



Government of **Western Australia**  
School Curriculum and Standards Authority

# RELIGION AND LIFE

GENERAL COURSE

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Year 11 syllabus

## **Acknowledgement of Country**

Kaya. The School Curriculum and Standards Authority (the Authority) acknowledges that our offices are on Whadjuk Noongar boodjar and that we deliver our services on the country of many traditional custodians and language groups throughout Western Australia. The Authority acknowledges the traditional custodians throughout Western Australia and their continuing connection to land, waters and community. We offer our respect to Elders past and present.

## **Important information**

This syllabus is effective from 1 January 2024.

Users of this syllabus are responsible for checking its currency.

Syllabuses are formally reviewed by the School Curriculum and Standards Authority (the Authority) on a cyclical basis, typically every five years.

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# Content

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<b>Rationale</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>Course outcomes</b> .....	<b>2</b>
<b>Organisation</b> .....	<b>3</b>
Structure of the syllabus .....	3
Organisation of content .....	3
Representation of the general capabilities .....	5
Representation of the cross-curriculum priorities .....	6
<b>Unit 1</b> .....	<b>8</b>
Unit description .....	8
Unit content .....	8
<b>Unit 2</b> .....	<b>10</b>
Unit description .....	10
Unit content .....	10
<b>School-based assessment</b> .....	<b>12</b>
Grading .....	13
<b>Appendix 1 – Grade descriptions Year 11</b> .....	<b>14</b>



## Rationale

The Religion and Life General course provides students with opportunities to learn about religion and explores the relationships between religion, society and individuals. It examines the nature of religion and how it offers individuals and their communities an understanding of the world around them.

Students develop an understanding of ways in which people discover, understand and express their religious beliefs. They explore one or more religions and investigate the characteristics of religion, origins, foundations, cultural influences and development over time. They analyse the role religion has played in human affairs and explore issues of concern to religion.

Through the Religion and Life General course, students learn skills that will enable them to understand the role religion plays in society and in the lives of people. They use a range of primary and secondary sources and employ a variety of methods to investigate information. These methods include research, observation, analysis, and discussion.

## Course outcomes

The Religion and Life General course is designed to facilitate achievement of the following outcomes.

### Outcome 1 – The nature of religion

Students understand that many people find meaning and purpose in life through religion.

In achieving this outcome, students:

- understand that people search for meaning and purpose in life
- understand that religion provides meaning and purpose in people's lives
- understand that there is diversity in religious structures and processes.

### Outcome 2 – The influence of religion

Students understand the role religion plays in the lives of individuals and in society.

In achieving this outcome, students:

- understand that religion and society interact and influence each other
- understand that events or issues in history have influenced the interaction between religion and society
- understand that current issues in society involve an interaction between religion and society.

### Outcome 3 – Religious inquiry skills

Students use religious inquiry and learning skills to investigate their understandings of religion and life.

In achieving this outcome, students:

- develop and use a religious vocabulary
- conduct research that incorporates planning, processing, synthesising and communicating relevant findings
- analyse and use sources
- evaluate different points of view
- communicate effectively.

## Organisation

This course is organised into a Year 11 syllabus and a Year 12 syllabus. The cognitive complexity of the syllabus content increases from Year 11 to Year 12.

### Structure of the syllabus

The Year 11 syllabus is divided into two units, each of one semester duration, which are typically delivered as a pair. The notional time for each unit is 55 class contact hours.

#### Unit 1

The focus of this unit is religion as a human activity. It explores how people search for meaning in life and the characteristics of religion. Students conduct research and develop the skills required for processing information and communicating findings about religion and life.

#### Unit 2

The focus of this unit is the role religion plays in society. It considers the responses offered by religion to issues that exist in society. Students conduct research and develop the skills required for processing information and communicating findings about religion and life.

Each unit includes:

- a unit description – a short description of the focus of the unit
- unit content – the content to be taught and learned.

### Organisation of content

The course content is divided into three content areas:

- The nature of religion
- The influence of religion
- Religious inquiry and learning skills.

#### The nature of religion

##### The search for meaning

People search for and find meaning in life in many different ways. In response to the search for meaning, many people find answers in religion and choose to follow a particular religious way of life. How a person interacts with religion is shaped by the context of their life, both social and personal. There are many examples of people who illustrate the role religion plays in a person's search for meaning in life.

##### Religious belief, teaching and practice

Within each religion, as well as across religions, there is complexity and diversity. In general terms, a religion is a system of beliefs and practices that guides how people live. Each religion offers particular insights and understandings about life. These find expression in a variety of religious beliefs, teachings and practices. Followers of each religion also come together to express aspects of their religion through worship,

celebrations, rituals, and by observing special events and seasons. Religious leaders and/or structures play an important role in developing and supporting the expression of religious beliefs, teachings and practices.

## **The influence of religion**

### **The place of religion in society**

Religious traditions interact with specific cultures in complex and dynamic ways. These interactions influence how religion is perceived and understood within society, particularly around matters of concern to religion. In a multicultural and multi-faith society such as Australia, there is a rich diversity of religious traditions. This diversity of religious traditions reflects many aspects of religion and society throughout the world.

### **Religion in historical contexts**

Religions are not static. They have been shaped, and continue to be shaped over time, by a dynamic interaction with particular places, times and people. Understanding the development of a particular religion is enhanced by a focus on the foundation and growth of the religion and how the religion has responded to changes in society.

