



**B O A R D O F S T U D I E S**  
NEW SOUTH WALES

## **2010 HSC Studies of Religion Sample Answers**

This document contains ‘sample answers’, or, in the case of some questions, ‘answers could include’. These are developed by the examination committee for two purposes. The committee does this:

- (a) as part of the development of the examination paper to ensure the questions will effectively assess students’ knowledge and skills, and
- (b) in order to provide some advice to the Supervisor of Marking about the nature and scope of the responses expected of students.

The ‘sample answers’ or similar advice are not intended to be exemplary or even complete answers or responses. As they are part of the examination committee’s ‘working document’, they may contain typographical errors, omissions, or only some of the possible correct answers.

## Studies of Religion I and Studies of Religion II

### Section I

### Religion and Belief Systems in Australia post-1945

#### Question 11

#### *Answers could include:*

Aboriginal spirituality linked to

- Country is ritual estate/territorial estate.
- Belong to country by:
  - \* Ceremonial life – gathering, sacred sites, song, languages, stories, art, rituals
  - \* Kinship:
    - (a) Blood
      - relationships between people
      - social control
      - job and role decisions
      - custodianship and care of land
    - (b) Totemic kinship
      - ritual estate
      - performing of ceremonies
      - custodianship and care of plants and animals
  - \* Obligations to the Land and People
    - performance of rituals and social intercourse
    - correct guardianship and care of ‘mother’ regarding country ritual estate

Land: Physical, mental, spiritual sustenance

Kanyini – connectedness

The effects of dispossession

## Studies of Religion II

### Section I Religion and Non-Religion

#### Question 22

*Answers could include:*

Individuals seeking a life enriched with significance and meaning through involvement in the following:

- actively caring for the poor and disadvantaged – both locally and globally
- social justice – seeking a role in government/politics, law etc. to have an impact; seeking to influence government policies as a member of an activist group
- involvement in community service initiatives eg, Night Patrol, Missionbeat
- seeking clarification and answers to life questions such as ‘where do I go when I die?’ and ‘is there a God?’

Communities and religious institutions seeking to have a positive impact on human communities:

- providing clear moral and spiritual guidance
- pressing governments to adopt socially just principles
- advocating for changes in society to improve the living standards and conditions of all people
- providing services that actively help the community, including hospitals, aged care, facilities for drug/alcohol/sexual abuse/homeless (eg Teresa House, Sydney City Mission, Salvation Army, The St Vincent de Paul Society), schools, counselling (eg Lifeline), charitable organisations administered by religious groups
- providing adherents with a community of people to turn to in times of need.

## Studies of Religion I and Studies of Religion II

### Section II — Religious Tradition Depth Study

#### Question 1 — Buddhism

##### Question 1 (a) (i)

*Answers could include:*

Mahayana Buddhist ethics

- basic comparison for all beings

Theravada Buddhists ethics

*Bioethics*

- an important consideration in all matters concerning life and death is the notion of reincarnation
- suffering may be a result of unskilful actions in a person's previous life or lives. As a result, Buddhists believe that nobody shall intervene to shorten a person's life.

##### Question 1 (a) (ii)

*Answers could include:*

*Euthanasia*

Arrested death difficult because last moments of a person's life are considered important in determining person's next life.

*Palliative drugs for excruciating deaths*

Fifth Precept – no intoxicating substances. First Precept states no harm to living thing. This leads to an ethical dilemma.

*Absolutist Approach* judges people's actions as being right or wrong in their own right. There is no account of the circumstantial. An absolutist would say abortion is murder under any circumstances.

*Utilitarian Approach* is where an action might be right or wrong based partly on circumstances. If a mother is put at extreme risk then abortion would not generate bad Karma.

#### Question 2 — Christianity

##### Question 2 (a) (i)

*Sample answer:*

*Sexual Ethics*

Many Christians view sexual activity in a religious sense, to occur within an appropriate context of commitment to one's partner. Some Christian variants, particularly those more influenced by Thomistic Natural Law, more closely associate sexual activity with human reproduction. In these instances, sexual activity that is not open to reproduction may be viewed as being outside an appropriate context.

