‘THE WESTERN MIND’

EXAM QUESTIONS

(One Hour and a Half)

Please answer three questions

1. What is the nature of Charles Taylor's critique of contemporary Western moral philosophy? Do you agree with him on the basis of the texts you have studied?

2. Either: How does Plato understand life before birth?

Or: Where does Plato think the source of true knowledge lies?

3. Either: What do you think Aristotle means by 'being'?

Or: What role does 'reason' play in Aristotle's thinking about the human?

4. Either: What are the implications of Augustine naming God as 'unchanging Being'? Is this Platonism, Christianity, both or neither?

Or: How does Thomas Aquinas link metaphysics with the Christian doctrine of God the Creator?

5. Either: What kind of theory of language emerges from Eckhart's Sermon 5?

Or: How does philosophy change when a medieval thinker produces philosophy in the form of a spoken sermon and in the German language?

6. Why does Descartes' philosophy begin in radical doubt and how good is this as a place to start?

7. How does Kant define 'enlightenment' in ‘What is Enlightenment?’. [Please do not choose the second question if you answered the essay question on Kant]

8. Either: Set out your understanding of Heidegger’s metaphysics as developed in his Introduction to Metaphysics.

Or: Analyze some of the ways in which Levinas or Derrida, or both, critically responded to Kant’s metaphysics.

[Please do not choose either of these questions if you answered the essay question on Heidegger]

9. Discuss how any one modern Western philosopher has influenced any one modern Western religious thinker.

10. Compare and contrast any one Western thinker you have studied on this course with any one Chinese thinker. [Please do not choose this question if you answered the essay question on this topic]

11. Either: Defend the idea that there is a distinctively Western ‘mind’, and define its characteristics on the basis of the texts you have studied.

Or: Offer a refutation of the idea that there is really a distinctively Western mind.