

Religion and Society

Victorian Certificate of Education Study Design

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Latoya BARTON
The sunset (detail)
from a series of twenty-four
9.0 x 9.0 cm each, oil on board



Tarkan ERTURK
Visage (detail)
201.0 x 170.0 cm
synthetic polymer paint, on cotton duck



Liana RASCHILLA
Teapot from the *Crazy Alice* set
19.0 x 22.0 x 22.0 cm
earthenware, clear glaze, lustres



Nigel BROWN
Untitled physics (detail)
90.0 x 440.0 x 70.0 cm
composition board, steel, loudspeakers,
CD player, amplifier, glass



Kate WOOLLEY
Sarah (detail)
76.0 x 101.5 cm, oil on canvas



Chris ELLIS
Tranquility (detail)
35.0 x 22.5 cm
gelatin silver photograph



Christian HART
Within without (detail)
digital film, 6 minutes



Kristian LUCAS
Me, myself, I and you (detail)
56.0 x 102.0 cm
oil on canvas



Merryn ALLEN
Japanese illusions (detail)
centre back: 74.0 cm, waist (flat): 42.0 cm
polyester cotton



Ping (Irene) VINCENT
Boxes (detail)
colour photograph



James ATKINS
Light cascades (detail)
three works, 32.0 x 32.0 x 5.0 cm each
glass, fluorescent light, metal



Tim JOINER
14 seconds (detail)
digital film, 1.30 minutes



Lucy McNAMARA
Precariously (detail)
156.0 x 61.0 x 61.0 cm
painted wood, oil paint, egg shells, glue, stainless steel wire

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IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Accreditation period

Units 1–4: 2011–2015

The accreditation period commences on 1 January 2011.

Other sources of information

The *VCAA Bulletin VCE, VCAL and VET* is the only official source of changes to regulations and accredited studies. The *VCAA Bulletin VCE, VCAL and VET*, including supplements, also regularly includes advice on VCE studies. It is the responsibility of each VCE teacher to refer to each issue of the *VCAA Bulletin VCE, VCAL and VET*. The *VCAA Bulletin VCE, VCAL and VET* is sent in hard copy to all VCE providers. It is also available as an e-newsletter via free subscription on the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority's website at www.vcaa.vic.edu.au

To assist teachers in assessing School-assessed Coursework in Units 3 and 4, the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority publishes online an assessment handbook that includes advice on the assessment tasks and performance descriptors for assessment.

The current year's *VCE and VCAL Administrative Handbook* contains essential information on assessment processes and other procedures.

VCE providers

Throughout this study design the term 'school' is intended to include both schools and other VCE providers.

Photocopying

VCE schools only may photocopy parts of this study design for use by teachers.

Introduction

In this study, religions are defined as those forms of belief and practice through which human beings express their sense of ultimate reality. Such beliefs and practices form an important part of human experience and this experience is both individual and collective. Religious communities are formed and traditions of belief and practice are developed.

This study proposes that religions can be understood in a general way as meaning systems that have eight interrelated aspects. These guide students through their study of one or many religious traditions. The eight aspects are:

- beliefs
- myths and other stories
- sacred texts and other religious writings (such as formal creeds)
- rituals
- symbols
- social structures
- ethical principles and oral or written codes of behaviour
- religious experience and spirituality (characteristic ways of thinking and behaving in the light of beliefs).

The eight aspects presented above provide a useful framework for discussion, but each tradition has its own characteristic emphases.

RATIONALE

The beliefs, values and ideas of religious traditions can play an important part in shaping and maintaining culture. Religious beliefs about the nature of existence and the purpose of human life provide a frame of reference for understanding the world and for guiding daily personal and communal action.

VCE Religion and Society is designed for students to engage with the great questions of life. It aims to develop understanding and respect for the perceptions of the participants in religious traditions. It values and promotes open inquiry, without bias towards any one tradition, while drawing on the personal and collective experience of the students.

AIMS

This study is designed to enable students to:

- understand the interplay between individual and collective dimensions of religious experience and the ways in which these interact with society
- reflect on the capacity of a religious tradition to provide ways of making meaning of significant life experiences for individuals and groups
- analyse the contribution made by religions to debate about important religious, cultural, political, social and ethical issues
- appreciate the dynamic process of interaction between society and religions in general as each shapes, and is shaped by, the other.

STRUCTURE

The study is made up of four units:

Unit 1: Religion in society

Unit 2: Ethics and morality

Unit 3: The search for meaning

Unit 4: Challenge and response

Each unit deals with specific content contained in areas of study and is designed to enable students to achieve a set of outcomes for that unit. Each outcome is described in terms of key knowledge and key skills.

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. All VCE studies are benchmarked against comparable national and international curriculum.

DURATION

Each unit involves at least 50 hours of scheduled classroom instruction.

CHANGES TO THE STUDY DESIGN

During its period of accreditation minor changes to the study will be announced in the *VCAA Bulletin VCE, VCAL and VET*. The *VCAA Bulletin VCE, VCAL and VET* is the only source of changes to regulations and accredited studies and it is the responsibility of each VCE teacher to monitor changes or advice about VCE studies published in the *VCAA Bulletin VCE, VCAL and VET*.

MONITORING FOR QUALITY

As part of ongoing monitoring and quality assurance, the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority will periodically undertake an audit of VCE Religion and Society to ensure the study is being taught and assessed as accredited. The details of the audit procedures and requirements are published annually in the *VCE and VCAL Administrative Handbook*. Schools will be notified if they are required to submit material to be audited.

SAFETY

It is the responsibility of the school to ensure that duty of care is exercised in relation to the health and safety of all students undertaking the study.

USE OF INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY

In designing courses for this study teachers should incorporate information and communications technology (ICT) where appropriate and applicable to the teaching and learning activities.

EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS

This study offers a number of opportunities for students to develop employability skills. The ‘Advice for teachers’ section provides specific examples of how students can develop employability skills during learning activities and assessment tasks.

LEGISLATIVE COMPLIANCE

When collecting and using information, the provisions of privacy and copyright legislation, such as the Victorian *Information Privacy Act 2000* and *Health Records Act 2001*, and the federal *Privacy Act 1988* and *Copyright Act 1968*, must be met.

Assessment and reporting

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. Designated assessment tasks are provided in the details for each unit. The Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority publishes online an assessment handbook that includes advice on the assessment tasks and performance descriptors for assessment for Units 3 and 4.

Teachers must develop courses that provide opportunities for students to demonstrate achievement of outcomes. Examples of learning activities are provided in the Advice for teachers section.

Schools will report a result for each unit to the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority as S (Satisfactory) or N (Not Satisfactory).

Completion of a unit will be reported on the Statement of Results issued by the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority as S (Satisfactory) or N (Not Satisfactory). Schools may report additional information on levels of achievement.

AUTHENTICATION

Work related to the outcomes of each unit will be accepted only if the teacher can attest that, to the best of their knowledge, all unacknowledged work is the student's own. Teachers need to refer to the current year's *VCE and VCAL Administrative Handbook* for authentication procedures.

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. Assessment of levels of achievement for these units will not be reported to the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority. Schools may choose to report levels of achievement using grades, descriptive statements or other indicators.

Units 3 and 4

The Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority will supervise the assessment of all students undertaking Units 3 and 4.

In VCE Religion and Society the student's level of achievement will be determined by School-assessed Coursework and an end-of-year examination. The Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority will report the student's level of performance on each assessment component as a grade from A+ to E or UG (ungraded). To receive a study score, students must achieve two or more graded assessments and receive S for both Units 3 and 4. The study score is reported on a scale of 0–50; it is a measure of how well the student performed in relation to all others who took the study. Teachers should refer to the current year's *VCE and VCAL Administrative Handbook* for details on graded assessment and calculation of the study score. 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.

Details of the assessment program are described in the sections on Units 3 and 4 in this study design.

Unit 1: Religion in society

In this unit students explore the origins of religion, identifying the nature and purpose of religion past and present. They investigate the contribution of religion to the development of human society and then focus on the role of religious traditions in shaping personal and group identity. Students examine how religious traditions are affected and changed by individuals and groups. The unit provides the opportunity for students to understand the often complex relationships that exist between individuals, groups, religious traditions and the society in which they live.

Throughout this unit at least two religious traditions should be studied. Different religious traditions may be selected for each area of study. Religious traditions to be studied are to be chosen from more than one of the following groups:

- Religions of ancient civilisations (for example, Mesopotamian, Babylonian, Egyptian, Canaanite, Roman, Greek)
- Primal religions (for example, Australian Aboriginal religions, religions of the Pacific islands)
- Asian religions (for example, Buddhism, Hinduism, Chinese religions)
- Abrahamic religions (for example, Judaism, Christianity and Islam).

AREA OF STUDY 1

The religious world

In this area of study students investigate the nature of religion. They identify the features common to religions, especially the eight aspects of religion outlined in the Introduction on page 7. They explore why these features are common to all religions studied and investigate a range of religions to show the importance of these features. Students also examine the contributions of religions to the development of human society. Within the broad overview of religions, past and present, students should study at least two different traditions in some depth.

Outcome 1

On completion of this unit the student should be able to explain the role of religion in society.

