VCE Religion and Society 2017–2022

Study summary

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| **Please Note: This study summary includes excerpts from the VCE Religion and Society Study Design. The summary is not a substitute for the VCE Study Design. Users are advised to view the full accredited study design and other resources on the VCAA website.** |

Scope of study

In VCE Religion and Society, religion is defined as a community organised around beliefs related to ultimate reality and the consequent beliefs, practices, principles and codes for behaviour. Students undertake a general study of religion and its interaction with society in the past and the present and of the individual experiences of members as they engage with their religion. This is supported by the study of specific religious traditions or denominations in societies where multiple worldviews exist. In Units 1 and 2 a wide range of examples from religious traditions are studied, with examples in Units 3 and 4 drawn from one or more of Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam and Judaism.

Rationale

VCE Religion and Society enables students to understand the interactions between religion and society over time, fostering an appreciation of the complexity of societies where multiple world views exist. Students come to appreciate the dynamic and changing role of religion in society and as an institution supporting adherents to grapple with the big questions of life. They study the value systems that guide religious traditions and the religious beliefs and other aspects of religion that express these. Students develop skills in research and analysis, assisting them to become informed citizens and preparing them for work and further study in fields such as anthropology, theology, philosophy, sociology, journalism, politics and international relations.

Structure

The study is made up of four units:

Unit 1: The role of religion in society

Unit 2: Religion and ethics

Unit 3: The search for meaning

Unit 4: Religion, challenge and change

Each unit contains between two and four areas of study.

Entry

There are no prerequisites for entry to Units 1, 2 and 3. Students must undertake Unit 3 prior to undertaking Unit 4. Units 1 to 4 are designed to a standard equivalent to the final two years of secondary education.

Unit 1: The role of religion in society

In this unit students explore the origins of religions and their role in the development of society, identifying their nature and purpose over time. They investigate the contribution of religion generally to the development of human society. They also focus on the role of religious traditions over time in shaping personal and group identity. Students examine how individuals, groups and new ideas have affected and continue to affect religious traditions. The unit provides an opportunity for students to understand the often complex relationships that exist between individuals, groups, new ideas, religious traditions and the Australian society in which they live.

Unit 2: Religion and ethics

Ethics is concerned with discovering the perspectives that guide practical moral judgment. Studying ethics involves identifying the arguments and analysing the reasoning, and any other influences, behind these perspectives and moral judgments. An important influence on ethical perspective is the method of ethical decision-making, made up of concepts, principles and theories. In this unit students study in detail various methods of ethical decision-making in at least two religious traditions and their related philosophical traditions. They explore ethical issues in the light of their investigations into ethical decision-making and ethical perspectives, and moral judgments in society.

Unit 3: The search for meaning

In this unit, students study the purposes of religion generally and then consider the religious beliefs developed by one or more than one than one religious tradition or denomination in response to the big questions of life. Students study how particular beliefs within a religious tradition/s or denomination/s may be expressed through the other aspects of religion, and explore how this is intended to foster meaning for adherents. Students then consider the interaction between significant life experience and religion.

Unit 4: Religion, challenge and change

This unit focuses on the dynamic interaction over time of religious traditions and the societies of which they are a part. Religious traditions are living institutions that participate and contribute in many ways, both positively and negatively, to wider societies – stimulating and supporting society; as levers for change themselves and embracing or resisting forces for change within society. In this unit, students explore challenge for religion generally over time and then undertake a study of challenge and change for one or more than one religious tradition or denomination.

Assessment

Satisfactory completion

The award of satisfactory completion for a unit is based on a decision that the student has demonstrated achievement of the set of outcomes specified for the unit. This decision will be based on the teacher’s assessment of the student’s performance on assessment tasks designated for the unit.

Levels of achievement

Units 1 and 2

Procedures for the assessment of levels of achievement in Units 1 and 2 are a matter for school decision.

Units 3 and 4

The Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority will supervise the assessment of all students undertaking Units 3 and 4. In the study of VCE Religion and Society, students’ level of achievement will be determined by school assessed coursework.

Percentage contributions to the study score in VCE Religion and Society are as follows:

* Unit 3 school-assessed coursework: – 25 per cent
* Unit 4 school-assessed coursework: – 25 per cent
* End-of-year examination: – 50 per cent