**Question 2 (a) (ii)****Sample answer:***Homosexuality*

Christian teachings on homosexuality vary both within and between variants. The Catechism of the Catholic Church emphasises that while a homosexual orientation is not an evil in itself, the practice of it is unacceptable as it excludes both a male/female marriage and the possibility of human reproduction.

The Anglican Church's attitude towards homosexuality varies from a full acceptance to condemnation. These strong variations are accentuating divisions within the Anglican Church globally, leaving the church open to schism.

**Question 2 (b)****Sample answer:***The Marriage ceremony*

The Christian concept of marriage entails a loving and supportive commitment to one's partner. This mutual commitment between the bride and the bridegroom emphasises the commitment that they also have towards one's "neighbour" as Christian adherents.

As Christian marriage is founded on the teaching of love, this also consolidates the primacy of love in the key decisions of the lives of the newly married couple.

The concept of faithfulness emphasised in the marriage ceremony serves to support adherents in their desire to be faithful and honest in their relating to others. The definition of love, often used in Christian marriage ceremonies, provided by Paul in I Corinthians 13, also serves to consolidate the marriage partners' understanding of and commitment to Paul's vision of love in their lives generally.

In churches where marriage is identified as a sacrament, the ceremony also serves as an act of worship both for the marriage partners and the adherents present.

**Question 3 — Hinduism****Question 3 (a)****Sample answer:**

*Pilgrimage* – no requirement/obligation; but:

- *Short*, during a religious festival. The journey may only involve travelling to a shrine for instance
- *Long*, pilgrims travel to important cities or shrines: Varanasi for instance, Kumbh Mela every 12 years, Paganatha temple in Puri

Two main groups of pilgrimage sites:

1. Natural – such as rivers or mountains, such as seven Holy rivers. Inspire feelings of reverence
2. Man-made structures are associated with important events in Hindu history.

**Question 3 (b) (i)*****Sample answer:******Ramanuja and the Bhakti Movement***

- A religious teacher (1017 – 1137 CE)
- Opposed Adi Shankara’s teaching of Advaita – “Brahman is real, the world is unreal”
- Formulated a Hindu theistic devotional movement called Bhakti – a loving devotion to a personal god
- Bhakti has persisted as a movement in Hinduism to this day
- Ramanuja believed that there was only one supreme God – Lord Vishnu
- The purpose of life was to cultivate a loving devotion to Vishnu and to surrender to him
- A follower would be rewarded with a place in heaven and remain there forever, unlike other souls who would be continually reborn
- This philosophical teaching is called Vishishtadvaita.

**Question 3 (b) (ii)*****Sample answer/Answers could include:***

Ramanuja challenged the status quo established by teachers like Adi Shankara that Brahman is the sole reality and that all living beings are, in their innermost essence, identical to Brahman. This idea of non-duality or Advaita is an attempt to offer a consistent explanation of the Upanishads which reveal that everything in its innermost essence is Brahman. Ramanuja encouraged Hindus to understand Brahman not as an abstract Being, but as a personal God. Ramanuja developed a particular theological model of the relation of the soul and the world to God.

The Bhakti movement became very popular and developed in the centuries after Ramanuja. Most Hindus would have a personal devotion to a god today and have a shrine in their homes devoted to that deity.

Followers of the Bhakti movement believe that liberation means going to heaven, which results only from the grace of the god, who becomes pleased with the devotion of the worshipper.

**Question 4 — Islam****Question 4 (a) (i)*****Sample answer:******Hajj***

- The Fifth Pillar – required at least once during a lifetime
- Pilgrimage is the supreme prayer for forgiveness of sins committed and the ultimate preparation for eternity
- Pilgrimage rituals which must be performed, eg circumambulation of the Ka’ba
- The rites of the Hajj symbolise the essential concepts of Islam and commemorate the trials of the Prophet Ibrahim and his family.