To achieve this outcome the student will draw on key knowledge and key skills outlined in Area of Study 1.

Key knowledge

This knowledge includes:

- the nature and purpose of religion, past and present
- features common to religions, including the eight aspects of religion:
 - beliefs
 - myths and other stories
 - sacred texts and other religious writings (such as formal creeds)
 - rituals
 - symbols
 - social structures
 - ethical principles and oral or written codes of behaviour
 - religious experience and spirituality (characteristic ways of thinking and behaving in the light of beliefs)
- the importance of the eight aspects of religion in the context of the specific tradition/s
- the contributions, both positive and negative, of religion in general to the development of human society
- the characteristics of at least two religious traditions.

Key skills

These skills include the ability to:

- identify and describe the nature and purpose of religion
- identify and define the eight aspects of religion
- explain the importance of these aspects to religion
- explain the contribution of religion to the development of human society
- interpret and synthesise source material.

AREA OF STUDY 2

Religious traditions in Australia

This area of study includes a geographical and statistical overview of the variety of religious traditions found throughout the world today and, in particular, in Australia.

Students focus on some of the religious traditions found in Australia. They explore how these religious traditions perceive themselves and express their collective religious identity in Australia, including how the history of each religious tradition has influenced its collective identity. This collective identity may be cohesive or it could be pluralistic, for example as expressed by different religious communities within the tradition. Students also explore how these religious traditions interact with society. At least two religious traditions should be selected for detailed study.

Outcome 2

On completion of this unit the student should be able to explain the expression of collective identity of particular religious traditions in Australia, and the interaction of these traditions with other religious traditions and wider society.

To achieve this outcome the student will draw on key knowledge and key skills outlined in Area of Study 2.

Key knowledge

This knowledge includes:

- the distribution of and adherence to major religions in the world and in Australia today
- the expression of collective identity by religious traditions in Australia through their history and relevant aspects of religion, including:
 - beliefs
 - myths and other stories
 - sacred texts and other religious writings (such as formal creeds)
 - rituals
 - symbols
 - social structures
 - ethical principles and oral or written codes of behaviour
 - religious experience and spirituality (characteristic ways of thinking and behaving in the light of beliefs)
- instances of interaction between different religious traditions in Australia
- instances of interaction between different religious traditions in Australia and the wider national society of which they are a part.

Key skills

These skills include the ability to:

- describe the diversity of religious traditions in the world and in Australia today
- explain how religious traditions express their collective identity through their history and religious aspects
- explain the nature of interaction between religious traditions
- explain the nature of interaction between different religious traditions in Australia and the wider national society of which they are a part
- interpret and synthesise source material.

AREA OF STUDY 3

Religious identity and life experience

In this area of study, students examine the relationship between religious traditions and the life experience of its members. They investigate the dynamic relationship that can exist between members as individuals or specific communities and their religious tradition. They explore how membership of a religious tradition contributes to the life experience of members, and how the search for meaning by and identity of members is shaped by the beliefs, practices and experiences of their religious tradition. Students investigate how members have a role in the growth and continuing transformation of the religious tradition. At least two religious traditions should be selected for detailed study.

Outcome 3

On completion of this unit the student should be able to recognise and discuss the interplay between the identity of members, as individuals or as specific communities, and their religious tradition.

To achieve this outcome the student will draw on key knowledge and key skills outlined in Area of Study 3.

Key knowledge

This knowledge includes:

- the impact of life experiences on identity
- the personal meaning and identity that is found and further developed through engagement with relevant aspects of religion, including:
 - beliefs
 - myths and other stories
 - sacred texts and other religious writings (such as formal creeds)
 - rituals
 - symbols
 - social structures
 - ethical principles and oral or written codes of behaviour
 - religious experience and spirituality (characteristic ways of thinking and behaving in the light of beliefs)
- the ways selected aspects of religion may assist members to find and then further develop personal meaning and identity
- the ways in which the religious traditions can assist members through important life passages and events
- specific occasions when members have been challenged by their religious tradition to change and grow
- the tension that can occur between members and a religious tradition over issues of authority, freedom, interpretation of beliefs and teaching, and behaviour
- the extent to which the expectations, judgments and involvement of members can contribute to the development of a religious tradition.

Key skills

These skills include the ability to:

- identify how a range of life experiences may have an impact on identity
- describe how religious traditions can contribute to the life experience and search for personal meaning and identity of members
- analyse points of tension between members and their religious tradition
- evaluate the extent to which the expectations, judgments and involvement of members can contribute to the development of a religious tradition
- interpret and synthesise source material.

ASSESSMENT

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 overall performance on assessment tasks designated for the unit.

The key knowledge and key skills listed for each outcome should be used as a guide to course design and the development of learning activities. The key knowledge and key skills do not constitute a checklist and such an approach is not necessary or desirable for determining the achievement of outcomes. The elements of key knowledge and key skills should not be assessed separately.

Assessment tasks must be a part of the regular teaching and learning program and must not unduly add to the workload associated with that program. They must be completed mainly in class and within a limited timeframe. Teachers should select a variety of assessment tasks for their assessment program to reflect the key knowledge and key skills being assessed and to provide for different learning styles.

For this unit students are required to demonstrate achievement of three outcomes. As a set these outcomes encompass all areas of study.

Demonstration of achievement of Outcomes 1, 2 and 3 must be based on the student's performance on a selection of assessment tasks. Where teachers allow students to choose between tasks they must ensure that the tasks they set are of comparable scope and demand.

Assessment tasks for this unit are selected from the following:

- report in multimedia format
- debates
- identification exercises
- analytical exercises
- oral presentations
- interviews
- annotated charts
- flow charts
- essay
- test
- written exercises.

Unit 2: Ethics and morality

Choosing which values to live by in principle and in practice is fundamental to being human. Ethics is a discipline that investigates the various methods for making ethical decisions; it involves reflection on what 'right' and 'wrong', and 'good' and 'bad' mean when applied to human decisions and actions. Ethics is concerned with discovering principles that guide practical moral judgment. Ethics is particularly concerned with the justification for moral choices – identifying the arguments and analysing the reasoning behind them. Ethical questions are raised at the personal, family, local, wider community, national and global level.

Unlike morality, ethics is not just a matter of individual awareness and personal decision-making. Family, community and traditional connections tie people together and provide an ethical background to guide what individuals do, supporting some choices and disapproving of others. This background is enmeshed with the dominant religious and philosophical traditions of the times. Today, religious and philosophical traditions compete with powerful alternative sources of moral values represented in the media and popular culture. Nevertheless, society still relies on cultural heritages that contain a variety of ethical perspectives as well as numerous values centred on human dignity and basic justice. These various values remain fundamental to legal and social systems, and constitute the everyday categories of ethical discourse in the modern world. They are taken by the individuals and groups that hold them to be the starting point and common ground for ethical discussion in pluralist society.

In this unit students survey various approaches to ethical decision-making and then explore at least two religious traditions in detail. They explore contemporary ethical issues in the light of their investigations into ethical decision-making and ethical perspectives, and moral viewpoints in religious traditions.

AREA OF STUDY 1

Ethical method in pluralist society

In this area of study students are introduced to the nature of ethical decision-making in pluralist society. Ethical decision-making refers to the selection of methods and principles which guide practical moral judgment. Students explore the concepts underpinning ethical decision-making and various influences on it. Various approaches to ethical decision-making are discussed as well as theories derived from these approaches. For example, one approach may involve a conception of right and wrong as subjective, from which relativist theories of ethics are derived, which in turn inform practical moral judgment. Another approach may be to see right and wrong as absolutes, from which various normative theories are derived.

Outcome 1

On completion of this unit the student should be able to explain ethical decision-making in pluralist society.

To achieve this outcome the student will draw on key knowledge and key skills outlined in Area of Study 1.

Key knowledge

This knowledge includes:

- understanding of concepts used in ethics and ethical decision-making, such as ‘good’, ‘bad’, ‘right’ and ‘wrong’
- the way competing ideas, values and principles in pluralist societies influence ethical decision-making
- factors involved in the process of ethical decision-making, such as reasoning, conscience, intuition, common sense, assumptions, authorities, world views, values, ethical principles and the competing rights and responsibilities of individuals, groups and society
- a variety of approaches to ethical decision-making and the theories that arise from these, including those that appeal to religious, philosophical, scientific, political, economic or other authority, to rules and principles, and to assessing consequences, motivation or intention.

Key skills

These skills include the ability to:

- define and use correctly, concepts associated with ethics and ethical decision-making
- explain the ideas, values and principles of pluralist societies that influence ethical decision-making
- outline the role of various factors in the process of ethical decision-making
- explain a variety of approaches to and theories of ethical decision-making
- interpret and synthesise source material.

AREA OF STUDY 2**Religion and morality in pluralist society**

In this area of study, students examine ethical perspectives and moral viewpoints upheld by at least two religious traditions in pluralist society. Certain authorities, ideas, values and ethical principles inform broad ethical perspectives and in turn ethical decision-making within a religious tradition. These ethical perspectives inform the religious tradition’s moral viewpoints on specific aspects of practical moral judgment.

