

Dear GOE takers:

May 27, 1994

Several students have asked for a copy of my GOE questions and answers, as well as a few hints for preparing for the test. Here they are and I hope they are of help to you.

Preparation:

I literally did absolutely nothing to prepare for the week of exams, other than rearrange the books in my library. Once the Fall Quarter had ended, I spent the time relaxing and enjoying the break with my wife and children. I took Sue Sommers advice. Get plenty of rest and do something, anything, except read a theology book. The reasoning for this approach is sound. The GOEs are not designed to test you about the things you know nothing about, but rather they are intended to test your knowledge on those things that you do know. At some point you have to put your trust and faith into yourself and the education you have received here at SWTS. It is a good, solid, well rounded theological education, that is able to stand on its own merits. Do not fret about the courses you did not have time to take, nobody has time to take them all. I repeat, studying for the GOEs does not provide any benefit, unless you believe it puts you at ease. If that is the case stop reading now. Anything else I would have to say to you wouldn't matter. You're ready to start on the test questions, so go ahead.

For the rest of you, developing a strategy for taking the test is important. You need to know in advance what your limits and strengths are. How much time will you need to research? How much time will you need to write? How much time will be left for proof reading? Obviously the important word here is time. There is a finite amount of it, and it should not be wasted. You must remember that this is not the same thing as turning in a final copy paper for

one of your classes. If you are lucky, you might have the chance to read through your answer once to correct glaring grammatical errors, and then go through it once with a spell-checker. That is the reality of the situation.

With that in mind, for a three hour type question, the following was my strategy:

I. Research Section (45 minutes)

1. read the entire question carefully to determine intended purpose of the section,
2. spend no more than 45 minutes pulling books from your library for source material,
3. mark the pulled books with post-em papers for easy reference,
4. lay the books out in three piles, introduction section, main body section, closing section,
5. start writing on your computer after 45 minutes have passed, you can no longer afford to spend time searching for things you do not know.

II. Writing Section (2 hours and 30 minutes)

1. Compose on the computer, you don't have time to write a detailed outline,
2. make sure you have answered the question, nothing will hurt you more than if you try to rewrite the question,
3. read through your answer to make sure it flows well,

III. Proof, Print, and Turn In (15 minutes)

1. run it through the spell checker,
2. print that sucker out and turn it in on time.

One final thing: I never went back and read any of my answers once I turned them in to Newland. I felt it was better to stay focused on the next section rather than worry about what I should have done on the previous one. In fact, I never once looked at any of the answers again until the Examining Chaplains scores and replies came back in March. Give it your best shot, and leave it at that. As you will see from my answers, there are many mistakes in them. The readers are looking for an overall impression. The little composition mistakes don't matter nearly as much as the major heresies that are sometimes put forth by students as doctrine.

Best of luck to each of you, and may you survive the week of GOEs with your humor still intact.
