

Kathy Walker Political Theory PhD Comprehensive Examination
Major Field

September 2017

Answer one question in each section.

I. Approaches

1. What does it mean to be a historian of political thought or to take an historical approach to political theory? Compare and contrast Foucault, Skinner, and Tully on this question.
2. What is the meaning of oppression and which thinkers might you use to frame this concept in your approach to political theory? Who provides the best framework and why?
3. To what extent are the anti-oppression readings in this section equipped to address the specific context of settler-colonialism and Indigenous decolonization? Feel free to draw on your “comparative Indigenous political theory” list to engage the literature in your anti-oppression list.

II. Michel Foucault

1. “Michel Foucault’s conceptualization of power is totalizing and leaves little room for human agency and thus has little to offer emancipatory politics.” Analyze and discuss the validity of this claim.
2. What does genealogy mean for Foucault? Discuss in relation to Foucault’s own writing as well as at least one interpreter of Foucault.
3. Compare and contrast Nietzsche and Foucault and the extent to which either one is useful to political theorists.