



2012 HSC Studies of Religion 'Sample Answers'

When examination committees develop questions for the examination, they may write 'sample answers' or, in the case of some questions, 'answers could include'. The committees do this to ensure that the questions will effectively assess students' knowledge and skills.

This material is also provided to the Supervisor of Marking, to give some guidance about the nature and scope of the responses the committee expected students would produce. How sample answers are used at marking centres varies. Sample answers may be used extensively and even modified at the marking centre OR they may be considered only briefly at the beginning of marking. In a few cases, the sample answers may not be used at all at marking.

The Board publishes this information to assist in understanding how the marking guidelines were implemented.

The 'sample answers' or similar advice contained in this document 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:

Religious traditions in Australia have given strong support to the process of reconciliation.

The traditions recognised that this process must include an understanding and valuing of Aboriginal culture as well as ensuring that programs and strategies to be put in place work towards justice and equity.

The Jewish tradition sees Aboriginal reconciliation as a human rights issue while the Islamic tradition supports reconciliation on both moral and humanitarian grounds.

Actions that support the relationship between Aboriginal spiritualities and religious traditions could include:

- Corroboree 2000 Bridge Walk – religious leaders and adherents of all major traditions participated.
- Statements of support by religious leaders for Prime Minister's 2008 Apology to the Stolen Generations and the commitment by the government to the process of reconciliation.
- The Christian and other religious traditions have politically supported the process of land rights recognition
- Hindus and Buddhists have similar views towards the process of Aboriginal reconciliation.

Studies of Religion II

Section I Religion and Non-Religion

Question 22

Sample answer:

Religious and non-religious belief systems have significantly different views on the understanding of the human person. Both humanists and Christians believe in the dignity of the human person. Christianity believes in the existence of a soul whereas humanists view the human person as the highest form of life.

The Christian belief system draws its moral teachings from its own religious authorities (eg the teaching Magisterium of the Catholic churches) and sacred texts. Humanists, however, view humanity as the dominant life form and, as such, it can determine its own values. Unlike humanism, the Christian belief system believes in the existence of an afterlife and the need to follow the will of God, and this belief affects human behaviour.

Studies of Religion I and Studies of Religion II

Section II — Religious Tradition Depth Study

Question 1 — Buddhism

Question 1 (a) (i)

Sample answer:

NA

Question 1 (a) (ii)

Sample answer:

NA

Question 1 (b)

Sample answer:

NA

Question 2 — Christianity

Question 2 (a) (i)

Sample answer:

Bioethics

Christians believe that all human beings are made in the image of God and so are to be cherished. This refers to the ethical teaching on the sanctity of all life. The value of a person's life should not be reduced to their contribution but to life itself. "Do no evil that good may come of it:" some kind acts are intrinsically evil and should never be performed, even their omission can have very bad consequences.

The principle of double effect – an act which is good in itself and not wicked, but which has good consequences and bad consequences: where (a) the agent does not intend the bad consequences and only tolerates it, (b) the bad consequences are not the means of bringing about the good ones, and (c) the good consequences are good enough to be worth tolerating the bad consequences as a regrettable side effect. This refers to the ethical teaching of treating each other with love and respect – the 10 Commandments (Ex 20).

Question 2 (a) (ii)

Sample answer:

All bioethical teachings in Christianity will have some influence on the lives of adherents. For example, the 'principle of double effect'; one may not directly kill another human being as no good may come of it. This can mean that one has to undergo the bad consequences of omitting to do the bad action, such as killing another to relieve their pain, and so, go to some trouble to find alternative ways to comfort the suffering rather than to put them 'out of their misery'.

With reference to the 'principle'; narcotics analgesia is permissible where no other pain relief is possible as the conditions apply to this treatment.

Question 2 (b)***Sample answer:*****Baptism**

Baptism is a significant practice for many Christian individuals. The adherent dies and rises with Christ in Baptismal waters. They die to sin and rise to the life of grace in living an ethical life in the light of Jesus Christ and his teachings. It can be considered a 'rite of passage'. It is a form of membership.

Through Christian Baptism the adherent's life bestows grace and fosters one's relationship with God, for example through prayer. For some variants – Catholic and Anglican – the sacraments of Communion and Confirmation affirm one's Baptism and bestow further gifts allowing greater participation for the life of the adherents.

Baptism inducts one into membership of the Church bringing with it both privileges and responsibilities. A community of support and encouragement during life's challenges, opportunities, failures and achievements. It is an outward sign of one's external vocation to serve God and his beloved.

