

2012 HSC Notes from the Marking Centre – Studies of Religion I and II

Contents

Introduction	1
General comments	1
Section I.....	2
Section II (Studies of Religion I and II).....	3
Religious Tradition Depth Study.....	3
Section III (Studies of Religion I and II).....	6
Religious Tradition Depth Study.....	6
Section IV (Studies of Religion II only)	8
Religion and Peace	8

Introduction

This document has been produced for the teachers and candidates of the Stage 6 courses in Studies of Religion I and Studies of Religion II. It contains comments on candidate responses to the 2012 Higher School Certificate examination, indicating the quality of the responses and highlighting their relative strengths and weaknesses.

This document should be read along with the relevant syllabus, the 2012 Higher School Certificate examination, the marking guidelines and other support documents developed by the Board of Studies to assist in the teaching and learning of Studies of Religion I and Studies of Religion II.

General comments

In the preamble to the Studies of Religion syllabus for the Religious Tradition Depth Studies it says:

The purpose of this section is to develop a comprehensive view of religious traditions as living religious systems that link directly with the life of adherents. Elements of a religious tradition raised in the Preliminary course are covered in greater depth in the HSC study. In a Religious Tradition Depth Study, the particular focus is on the ways in which a religious tradition, as an integrated belief system, provides a distinctive answer to the enduring questions of human existence.

It is in the best interest of candidates that they understand concepts like an integrated belief system and enduring questions of human existence. They should undertake the Religious Tradition Depth Study through the thematic lenses of these concepts. Candidates are advised that it is the Board's intention that the questions in Section III will be less predictable from year to year. Consequently, although previous years' examinations have had a rather holistic question in this section, this might not be the case in coming years.

Candidates need to be familiar with the [Board's Glossary of Key Words](#), which contains some terms commonly used in examination questions. However, candidates should also be aware that not all questions will start with or contain one of the key words from the glossary.

Questions such as ‘how?’, ‘why?’ or ‘to what extent?’ may be asked, or verbs that are not included in the glossary may be used, such as ‘design’, ‘translate’ or ‘list’.

Candidates are reminded that a question restriction applies in Sections II and III: the same religious tradition cannot be used to answer both sections. If a candidate responds with the same religious tradition in both Section II and Section III, they will receive a zero mark for one of the sections.

Candidates should avoid prepared answers based on the ‘dot points’ in the syllabus to suit the directive term in the question stem, as this invariably prevents them from fully answering the question posed.

Candidates need to be aware that, where the answer space allocated, this is a guide to the length of the required response. A longer response will not in itself lead to higher marks. Several candidates wrote far too much for the mark value in Section II and required additional writing booklets. Candidates are warned against doing this as writing in excess of the space allocated could reduce the time available for answering other questions. Candidates are reminded that in Section III, the expected length of response is around three pages or approximately 600–800 words.

Section I

Question 11 (Studies of Religion I and II)

In better responses, candidates wrote within the space provided and produced quality rather than quantity. In these responses, candidates clearly demonstrated how at least two religious traditions have contributed to the process of Aboriginal reconciliation. Candidates also referred to variants of the religious traditions where appropriate and provided relevant examples. A comprehensive understanding of the timeline and aspects of Aboriginal reconciliation were included in these responses.

In mid-range responses, candidates generally referred to one religious tradition and may have included some examples.

In weaker responses, candidates provided general statements about the process of Aboriginal reconciliation and/or some aspects of religion. In these responses, candidates referred only to the secular or political approach to Aboriginal reconciliation. In some responses, candidates did not identify a religious tradition and instead confused the concept with, for example, Aboriginal rituals such as smoking ceremonies being included in Christian Eucharist.

Question 22 (Studies of Religion II only)

In better responses, candidates wrote within the space provided and produced quality rather than quantity.

In better responses, candidates provided a clear, accurate and relevant comparison of the response of one religious belief system and one non-religious belief system to the human person. In these responses, candidates gave specific examples with scriptural references where appropriate, and used terminology appropriate to the belief system.

In mid-range responses, candidates referred to some similarities and/or differences in the response of one religious and one non-religious belief system to the human person. These responses were more general in nature.

In weaker responses, candidates made little or no reference to the question.

Section II (Studies of Religion I and II)

Religious Tradition Depth Study

Question 1: Buddhism

- (a) (i) In better responses, candidates demonstrated an understanding of the question and clearly outlined two ethical teachings of Buddhism based on bioethics, environmental ethics or sexual ethics. In these responses, candidates included references to sources of ethical teachings, supported their response with detailed examples and used appropriate terminology.

In mid-range responses, candidates focused on the issues contained in the ethical areas rather than the teachings themselves.