Students analyse how the ideas, values and ethical principles underpinning ethical perspectives are expressed through the formal aspects of religion. A non-religious tradition could be included for purposes of comparison. Students also investigate a range of moral viewpoints of each religious tradition derived from the ethical perspectives and ethical decision-making process of the tradition.

Outcome 2

On completion of this unit the student should be able to explain the ethical perspectives and moral viewpoints upheld by at least two religious traditions in pluralist society.

To achieve this outcome the student will draw on key knowledge and key skills outlined in Area of Study 2.

Key knowledge

This knowledge includes:

- the authorities, ideas, values and principles informing ethical perspectives and ethical decision-making of at least two religious traditions in pluralist society
- the expression of such ideas, values and ethical principles to succeeding generations in relevant beliefs, myths and stories, rituals, symbols, social structures, sacred texts and other religious writing such as formal creeds, oral and written codes of behaviour, and other relevant formal aspects of traditions
- moral viewpoints of religious traditions derived from their ethical perspectives and their ethical decision-making processes.

Key skills

These skills include the ability to

- identify the authorities, ideas, values and ethical principles informing ethical perspectives and ethical decision-making of at least two religious traditions in pluralist society
- explain the ways in which these ideas, values and ethical principles are expressed to succeeding generations in religious traditions
- explain moral viewpoints of religious traditions
- interpret and synthesise source material.

AREA OF STUDY 3

Contemporary ethical issues in pluralist society

This area of study builds on the knowledge of concepts, approaches, methods and traditions associated with ethical perspectives and ethical decision-making explored in Areas of Study 1 and 2. Students apply this knowledge to an examination of debates about ethical issues conducted in the public arena of pluralist societies, focusing on two or more contemporary issues. The analysis should encompass an explanation of why the issue is regarded as an ethical issue; identification of contributors to the debate and the worth and influence of their contribution; the basis of ethical perspectives and moral viewpoints used in the debates; and the methods involved in the ethical decision-making process.

Outcome 3

On completion of this unit the student should be able to analyse and evaluate two or more debates on contemporary ethical issues in pluralist society.

To achieve this outcome the student will draw on key knowledge and key skills outlined in Area of Study 3.

Key knowledge

This knowledge includes:

- the reasons why the issues are ‘ethical issues’
- the religious and non-religious individuals, groups and traditions in pluralist society that contribute to debate about ethical issues
- the ethical perspectives and moral viewpoints presented in the arguments by those participating in the debates, including the ideas, values and ethical principles on which the various ethical perspectives and moral viewpoints rest
- the authorities that are used to justify ethical perspectives and moral viewpoints in the debates

- the ethical decision-making methods involved in the debate process and their strengths and weaknesses
- the worth and influence of the various participants' contributions to the debates.

Key skills

These skills include the ability to:

- select appropriate ethical issues for study and articulate the nature of the ethical issue
- identify the contributors to the debate
- identify the authorities used to support the argument of each participant in the debate
- summarise and explain the ethical perspectives and moral viewpoints within the arguments presented by those participating in the debates
- explain and evaluate the methods of ethical decision-making involved in the process at work in the debates
- analyse and evaluate the worth and influence of the various participants' contributions to the debate
- interpret and synthesise source material.

ASSESSMENT

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 overall performance on assessment tasks designated for the unit.

The key knowledge and key skills listed for each outcome should be used as a guide to course design and the development of learning activities. The key knowledge and key skills do not constitute a checklist and such an approach is not necessary or desirable for determining the achievement of outcomes. The elements of key knowledge and key skills should not be assessed separately.

Assessment tasks must be a part of the regular teaching and learning program and must not unduly add to the workload associated with that program. They must be completed mainly in class and within a limited timeframe. Teachers should select a variety of assessment tasks for their assessment program to reflect the key knowledge and key skills being assessed and to provide for different learning styles.

For this unit students are required to demonstrate achievement of three outcomes. As a set these outcomes encompass all areas of study.

Demonstration of achievement of Outcomes 1, 2 and 3 must be based on the student's performance on a selection of assessment tasks. Where teachers allow students to choose between tasks they must ensure that the tasks they set are of comparable scope and demand.

Assessment tasks for this unit are selected from the following:

- report in multimedia format
- debates
- identification exercises
- analytical exercises
- oral presentations
- interviews
- annotated charts
- flow charts
- essay
- test
- written exercises.

Unit 3: The search for meaning

Across time and cultures, humanity has sought to understand the why and how of existence. In this quest humans have consistently posed big questions of life such as: Where did we come from? Is there someone or something greater than us – an ultimate reality? What is the purpose of our existence? How should we live? Why do we die? Is there anything beyond death? In response to this quest for meaning, religions have developed systems of belief that have offered ways of establishing meaning and purpose – not only for human existence but also for all that exists. Such religious beliefs have also attempted to explain the nature of relationships between humans, between humans and the rest of the natural world, and between humans and ultimate reality.

In this unit students begin by studying the religious beliefs developed by one or more than one religious tradition in response to the big questions of life. They explore the ways in which these religious beliefs create meaning for religious traditions and their members. The religious beliefs of any religion arise from the beliefs held about ultimate reality, and these in turn inform particular beliefs about human existence; about its meaning, purpose and destiny. Religious beliefs may be expressed through the other aspects of religion, such as myths and other stories, sacred texts and other religious writings (such as formal creeds), rituals, symbols, social structures, ethical principles and oral or written codes of behaviour, religious experience and spirituality.

Religious tradition/s will be chosen from one or more of the following groups:

- Primal religions (for example, Australian Aboriginal religions, religions of the Pacific Islands)
- Asian religions (for example, Buddhism, Hinduism, Chinese religions)
- Abrahamic religions (for example, Judaism, Christianity and Islam).

Students undertake a general investigation of religious traditions in Unit 3. Within this investigation, they focus on a particular example from one or more than one religious tradition for each area of study. The particular examples for investigation should demonstrate many of the characteristics discovered in the general investigation of religious traditions for each area of study.

AREA OF STUDY 1

Meaning in religious traditions

In this area of study, students examine the nature and purpose of religious beliefs within religious traditions generally. They then explore specific religious beliefs in one or more than one religious tradition that are common to members of that tradition. This exploration includes consideration of how each belief is distinctive for that tradition; that is, traditions may share a common belief but this belief

may have a distinctive meaning for each tradition. It is this distinctiveness that should be explored for the tradition/s under study. Students investigate the expression of these religious beliefs in the religious tradition/s through the relevant aspects of religion. Students also consider what these religious beliefs mean for the way in which members of the religious tradition/s are to lead their lives.

Outcome 1

On completion of this unit the student should be able to explain the nature, purpose and expression of religious beliefs generally and for one or more than one religious tradition.

To achieve this outcome the student will draw on key knowledge and key skills outlined in Area of Study 1.

Key knowledge

This knowledge includes:

- the nature and purpose of religious beliefs in religious traditions generally
- a range of religious beliefs in one or more than one religious tradition common to members of that tradition/s and focusing on:
 - ultimate reality
 - the nature and purpose of human life
 - the meaning of life and death
 - the relationship between ultimate reality and humanity
 - the relationship between humans
 - the relationship between human life and the rest of the natural world
- how each of these religious beliefs are related to
 - ultimate reality
 - the nature and purpose of human life
 - the meaning of life and death
 - the relationship between ultimate reality and humanity
 - the relationship between humans
 - the relationship between human life and the rest of the natural world
- how these religious beliefs are expressed through the relevant aspects of religion:
 - myths and other stories
 - sacred texts and other religious writings (such as formal creeds)
 - rituals
 - symbols
 - social structures
 - ethical principles and oral or written codes of behaviour
 - religious experience and spirituality (characteristic ways of thinking and behaving in the light of beliefs)
- what these religious beliefs mean for the way members of the religious tradition/s are to lead their lives.

Key skills

These skills include the ability to:

- define and summarise the nature and purpose of religious beliefs in religious traditions generally
- explain a range of religious beliefs within one or more than one religious tradition/s
- explain how these religious beliefs are expressed in the religious tradition/s
- explain the implications of religious beliefs for the way members of the religious tradition/s are to lead their lives
- interpret and synthesise source material.

AREA OF STUDY 2

Maintaining continuity of religious beliefs

This area of study builds on the knowledge of religious beliefs developed in Area of Study 1. Students examine how religions maintain continuity of beliefs concerning ultimate reality, the nature and purpose of human life, the meaning of life and death, the relationship between ultimate reality and humanity, the relationship between humans, and the relationship between human life and the rest of the natural world.

Students investigate the reasons for maintaining continuity of religious beliefs. They explore the ways these beliefs are maintained by religious traditions generally and specifically in one or more than one religious tradition/s, exploring a detailed example in their investigation of a specific religious tradition.

Students investigate these maintenance practices: the reaffirmation of religious beliefs; the application of reaffirmed religious beliefs to new circumstances; the reinterpretation of religious beliefs to address new circumstances; and the reaffirmation of religious beliefs through reformulation of their expression. Students use the eight aspects of religion (outlined in the Introduction on page 7) as a framework for their analysis.

Outcome 2

On completion of this unit the student should be able to analyse the maintenance of religious beliefs for continuity in religious traditions.