Question 3 — Hinduism

Question 3 (a) (i)

Sample answer:

NA

Question 3 (a) (ii)

Sample answer:

NA

Question 3 (b)

Sample answer:

NA

Question 4 — Islam

Question 4 (a) (i)

Sample answer:

Sexual ethics. In Islam, sexuality is viewed as a gift from God. Hence, non-consensual sexual activity is forbidden ('haram') and is considered to be seriously sinful. Punishments in Sharia'h law vary depending on whether the perpetrator is married or unmarried and include physical punishments (eg stoning although this would be unacceptable in Australian culture). Some Islamic communities encourage their men to marry at a young age to avoid illicit sexual activity.

Sexual relations, including homosexuality, outside marriage are not permitted in Islam. This includes both pre-marital and extra-marital sexual relationships. Faithfulness to one's marriage partner is honoured. Strict Islamic observance includes physical punishments for illicit relations (eg fornication can be punished by 100 lashes, Sura 24:2) and the type of punishment varies depending on the marital state of the perpetrator. Such punishments however, would not be acceptable practice in Australia.

The teachings of the Prophet give guidance in this area of ethical teaching, ie sexual relations outside of marriage.

Question 4 (a) (ii)

Sample answer:

Extra-marital sexual relationships

Islam provides clear moral teaching to guide adherents in their sexual behaviours. For Muslims, marriage legitimises sexual relations between a man and a woman and provides a nurturing and supportive environment for the raising of children. Hence, *zina* (adultery) is viewed by observant Muslims to be an extremely serious crime because it not only undermines marriage but because it threatens the family as the fabric of Islamic community. Both the primacy and the clarity of this teaching significantly affect the life decisions and hence the behaviour of Islamic adherents.

For the Muslim, sexual relations and the capacity to procreate is a gift from Allah. It affects significantly the life of an Islamic believer because, as a gift, it fulfils not only the emotional and physical needs but also the spiritual needs of the adherent. Although not administered in almost all countries, including Australia, a small number of Islamic societies apply some type of punishment for infringements of Islamic teaching on sexual fidelity in marriage. In Islamic communities where punishments (stoning, banishment etc) do not apply, the stigma attached to the infringement of Islamic teachings on sexual behaviour can also serve as a formidable deterrent.

Finally, as Allah is respected as the creator of marriage as the basis of society and the Qur'an is respected as the final and perfect revelation, the adherent – as a faithful believer – would be most strongly influenced by Islamic guidance on sexual behaviour.

Question 4 (b)***Sample answer:*****The Hajj**

The Hajj, one of the Five Pillars of Islam, is a highly significant practice for the Islamic adherent. The Hajj is a pilgrimage based on the foundation of the tradition involving a spiritual, mental and physical journey to Mecca.

It is a reminder of the equality of all people before Allah – the individual will submit to the will of Allah through the letting go of family, friends and possessions during the pilgrimage. This enables the individual during the pilgrimage to focus on the physical challenges of the Hajj. The personal struggle to follow the way of Allah assists the adherent to visibly support the promotion and expansion of Islam. As a result, the Hajj demonstrates the adherent's acceptance of the Qur'an and respect for Muhammad.

At the Ka'ba, the revered house of Allah in Mecca, the adherent announces his/her presence to God, the Lord of the Ka'ba "at your service, Lord God" as they circumambulate it. The pilgrimage's strong significance, therefore, for the individual, is the supreme prayer for the forgiveness of sins and a preparation for the afterlife.

Question 5 — Judaism

Question 5 (a) (i)

Sample answer:

Bioethics Jewish ethical teachings are derived from the Ten Commandments of the Torah, the Prophetic Vision and the Book of Proverbs and are set out as principles. One ethical teaching states that human life is sacred and a gift from God and is derived from the Commandment “Do not Kill”. This teaching forbids abortion in most cases and also the practice of active euthanasia. Aging, illness and death are a natural part of life. Another ethical teaching stemming from the Torah requires that animals, although not equal in status to humans, be treated compassionately. Animal experimentation is justifiable only if there is a clear benefit to human life and no unnecessary distress is inflicted upon the animal.

Question 5 (a) (ii)

Sample answer:

Bioethics – Abortion

Life is sacred and a gift from God. This makes it clear to the adherents that the decision of life and death is not a choice to be made by humans. This then relates to the life of the adherent in matters of abortion and active euthanasia.

In general, a decision to deliberately abort a foetus is prohibited. The adherent should rejoice in this gift (baby) from God. Following this ethical teaching influences the life of the adherent and that of her observant family.

Conversely, when a mother’s life is put into serious, critical danger by continuing the pregnancy, the teaching that life is a gift from God is invoked to protect the life of the mother – her life has been, and one expects would be continued to be, sustained by God as his gift! Again the life of the adherent (and the observant family) has been influenced by the ethical teaching.

