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Studies of Religion

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STUDIES OF RELIGION

In 1998, 7974 candidates sat for the Studies of Religion examinations, of whom 689 presented for 2 Unit and 7285 for 1 Unit.

Both courses are based on the same syllabus and the two examination papers are identical, with the exception of the second question in the 2 Unit paper on Aboriginal belief systems and spirituality. This study is part of the requirements of the Higher School Certificate course. All other questions are marked together, using the same scale. Any questions of different numerical value are adjusted mathematically afterwards. Each response is double marked by two different people. Any discrepancies that appear are then re-marked independently by a Senior Marker.

It should be remembered that the examination is based on the Outcomes listed for each topic in the Studies of Religion syllabus. The wording of questions is a direct reflection of these. The marks reflect the quality of each response in comparison with the quality of all other responses in terms of the degree to which they demonstrate achievement of the syllabus Objectives and Outcomes.

Marking schemes are developed which specify the characteristics of responses that fall into the following five categories:

A	Excellent, approximately the top	10%
B	Above average, approximately the next	20%
C	Average, approximately the middle	40%
D	Below average, approximately the next	20%
E	Well below average, approximately the bottom	10%

Candidates are warned of the consequences of prepared responses. These seldom gain high marks and were particularly evident this year in the Rites of Passage question. It is pleasing to see that more candidates are now recognising some variants within religious traditions; there are still many, however, who look at the religious tradition as a whole. They do not receive high marks.

Unfortunately, there is still a significant number of candidates who attempt questions that they obviously have not studied. They seldom gain high marks, making only superficial comments, which are lacking in examples and are without obvious understanding.

Questions can be quite specific. Furthermore, the expression of religion in Australia today is a key syllabus Objective, which implies the need for classroom discussion of the contribution of religion to significant contemporary social situations, even if these are not explicitly named in the syllabus.

The quality of the examination responses continues to rise, especially in Section III, Cross-Religion Studies.

General Criteria for Assigning Categories of Marks

Candidates should seek to develop the ability to write responses that have the following general characteristics:

1. Clear demonstration of achievement of the Outcomes on which the question is based.
2. Breadth and depth of knowledge.
3. Analysis and evaluation of religious issues.
4. Communication of a coherent point of view using terminology appropriate to the question.
5. The use of evidence drawn from a variety of appropriate sources, especially the writings and oral stories of religious traditions or belief systems.
6. Discernment of the demands of questions and their parts; that is, responses of the length and depth consistent with the wording of the question and its mark value.
7. Demonstration of the same degree of objectivity as is expected in other subjects in the Human Society and Its Environment key learning area.
8. Treatment of religious traditions (and, in 2 Unit, Aboriginal Belief Systems) on their own terms.
9. Evidence of relating religious beliefs and practices to the everyday life of believers.
10. In the compulsory questions, treatment of religion in Australia which reflects the breadth of religious expression evident in Australia's multicultural society.
11. In questions on Cross-Religion Studies, an understanding of the aspect of religion around which the question is based and a proportionate treatment of how it relates to two religious traditions.
12. Treatment of the subject matter consistent with syllabus expectations, eg no part of the examination invites concentration on a variant of a religious tradition. (This concentration was permissible in relation to certain outcomes of the Religious Traditions questions in the 1993/94 examination format, but did not and does not apply to Cross-Religion Studies.) Where recognition of diverse expressions within religious traditions is relevant to a question in Section III, but is not always the case, direct reference to variants within religious traditions becomes a significant marking criterion.

This report should be read in conjunction with the 1998 Studies of Religion Sample Answer Booklet.

SECTION I — FOUNDATION STUDIES

This question is COMPULSORY.

Question 1

- (a) *List TWO religious traditions present in Australia before or at the time of European settlement (1788).*
- (b) *Name and briefly describe THREE ways in which Christianity influenced the development of the Australian society before Federation (1901).*
- (c) *Choose ONE of the ways you have named in part (b). Describe in detail the influence of Christianity on this aspect of Australian society since 1901.*

For the first time no stimulus material was used here.

- (a) There was a problem with the term ‘religious tradition’. Some candidates confused it with ‘denomination’ or variants, or with particular practices such as ‘the tradition of Christmas’, ‘the tradition of baptism’ or ‘the tradition of marriage’.
- (b) Candidates had great difficulty in interpreting the term ‘before Federation’ and the date 1901. According to many, nothing of a religious nature appeared to happen. They often knew information but expressed it poorly and, sometimes, the words ‘briefly describe’ resulted in a three page answer for a maximum of 3 marks. In both (b) and (c) candidates incorporated ideas and presented material out of chronological sequence.
- (c) Some candidates were limited in the amount of material they could provide. This depended on which topic they chose. Many candidates attempted to describe religious and social welfare in rural Australia in order to answer the question. Apart from the establishment of the Royal Flying Doctor Service, it seems nothing much of a religious nature has happened in rural Australia since 1901.