In weaker responses, candidates made little reference to ethical teachings, and simply listed ethical issues and/or sources in Buddhism.

- (a) (ii) In better responses, candidates clearly described the influence of one of the ethical teachings selected in part (a)(i). In these responses, candidates provided a number of examples that reflected the influence of the selected ethical teaching on the lives of adherents.

In mid-range responses, candidates made general statements in regard to the influence of the ethical teaching, but did not make a clear link between the ethical teaching and its influence on the lives of believers. In a number of these responses, candidates simply focused on the influence an ethical issue has on the adherents.

In weaker responses, candidates did not refer to an ethical teaching. In these responses, candidates listed an ethical issue without any discussion of the influence on the lives of adherents.

- (b) In better responses, candidates identified the significant features of a practice in Buddhism and clearly analysed the influence of this practice on, and the meaning of this practice to, the individual.

In mid-range responses, candidates focused on the significance of the practice to the individual without necessarily identifying key features of the practice. In some responses, candidates identified key features of the practice without detailing their influence on the adherents. Many of the mid-range responses were descriptive rather than analytical.

Weaker responses lacked accuracy, details or analysis of the practice and/or its influence on lives of believers.

Question 2: Christianity

- (a) (i) In better responses, candidates clearly provided the main features of two Christian ethical teachings in the area of environmental ethics, bioethics or sexual ethics. These responses were supported with correct terminology and scriptural references from the New Testament and/or Church documents. In these better responses, candidates clearly identified the ethical teaching and did not confuse this with the concept of an ethical issue; for example, the ethical teaching of *the dignity of all human life* as opposed to the ethical issue of *euthanasia* or *abortion*. In these responses, candidates were objective in their responses rather than taking the high moral ground.

In mid-range responses, candidates interchanged ethical teachings with ethical issues.

In weaker responses, candidates named or described an ethical issue.

- (a) (ii) In better responses, candidates clearly linked one ethical teaching to the chosen issue. In these responses, candidates supported their responses with reference to scripture and other authoritative documents from the Christian tradition. These responses were thoughtfully considered and well expressed, clearly identifying the link between the ethical teaching and the chosen issue. Candidates supported their responses with clear examples and made reference to sacred texts. They used correct terminology and logically developed an argument.

Candidates who wrote mid-range responses described an ethical issue without making a clear link to the ethical teaching or using good examples.

In weaker responses, candidates mainly outlined an ethical issue or simply reiterated the response of part (a)(i).

- (b) In better responses, candidates made clear reference to the key features of the chosen practice, and linked these features to the meaning of the practice for the individual adherent. In better responses, candidates used clear examples to demonstrate their hypothesis.

In mid-range responses candidates did not clearly identify the features of the practice or the influence of the practice on the life of adherents. In some responses, candidates made emotive rather than evidence-based judgments about the influence on the life of adherents.

In weaker responses, candidates were mainly descriptive in nature and made few or no links to the life of adherents.

Question 3: Hinduism

- (a) (i) In better responses, candidates clearly demonstrated an understanding of the question and provided the main features of two ethical teachings. Candidates supported their responses with detailed examples and used appropriate terminology. In these responses, candidates included references to sources of ethical teachings, for example the sacred texts of Hinduism.

In mid-range responses, candidates focused on the issues contained in the ethical areas rather than the teachings themselves. Emphasis was placed on discussion of the ethical issue with minimal reference to the ethical teachings.

Weaker responses were very general, and candidates made very little reference to ethical teachings, or simply listed ethical issues and/or sources in Hinduism.

- (a) (ii) In better responses, candidates clearly described the influence of the ethical teaching selected in part (a)(i). In these responses, candidates provided a number of examples to demonstrate the influence of the selected ethical teaching on the lives of adherents.

In many mid-range responses, candidates did not make a clear link between the ethical teaching and its influence on the lives of believers. In a number of responses, candidates simply focused on the influence of an ethical issue on the adherents.

In weaker responses, candidates did not refer to an ethical teaching. In these responses, candidates listed an ethical issue without any discussion of the influence on the lives of adherents.

- (b) In better responses, candidates clearly identified the significant features of a practice in Hinduism and analysed its influence on the life of an individual.

In mid-range responses, candidates focused on the significance of the practice to the individual without necessarily identifying key features of the practice. In some responses, candidates identified key features of the practice without detailing their influence on the adherents. Many of the mid-range responses were descriptive and not analytical.

In weaker responses, candidates lacked accuracy, details or analysis of the practice and/or its influence on the lives of believers.