To achieve this outcome the student will draw on key knowledge and key skills outlined in Area of Study 2.

Key knowledge

This knowledge includes:

- the maintenance of continuity of religious beliefs in religious traditions generally, including:
 - reasons for maintaining continuity of religious beliefs concerning ultimate reality, the nature and purpose of human life, the meaning of life and death, the relationship between ultimate reality and humanity, the relationship between humans, and the relationship between human life and the rest of the natural world
 - internal and external factors that can promote action to maintain continuity of these beliefs
 - ways of maintaining continuity of these religious beliefs used in response to internal and external factors, including reaffirmation of religious beliefs, the application of reaffirmed religious beliefs to new circumstances, the reinterpretation of religious beliefs to address new circumstances, and the reaffirmation of religious beliefs through reformulation of their expression

- the maintenance of continuity of religious beliefs in one or more than one religious tradition/s specifically, including:
 - the reasons for maintaining continuity of a particular religious belief/s concerning ultimate reality, the nature and purpose of human life, the meaning of life and death, the relationship between ultimate reality and humanity, the relationship between humans, and the relationship between human life and the rest of the natural world
 - internal and/or external factors that promoted action to maintain continuity of the belief/s
 - the way/s of maintaining continuity of the belief/s used in response to the internal or external factors.

Key skills

These skills include the ability to:

- identify the reasons for maintaining continuity of religious belief/s
- describe internal and external factors which promote action to maintain continuity of religious belief/s
- analyse the ways of maintaining continuity of religious belief/s by:
 - giving a clear description of the ways of maintaining continuity of religious belief/s
 - explaining the strengths and weaknesses of the choice of method to maintain continuity
 - applying understanding of any relevant eight aspects of religion
- interpret and synthesise source material.

AREA OF STUDY 3

Significant life experience and religious belief

This area of study focuses on personal development in religious belief. Students investigate how belief in, and understanding of, religious beliefs of religious traditions may be subject to a dynamic process of change over time through significant personal life experience.

Students consider the relationship between significant life experience and religious belief, and then undertake a detailed study of a member of a selected religious tradition/s. Students investigate a particular significant life experience for the member of the religious tradition/s studied, exploring the impact on their understanding of and belief in the tradition's religious belief/s. The member studied can be a person or a group and must be a member of the religious tradition at the time of the experience. Students also investigate how religious beliefs can have an impact on the interpretation of significant life experiences, which are characterised by intense experiences such as joy, wonder (awe), suffering, death, major life choices, love, human relationships, or commitment.

Outcome 3

On completion of this unit the student should be able to explain and draw conclusions about the interplay between religious beliefs and significant life experiences.

To achieve this outcome the student will draw on key knowledge and key skills outlined in Area of Study 3.

Key knowledge

This knowledge includes:

- the relationship between a range of significant life experiences and religious belief generally
- a significant life experience of a particular person or group from within a religious tradition studied
- the belief in, and understanding of, the religious beliefs of the religious tradition held by the person or group prior to their significant life experience
- the impact of religious beliefs on the person's or group's interpretation of a significant life experience
- the ways in which religious beliefs come to be understood by the person or group through a process of change as a result of their significant life experience.

Key skills

These skills include the ability to:

- explain and draw conclusions about the relationship between a range of significant life experiences and religious beliefs generally
- summarise a significant life experience of a person or group within the religious tradition studied
- outline the belief in and understanding of the religious beliefs of the religious tradition held by the person or group prior to their significant life experience
- explain how the religious beliefs of the religious tradition influence the interpretation of the significant life experience of the person or group
- explain the process of change in the way religious beliefs are understood by the person or group as a result of their significant life experience
- interpret and synthesise source material.

ASSESSMENT

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 overall performance on assessment tasks designated for the unit. The Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority publishes online an assessment handbook for this study that includes advice on the assessment tasks and performance descriptors for assessment.

The key knowledge and key skills listed for each outcome should be used as a guide to course design and the development of learning activities. The key knowledge and key skills do not constitute a checklist and such an approach is not necessary or desirable for determining the achievement of outcomes. The elements of key knowledge and key skills should not be assessed separately.

Assessment of levels of achievement

The student's level of achievement in Unit 3 will be determined by School-assessed Coursework and an end-of-year examination.

Contribution to final assessment

School-assessed Coursework for Unit 3 will contribute 25 per cent.

The level of achievement for Units 3 and 4 is also assessed by an end-of-year examination, which will contribute 50 per cent.

School-assessed Coursework

Teachers will provide to the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority a score representing an assessment of the student's level of achievement.

The score must be based on the teacher's rating of performance of each student on the tasks set out in the following table and in accordance with the assessment handbook published online by the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority. The assessment handbook also includes advice on the assessment tasks and performance descriptors for assessment.

Assessment tasks must be a part of the regular teaching and learning program and must not unduly add to the workload associated with that program. They must be completed mainly in class and within a limited timeframe. Where teachers provide a range of options for the same assessment task, they should ensure that the options are of comparable scope and demand. Teachers should select a variety of assessment tasks for their program to reflect the key knowledge and key skills being assessed and to provide for different learning styles.

Outcomes	Marks allocated*	Assessment tasks
Outcome 1 Explain the nature, purpose and expression of religious beliefs generally and for one or more than one religious tradition.	30	For each outcome, one or more tasks, selected from the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a report in written format • a report in multimedia format • an essay • a case study • analytical exercises • structured questions • a media analysis • a test • extended responses • oral presentation.
Outcome 2 Analyse the maintenance of religious beliefs for continuity in religious traditions.	40	
Outcome 3 Explain and draw conclusions about the interplay between religious beliefs and significant life experiences.	30	
Total marks	100	

*School-assessed Coursework for Unit 3 contributes 25 per cent.

Unit 4: Challenge and response

The focus of Unit 4 is the interaction of religious traditions and the societies of which they are a part. Religious traditions are dynamic, living institutions that contribute in many ways, both positively and negatively, to wider societies – stimulating, supporting, as levers for change or resisting changes in those societies. Religious traditions also change over time; this change may be in the form of growth or decline or both. The eight aspects of religion provide a framework for understanding these changes that happen as religious traditions respond to the internal challenges arising from the needs and insights of their membership, and to the external challenges provoked by changes in the wider society. The impetus for these changes in society may come from religious traditions themselves or from other groups, individuals, events or movements within the wider society.

In this unit students explore challenge and response in historical and contemporary contexts. Students investigate historical challenges to religious traditions arising internally and externally. They explore the challenge to religious traditions in contemporary pluralistic society for action on behalf of social justice and for assessment of new problems arising from social and technological change.

AREA OF STUDY 1

Historical challenges to religious traditions

In this area of study, students investigate the types of significant internal and external challenges to religious traditions generally within an historical framework. They consider how some aspects of religion are more likely to be challenged, such as key beliefs, ritual practice, the interpretation of texts, and the nature and role of authority, and the manner of participation within the social structure of the religious tradition. These challenges may come from an historical event or events, a movement, a person, or an issue arising from within the religious tradition/s, or from the wider society or from other religious traditions. Students appreciate how challenge may come from a number of directions or sources, requiring different types of responses from the religious tradition.

Students begin with a study of a profile of one or more than one religious tradition and develop an overview of a range of significant internal and external challenges faced by the religious tradition/s during its historical development.

Students select one of these historical challenges from one or more religious traditions for further investigation. The historical challenge should be at a stage where a range of evaluations have been made by commentators. Students investigate the circumstances leading to the challenge, the nature of the challenge, the responses of the religious tradition/s to the challenge, and assess the ways in which

the responses of the religious tradition/s to the challenge impacted on the religious tradition/s. They also examine the nature and extent of the impact on the relationship of the religious tradition/s to the wider society and to other religious traditions.

Outcome 1

On completion of this unit the student should be able to analyse how one or more than one religious tradition/s responded to a significant historical internal or external challenge, and evaluate the outcome for the religious tradition/s.

To achieve this outcome the student will draw on key knowledge and key skills outlined in Area of Study 1.

Key knowledge

This knowledge includes:

- a range of significant historical internal and external challenges that have faced religious traditions generally
- an historical overview highlighting a range of significant internal and external challenges faced by one or more than one religious tradition
- a particular significant historical internal or external challenge faced by one or more than one religious tradition, where the investigation includes:
 - the aspects of religion that were being challenged:
 - beliefs
 - myths and other stories
 - sacred texts and other religious writings (such as formal creeds)
 - rituals
 - symbols
 - social structures
 - ethical principles and oral or written codes of behaviour
 - religious experience and spirituality (characteristic ways or thinking and behaving in the light of beliefs)
 - why and how these aspects were challenged
 - the historical, social and religious context of the particular challenge/s
 - the responses of the religious tradition/s to the challenge
 - the nature and extent of the impact of the responses of the religious tradition/s:
 - within the religious tradition/s
 - in the religious tradition/s' relationship to the wider society and
 - in the religious tradition/s' relationship to other religious communities.

Key skills

These skills include the ability to:

- identify a range of significant historical internal and external challenges to religions generally
- compile an historical overview identifying a range of significant internal and external challenges faced by one or more than one religious tradition
- explain a particular significant historical challenge faced by one or more than one religious tradition
- analyse the responses of the religious tradition/s to the challenge

- evaluate the nature and extent of the impact of the responses of the religious tradition/s
- interpret and synthesise source material.