SECTION II — FOUNDATION STUDIES

In this section 2 Unit candidates attempt two questions, each with a maximum value of 15 marks, and 1 Unit candidates attempt one question, with a minimum value of 10 marks.

2 Unit Only

Question 2: Aboriginal Spirituality

- (a) Briefly describe *THREE* differences between Aboriginal spirituality and non-Aboriginal beliefs and practices.
- (b) Analyse the impact of Christian teaching on Aboriginal belief systems. In your answer, refer to the image below.

(The stimulus material was a painting entitled 'Crucifixion' (1968), by Milingimbi artist, Dawulinyera.)

- (a) This was a particularly challenging question which required candidates to think of 'differences' between Aboriginal spirituality and non-Aboriginal beliefs and practices. Some answers were outstanding.
- (b) The stimulus picture was often misinterpreted. Candidates struggled to find 'hidden meanings' and so lost the general significance. Many candidates did not know the story of the Crucifixion of Christ.

Some candidates interpreted 'Christian impact' to mean 'European impact' and so, although they wrote long and interesting answers, their marks remained in the middle range of 'average' or 'slightly below average'.

Many saw the influence of Christianity on Aboriginal spirituality as being wholly negative. Only the very best candidates were able to describe the positive as well as the negative aspects.

Question 2 (1 Unit) or Question 3 (2 Unit)

(A quotation from Gary D. Bouma, *Many Religions, All Australian* (Melbourne, 1996) was included here.)

Discuss, with reference to the above quotation, the contribution of TWO of the following traditions to the enrichment of Australia's religious landscape since 1945:

- *Judaism*
- *Islam*
- *Hinduism*
- *Christianity*
- *Buddhism.*

Above-average candidates understood the quotation and related it to two of the given traditions. The best candidates were well able to trace change in the religious milieu of Australia since 1945. They were able to point to the emergence of a tolerance which was absent before World War II. They saw the richness of the tapestry in terms of spirituality, worship, architecture, service food,

theatre, customs etc. Some excellent answers chose Christianity and pointed out the variety of cultures and countries from which Christians originated. Some excellent answers made specific reference to particular people, customs, festivals and diversity within the tradition.

Some candidates were able to focus on a specific contribution of two traditions and interpreted 'religious landscape' in a broad way to include literature, academic courses etc. A number pointed out that there had been 'drama' involving some traditions and quoted recent news events.

Most candidates could describe issues concerning immigration and discussed the specific tradition at least at a general level.

Religious traditions other than Christianity were not discussed as well. Very few candidates actually discussed the specifics of the question. The greatest difficulty lay in focusing on the significance of 'since 1945', or in focusing solely on Post World War II immigration. The term 'landscape' was not handled well.

Question 4 (2 Unit) and Question 3 (1 Unit)

In the Australian experience, religion has been a force for both division and unity.

- (a) Name and describe TWO issues that have been sources of religious division.*
 - (b) Outline the commonalities among religions in Australia today. Discuss how these contribute to religious harmony.*
- (a) Part (a) was clearly understood by most candidates and provided no significant difficulty.
- (b) The majority were able to respond clearly, showing understanding of concepts such as sectarianism and secularisation. The better responses reflected a clear understanding of the historical framework, and of the part played by the issue of conscription and Education Acts.

The clarity with which candidates answered the question varied considerably.

Weaker responses confused historical facts or failed to develop any inter-relationship between the points cited.

SECTION III — CROSS-RELIGION STUDIES

Questions in this section carry a maximum value of 30 marks. 2 Unit candidates were required to select TWO questions, while 1 Unit candidates were required to select one question.

These questions have different numbers in the 2 Unit and 1 Unit papers but will be identified here according to their 2 Unit numeration and their names in the syllabus.

Question 5: Rites of Passage (2 Unit) Question 4 (1 Unit)

- (a) Describe how religious rites of passage transform the status of believers.*
- (b) Choose ONE rite of passage common to TWO religious traditions you have studied. Outline the religious beliefs of the community and participants that are expressed through this rite.*
- (c) Choose a rite of passage different from that chosen in part (b). Analyse ways in which this religious rite reflects common aspects of human experience. Refer to TWO religious traditions in your answer.*

This was the most popular question in this section.