Question 4: Islam

- (a) (i) In better responses, candidates demonstrated an understanding of the question and clearly outlined two ethical teachings in Islam. These responses were supported by detailed examples and appropriate terminology, and included references to sources of ethical teachings for example the Qur'an and Hadith.

In mid-range responses, candidates focused on the issues contained in the ethical areas rather than the teachings themselves. Emphasis was placed on discussion of the ethical issue with minimal reference to the ethical teachings.

In weaker responses, candidates made little reference to ethical teachings, and simply listed ethical issues and/or sources in Islam.

- (a) (ii) In better responses, candidates clearly described the influence of the ethical teaching selected in part (a)(i), and provided a number of examples which showed the influence of the selected ethical teaching on the lives of adherents.

In mid-range responses, candidates did not make a clear link between the ethical teaching and its influence on the lives of believers. In a number of responses, candidates simply focused on the influence of an ethical issue on its adherents.

In weaker responses, candidates did not refer to an ethical teaching. In these responses, candidates listed an ethical issue without any discussion of the influence on the lives of adherents.

- (b) In better responses, candidates clearly identified the significant features of a practice in Islam and analysed its influence on the life of an individual. In these responses, candidates identified the main features of the practice in detail, and clearly and accurately described their influence and meaning to the individual.

In mid-range responses, candidates focused on the significance of the practice to the individual without necessarily identifying key features of this practice. In some responses, candidates identified key features of the practice without detailing their influence on the adherents. Many of the mid-range responses were descriptive and not analytical.

In weaker responses, candidates lacked accuracy, details or analysis of the practice and/or its influence on the lives of believers.

Question 5: Judaism

- (a) (i) In better responses, candidates clearly provided the main features of two Jewish ethical teachings. These candidates supported their response with correct terminology and scriptural references from the Torah and/or Talmud.

In mid-range responses, candidates focused on the issue rather than the ethical teaching. They may have provided some reference to sacred texts when discussing the issue.

In weaker responses, candidates listed the ethical issues and made limited, if any, mention of one ethical teaching. In these responses, candidates lacked Jewish/Hebrew terminology and failed to mention sacred texts or scripture.

- (a) (ii) In better responses, candidates provided detailed accurate information to link one ethical teaching selected in part (a)(i) to the influence it has on adherents. The link was made explicit through the use of current examples and sophisticated terminology.

In mid-range responses, candidates did not make a clear link to the ethical teaching but concentrated on the issue and its influence on the adherent.

In weaker responses, candidates simply discussed the issue, making limited, if any, reference to the life of the adherent.

- (b) In better responses, candidates accurately identified key features of a significant practice and clearly related these features to implications for the individual. In these responses, candidates made explicit reference to the practice, supported by solid links to sacred texts and writings, and also included identification of significant symbols and actions. Candidates used sophisticated terminology appropriate to Judaism in these responses.

In mid-range responses, candidates either focused on the significance of the practice for the individual without making any link to the features, or concentrated on the key features without relating the implications for the individual. The analysis and terminology in these responses was limited.

In weaker responses, candidates made no reference to the individual and often lacked accurate information.

Section III (Studies of Religion I and II)

Religious Tradition Depth Study

Question 1: Buddhism

In better responses, candidates made a reasoned judgment which provided pertinent and factual evidence of whether the significant person or school of thought challenged adherents to follow Buddhist teachings more closely. In these responses, candidates explicitly assessed the accuracy of the statement in relation to the chosen significant person or school of thought. They comprehensively addressed how the chosen significant person or school of thought challenged adherents through, for example, the interpretation and application of beliefs in particular contexts or the development and expression of Buddhist practices or ethics, to follow Buddhist teachings more closely.

In mid-range responses, candidates inferred how and why the significant person or school of thought challenged adherents to follow Buddhist teachings more closely. There was a tendency to become biographical in nature, often providing a solid description of what the person did but without the necessary emphasis on how actions and/or teachings challenged adherents to follow Buddhist teachings more closely.

In weaker responses, candidates provided limited facts about a person or school of thought, or some general aspects of Buddhism. There was very little evidence of engaging with the stimulus and question to show understanding of how the person or school of thought had challenged adherents to follow Buddhist teachings more closely.

Question 2: Christianity

In better responses, candidates engaged thoughtfully with the question and challenged what 'reform' and 'revitalisation' actually meant in relation to the significant person or school of thought chosen. Regardless of whether candidates agreed fully or in part with the stimulus, they presented a critical judgement explicitly supported by specific scripture references, other writings and examples. The information presented was accurate, relevant and well integrated into the response. In these responses, candidates wrote objectively, and were comprehensive in detail and cohesive in structure.

