God-talk”. What are different “species” of God-talk and how do they differ from each other?

12. Discuss Dan Brown’s statement (Langdon in *The Da Vinci Code*):

“Sophie, *every* faith in the world is based on fabrication. That is the definition of *faith* – acceptance of that which we imagine to be true, that which we cannot prove. Every religion describes God through metaphor, allegory, and exaggeration, from the early Egyptians through modern Sunday School. Metaphors are a way to help our minds process the unprocessable. The problems arise when we begin to believe literally our own metaphors.”

- a) Analyze this statement. What *key words and phrases* carry a deeper connotation? What is being implied by their use?
- b) In what way(s) do you agree or disagree with this statement?

There are at least 5 or 6 “loaded” words and phrases in this text that convey a deeper message than you find on the surface of it. You need to identify at least a couple of them and then explain what “sub-surface” message is being sent. That will outline the author’s view of what religion *is*...)

There may be points you agree with and some you disagree with. List them and explain why.

13. Discuss the statement: “Human beings are hard-wired for religion.” What issues, if any, does this raise in the theism vs. naturalism debate?

“Discuss” is a trigger-word that means you should *explain* what the statement means. “Issues” is a trigger-word that tells you the examiner wants you to list and explain the *consequences* for the debate.