

Fundamentals Senior Exam

I. Format

The Senior Exam consists of four questions, three on texts from your list and one that asks you to reflect on your Fundamentals question in conversation with any one of the texts from your list.

The three text questions will be submitted by faculty members. The faculty member who wrote the question you choose will evaluate your essay. Each essay will also be read by another faculty member, usually one with expertise in the text in question. The faculty members will be acquainted with your question statement and will craft a question about the text that is relevant to your intellectual project. **You must answer ONE of these text questions.**

The fourth, “question” question will be formulated either by your adviser or by the Fundamentals program chair, should your adviser not be available. Here, too, the author of the question will be one of the two readers of your essay. **You must answer the “question” question.**

Each answer usually consists of an essay of approximately eight to ten double spaced pages. You must email both essays to the program coordinator at fundamentals@uchicago.edu by the specified time.

You MAY NOT confer with other students or your adviser when you are working on your exam essays.

II. Preparation

The Senior Exam will be distributed by email at **9:00am on Friday of Week 6 of Spring Quarter and is due at 9:00 am the following Monday**. Alternative dates can be arranged if these conflict with important religious obligations.

During Spring Quarter, you must sign up for the Senior Exam reading course, [FNDL 29902](#). This allows you time in your schedule for reading, reviewing and analyzing the six texts on your list and for reflecting upon your question in the light of these six texts.

By Friday of fWeek 1 in Spring Quarter, you must submit your revised question statement to the program coordinator. This is the place to signal to the examiners what kind of question you would like to be asked about each text. It should articulate the most current form of the question and include a brief paragraph regarding each of your texts that explains how you understand the text to relate your question, and whether it poses particular problems or suggests particular avenues for you.

III. Follow-up

As with the Junior Paper, you are encouraged to follow up with the Fundamentals program coordinator and chair about your exam papers. They will also encourage the faculty who read your papers to contact you.

IV. Timeline and To-dos (Spring 2021)

- **Friday of Week 1:** Send the Program Coordinator your finalized Question Statement. This will include the final articulation of your Fundamentals question, an essay (1-2 pages) discussing how

you have come to approach this question, followed by six short paragraphs that name the six texts you have chosen for your Senior Exam and explain their relevance to your overarching question

- **By Friday of Week 3:** Get the appropriate form from your college adviser to register for FNDL 29902. The section number will correspond with the Fundamentals chair; this year, you'll use FNDL 29902 / 20 for Prof. Sternstein.
- **Friday of Week 6:** You will receive your exams by email from the Program Coordinator at 9:00am. Choose one question out of the three text question and write one essay of 8–10 pages in response to it, and another in response to the “question” question. Be sure to include your name and the question number (A, B, C, Q) in the title of each essay.
- **Monday of Week 7:** Submit your essays, either in .doc or .pdf form, by e-mail to the Coordinator on time at 9:00am.
- **Relax and take a day to celebrate;** you're done with the last stage of Fundamentals!

V. FAQ

- **Can I see example exam questions?** Indeed, you can, but be advised that the exams are customized to fit each student's question. Historically, they have been available on the Webpage, but I will send you all a copy.
- **Can grad students or faculty outside of U of C grade my exams?** Ordinarily not. Only U of C faculty are asked to evaluate your responses; usually the faculty are in Fundamentals, although there are exceptions.
- **Can I change the date of my exams?** Generally, no. We make exceptions to accommodate religious obligations or other serious matters that cannot be worked around, but you have to let us know well in advance and make a good case. If you do get permission to reschedule, the new dates will be as close to the official exam times as possible; i.e., a matter of days, not weeks.