In mid-range responses, candidates made some reference to the statement but were not explicit enough in presenting a reasoned judgement; that is, they did not go far enough to show how the person or school of thought reformed or revitalised the Christian religious tradition. In these responses, candidates discussed the impact of the person or school of thought, but showed no real understanding of the terms 'revitalised' and 'reformed'. Information presented was largely descriptive and relevant, but the responses lacked detail. In these responses, candidates did not provide enough evidence to imply a sustained, reasoned judgement. They often lacked coherent structure.

In weaker responses, candidates presented information about a person or school of thought that was largely biographical and lacking in accurate detail. In some responses, candidates discussed ethics or practice without any links being made to the person or school of thought.

Question 3: Hinduism

In better responses, candidates sustained a reasoned judgment, which provided pertinent and factual evidence, of how the significant person or school of thought helped adherents understand that there is a way to liberation from the endless cycle of life and rebirth. Candidates also made an explicit assessment about the extent to which the statement was true in regard to the chosen person or school of thought. Candidates generally drew on evidence from sacred texts and in some instances from religious scholarship to enhance their argument. Candidates also engaged with the stimulus and question throughout the response.

In mid-range responses, candidates inferred how the significant person or school of thought helped adherents understand that there is a way to liberation from the endless cycle of life and rebirth. In these responses, candidates tended to be biographical and often provided a solid description of what the person did. The assessment of the extent to which the statement was true was implied rather than thoroughly explained. Some attempt was made to engage with the stimulus and question.

In weaker responses, candidates provided limited facts about a person or school of thought, or some general aspects of Hinduism. There was very little evidence of engaging with the stimulus and question to show understanding of how the person or school of thought had helped adherents understand that there is a way to liberation from the endless cycle of life and rebirth. Similarly, there was no assessment regarding the extent to which the statement was true.

Question 4: Islam

In better responses, candidates sustained a reasoned judgment, which provided pertinent and factual evidence of how the significant person or school of thought revitalised and/or reformed Islam. For example, in these responses, candidates explored how the person or school of thought re-articulated the principal beliefs of Islam within a particular historical/cultural context. Depending on the person or school of thought they also showed how revitalisation/reform has been continuous and how it is evident today. In these responses, candidates generally drew on evidence from sacred texts and in some instances from religious

scholarship to enhance their argument, and engaged with the stimulus and question throughout the response.

In mid-range responses, candidates inferred how and why the significant person or school of thought contributed to the revitalisation or reform of Islam. There was a tendency to become biographical in nature, often providing solid description of what the person did but without the necessary emphasis on the impact of their actions or teachings on Islam. In some instances, candidates referred to the ethics and practice of Islam as defined by the syllabus but did not connect them well to the question. Some attempt was made to engage with the stimulus and question.

In weaker responses, candidates provided limited facts about a person or school of thought or some general aspects of Islam. There was very little evidence of engaging with the stimulus and question to show understanding of how the person or school of thought contributed to the revitalisation/reform of Islam.

Question 5: Judaism

In better responses, candidates engaged with the question and explicitly identified the impact of the significant person or school of thought as they ‘reformed’ and/or ‘revitalised’ the Jewish religious tradition. In these responses, candidates gave a critical and sustained judgement that was well supported with specific references to beliefs, practices, sacred texts and writings, as well as the lived expression of the Jewish religious tradition. The terminology used was relevant and accurate for Judaism.

In mid-range responses, candidates provided a more descriptive response, with some references and links to the statement. In some responses, candidates indicated the contributions made by the person or school of thought but were simplistic in their judgement as to whether they had reformed and/or revitalised the Jewish religious tradition.

In weaker responses, candidates did not engage with the stimulus and specific terminology was not evident. In these responses, candidates generally identified the characteristics of the person or school of thought, or used prepared responses that failed to provide a judgement about how the person or school of thought may have reformed and/or revitalised the Jewish tradition.

Section IV (Studies of Religion II only)

Religion and Peace

Question 1

In better responses, candidates showed an explicit understanding of specific teachings on peace within one religious tradition, well supported by correct references to sacred texts and/or other relevant writings. In these responses, candidates explained how these teachings guided contributions to world peace and they supported their argument with examples of specific initiatives and/or organisations and/or individuals.

In mid-range responses, candidates attempted to identify principal teachings on peace from a religious tradition. Many referred to examples of initiatives and/or organisations and/or individuals whose contributions to world peace were guided by these teachings. In these responses, candidates attempted to link the teachings to the examples of these contributions. These responses tended to be descriptive and candidates used some relevant terminology.

In weaker responses, candidates tended to provide limited and/or general knowledge about one or more traditions and/or peace. These responses were poorly structured.