AREA OF STUDY 2

Contemporary challenges and their impact

Past societies often had a dominant religion inseparable from the political, legal, economic and social dimensions of that society, and to which most of the population adhered in some way. Modern societies that are multicultural, pluralist and democratic, confront religious traditions with types of challenges religions did not have to face at other times and in other places. Today modern multicultural, pluralist and democratic societies have a large number of religious traditions that co-exist within a political and legal system which may not privilege any of them. Confronted by attitudes, beliefs, principles and values that contradict or are in tension with theirs, religious traditions may then attempt to implement their vision for society by transforming it. These visions encompass the way society should be developed over time, and stem from the religious beliefs of religious traditions concerning ultimate reality, the nature and purpose of human life, the meaning of life and death, the relationship between ultimate reality and humanity, the relationship between humans and the relationship between human life and the rest of the natural world.

In this area of study, students examine the visions for society held by religious tradition/s that are confronted by contemporary social or moral issues. They investigate the contributions that religious traditions may bring to debates on major social and moral issues, and the impact these may have on the religious tradition/s and the wider society. Through a discussion of at least one contemporary example, students demonstrate the ways that religious tradition/s are confronted by and respond to challenges of modern society. This response by the tradition may at times be manifest through a religious community within the tradition or be manifest as a broader response. The contemporary challenge selected may have a history but students focus on its current context. The challenge should be at a stage where its impact on the tradition and on the wider society is apparent and able to be evaluated.

Outcome 2

On completion of this unit the student should be able to analyse the interplay between religious beliefs and their developed vision of religious tradition/s for society in response to contemporary challenge.

To achieve this outcome the student will draw on key knowledge and key skills outlined in Area of Study 2.

Key knowledge

This knowledge includes:

- contemporary challenges to religious traditions generally, including:
 - the causes of these challenges and the responses of the religious traditions
 - the ways religious traditions confront and respond to specific major social or moral issues that challenge their vision for society
 - the impact of the response/s of a religious tradition on the tradition itself and on the wider society
- a specific contemporary challenge to one or more than one religious tradition, including:
 - the vision of human society implied in the religious beliefs of the religious tradition/s studied and articulated in ethical principles and moral values

- the nature of the specific major social or moral issue/s selected
- the relationship between the selected issue/s and the religious tradition/s' vision for society
- the causes of these challenges and the responses of the religious traditions
- the impact of the response/s of the religious tradition/s to the issue on the tradition itself and on the wider society.

Key skills

These skills include the ability to:

- explain why religious traditions respond to contemporary challenges generally
- explain ways that religious traditions respond to contemporary challenges generally and the impact of their response
- explain the vision of human society held by the religious tradition/s studied
- describe and analyse how and why a specific major social or moral issue/s has been addressed by the religious tradition/s
- evaluate the impact of the response/s to the issue/s on the religious tradition itself and on the wider society
- interpret and synthesise source material.

ASSESSMENT

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 overall performance on assessment tasks designated for the unit. The Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority publishes online an assessment handbook for this study that includes advice on the assessment tasks and performance descriptors for assessment.

The key knowledge and key skills listed for each outcome should be used as a guide to course design and the development of learning activities. The key knowledge and key skills do not constitute a checklist and such an approach is not necessary or desirable for determining the achievement of outcomes. The elements of key knowledge and key skills should not be assessed separately.

Assessment of levels of achievement

The student's level of achievement for Unit 4 will be determined by School-assessed Coursework and an end-of-year examination.

Contribution to final assessment

School-assessed Coursework for Unit 4 will contribute 25 per cent.

The level of achievement for Units 3 and 4 is also assessed by an end-of-year examination, which will contribute 50 per cent.

School-assessed Coursework

Teachers will provide to the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority a score representing an assessment of the student's level of achievement.

The score must be based on the teacher's rating of performance of each student on the tasks set out in the following table and in accordance with the assessment handbook published online by the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority. The assessment handbook also includes advice on the assessment tasks and performance descriptors for assessment.

Assessment tasks must be a part of the regular teaching and learning program and must not unduly add to the workload associated with that program. They must be completed mainly in class and within a limited timeframe. Where teachers provide a range of options for the same assessment task, they should ensure that the options are of comparable scope and demand. Teachers should select a variety of assessment tasks for their program to reflect the key knowledge and key skills being assessed and to provide for different learning styles.

Outcomes	Marks allocated*	Assessment tasks
<p>Outcome 1 Analyse how one or more than one religious tradition responded to a significant historical internal or external challenge, and evaluate the outcome for the religious tradition/s.</p>	50	<p>For each outcome, one or more tasks, selected from the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a report in written format • a report in multimedia format • an essay • a case study • analytical exercises • structured questions • a media analysis • a test • extended responses • oral presentation.
<p>Outcome 2 Analyse the interplay between religious beliefs and their developed vision of religious tradition/s for society in response to contemporary challenge.</p>	50	
Total marks	100	

*School-assessed Coursework for Unit 4 contributes 25 per cent.

End-of-year examination

Description

The examination will be set by a panel appointed by the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority. All the key knowledge and key skills that underpin the outcomes in Units 3 and 4 are examinable.

Conditions

The examination will be completed under the following conditions:

- Duration: two hours.
- Date: end-of-year, on a date to be published annually by the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority.
- Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority examination rules will apply. Details of these rules are published annually in the *VCE and VCAL Administrative Handbook*.
- The examination will be marked by assessors appointed by the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority.

Contribution to final assessment

The examination will contribute 50 per cent.

Further advice

The Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority publishes specifications for all VCE examinations on the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority website. Examination specifications include details about the sections of the examination, their weighting, the question format/s and any other essential information. The specifications are published in the first year of implementation of the revised Units 3 and 4 sequence together with any sample material.

Advice for teachers

DEVELOPING A COURSE

A course outlines the nature and sequence of teaching and learning necessary for students to demonstrate achievement of the set of outcomes for a unit. The areas of study broadly describe the learning context and the knowledge required for the demonstration of each outcome. Outcomes are introduced by summary statements and are followed by the key knowledge and key skills which relate to the outcomes.

Teachers must develop courses that include appropriate learning activities to enable students to develop the key knowledge and key skills identified in the outcome statements in each unit.

For Units 1 and 2, teachers must select assessment tasks from the list provided. Tasks should provide a variety and the mix of tasks should reflect the fact that different types of tasks suit different knowledge and skills, and different learning styles. Tasks do not have to be lengthy to make a decision about student demonstration of achievement of an outcome.

In Units 3 and 4, assessment is more structured. For some outcomes, or aspects of an outcome, the assessment tasks are prescribed. The contribution that each outcome makes to the total score for School-assessed Coursework is also stipulated.

SUITABLE RESOURCES

Courses must be developed within the framework of the study design: the areas of study, outcome statements, and key knowledge and key skills.

A list of suitable resources for this study has been compiled and will be available via the Religion and Society study page on the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority website: www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/vce/studies/index.html

VICTORIAN ESSENTIAL LEARNING STANDARDS (VELS)

Skills and knowledge in a variety of VELS domains and in particular Health and Human Development, Civics and Citizenship, History, Geography and English, may go some way towards preparing students for this study. Interpersonal development may provide an introduction to some ethical concepts that students may come across in their study. Thinking Processes can provide important skills in inquiry and the analysis and evaluation of argument. Applying skills learnt through the VELS Personal Learning may assist students as they adjust to the demands of this study.

EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS

Units 1 to 4 of the VCE Religion and Society study provide students with the opportunity to engage in a range of learning activities. In addition to demonstrating their understanding and mastery of the content and skills specific to the study, students may also develop employability skills through their learning activities.

The nationally agreed employability skills* are: Communication; Planning and organising; Teamwork; Problem solving; Self-management; Initiative and enterprise; Technology; and Learning.

Each employability skill contains a number of facets that have a broad coverage of all employment contexts and are designed to describe all employees. The table below links those facets that may be understood and applied in a school or non-employment related setting, to the types of assessment commonly undertaken within the VCE study.

Assessment task	Employability skills: selected facets
Analytical exercises	<p>Communication (sharing information) Planning and organising (collecting, analysing and organising information) Self management (evaluating and monitoring own performance)</p>
Annotated charts/flow charts	<p>Communication (sharing information; writing to the needs of the audience) Learning (managing own learning) Planning and organising (collecting, analysing and organising information) Technology (using IT to organise data)</p>
Case study	<p>Communication (reading independently; sharing information) Planning and organising (collecting, analysing and organising information) Self management (evaluating and monitoring own performance; taking responsibility)</p>
Debates	<p>Communication (reading independently; writing to the needs of the audience; speaking clearly and directly; persuading effectively; sharing information; listening and understanding) Initiative and enterprise (generating a range of options; initiating innovative solutions) Learning (being open to new ideas and techniques; managing own learning) Planning and organising (collecting, analysing and organising information; managing time and priorities – coordinating tasks for self and with others) Teamwork (working as an individual and as a member of a team)</p>

*The employability skills are derived from the Employability Skills Framework (*Employability Skills for the Future*, 2002), developed by the Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the Business Council of Australia, and published by the (former) Commonwealth Department of Education, Science and Training.