Many candidates still ignored variants of religious traditions or failed to acknowledge or describe the variety of beliefs and practices relevant to the examples they chose, thus detracting from the quality of their response.

Above average candidates were able to discuss some variants relevant to the Orthodox tradition. Despite this, there was still a lot of ignorance concerning the Christian tradition such as acknowledging that marriage was a sacrament and discussing Catholicism as being the Christian tradition.

A large number of candidates were unable to make the link between beliefs and the practice of the ritual.

Part (a) was well answered, with many candidates using Van Gennep's model. Above average candidates gave clear and detailed descriptions. Better answers stood out clearly, demonstrating the transformation in the status of believers.

Part (a) was generally answered well. An interesting range of examples was chosen from a variety of religious traditions. Most responses were based on depth of knowledge; many, however, followed a pre-prepared pattern of 'define, describe and compare'. This was particularly evident in part (c) where a number of students failed to apply their knowledge to the question. In only the best responses could they discuss common aspects of human experience. It was not uncommon for students to compare two rites of passage, ignoring the reference to 'human experience'.

This was a challenging question that elicited a wide range of responses.

Question 6: Religion and Ethics (2 Unit) Question 5 (1 Unit)

- (a) Choose TWO religious traditions you have studied. Name and briefly describe THREE sources for ethical reasoning used in these traditions.
- (b) Using the sources for ethical reasoning named in part (a), outline the response of TWO religious traditions to ONE of the following ethical issues.
- Violence, war and peace
 - Attitude to the environment
 - Sexual behaviour
 - Marriage and divorce
 - Bioethical questions
 - Work ethics
 - Business and professional ethics
- (c) Refer to the list of ethical issues provided in Part (b). Choose a different ethical issue to that selected in Part (b). Compare and contrast the way in which ONE religious tradition has responded to this issue with your own view of this issue.

- (a) Better responses had no difficulty in using the appropriate sacred writings as source material. Here, candidates based their answers on knowledge thus gained and referred to variants as appropriate.
- (b) On the whole Part (b) was well answered although, at an 'average' and lower level, one religious tradition still had the tendency to be stronger than the others. Violence, war and peace and environment tended to elicit stronger responses than 'sexual behaviour'.
- (c) Candidates, particularly in the 'best' and 'above average' responses, had well developed personal views. Weaker candidates tended to regard the question as requiring a 'soap box' response. Other weaknesses included dealing with only one bioethical problem and a confusion of information about marriage and divorce and sex education.

Responses were generally well balanced and candidates appeared to be better prepared than in previous years. On the whole the question was handled well, producing a higher quality of answers than in past years.

Question 7: Sacred Writings and Stories (2 Unit) Quest

- (a) Describe what is known of the origins of sacred writings and stories in ONE religious tradition you have studied.
- (b) Choose a religious tradition different from that selected in part (a). Identify ONE theme in the sacred writings and stories of this tradition. Discuss the treatment of this theme using examples from the various genres you have studied.
- (c) Compare and contrast the type and place of sacred writings and stories in TWO religious traditions that you have studied.

Well prepared students had a clear understanding of the nature, origins and types of sacred writings in two different traditions. In addition, they were able to deal knowledgeably with the

treatment of writings in two specific traditions and the place of such writings. Better responses reflected a good understanding of genres and themes, while average and below average responses showed little understanding of genre, with many ignoring the theme.

Unfortunately many 1 Unit candidates chose to answer this question without adequate preparation and, consequently, they lacked knowledge of both theme and genre.

On the whole the question was well answered by those who had prepared for this option, which provided candidates of various abilities with the opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding. The better responses showed the candidates' engagement with the question and topic.

Question 8: Ways of Holiness (2 Unit) Question 7 (1 Unit)

- (a) *Name and briefly describe THREE ordinary ways of holy living present today in ONE religious tradition you have studied.*
- (b) *Choose a religious tradition different from that selected in part (a). Trace the development of a special way of holiness across the ages.*
- (c) *Analyse the purpose and meaning of holy living in the TWO religious traditions you have studied.*

Those candidates who had studied the topic answered it well, but many candidates had obviously not prepared it and, consequently, their responses reflected this fact.

Too many candidates were not clear about the difference between 'ordinary' and 'special' ways of holiness. Answers tended to be descriptive rather than analytical, and many showed little understanding of the syllabus requirements, interpreting the question in very basic terms.

