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**Political Theory Comprehensive Questions (major field)**  
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**CHOOSE ONE OF THREE**

**I. Approaches to Political Theory:**

1. What kinds of approaches within western political theory limit its capacities to frame problems for diverse and plural societies? What kinds of approaches serve as resources? Discuss, referencing at least three thinkers.
2. What should we make of Alasdair MacIntyre's argument in 1983 about "The Indispensability of Political Theory" from the perspective of key problems and concerns of our current historical moment, including such things as global warming, new understandings of power, and new thinking about colonialism, difference, and inequality?
3. Do recent theories about cosmopolitanism call for a radical rethinking of the project of political theory – e.g., with respect to assumptions about nation-states, cross-cultural understanding, and political practice – or, more modestly, do these theories simply call for a modest extensions or re-working of well-established approaches to political theory (e.g., those of Taylor, Arendt, and Ryan).

**CHOOSE ONE OF THREE**

**II. Ricoeur**

1. Explain how Ricoeur's broad ranging work on phenomenology, hermeneutics, recognition, and narrative might provide resources for theorizing the potentials of mutual understanding, especially across the most intractable kinds of diversity and difference. Engage at least three of Ricoeur's works and/or areas of thinking.
2. Explain what you take to be the key features of Ricoeur's contribution to the study of identity politics broadly construed (i.e., to grasp productively the various ways that social identities are important to politics). Engage at least three of Ricoeur's works and/or areas of thinking.
3. David Couzens Hoy once asked, with special reference to Gadamer's hermeneutical philosophy, "Is Hermeneutics Ethnocentric?" For present purposes, you can ignore Gadamer's approach and focus on Ricoeur's contribution to answer this question: Is Ricoeur's hermeneutics ethnocentric? For instance, how far does it – or can it – take us in the study of cross-cultural political understanding in light of current local and global challenges (e.g., of power, inequality, and religio-politics)? Engage at least three of Ricoeur's works.