Assessment task	Employability skills: selected facets
Essays	Communication (reading independently; writing to the needs of the audience; persuading effectively) Planning and organising (collecting, analysing and organising information)
Identification exercises	Planning and organising (collecting, analysing and organising information) Problem solving (applying a range of strategies to problem solving)
Interviews	Initiative and enterprise (generating a range of options; initiating innovative solutions; being creative) Planning and organising (planning the use of resources including time management) Problem solving (developing practical solutions; testing assumptions taking the context of data and circumstances into account) Self management (having knowledge and confidence in own ideas and visions; taking responsibility; evaluating and monitoring own performance)
Oral presentations	Communication (speaking clearly and directly; persuading effectively; sharing information) Planning and organising (establishing clear project goals and deliverables; collecting, analysing and organising information) Self management (having knowledge and confidence in own ideas and visions; taking responsibility; articulating own ideas and visions)
Reports (written/multimedia)	Communication (sharing information; writing to the needs of the audience) Planning and organising (collecting, analysing and organising information) Technology (using IT to organise data; having a range of basic IT skills)
Tests	Communication (writing to the needs of the audience) Problem solving (applying a range of strategies to problem solving) Planning and organising (managing time and priorities; analysing and organising information)
Written exercises	Communication (reading independently; writing to the needs of the audience) Problem solving (applying a range of strategies to problem solving) Planning and organising (managing time and priorities; analysing and organising information)

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

Examples of learning activities for each unit are provided in the following sections. Shaded examples are explained in detail in accompanying shaded boxes.

Unit 1: Religion in Society

AREA OF STUDY 1: The religious world

Outcome 1

Explain the role of religion in society.

Examples of learning activities

brainstorm the questions: What is religion? What has been the function of religion in the past? Does it serve the same purpose today? What are the different aspects of a religious tradition? What are the functions of these aspects? What contribution has religion made to the development of human society?

develop a set of basic philosophical key questions about origins, meaning and purpose of human existence; research using the Internet and printed sources the responses of some selected religious traditions to the set of questions; record on a comparative chart in individual workbooks and/or for class display

students work in pairs to research two different religious traditions; develop a comparative chart of the religious beliefs and practices of the two religious traditions; using Internet sites related to a particular religious tradition, make a list of the main things a member of a particular religious tradition has to believe and do

show a video (see Resources) on a particular religious tradition, which gives an overview of its history; develop a set of questions that focus on information about the origins of the religious tradition and how and why the religious tradition has spread

read and discuss a short article or extract from a novel that explores the origins and purposes of religious ways of viewing the world

present a short overview of what is broadly known about the history of the human search for meaning, looking at the role of myth, religion and philosophy; consider what a religious tradition offers to humans in their ongoing search for meaning; research Internet sites to confirm and extend understanding of this broad historical context of the role of religion

research one of the following aspects: rituals, symbols, sacred texts, social structures in two religious traditions; students create a poster or multi-media presentation highlighting the functions of this particular aspect of the religious traditions and illustrating the similarities and differences using images and text

use ICT tools to explore the relationship between beliefs and aspects of a religious tradition; present one or two beliefs of the religious tradition and the expression of the belief/s through any two of the following aspects: story, symbol, ritual, social structure

Detailed example**BELIEFS AND ASPECTS: A COMPARATIVE CHART**

Students could undertake the following:

1. Work in pairs to research two different religious traditions.
2. Use Internet sites related to each particular religious tradition, to create an overview of what a member of each particular religious tradition has to believe.
3. Make a list of what a member of each particular religious tradition has to do to be a member of that religious tradition.
4. Develop a comparative chart of the beliefs and aspects of the two religious traditions researched.
5. Discuss the connections between the beliefs and the aspects of the two religious traditions researched.
6. Discuss the similarities and differences in the beliefs and aspects of these two religious traditions.
7. In pairs write a brief statement of what they have learned about religion from their study of these two religious traditions.
8. Contribute their observations to a class discussion about the nature and purpose of religious beliefs.

AREA OF STUDY 2: Religious traditions in Australia**Outcome 2**

Explain the expression of collective identity of particular religious traditions in Australia, and the interaction of these traditions with other religious traditions and wider society.

Examples of learning activities

hold a dialogue with students to discuss the meaning of collective identity and how this might be expressed

small groups of students are assigned one religious tradition each for which they research origins and geographical spread; they use coloured markers to locate on a map of the world places where each religious tradition is practised, adding appropriate dates and current number of members

each group of students presents their research to the class using a smartboard or other multimedia format, in such a way that each group's information is built upon the previous groups to create a complete map of religious traditions with appropriate dates and current number of members

research the locations of members of a range of religious traditions in Australia; colour code these religious traditions and then apply colour and markers to an appropriate sized map of Australia

on an appropriate map of the local area, or of an Australian capital city, use a colour and symbol to highlight the locations of members of religious traditions; display in the classroom to help students begin to appreciate the impact of the diversity

choose an appropriate number of places of worship that have websites and conduct a case study of the history of that place of worship and its congregation in Australia; present results as a table which includes a timeline and information, or as a news sheet

arrange a visit to a museum to study the display section that relates to one of the religious traditions studied; for example, the history of the migration of the members to the religious tradition to Australia or stories of settlement in Australia of members of the religious tradition

use Internet sites or textbooks to research the history of Ecumenism in Victoria or the local area; report as a brief oral presentation with appropriate illustrative material

use Internet sites or textbooks to research the history of inter-faith dialogue between different religious traditions at particular moments in history; report as an oral/media presentation or a written report, with appropriate illustrative material

use the Internet or textbooks to research the history of inter-faith dialogue in Victoria or the local area or a region of the world; report as a brief oral presentation with appropriate illustrative material

invite a guest speaker who is involved with the ecumenical or inter-faith dialogue in Victoria or the local area and who is from one of the major religious traditions studied

arrange to visit a local religious place of worship and be guided through some of the symbols and rituals of that religion by a religious leader

use the Internet for research and free-access clip art to compile a visual collage of the different religious traditions represented in Australia; focus on religious symbols or places of worship or rituals; present the collage to the class, explaining selections

Detailed example

AN OVERVIEW OF RELIGIOUS TRADITIONS IN AUSTRALIA IN TABLE FORM

Provide students with a template using the following directions:

1. On an A4 sheet draw a 7-column and 12-row table (allowing for 10 religious traditions).
2. At the bottom of the page provide about 6 lines for a summary of observations.
3. Column headings are: Name of Religious Tradition; 1790; 1890; 1960, 2004; Year of First Arrival; Number of Current Members.
4. Provide an example in the first row.

Example of template:

Religion	1790	1890	1960	2004	Year of first arrival	No. of current members
Aboriginal	✓	✓	✓	✓	40,000 to 60,000	Approx. 7000
Summary of observations						

The following directions can accompany the table:

- Name the religious traditions represented in Australia in the years: 1790, 1890, 1960 and 2004. (Place a tick in each date column for which a religious tradition is present in Australia.)
- List the year for the first arrival of these religious traditions in Australia.
- State the number of current members of these religious traditions in Australia.
- Write a brief summary of these observations.
- Look carefully at the completed table and discuss in pairs or small groups what could be learned about collective identity of religion in Australia from these dates and figures. Students could develop questions to inform future research, about the link between collective identity and the data. For example, how has the longevity of Aboriginal religion impacted on its collective identity?

AREA OF STUDY 3: Religious identity and life experience**Outcome 3**

Recognise and discuss the interplay between the identity of members, as individuals or as specific communities, and their religious tradition.

Examples of learning activities

brainstorm the term 'identity'; write a reflective account on what has shaped students' identities

gather examples from literary works, TV programs, and films of members expressing or discovering their religious identity

research Internet sites that offer reflections about faith experiences; discuss what happened to the religious beliefs of the members involved in these experiences

research articles in religious journals that explore areas of difficulty or disagreement between adherents, or between an individual and the religious tradition or the wider local religious community

conduct individual interviews with members of different religious traditions; develop a well-considered set of questions to cover the key knowledge points; trial questions and interview technique with other students or guest teachers

focus on a particular rite of passage and its related ritual and symbols in a particular religious tradition; outline any formal teachings on the chosen research area; interview a number of members who have participated in the rite of passage; compile a report on what the rite has meant for these members

select a character from a film or TV program where there is an interplay between the character and their religious tradition, and make this the focus of a class study using the key knowledge points as a basis for discussion

Detailed example**THE INDIVIDUAL AND RELIGION – AN INTERVIEW**

- Students could conduct individual interviews with members of different religious traditions. Leading up to the interview, students will need time to develop a well-considered set of questions to cover the key knowledge points. This process involves:
 - Discussing the key knowledge points and developing interview questions from them.
 - Developing questions that avoid single word responses.
 - Developing questions that logically flow on from one to the next.
 - Providing opportunities for students to trial their questions and interview technique with other students or guest teachers.
- Students write up a transcript of their interview/s. Using these transcripts, they write a report explaining what has been learned about the interplay between an individual's identity and their religious tradition.

