

## CHRISTENDOM GRADUATE SCHOOL MA COMPREHENSIVE EXAM INFORMATION

The comprehensive exam is the culmination of the student's work for the Master of Arts degree in Theological Studies. It examines the student on his knowledge from the required courses and from readings in the Graduate School Bibliography, and on his ability to synthesize this knowledge and to discuss and explain it. Students should be prepared to give relevant, complete, and well-organized answers to questions. Candidates must have completed all required courses and must have resolved all incompletes in order to register for the exam. Students who are not sure of their status may check with Maura by calling the office or emailing her at [maura.mcmahon@christendom.edu](mailto:maura.mcmahon@christendom.edu).

The exam has two parts, the written exam and the oral exam, which are taken on different days, normally at the Alexandria campus. The first part of the written exam, normally taken from 10 am until noon, covers the core curriculum. Students answer one question in Scripture (chosen from a list of 15), one question in philosophy or moral theology (chosen from a list of 15) and two questions in dogmatic theology (again chosen from a list of 15). There is a break from noon until 1 pm for lunch: students are encouraged to bring a lunch with them. The afternoon portion of the written exam contains three essays, from a choice of approximately 15, on topics in the student's concentration. **Students are encouraged to bring laptops for the written exam, and will use college computers if they do not have laptops.** They may also bring a Bible (with no writing in it) for reference during the exam, if they wish.

For the oral portion of the exam, each student is examined by a panel of at least three professors for about one-half hour, on various topics from the core curriculum and the student's concentration. The whole exam (written and oral combined) is graded "pass" or "fail" by the panel of professors, and the student is notified of his grade in writing within a few days.

Students who are traveling from far away to take the exam may contact the Registrar to schedule the written portion of their exams within a day or two of the oral portion to avoid a long stay in Virginia.

There may be a special session of the comps exam at the Front Royal campus during the summer if there are sufficient summer residents desiring to take the exam.

Students who wish to register for the comprehensive exam may do so by submitting the registration form and fee to the Registrar at least six weeks before the scheduled exam. The form is found on the Graduate Student Resource Center of the website, at [graduate.christendom.edu/about-us/graduate-student-resource-center](http://graduate.christendom.edu/about-us/graduate-student-resource-center).

Studying for the comprehensive exam should focus on class notes, old exams, textbooks, and the Bibliography. Please see the "Christendom Graduate School Study Guide for Comps Exam" for a list of suggested topics to study.