**Question 4 (a) (ii)*****Sample answer:****Beliefs*

- Muslims believe the Qur'an is the word of Allah and therefore undertaking the Hajj is God's command
- Muhammad performed many pilgrimages throughout his life. He is the final prophet and therefore a role model whom people should attempt to emulate
- Belief that Adam fell from grace by giving into temptations, after which he came to his senses and received forgiveness from the merciful God. Muslims practise Waguf on the third day, reminiscent of the three temptations. Waguf is standing before God seeking forgiveness
- During Hagar and Ismail's searching for water she drank from the Zamzam well which was created by God; modern-day Muslims collect this sacred water and sanctify their burial shrouds
- Plain of Arafat believed to be the place where people will be judged, and is central to the Hajj where Muslims pray and reflect on their lives
- The Hajj expresses numerous beliefs about prophetic heritage (*risalah*) of Islam prior to Muhammad
- The central belief of Tawhid and also Akrah feature predominantly
- For Shi'a the Hajj is central to their beliefs and expression of Islam, but forms part of a greater pilgrimage.

**Question 4 (b)*****Sample answer:****Environmental ethics*

- Established on the principles set forth in the Qur'an which both Shi'a and Sunni variants accept as the direct word of God. The Qur'an is uniformly accepted and interpreted by all Muslims to reflect its importance in understanding that conservation of the natural environment is a moral and ethical imperative
- The Hadith is an important second authority for Islamic environmental ethics. It is a tradition which has been compiled by various Muslim scholars intending to document the movements of the prophet; however, conflict in interpreting this source reinforces the importance of the Qur'an
- Shari'a Law involves Islamic jurisprudence, formulating policies in regard to the environment based on the principles enunciated in the Qur'an and Hadith
- The disagreements on the source of Islamic laws other than the Qur'an have caused conflict in understanding how Islam as a whole should confront the current ecological crises
- Khahfa is the notion of trusteeship, that we are 'custodians' of the created world. The Qur'an, together with Hadith, emphasises our role as guardians using the world's resources in a suitable manner
- Tawhid refers to the oneness of Allah which by extension encompasses the created world
- Akrah refers to all being accountable for their actions including those against the environment.

## Question 5 – Judaism

### Question 5 (a)

#### *Sample answer:*

#### *Marriage (Kiddushin)*

- Chuppah – canopy under which a Jewish couple are married. Symbolises the new home the couple will build
- The bride circles the groom seven times symbolically weaving a protective web around the groom
- The groom gives his bride a wedding ring and places it on her right index finger and says, ‘Behold, you are consecrated unto me with this ring, according to the law of Moses and of Israel’
- Wine is drunk as a reminder of the joy of the day
- The Ketubah is read out to the community, symbolic of the fact that the community are witnesses to the union
- The Sheva Brachot are recited calling on God to bless the union.

### Question 5 (b) (i)

#### *Sample answer:*

#### *Nechama Leibowitz (1905–1997 )*

- Encouraged an active approach to studying Torah
- Produced worksheets (gilyonot) which were mailed to Jewish people in Israel and later around the world. These worksheets dealt with a portion of the Torah which the respondents completed and returned to Nechama to be marked
- Allowed for all Jews from every walk of life to study Torah and to respond to it from their perspective
- She restored the glory of studying the written Torah.

### Question 5 (b) (ii)

#### *Sample answer:*

- Leibowitz compared the ideas of various Bible commentators in a unique manner
- She introduced non-Orthodox thinkers like Martin Buber and non-Jewish thinkers like Thomas Mann to her students
- She employed modern literary analysis to study biblical texts, looking at vocabulary and literary forms to determine the meaning of the ancient writings – something which was rarely done before
- Her methods legitimised the idea that texts could have multiple interpretations and hidden moral dimensions
- She encouraged a refocus on Bible commentaries as opposed to the study of the Talmud
- She believed that the importance of the text lay in its relevance to the audience reading it, not anyone else
- She emphasised the importance of responsibility of Jews to Judaism rather than Judaism being a mystical faith.