Unit 2: Ethics and morality

AREA OF STUDY 1: Ethical method in pluralist society

Outcome 1

Explain ethical decision-making in pluralist society.

Examples of learning activities

use sources such as novels, short stories, poems, legends, myths, cartoons, films and TV programs to compile literary examples that show the role of conscience in ethical decision-making

develop a glossary of key terms and their meanings that will be referred to throughout Unit 2; display some of these in enlarged form around the classroom as reference points

consider the way ethical decisions are made; write this up as the decision-making process; consider the strengths and weaknesses of the process and the factors involved; using personal models, develop a model decision-making process for the class; test it on some examples and adjust accordingly

develop sets of cards, each with a different approach to ethical decision-making; give groups a situation about which they must make an ethical decision; give each member of a group a card; set a precise time to complete the group work; discuss and then write an individual account about what happened in the group as they tried to reach a group decision using the method on the card they had been given; identify which approach helped, which hindered; did each group arrive at an ethical decision? if so, how? if not, why?

research on the Internet and identify the values espoused in the United Nations' Declaration of Human Rights

use the Internet to identify the values that form the basis of Australia's Equal Opportunity Policy

work from an agreed definition of what constitutes an ethical decision, choose a character from a TV program or from news sources who has made an ethical decision; present a brief oral description of the situation and explain the process used by the character to make the decision; explain why it is an ethical decision

search the Internet for Codes of Ethics; choose one and highlight the values it contains; display and write a Code of Ethics for school or class

select an appropriate policy document of the school and analyse it to discover the values upon which it is based

select an ethical dilemma; consider approaches to this dilemma arising from different ethical theories, for example utilitarianism or virtue ethics

Detailed example

APPROACHING ETHICAL DECISION-MAKING

1. Develop sets of cards, each indicating a different approach towards decision-making. Headings could be:
 - It's the law.
 - Anything goes.
 - It's only natural.
 - What's in it for me?
 - Will others like or accept me?
 - Will I get caught or rewarded?
 - What are society's standards?
 - It's the right thing to do.
 - I don't want to be involved.
 - I'll be guided by the majority.
2. Give groups a situation about which they must make an ethical decision. Give each group member a card and ask them to apply the approach they have been given to making a decision. Set a precise time to complete the group work.
3. Students discuss what happened in the group as they tried to reach a group decision using the method on the card they had been given. Identify which approach helped, which hindered. Did each group arrive at an ethical decision? If so, how? If not, why?
4. Students write an individual account of what happened in the group as they tried to make an ethical decision.

AREA OF STUDY 2: Religion and morality in pluralist society**Outcome 2**

Explain the ethical perspectives and moral viewpoints upheld by at least two religious traditions in pluralist society.

Examples of learning activities

draw up a list of moral viewpoints held by a religious tradition; research how these viewpoints are expressed in the religious tradition

research the Internet sites of social justice groups belonging to a religious tradition; identify the moral viewpoints upon which their work is based

invite a specialist in moral theology or teaching from a religious tradition to speak about a particular ethical perspective and moral viewpoint and its expressions; schools might be able to combine for such an event

select a particular ethical event in history, such as a war, rebellion, medical crisis, industrial change, or criminal trial, and research via the Internet or textbooks the involvement of a religious tradition

invite guest speakers from a number of religious traditions to speak about the ethical perspectives of their religion and how they are expressed and communicated to their religious communities; a specific issue could be chosen as a means of illustrating their respective moral teaching and practice

Detailed example

VALUES AND THEIR EXPRESSION

1. Draw up a list of moral values held by a particular religious tradition.
2. Present to students for discussion and keep adding to the list.
3. In groups, students take one moral value and research, via Internet and textbooks, how that religious tradition expresses the moral value through myths, stories, rituals, symbols, social structure, formal documents and formal practices.
4. Students refer to a particular example of these aspects of the religious tradition in order to explain in detail how the moral value is communicated.
5. Students present their research as a large display table or chart, which can be retained for class reference in further study.
6. Each group of students should also include a bibliography to assist the class in future research.

AREA OF STUDY 3: Contemporary ethical issues in pluralist society**Outcome 3**

Analyse and evaluate two or more debates on contemporary ethical issues in pluralist society.

Examples of learning activities

brainstorm a list of the areas and activities in which people are involved, for example recreation, work, travelling, student years, childhood, adolescence, retirement, family life; in groups take one category and discuss what ethical issues might arise for people engaged in that type of activity or stage of life

design an Ethical Issue Analysis Planning sheet, giving a step-by-step process to guide students in their detailed research of issues; include a category for sources of information and bibliography

invite a guest panel of representatives from different religious traditions to discuss their respective position in belief and action on a particular contemporary ethical issue; this could involve more than one school

allocate particular ethical issues to small groups who survey the media over time; the groups collate short oral or multimedia reports on their findings

assign an ethical issue to the class to be researched in groups; prepare a brief written report on the position of their representative group and present their argument within an open forum debate

conduct a newspaper search for a contemporary ethical issue involving the responses of a religious tradition and analyse and evaluate the debate

research a religious journal of a particular religious tradition or a multi-faith journal and analyse articles dealing with a contemporary ethical issue

as part of their analysis of the worth and influence of various participants' contribution to debate, students could

- invite a member of local or state government to speak about their perceptions and experience of the contributions of religious traditions to public debate on ethical issues
- invite a member of a particular social concern or social justice group to speak about their perceptions and experience of the contributions of religious traditions to public debate on ethical issues; many of these groups operate from within particular religious traditions

Detailed example**ETHICAL ISSUES AND THE COMMUNITY**

Assign an ethical issue to the class to be researched in groups. Each group should represent different interest groups within the community, including different religious traditions.

This search could be done using the Internet as well as textbooks, hardcopy newspapers, magazines and journals, interviews and guest speakers.

Each group prepares a brief written report on the position of their representative group. They then

present this argument within an open forum debate, directed by a chairperson. Alternatively, groups could prepare a PowerPoint presentation on the position of their representative group. Allow for Question Time for each group.

Students could then write an individual analysis of the ethical issue informed by the arguments of the representative groups.

Unit 3: The search for meaning**AREA OF STUDY 1: Meaning in religious traditions****Outcome 1**

Explain the nature, purpose and expression of religious beliefs generally and for one or more than one religious tradition.

Examples of learning activities

discuss the role of religion in general in human society; research how particular religious traditions address questions about their role and purpose

discuss the role of story and ritual within religious traditions; give examples of how these explanations and ideas apply to particular religious traditions

assign each student a belief; the student develops a flowchart identifying the belief and what it means for the way members of the religious tradition are to lead their lives

use web or print sources to develop either group or individual flow charts of a religious tradition's beliefs about ultimate reality, human life, and human relationships with the rest of the natural world; the flow charts could be done as a large class display or for student workbooks; such charts would be useful references for the students as these religious beliefs underpin the study of all content in Units 3 and 4

write reflectively on what gives meaning to life; identify beliefs about origins and the meaning and purpose of existence; return to this reflection task during the unit to consider how study has influenced views

use Internet sites of particular religious traditions, list the beliefs of these religious traditions and develop a comparative chart of beliefs for two or three religious traditions

develop a chart for each belief studied and show how it is expressed through various aspects of religion

list various ways of believing, such as unquestioning belief, belief with reservations, selective believing, or cultural believing; develop suitable categories to explore the different ways people believe; identify the implications of these various ways of believing for how people participate in their religious traditions and the way they lead their lives

Detailed example

RELIGION AND HUMAN SOCIETY

Most books dealing with world religions have an introductory section that discusses the origins, nature and purposes of religion in general.

Discuss with students how the following questions are answered in their books:

- What are religious traditions about?
- Why is there anything at all?
- Where has everything come from?
- What is the purpose of everything?
- What sort of world is this? Good, bad, both, neither?
- Are human beings of special importance?
- Do our lives have any meaning?
- Why is there suffering?
- How should I live?
- What happens to me when I die?
- Is this the only world there is?

These are some of the questions posed by Charlesworth and Ingpen (see Resources). Alternatively, develop questions suggested by the text you are using.

Students could then apply these discussion questions in the following ways:

- A quick questionnaire for family and friends.
- A journal with reflections on the questions. Revisit these responses after studying some of the beliefs of religious traditions.
- Small groups discussing the results of their reflections and questionnaires.
- Researching how particular religious tradition/s answer these questions.
- Reviewing their personal responses to the questions in light of their knowledge of the beliefs of some religious traditions.

AREA OF STUDY 2: Maintaining continuity of religious beliefs

Outcome 2

Analyse the maintenance of religious beliefs for continuity in religious traditions.

