**Gods, Myths, Religions In a Secular Age**

This first exam will draw from the readings, lectures, films, and all course content from January 24th through (and including) February 21st . Below are some key questions or themes that will aid you in your preparation. These should serve as a study guide, and should remind you of the various topics that we covered in the course. Please be sure to review your readings and notes.

Remember, if you can answer these questions, and address these terms **substantively and coherently**, then you should be prepared for the exam. Please make sure that as you are preparing your answers, you are both presenting the **factual content and analysis**.

Good luck, and I hope that you are proud of the amount of material that you have mastered.

**Just a reminder: The exam will take place on Friday, February 22nd. The exam will be structured to take between 65-80 minutes. You will have an 80-minute time limit.**

**Exams are based on the honor system. They are intended to be closed note, closed book, and are to be taken individually.**

1. What is religion? How can it be defined? Can it be defined?
2. Why study religion?
3. How has the study of religion changed?
4. According to Solomon in *Flight from Death*, what is the death-anxiety? What does it have to do with religion?
5. According to *Flight from Death*, what is death anxiety and why does religion exist as its remedy? Is this a compelling argument? Why or why not?
6. According to *Flight from Death*, what is the meaning/importance of death rituals? Religious rituals in general?
7. According to *Flight from Death,* what is the relationship between religion and culture?
8. According to *Flight from Death*, what is the difference between symbolic and literal immortality? Explain and provide examples.
9. What does Tylor say about psychic unity? Why is this important to his theory?
10. What is the “doctrine of survivals”? Explain in your own words.
11. Explain Tylor’s theory of religion (pages 23-25)
12. What are totems? Why does Frazer find them important?
13. What is the argument of Frazer’s *Golden Bough*? Explain.
14. What is animism? Explain.
15. What is magic? Explain.
16. Explain the three critiques of Tylor and Frazer’s works (pages 42-44)
17. What do you think of each of their approaches?
18. What questions do you still have about their theories? Explain.
19. What does Taylor argue in his article, “The Religion and Politics of Avatar”?
20. How is animism presented in the film *Avatar*?
21. Where and how is religion depicted in the Avatar?
22. How is ritual presented in Avatar? And, what function does it serve?
23. Based on your reading and understanding of totems, find an example of a totem in everyday life.
24. What in Freud’s early life may have been relevant to his theories on religion?
25. What is Freud’s theory of religion?
26. According to Freud, what are the basic human drives? Why is this important?
27. What is the Oedipus Complex? Why is this significant in terms of Freud’s religious theories?
28. What does Freud argue in *Totem and Taboo*?
29. What does Freud argue in *The Future of an Illusion*? How is this important for understanding Freud’s theories? The intersections of religion and psychoanalysis?
30. What does Freud argue in *Moses and Monotheism*?
31. Review pages 71-72 on Freud and Religion
32. Explain critiques of Freud’s theory of religion?
33. Who is Émile Durkheim?
34. What is Durkheim’s argument in terms of the relationship between religion and society?
35. According to Durkheim, what is society?
36. For Durkheim, what are the significance of industrialization and the French Revolution on society? Religion?
37. What is anomie? How does this relate to religion?
38. What does Durkheim argue in his book, *The Division of Labor*?
39. What does Durkheim argue in his work, *Suicide*?
40. What does Durkheim argue in *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*? How does this inform his views on religion and society?
41. What are the sacred and profane?
42. According to Durkheim, what is a totem? Why is a totem important for society? What is the relationship between totem and ritual? (think about the current “flag” controversy)
43. What is the importance of the cult/cultus for Durkheim? What are the cult/cultus?
44. Why are rituals important for society?
45. Durkheim argues that society needs to maintain stasis. How is this achieved? What are challenges to this?
46. What is functionalism? Why is it important to Durkheim’s theories?
47. Explain critiques of Durkheim.
48. How do Durkheim’s theories differ from Freud’s?
49. Think about the school bus clip
50. ( <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=89fApjIW0mA> ) that we viewed. How does it relate to Durkheim’s theories? What does it illuminate?
51. Think about the segment of the London Olympics opening ceremony that we viewed (minutes 13-34 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4As0e4de-rI&t=13m40s> )

What does it illuminate in terms of Durkheim’s theories? In terms of Marx’s theories of alienation?