

# SOCIETY AND CULTURE

In 1995, 2715 candidates presented for the examination in Society and Culture, of whom 728 sat for the 3 Unit (Additional) paper. This was the first year of the examination of the revised 2 Unit Syllabus, with the examination time being reduced to two hours and a revised mark allocation for the compulsory Section I. Students were required to attempt Section I and two Depth Studies.

## 2/3 UNIT

### SECTION I : Concepts and Methodologies of the Syllabus

#### Question 1

Students were shown four pictures depicting

1. *The flag raising ceremony involving Governor Phillip;*
2. *Voters on election day;*
3. *An anti-nuclear demonstration.*
4. *A Students' Representative Council Meeting.*

This was a compulsory question with a revised mark allocation. Students should be aware that not all parts of this question are of equal value; more time should, therefore, be allocated to part (d) which has a revised mark value of 12 marks.

The majority of candidates appreciated the increase in marks allocated to Question 1 and, consequently, gave it more time.

- (a) *Distinguish between the concepts of 'power' and 'authority'.  
What changes are taking place in attitudes towards authority?  
Outline ways in which ONE of these changes will have a significant impact on future Australian society.*

In the better responses students offered definitions and gave examples, some discussing political changes, e.g. republicanism, limited powers of the monarch in Britain, Mabo or the power of rich entrepreneurs ((Super League or the globalisation of the media).

Weaker candidates failed to distinguish adequately between *power* and *authority* and depended greatly on the stimulus material.

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- (b) *You are a researcher who has been employed to conduct social research. Identify ONE topic that you would choose to research. State the relevant issues that you would investigate. State ONE methodology that you would use in your research, and briefly explain why this methodology is appropriate.*

Responses here were good; here the majority of candidates did not simply restate their P.I.P. research, but chose an issue or methodology which apparently was not related to their P.I.P. This clearly indicated that students are aware of the role of social issues and research methodology as being an integral part of the course and not just something done and forgotten with the completion of the P.I.P. It was pleasing to note that the majority of candidates had no problem in identifying a social issue that was worth investigating.

Weaker responses were those in which candidates chose exceptionally broad issues, for example, unemployment in Australia. As a result of these students had a broad-based methodology with some suggesting interviews for such an issue.

- (c) This part included a picture of a multi-racial group.  
*What changes have taken place in the ethnic composition of Australian society in the last twenty years?  
What forces, BOTH inside and outside Australia, have brought about these changes?*

In the better responses candidates identified different waves of migration and offered explanations, illustrating the fact that multiculturalism was/is a specific government policy and a move away from assimilation.

In poorer responses candidates failed to deal with the forces both inside and outside Australia which have brought about change. These responses offered only a broad discussion of change.

- (d) Three population graphs for 1931, 1981 and 2031 (Age and Sex Distribution in Australia) were included here.  
*What changes in the composition of the age structures are apparent between 1931 and 1981?  
What could be the underlying trends that might lead to the forecast for 2031?  
What changes in institutions and institutional structures are needed to respond to these changes?*

The better answers distinguished between institutions and institutional structures, e.g. *work* as the institution. In these responses candidates also contended that immigration is the only way by which the 2031 pyramid could achieve its numbers and shape, identifying many changes in age structures rather than only one.

Weaker answers showed a lack of understanding of the pyramid graphs and did not address the changes in institutions and structures. Some indicated that the candidates were unsure of the meaning of the term *institution*.

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### SECTION II : Depth Studies

#### Question 2 : Intercultural Communication

This depth study attracted approximately 22% of the candidature.

EITHER

(a)

*Culture affects both one's own behaviour and the way one interprets the behaviour of others.*

*How does culture influence the communication process?*

*In your answer, explain how an understanding of similarities and differences can lead to better intercultural communication. Refer to your cultural experience and your study of another cultural group.*

Good responses addressed all parts of the question, demonstrating a relationship between concepts and examples and tying these to the question. These answers showed that students were able to show an application of the theory of intercultural communication and a sound understanding of social literacy when referring to their own cultural experience and their study of another cultural group. The better candidates gave a balanced response to all sections of the question.

In the weaker responses candidates gave either a description of the communication model or a very brief answer lacking in concepts. Some of these were simply a rephrasing of the question, while others offered merely superficial examples, addressing only one of the requirements.

OR

(b)

*Select and describe a situation of intercultural misunderstanding that you have studied.*

*Identify the factors that have contributed to this situation.*

*In your answer, refer to **at least TWO** of the following:*

- *codes and cues*
- *prejudice*
- *group identity*
- *tradition.*

Good responses followed the format of the question and gave a well constructed answer. Many described *intercultural misunderstanding* and then explained how it tied into their interpretation. Some presented the second part of the question separately and, after defining the concept, they then linked it carefully to the description explaining how their two specific points contributed to misunderstanding.