Examples of learning activities

define the following terms in the context of religious belief: continuity, maintenance, strengthen, reaffirmation, reformulation, reinterpretation, application to new circumstances; be clear about their distinctive and interrelated meanings

as a class, apply the definitions listed above to an example such as a particular belief and situation or an example from fiction

apply the above listed definitions to some of the beliefs of a religious tradition about ultimate reality or the nature and purpose of human life; do a class sample and then set another example as a group activity

draw three columns under the headings: 'Date', 'Event/Situation', 'Maintained/ Strengthened – How?' to show an overview of what happens to the particular beliefs selected for study; Internet and textbooks could be used for this research

use the Internet and textbooks, research and develop a flowchart mapping the changes in expression of a particular religious belief and analyse whether the meaning of the religious belief has stayed the same

refer to an online religious journal or encyclopaedia or a site dealing with the history of a particular religious belief; use the information to develop a two-column chart, with headings 'Date' and 'Event' to outline the historical development of a belief in a particular religious tradition; highlight factors that led to the need for maintenance of their belief

invite a guest speaker from the religious tradition/s studied to undertake a model analysis of the maintenance of a religious belief for continuity in the religious tradition/s

Detailed example

RELIGIOUS BELIEFS OVER TIME

Students could undertake the following:

- Choose a belief from a religious tradition. Research the same belief or form small groups and research different beliefs. Before the students undertake their individual or group research task, this research process could be done as a class model led by the teacher.
- Copy an extract clearly stating the belief from a contemporary official document of the religious tradition (or other religious writing broadly accepted by members of the tradition). Note the date, author and reference details.
- Restate the belief in their own words to check their understanding. The teacher checks the accuracy of students' work.
- Find the earliest statement of this belief written by the religious tradition. Copy the statement, noting the date, author and reference details.
- Write the statement in their own words and the teacher checks for accuracy.
- Identify the similarities and differences between the earliest and the contemporary statements of the belief.
- Find an Internet site and a textbook that discuss the history of the belief. Note the bibliographical details for these references.
- Using the information from these two references, summarise the information in three columns ('Date', 'Event/Situation', 'Maintained/ Strengthened – How?') to show an overview of how maintenance of a belief for continuity in the religious tradition is achieved.

AREA OF STUDY 3: Significant life experience and religious belief**Outcome 3**

Explain and draw conclusions about the interplay between religious beliefs and significant life experiences.

Examples of learning activities

reflect upon a personal experience that changed beliefs and/or self-perception, and/or perception of others, and/or perception of their world

brainstorm the impact significant life experiences could have on a person's religious beliefs or understanding of religious beliefs

research the rites of passage in a religious tradition; identify what beliefs they express

research and compile a broad list of significant life experiences; correlate religious beliefs, symbols and rituals with these

show short sections from films, TV programs and/or DVDs, dealing with significant life experiences; discuss what happens to the people involved and the way they deal with their experiences

compile a selection of literary extracts or poems that explore what people feel, think, do and say during significant life experiences

explore through music and song what happens to people during significant life experiences

using the Internet, research examples of religious art, including religious buildings and funerary memorials, to explore how people respond to significant life experiences

invite a member of the school's art faculty or someone from a Victorian art gallery to speak and show examples of artwork depicting the role of religion in significant life experiences

research the religious tradition's formal writings on the role of special rituals or rites of passage in the life of a believer

undertake a detailed study of a significant life experience of a particular member of a religious tradition; investigate the interplay between religious beliefs and the significant life experience according to the key knowledge points and present as a report or case study

Detailed example**RELIGIOUS BELIEFS AND LIFE EXPERIENCES**

Students could undertake the following:

1. As a class, choose four to six different significant life experiences.
2. Divide into small groups and for each group allocate one of the selected significant life experiences.
3. Identify the particular religious beliefs of the religious tradition being studied that relate to this significant life experience.
4. Individually find two or three examples of people from that religious tradition who have expressed their feelings and understandings about the selected significant life experience through literary works or songs or music or other artwork.
5. Discuss their examples within their group to identify the similarities and the differences in these reflections upon this significant life experience.
6. Each group gives an oral presentation on their findings.

Unit 4: Challenge and response

AREA OF STUDY 1: Historical challenges to religious traditions

Outcome 1

Analyse how one or more than one religious tradition responded to a significant historical internal or external challenge, and evaluate the outcome for the religious tradition/s.

Examples of learning activities

brainstorm ideas about how a religious tradition could be challenged from within by its own members; start with general causes, for example alternative interpretations, public rejection or silent/covert disobedience, then search for the particular examples of each type of challenge

brainstorm ideas about what type of external events, authorities and ideas could challenge a religious tradition; start with the general, for example civil rebellions, changes in civil laws, wars, cultural value changes, then search for the particular examples of each type of challenge

show a video documentary which gives an historical overview of a religious tradition highlighting the challenges it faced

select an Internet site that deals with the history of the religious tradition; write a summary or timeline of significant challenges to the religious tradition, identifying whether the source of the challenge has been internal or external to the religious tradition

make a list of religious orders, organisations and movements and research online to find the date and purpose of their foundation; make a summary list of these purposes to identify common factors; find out what was happening in the wider society at the times these orders were founded; identify the social, political and historical contexts of the founding of religious orders, organisations and movements

invite a guest speaker from a history department to present an analysis of an internal or external challenge to a particular religious tradition as a model for a student investigation

develop a set of interview questions based on the key knowledge points and arrange to interview a guest from a religious community

invite a guest speaker from a religious tradition to speak about a particular historical challenge experienced by that tradition

Detailed example

HISTORICAL CHALLENGE

Students could undertake the following:

1. Research the history of a religious tradition, making a list of events/movements/persons/ideas that have challenged the tradition.
2. Identify the challenges as internal or external.
3. Choose one of these challenges for an in-depth study.
4. Research the historical, social, political, and religious context of the challenge.
5. Research a range of responses to the challenge by commentators of the religious tradition.
6. Evaluate the impact of these responses on the religious tradition and the wider society.
7. Evaluate how this impact has affected the relationship between the religious tradition and the wider society.
8. Write a report on the results of this research.

AREA OF STUDY 2: Contemporary challenges and their impact

Outcome 2

Analyse the interplay between religious beliefs and their developed vision of religious tradition/s for society in response to contemporary challenge.

Examples of learning activities

select a journal or paper or an Internet site of a particular religious tradition that collates news articles related to a specific religious tradition and compile a list of the challenging issues featured in the publication; this could be researched over a number of editions

brainstorm a list of major social and moral issues; select one of these and undertake a brief newspaper and journal search on the Internet for articles dealing with a particular religious tradition's involvement with the issue; compile a list of relevant articles; create a class file

select the relevant beliefs of a religious tradition that form the foundation for the religious tradition's perception of how society should operate; collate relevant scriptural references and theological statements from the religious tradition that expresses its beliefs about society

invite representatives from some of the support and service organisations of a religious tradition to speak about the inspiration, vision and activities of their particular organisation, and the impact of their vision and activities on the religious tradition and the wider society

use the scriptural and theological writings of a religious tradition, compile a sheet with various statements about the understanding that a particular tradition demonstrates about human life and society; identify the beliefs of that religious tradition contained within these statements; this information could then be used in the study of specific issues involving that religious tradition

Detailed example

RELIGIOUS BELIEFS AND VISIONS FOR SOCIETY

Students could undertake the following:

1. Refer to earlier work on religious beliefs of a religious tradition, students make an agreed class list of the relevant religious beliefs that form the foundation for that religious tradition's perception of how society should operate.
2. Research how this vision for human society has been represented in the teachings and writings of the religious tradition over time.
3. Select a number of appropriate references from textbooks and the Internet and note the reference details in a bibliography.
4. Submit the bibliography for the teacher to verify its accuracy.
5. Use these references to collate relevant scriptural references and theological statements from that religious tradition, expressing its beliefs about human society. Dates, titles and authors should be noted.
6. Present this overview in the form of a collage, chart, table, flowchart or summary report.

SCHOOL-ASSESSED COURSEWORK

In Units 3 and 4 teachers must select appropriate tasks from the assessment table provided for each unit. Advice on the assessment tasks and performance descriptors to assist teachers in designing and marking assessment tasks will be published online by the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority in an assessment handbook. The following is an example of a teacher's assessment program using a selection of the tasks from the Units 3 and 4 assessment tables.

Outcomes	Marks allocated	Assessment tasks
Unit 3		
Outcome 1 Explain the nature, purpose and expression of religious beliefs generally and for one or more than one religious tradition.	30	Analytical exercises that look at a particular example used to explain the nature, purpose and expression of religious beliefs in the religious tradition/s studied.
Outcome 2 Analyse the maintenance of religious beliefs for continuity in religious traditions.	40	Report in multimedia format that traces the history of the continuity of a particular religious belief/s being studied, and analyses ways of maintaining continuity of the religious beliefs.
Outcome 3 Explain and draw conclusions about the interplay between religious beliefs and significant life experiences.	30	Case study (this could include structured questions or headings to guide students) that explains how religious beliefs and significant life experiences influence each other.
Total marks for Unit 3	100	
Unit 4		
Outcome 1 Analyse how one or more than one religious tradition responded to a significant historical internal or external challenge, and evaluate the outcome for the religious tradition/s.	50	Essay that explains the context of a selected challenge and the religious tradition/s' response to it, and evaluates the impact of the response upon the religious tradition.
Outcome 2 Analyse the interplay between religious beliefs and their developed vision of religious tradition/s for society in response to contemporary challenge.	50	Media analysis that explains how a religious tradition's vision for human society is interpreted and applied to a contemporary situation.
Total marks for Unit 4	100	