Question 9: Teachers and Interpreters

- (a) *Name and briefly describe THREE individuals or schools of thought (other than founders) influential in the development of ONE religious tradition you have studied.*
- (b) *Using a different religious tradition to that chosen in part (a), identify THREE individuals or schools of thought, and discuss the cultural and social factors that influenced their teaching.*
- (c) *Using examples, analyse causes of religious diversity within TWO religious traditions you have studied.*

Candidates had little trouble in answering part (a), and, on the whole, the quality of their responses was high.

Part (b) asked for a different tradition from that in part (a) to be chosen and this seemed to elicit many good responses. Average and below average candidates, however, did not read the question carefully enough and so confused individuals and traditions. These responses tended to be descriptive rather than explanatory, while the best and above average scripts clearly explained the influence of social and cultural factors that influenced the teaching of three individuals or schools of thought.

Part (c) was handled well by better candidates but weaker candidates lacked the skills necessary to answer the question.

Question 10: Women and Religion (2 Unit) Question 9 (1 Unit)

- (a) *Choose ONE religious tradition you have studied. Describe the role of a woman or women in the life of the founder in the early years of the tradition, or in religious stories.*
- (b) *Choose a different religious tradition from that selected in part (a). Outline the part that individual women have played in the development of this tradition.*
- (c) *Using the examples from TWO religious traditions, compare and contrast the ways in which women in contemporary society have attempted to broaden their role within the religious tradition.*

This was a question that drew on candidates' knowledge and the majority answered it well. Their knowledge of the variants within Christianity and Judaism was sound and the best responses were excellent. Above average and average candidates needed to refer to the question more specifically – many had excellent information but failed to use it to the best advantage and their responses were too descriptive, especially in parts (b) and (c).

SECTION 1 FOUNDATION STUDIES: QUESTION 1 1998

1(a)			2 marks	1 mark	0 marks
			Two religious traditions from: Christianity, Judaism, Islam or Aboriginal Spirituality.	One religious tradition from: Christianity, Judaism, Islam or Aboriginal Spirituality	Denominations or variants rather than religious traditions.
		3 marks	2 marks	1 mark	0 marks
1(b)		Two or more ways with accurate descriptions, 1788–1901.	Two or more ways with poorer descriptions or three named only.	One way described or two ways named but no description.	Confused or inaccurate.

1(c)	A: BEST 10%	B: ABOVE AVERAGE 20%	C: AVERAGE 40%	D: BELOW AVERAGE 20%	E: WELL BELOW AVERAGE 10%
	9–10 marks	7–8 marks	4–6 marks	2–3 marks	1 mark
	Clear understanding and accurate description of influences of Christianity on Australian society. Must use relevant examples from different Christian variants from 20th century. Must be in one of the three ways mentioned in (b).	Good description providing examples since 1901. Influence of Christianity may be implied, rather than stated. May include variants.	A general answer with description of the particular aspects of Australian society or a prepared answer which is unrelated to the question.	Limited description or narrow focus or a great deal of accurate information before 1901 or prepared answer which is unrelated to the question.	Confused, inaccurate or completely irrelevant.

HSC STUDIES OF RELIGION MARKING SCALE FOR 1U Q2 / 2U Q3 1998

This question is commonly identified as 'Religious Diversity'.

RELIGIOUS DIVERSITY	A: BEST 10%	B: ABOVE AVERAGE 20%	C: AVERAGE 40%	D: BELOW AVERAGE 20%	E: WELL BELOW AVERAGE 10%
	10 marks	8–9 marks	4–7 marks	2–3 marks	1 mark
	Specific and accurate detail. Close reference to Bouma's quotation. Analytical.	Accurate reference to two traditions (one may be more detailed than another). Implied / actual reference to quotation. Post-1945 analysis. Ignore minor inaccuracies.	Broad descriptions of immigration. Generalisations. or Only one tradition. Accurate but brief.	One tradition very brief description(s). Several inaccuracies. Very brief.	Irrelevant. Many inaccuracies.

HSC STUDIES OF RELIGION MARKING SCALE FOR 1U Q3 / 2U Q4 1998

Otherwise known as 'Australian Experience'.