In weaker responses candidates either did not answer the question or failed to go beyond a description of the specific situation. Some of these responses were very vague or failed to show how the chosen situation was intercultural. Some ignored the question format and their answers became repetitive.

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### Question 3 : Religion and Belief

Approximately 24% of candidates answered this Depth Study.

Many students compared religions such as Hinduism or Islam with denominations of Christianity, such as Catholicism. In these instances students used the rituals, beliefs, etc of Catholicism, totally ignoring rituals, beliefs, etc, of other denominations within the Christian religion. In a few cases students compared and contrasted Catholicism and the Anglican religion as being two separate religions.

EITHER

- (a) The question included a photograph of a wedding party.  
*What activities and beliefs do we commonly call religious?*  
*What is meant by 'secularisation'?*  
*To what extent do religious beliefs and practices influence contemporary society?*

In good responses candidates showed an understanding of *activities and beliefs we commonly call religious*, as well as the concept of *secularisation*. These students took a structured approach to answering the last part of the question by first describing the specific religious belief or practice and then showing its influence or lack of influence on contemporary society.

OR

- (b) *Compare and contrast how any TWO religions have or have not responded to changes in the society around them. In your answer, refer to THREE of the following:*
- *institutional structures*
  - *practices*
  - *beliefs*
  - *relationships with other social institutions*
  - *symbols and rituals.*

Weaker answers failed to define or describe activities and beliefs of two religions. Many completely ignored the need for explanation and made no mention of secularisation, while others showed a complete lack of understanding of this specific concept.

### Question 4 : Social Inequality, Prejudice and Discrimination

This depth study attracted approximately 78% of the candidature.

Responses were, on the whole, well integrated, showed a high level of social literacy and an excellent understanding and analysis of course concepts appropriate to the depth study. An appropriate application of examples, facts and figures was evident in the better responses.

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EITHER

- (a) Here candidates were shown a cartoon illustrating prejudice and discrimination.

*The way in which social inequality is presented in the media can reinforce prejudices and discrimination.*

*Explain what you understand by 'prejudice' and 'discrimination'.*

*In what ways might media coverage of issues reinforce discrimination and prejudice?*

*In your answer, refer to TWO of the following:*

- *gender*
- *age*
- *disability*
- *race*
- *social class.*

The better candidates clearly illustrated a depth of understanding of both *prejudice* and *discrimination*. Many showed a perceptive analysis of the role of the media in perpetuating stereotypes and in making the community aware of the existence of inequality in society. Examples chosen were accurate, contemporary and easily integrated into the entire response; some students acknowledged sources within examples used.

Weaker responses did not deal with all aspects of the question and had difficulty in defining the concepts. These answers included inaccurate information, while examples given were unbalanced in coverage and scope. In some responses candidates either misinterpreted the question or their responses were far too brief.

OR

- (b) *What do you understand by 'social inequality'?*

*Discuss how effectively social inequality has been reduced in Australia.*

*In your answer, refer to TWO groups within society that you have studied.*

In the better responses candidates showed a very sound understanding of *social inequality* and its implications in society. By using appropriate examples, these responses effectively analysed how social inequality has or has not been reduced in Australia over a period of time. Many of the better responses used statistics and references from acknowledged sources to substantiate their argument. Analysis of the two groups chosen from within a specific society was well balanced and often integrated in a sophisticated manner.

Weaker answers showed not only candidates' difficulty in using the concepts in the question, but also little or no use of further course concepts. These responses tended to be emotional and the views reflected the students' bias. Poorer responses misinterpreted the question, were anecdotal and limited in their discussion of the question asked.

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### Question 5 : Work, Leisure and Sport

This depth study attracted approximately 48% of the candidature.

Significantly more students answered 5(a) than 5(b). In 5(a) changes in the nature of work, leisure and sport were well understood but their impact on personal identity was less so.

This was an important part of the question, yet many candidates only addressed it in the two concluding paragraphs. In 5(b) the changing patterns of leisure and sport were well understood, although the concept of marketing them was not. It is expected that candidates should be able to use course concepts more often and more accurately, as well as giving specific examples and factual evidence.

#### EITHER

(a)

*Rapid changes are taking place in work, leisure, and sport.*

*Briefly discuss some changes in TWO of the following:*

- *work*
- *leisure*
- *sport.*

*In what ways have these changes had an impact on personal identity?*

The better candidates presented clearly the relationship between work, leisure and sport, and analysed well the concept of their impact on personal identity. These candidates discussed the changes in both historical and contemporary contexts. Their conceptual understanding was clearly indicated by their use of terms, rather than simply quoting learned definitions, while their arguments were supported with specific examples and factual evidence.