Question 5 (b)***Sample answer:***

The practice of marriage for the individual in Judaism is highly significant because the process of marriage is an expression of a belief in Judaism. The individual fulfils the *mitzvah* of “increase and multiply” (Genesis 1:28), thus ensuring the continuation of the tradition and the beliefs of Judaism.

The ketubah emphasises the major significance for the individual as they are agreeing to a written contract in a religious setting. This is a form of covenant. Every marriage builds a new house in Israel forever changing the life of the individual with his or her change of status from single to married. Marriage celebrates the distinctive way that an individual can experience God’s saving love, which touches and transforms his/her life.

The giving or exchange of rings links the individual to the history and community of all Jewish people – “behold you are consecrated to me with this ring according to the Law of Moses and Israel”. This also assists the individual in setting up a loving home *shalom bayit* (peace in the home) to provide strong foundations for the Jewish community. It may also involve, for the women, setting up a *kosher* home.

Studies of Religion I and Studies of Religion II

Section III — Religious Tradition Depth Study

Question 1 — Buddhism

Answers could include:

XIVth Dali Lama's exile and public appearances are a source of inspiration

- Affirms:
 - Three Jewels
 - Four Noble Truths
 - Five Precepts
 - Eightfold Path
- Promotes:
 - peace and freedom internationally
 - humility
 - non-violence, as in Right Mindfulness
- Aims to:
 - develop religious tolerance and understanding
- Actively seeks to:
 - eliminate desires (eg distrust, revenge, hatred) seen in his many interviews with world leaders
- Challenges adherents to:
 - reject human weaknesses by his example of:
 - living in exile
 - living simply/humbly

Question 2 — Christianity

Answers could include:

This statement strongly reflects the impact of Paul and Luther in the work of reforming, transforming and revitalising the Christian tradition.

St Paul

- His impact over time was enormous both as a missionary and theologian.
- Gentile males who converted to Christianity did not have to be circumcised (First Council of the Church in Jerusalem). This had a transformative effect on the early tradition – breaking from traditional Judaism.
- His letters were the earliest writings about Christianity – transforming the tradition from an oral to written form and establishing instructions for the early Christian communities.
- The Gospel writings, especially Luke and John, were greatly influenced by his writings. Paul is credited with writing a significant number of letters that now form part of the New Testament writers. His writings continue to revitalise established Christianity especially his concept of Church and salvation.
- Established churches in the centres of civilisation in the western world, for example Rome and Corinth. These communities were reformed and transformed by the teachings of Paul.
- His teachings inspired followers, including Martin Luther, to think deeply on theological matters.
- Although a Roman citizen, Paul experienced great difficulties, including imprisonment, while spreading his message of love and salvation. As a role model he revitalised the communities in which he preached and visited.
- Best-known writings – Paul’s first letter to Corinthians ‘love is patient and kind’, ‘love is eternal’. This inspirational message is a model for all Christians and still inspires followers today. Often used as a reading in the marriage ceremony today for Christians.
- Changed the societies that he visited. He founded churches; spoke to followers about how to live a Christian life, based on the teachings of Christ. This had a transforming and revitalising impact upon the then church communities.
- Responsible for spread of Christianity beyond Jerusalem – he was the first great Christian missionary undertaking three missionary journeys throughout the Mediterranean region.
- His example and teachings from his writings transformed, challenged and inspired Christians in the first century and still continue today.

Luther

- Reformed, transformed and revitalised the Christian tradition. His writings and protests led to the reform of the Christian churches of that time.
- 1517 published his Ninety-Five Thesis on the church door at Wittenberg castle.
- He addressed poor attitudes and practices of the Christian Church – reforming the thinking and practices of the church.
- Strong believer, academic and leader in church – associated with ideas of protest and change, particularly challenging the status quo of the church – its hierarchy, leadership and beliefs especially the concept of salvation.
- Luther protested the corruption – payment for indulgences and buying forgiveness that was common in the church at that time. His views were aimed at transforming the church practices and returning to the basic teachings of Christianity.
- He was excommunicated in 1520 and established the Lutheran Church in 1530. This was a complete reformation for the church at that time and this gave impetus to many reformers in Protestant variants – separating from established Christian Church of Rome.
- He taught of *sola fide* (salvation through faith alone). Although not a new concept, it did transform the Church at that time with its belief in ‘faith and good works’ for salvation.
- Luther believed in the fundamental teachings of Christ and its sacramental life for the believers.
- He became a key figure in the Reformation in Europe, revitalising dialogue and the writings on Christianity, including Liturgy said in vernacular.
- He transformed and revitalised Liturgical practices; presented his beliefs in words, hymns, preaching and actions.
- Luther emphasised the importance of the Sacraments of Baptism and Holy Communion. This action had the impact of reforming and revitalising Christian beliefs and teachings.
- Luther reformed Church leadership in contrast to the Roman centre’s authority of the time associated with abuse and corruption.
- Luther’s reformation, transformation and revitalising of the Christian tradition has a continuing impact on Christianity. Vatican II took up some of the challenges presented by Luther from the 16th century including Liturgy in the vernacular and the importance of scripture.