Part (a)		4 marks	3 marks	2 marks	1 mark
		Two appropriate issues named and described clearly.	Two issues named but only one clearly described. One issue named and clearly described.	Two issues named but no description. One issue named with some description.	One issue named without discussion. Poor examples. Sectarianism named, but no example.
Part (b)	A: BEST 10%	B: ABOVE AVERAGE 40%	C: AVERAGE 40%	D: BELOW AVERAGE 20%	E: WELL BELOW AVERAGE 10%
	6 marks	5 marks	3–4 marks	2 marks	1 mark
	May include statement describing common religious world view. Multiple examples of commonalities clearly outlined. Discussion of how these lead to religious harmony.	Example of commonality outlined. Some attempt to discuss how these lead to religious harmony.	One example outlined with some link to religious harmony. Examples given but not outlined or poorly outlined. May include link to religious harmony.	Examples given but not outlined. No link to religious harmony. General discussion of unity and division. Outside Australian experience.	Largely erroneous response.

HSC STUDIES OF RELIGION MARKING SCALE FOR RITES OF PASSAGE 1998

<div> <div>RITES OF PASSAGE</div> <div></div> </div>	A: BEST 10%	B: ABOVE AVERAGE 20%	C: AVERAGE 40%	D: BELOW AVERAGE 20%	E: WELL BELOW AVERAGE 10%
	6 marks	5 marks	3–4 marks	2 marks	1 mark
Part (a) Describe how religious rites of passage transform the status of believers.	Very clear and logical. Details how the stages of the ritual bring about transformation.	Detailed. May discuss the three stages. May use examples relating to 'before' and 'after'.	Merely states three stages. May use superficial examples.	Defines rite of passage. Examples of civil rites only. Poor examples.	Repetition of question. Irrelevant information.
	9 marks	7-8 marks	4–6 marks	2–3 marks	1 mark
Part (b) Choose one rite of passage common to two religious traditions you have studied. Outline the religious beliefs of the community and participants that are expressed through this rite.	Detailed explanations of beliefs of community and participants, make distinctions. Synthesis of belief throughout the ritual. May acknowledge variants.	Outlines religious beliefs of community and/or participants expressed through ritual in two traditions.	Describes the rite of passage in two traditions. One tradition well handled, one poorly. One tradition and one variant of another tradition well done.	One rite in one tradition. Two traditions poorly described.	Unrelated information relating to one rite.
	12–15 marks	9-11 marks	5–8 marks	2–4 marks	1 mark
Part (c) ... Different rite from part (b)... Analysis of ways in which this religious rite reflects common aspects of human experience... two religious traditions.	Analyse and synthesise how religious rites through symbols / rituals reflect human experience in two traditions.	Religious rites reflect human experience — two traditions. May attempt analysis.	Very good but same rite as (b). Good description in two rites only.	Same rite as (b). Different rite but one tradition. Different rite in two traditions briefly described.	Unrelated information.

HSC STUDIES OF RELIGION MARKING SCALE FOR RITES OF PASSAGE

ETHICS	A: BEST 10%	B: ABOVE AVERAGE 20%	C: AVERAGE 40%	D: BELOW AVERAGE 20%	E: WELL BELOW AVERAGE 10%
Part (a)	6 marks	5 marks	3–4 marks	2 marks	1 mark
	Explicitly identifies two traditions. Names and clearly describes three distinct sources for each tradition.	Identifies two traditions clearly. Names and briefly describes at least four sources clearly.	Identifies two traditions. Names at least two sources, gives limited description.	Names one source or uses one tradition only.	Restates the question. Names traditions only.
Part (b)	9 marks	7–8 marks	4–6 marks	2–3 marks	1 mark
	Outlines clear and concise response of two religious traditions to issue. Explicit use of sources. Variants acknowledged appropriately.	Outlines response of two religious traditions to one issue. Clear references to source. General use of examples/quotations.	Outlines response of at least one religious tradition to issue. Some reference to source. May equate variant with tradition.	Superficial discussion of issue without source Limited and poor discussion of one tradition or two traditions. General discussion of sources.	Restates the question. Names one source or one tradition only. Largely erroneous response.
Part (c)	12–15 marks	9–11 marks	5–8 marks	2–4 marks	1 mark
	Substantial discussion of issue with clear statement of own view. Evidence of comparison. Use of sources or examples. Variants acknowledged appropriately.	Clear and coherent discussion of issue with reference to their own view. May refer to sources. Some attempt at comparison.	Limited discussion of issue and own view. Good discussion of issue but not of own view. Poor discussion of issue and own view. Equates variant with tradition. Same issue as in (B).	Limited discussion of issue and poorly expressed or little account of own view. General discussion of issue not related to tradition. Does not identify tradition.	Largely erroneous statements.

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