Weaker responses were very basic with limited definitions and showing little or no understanding of related concepts. Some candidates saw an opportunity to be emotive with sweeping generalisations replacing case studies of examples to illustrate a point of personal identity.

#### OR

(b)

*To what extent is marketing changing patterns of EITHER leisure OR sport?*

*In your answer, refer to THREE of the following:*

- *ethics*
- *gender*
- *social class*
- *politics*
- *technology*
- *tourism*
- *environment*
- *media.*

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The better candidates addressed concepts clearly and in an integrated discussion. Marketing and advertising patterns were shown both historically and in a contemporary setting to have changed leisure or sport. These candidates used good examples with supporting evidence and clearly indicated which three of the given concepts were being explored.

Poorer responses again were very basic and showed little understanding of course concepts. Some candidates saw this as an opportunity to *get on a soap box* about Super League running the game of football, etc.

### Question 6 : Popular Culture

This depth study attracted 25% of candidates in this first year as a new option.

Here students were given a concept map showing the interrelationship of issues relating to popular culture.

#### EITHER

- (a) *The concept map above identifies ways in which issues relating to popular culture are interrelated. Select FOUR of these issues and show how they are interconnected in your particular case study of a popular culture.*

Good responses displayed an ability to link course concepts to a specific case study and included appropriate examples. These candidates used theorists to substantiate their ideas and defined the terminology used; some perceived paradoxes in the nature of popular culture.

Weaker responses dealt only superficially with the concepts and showed little capacity to link them in any way. Aspects of the question were omitted or ignored and examples given were often vague.

#### OR

- (b) *How is popular culture created?  
How is popular culture controlled?  
In your answer, refer to local, national, and global aspects.*

In the better responses candidates showed that they were aware of a variety of influences on the nature of popular culture other than the media. These candidates referred to theorists as well as handling the local, national and global components at a sophisticated level.

Weaker answers omitted aspects of the question and showed little capacity to link concepts. Some candidates tended to present *prepared* material which was not developed in relation to the question. Many made sweeping statements and some used doubtful case studies of popular culture such as *vegemite*.

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### 3 UNIT

#### Question 1

(a)

*It has been argued that rich countries have been responsible for the emergence of poor countries.*

*Critically discuss this statement.*

*In your answer, use ONE of the following pairs of concepts:*

- *colonialism/dependence*
- *industrialisation/Westernisation*
- *world system/interdependence.*

Good responses included both integration and analysis of the question in relation to a specific concept pair as well as integrating other linked concepts, e.g. *modernisation, ethnocentrism, acculturation, secularisation*. The better candidates showed an understanding of the term *emergence*, incorporating this in their answer which integrated with course aims. These candidates recognised that there are different possible interpretations of the quotation.

Weaker responses did not recognise the issues involved in the question and offered value judgments with no evidence, or gave *prepared* answers on the country studied without referring to the question.

(b)

*Understanding continuity and change requires knowledge not only of social revolution but also of social evolution.*

*What do you understand by the concepts of social revolution and social evolution?*

*How does ONE theory of social change help you to explain EITHER social revolution OR social evolution?*

The better candidates made a sophisticated distinction between the specific two concepts with a thorough integration and analysis of theory being propounded. These candidates showed good choice of theory to link *social revolution* and *social evolution* with examples to illustrate their answer.

Weaker students failed to relate *revolution/evolution* to a social change and indicated that they had misunderstood the concept of *social revolution*.

(c)

This part included a document headed 1886 Rules for Teachers.

*Identify values and beliefs that are apparent in the above document.*

*What factors have been responsible for bringing about changes in these values and beliefs?*

The better candidates were able to identify changes in social expectations, particularly in the role of women, and through the rise of feminism. Such candidates were aware not only of social controls but also of the fact that the advent of a more pluralistic



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society might well see tolerance of wider parameters for behaviour, e.g. dress codes, marital status, political activism.

Weaker responses were brief, showing poor insight into the expected level of conceptual understanding of the question. These candidates tended to rewrite the stimulus, making little or no comment. Their answers contained no links to the 1886 schedule or current practices, thus failing to identify factors for change.

### Question 2

Answer EITHER (a) OR (b) OR (c).

In this question very high standards were achieved by many 3 Unit students. The better answers featured not only outstanding use of course concepts, but also choice of relevant examples which enabled these students not only to answer the question in full, but also to show a depth of understanding of its complexities and subtleties. These students were able to incorporate a wide variety of current data within a framework of detailed theoretical analysis. Their essays showed excellent planning and logical development which was at all times directly related to the question as asked.

