Humanities 1301
Discussion Questions for “The Metamorphosis” (first section)

Some of these questions require careful reading, some extrapolation, and some speculation. Find specific details in the text to support your answers and interpretation.

1. What was Gregor’s life like prior to his physical metamorphosis?
   - What was his job like? What do we learn from his thoughts? What do we learn from the behavior and words of the chief clerk?
   - What was Gregor’s personal life like? What does his mother say about it?
   - What do Gregor’s bedroom and possessions tell us about his life?
   - What does Gregor’s relationship seem to be with the members of his family?

2. How does Gregor react to the discovery that he has turned into a giant insect? What is he preoccupied with? What are his main concerns?

3. How does Gregor seem to feel about his metamorphosis? How can you explain his attitude?

4. How do Gregor’s parents and the chief clerk react to Gregor’s transformation? Why do they assume that this giant bug is Gregor? (Much Later in the story, Gregor’s sister wonders if it is really Gregor, but no one else suggests this.)

5. Try interpreting this story in a variety of ways:
   - As a look into Gregor’s inner psyche (and as a look into the psyche of modern man),
   - As a comment on a crushing, impersonal world,
   - As very dark comedy;
   - Your own interpretation Based on your interpretation, what does this story say to you about life, about people, etc.?

6. Kafka creates a frightening, surreal world in which people can turn into insects and chief clerks come to a person’s house when they are an hour late. What is the effect on the reader? Why might Kafka have chosen this technique rather than a realistic style to convey his ideas?