Question 3 — Hinduism

Sample answer:

NA

Question 4 — Islam

Sample answer:

NA

Question 5 — Judaism

Sample answer:

NA

Studies of Religion II

Section IV — Religion and Peace

Question 1

Answers could include:

CHRISTIANITY

- All Christian Churches support peace and advocate peace in their teachings and writings.
- Over the centuries different teachings on peace and guidance have evolved in different variants of Christianity especially in relation to the achievement of world peace.
- Principal teachings on peace guide the individual and the Christian tradition. Ethical guidance is provided through the interpretation of Mosaic Law, writings in the New Testament, the letters of St Paul and St Augustine and, more recently, statements by various Christian leaders.
- Principal teachings on peace are found in the New Testament, including the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5:7) ‘love your enemies’, St Paul’s letters to Churches instructing people to ‘obey authority’ and St Augustine’s writings on a ‘just war’ stating that rulers of nations have an obligation to maintain peace and hence right to wage war. Encyclicals by the Pope John XXIII and Pope Paul II refer specifically to beliefs and actions supporting peace.
- Christian pacifists do not support the notion of a ‘just war’ but rather speak of ‘peace churches’ advocating pacifism.
- The Amish, Quakers and Church of Brethren and many groups within the Pentecostal movement follow this belief, not agreeing to or supporting violence. They will not take part in combatant military service, and many countries allow exemptions based on religious grounds and beliefs.
- Other Christians are encouraged to take an active role in promoting peace, for example Christian Peacemakers Teams and social justice initiatives. The Catholic Social Justice Commission focuses on peace initiatives and closing the inequality gap between people and nations.
- Christian teachings acknowledge and recognise difference, respect, human dignity and human rights. They oppose the violation of human rights, for example genocide and torture, and support attempts to resolve conflict globally. This guidance is expressed in the contribution of Christian followers to the achievement of world peace.
- For Christians, world peace starts with how one lives one’s own life based on New Testament teachings and the life of Jesus. Living in harmony with other people, love of neighbour and active involvement in world peace initiatives.
- A key way Christians seek peace is through prayer both individual and communal.
- Examples of the contribution to the achievement of world peace by Christians and based on their principal teachings may include – peaceful protests, for example against nuclear testing in the South Pacific, campaigns to ban land mines, the World Council of Churches’ statements on the Middle East crisis, public expressions by Christian Churches after September 11, the Bali and London bombings, International Week of Prayer and Peace, and initiatives to challenge potential leaders to meet Millennium Development Goals.
- The World Conference for Religion and Peace offers initiatives for Christian Churches involvement in stopping war, ending poverty and active stewardship. National Council of

Churches in Australia ‘act for peace campaign’ aims to reduce poverty, protect refugees and empower local communities.

JUDAISM

- All Jewish variants support peace and advocate peace in their teachings, although there may be vast differences in a variant’s interpretation of a situation and the response. However, peace is a requirement of God.
- The sacred texts and writings of Judaism including the Torah and Talmud provide ‘laws’ or instruments for peaceful living. The Shema Prayer acknowledges ‘love of God’.
- The Jewish blessing of ‘shalom’ meaning peace is central to the understanding of peace and expressed in Numbers 6:24–26 and their covenant arrangement with God.
- The sacred texts of Judaism give a strong message on God’s righteousness, relationships with others and judgement. Psalm 82 refers to the duty of Jews to look after the weak. Psalm 29 refers to God blessing his people with peace.
- Maintaining peace, promoting peace, defending the weak are all referenced in the sacred texts of Judaism.
- Inner peace is a prerequisite for world peace. Inner peace is achieved by following the instructions of God – the 10 commandments.
- The principal teachings on peace in Judaism guide the contribution of individuals and communities to the achievement of world peace.
- Hebrew and Arabic ‘Oasis of Peace’ village and the Jewish Voices for Peace and Justice are specific examples of groups that are working for world peace within Judaism. Statements from groups including the Palestinian and Jewish Dialogue Groups and the Australian Arabic Palestinian Support Association express a desire for peace especially in the Middle East.