Poorer responses tended to include less relevant information and, in fact, some students tried unsuccessfully to fit *prepared* answers into the framework of the questions. Understanding of the course concepts was also lacking in these responses.

### EITHER

- (a) *You are employed by your local council as a consultant to investigate an important human issue affecting the local community. You have been directed to use action-research methodology for your investigation.*

*In your answer:*

- (i) *name and describe the human issue selected by you for action research;*
- (ii) *outline your action-research plan for this investigation;*
- (iii) *evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of using action-research methodology.*

This attracted the poorest responses, students being unclear about what constituted a *human issue* and what issues would fall within the domain of the local council. Few of those who attempted this question understood what was meant by *action-research methodology*, interpreting it as meaning any research methodology that required action by the researcher, e.g. interview, survey, etc.

### OR

(b)

*The process of Westernisation is to a large extent also a process of Modernisation.*

- (i) *Critically discuss this statement by distinguishing between Westernisation and Modernisation.*
- (ii) *Evaluate the impact of EITHER Westernisation OR Modernisation on the country you have studied.*

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*In your answer, refer to ONE of the following aspects of society and culture:*

- *individual*
- *small social group*
- *larger social institution*
- *national level.*

Good responses to this question discussed critically the differences between the concepts of Modernisation and Westernisation. These responses also demonstrated that candidates were able to evaluate and discuss the positives and negatives of these two processes. In the better responses students also showed that they were able to confine themselves to one of the aspects of society listed in the question, viz. that they were able to display a deep knowledge and understanding of the country chosen.

OR

(c) Here candidates were given a cartoon depicting a couple watching or listening to the news.

- (i) *To what extent is theory useful for predicting the future?*
- (ii) *How does ONE theory explain continuity and change in ONE aspect of society and culture in the country you have studied?*

*Evaluate the usefulness of **this** theory in predicting the future of this aspect. What other explanations or factors might need to be taken into account?*

Some of those who attempted this question were unable to differentiate between strategies for predicting the future, e.g. scenarios, trend extrapolation, Delphi, etc, and theories of social change. Good responses contained an evaluation of the usefulness of the theory discussed and an examination of a variety of factors affecting social change.

## PERSONAL INTEREST PROJECT

In 1995, 2725 Personal Interest Projects were examined and again showed high levels of social research and commitment by the students.

Good projects showed students to be both socially literate and ethical researchers. Their work had a clear focus which was directly related to both the content and the concepts of the Society and Culture Course.

Those PIPs which featured primary research findings related their original data to the work of other researchers in the field. The best candidates showed not only excellent integration of data from a variety of sources, but also awareness of the strengths and weaknesses of the methodologies used. These students were careful to acknowledge the intellectual property of others by fully referencing all secondary sources. **The importance of fully acknowledging the work of others cannot be over-emphasised.**

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Weaker PIPs tended to be those not directly related to the content or concepts of the course. In these PIPs candidates also failed to make full use of their research data, seeing the gathering and recording of data as an end in itself instead of the starting point for analysis.

**Care should be taken with topic selection; the Syllabus is quite clear about ethical implications in this area. Students should consider the ethical implications of the topic they choose and the methodologies they employ to research that topic.** (Society and Culture Syllabus, p.57).

In the early stages of topic selection teachers need to display guidance concerning the topics, which may, by their very nature, lead the student into material which could cause concern.

Students are advised to choose topics which have real interest for them and are manageable.

Topics which are addressed in a descriptive way need also to contain assessment and evaluation of findings.

Careful and serious selection and editing of material is recommended.

Students need to be made familiar with the implications of the act of plagiarism, both deliberate and naïve.

Attention is also drawn to the following points:

- Legibility should be a factor in the student's choice of fonts when word processing, with double-spacing being preferred.
- Photographs, illustrative material and other data need to be relevant to the Central Material and discussed within it.

Any material not referred to in the text should be omitted. All such material should be fully referenced.

- The identification of individuals and locations should be avoided for ethical reasons.

The Syllabus states: "**students need to respect confidentiality when undertaking their research**". No individuals, schools or locations should be named within the project.

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- Over-length PIPs are now less prevalent. It is important, however, to draw attention to the word limits outlined in the Syllabus. Most students stayed within the 4000 word limit of the Central Material, but the Introduction, Conclusion and Log need to stay within their specified limits also.
- PIPs should be presented in the manner outlined on page 56 of the Syllabus. "*Extras*" such as Statements of Intent, Synopsis, separate Methodologies section and extensive Appendices do not advantage the student and may detract from the quality of the finished product.
- All pages need to be fixed inside the cover provided.