### **Current issues for religion**

All religions, in order to remain both authentic and relevant, constantly reflect on how best to respond to changing values and attitudes in society. Rapid changes in such things as technology, the media, family life, marriage and other dimensions of social life all have the potential to create issues within society that in turn become matters of concern or interest for particular religions.

## **Religious inquiry and learning skills**

A study of religion involves the use of skills that promote:

- specific and technical language
- particular thought processes
- the capacity to think and express understandings about religion in an informed and critical manner.

Understanding the interplay between religion, society and individuals involves a capacity to conduct meaningful inquiries. Inquiry utilises a range of skills and involves a number of important and related steps:

- identifying a research focus
- gathering, processing and synthesising relevant information
- communicating effectively the findings of an inquiry.

Learning in the unit is supported by using a range of skills that focus on:

- terms and concepts
- research
- analysis and use of sources
- explanation and communication.



## Representation of the general capabilities

The general capabilities encompass the knowledge, skills, behaviours and dispositions that will assist students to live and work successfully in the twenty-first century. Teachers may find opportunities to incorporate the capabilities into the teaching and learning program for the Religion and Life General course. The general capabilities are not assessed unless they are identified within the specified unit content.

### Literacy

Students access relevant content through a variety of print, oral, visual, spatial and electronic forms. They learn to interpret and infer meaning from a variety of sources. They identify relevant evidence by analysing and evaluating texts for authority, reliability, relevance and accuracy. Students create a wide range of texts to communicate, explore, discuss, explain, and argue a point of view. By selecting and employing text structure and language knowledge, students express their thoughts and ideas logically and fluently, supported by evidence. They learn to monitor their own language use for accuracy in the use of religious terms, clarity of ideas and explanations, conciseness of expression, and use language effectively to articulate a position.

### Numeracy

Students recognise patterns and relationships chronologically and spatially through the use of scaled timelines, tables, graphs and maps. They have opportunities to support their views with data, some of which is numerical in nature. Students develop numeracy capability when they analyse, interpret and draw conclusions from statistical information.

### Information and communication technology capability

Students use digital tools and strategies to locate, access, process and analyse information. They use information and communication (ICT) skills to investigate and identify the provenance and credibility of evidence and to communicate relevant information. They develop an understanding of the issues involved in the use of ICT when practising ethical scholarship as part of the inquiry process.

### Critical and creative thinking

Students have opportunities to delve deeply into the implications of ideas and information they investigate. The demands of inquiry include the ability to pose intelligent questions, interrogate, select and cross-reference sources, and develop interpretations based on an assessment of the evidence and reasoning. Students identify possible weaknesses in their own positions, and analyse, evaluate and synthesise alternative interpretations and representations relevant to a study of religion and life.

### Personal and social capability

Students develop and practice skills that enhance their communication skills and participation in teamwork. Students have opportunities to work both collaboratively and independently as part of their learning and research. They develop advanced research and presentation skills to express and justify their views effectively to others. Students develop their ability to appreciate the perspectives and experiences of others through the practise of empathy. Students develop increasing social awareness through the study of relationships between individuals and diverse social groups, that interact on matters related to, and important to, a study of religion.

### **Ethical understanding**

Students explore and understand the diverse perspectives and circumstances that shape the actions and possible motivations of people. Students have opportunities, both independently and collaboratively, to explore the values, beliefs and principles that are the basis for the judgements and actions of people and particular religions.

### **Intercultural understanding**

Students acquire knowledge of culturally diverse perspectives and roles and learn how these relate to a study of religion. Students develop an understanding of diverse societies and cultures, and that different ways of life provide a frame of reference for recognising and appreciating intercultural diversity in the contemporary world. They also explore different perspectives, the contexts for those perspectives, and the implications these may have for religion and people in the contemporary world.

## **Representation of the cross-curriculum priorities**

The cross-curriculum priorities address contemporary issues which students face in a globalised world. Teachers may find opportunities to incorporate the priorities into the teaching and learning program for the Religion and Life General course. The cross-curriculum priorities are not assessed unless they are identified within the specified unit content.

### **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures**

The rationale for the course requires students to focus on at least one religion in their study. A religion, as understood within this course, can include Aboriginal spiritualities. The interaction of Aboriginals and Torres Strait Islanders with particular religions can also be examined. Exploring aspects of the past or present context of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples offers opportunities for developing an understanding of the place of religion in Australian society or issues that exist within society, including the dichotomy between Aboriginal spirituality and introduced religions.

### **Asia and Australia's engagement with Asia**

Much of what is understood about religion and particular religions originates in the history and culture of Asia. A study of the interplay between religion and life will therefore naturally explore the history and culture of Asia, in all its diversity, and Australia's engagement with Asia. Opportunities exist to explore: particular religious traditions that arose and grew within the Asia region; how religion has interacted with this region over time; and, the nature of past and ongoing links between Australia and Asia involving religion. Students develop the knowledge, understanding and skills, which make it possible for them to engage actively and effectively with peoples from the Asia region, particularly in terms of how peoples of the Asia region relate to religion.

## Sustainability

Each religion has insights, beliefs and practices that have the potential to impact upon how people respond to issues of sustainability. These beliefs play an important role in shaping how people understand and interact with the world in which they live. Religions also contribute to how people understand and interact with the promotion of healthy social, economic and ecological patterns of living for our collective wellbeing and survival. The study of the Religion and Life General course engages with a diversity of world views, including those on ecosystems. It informs the values of people and the views they hold about social justice and how these values and views relate to sustainability. In promoting inquiry skills, the Religion and Life General course helps build the capacity of students to think and act in ways that are necessary to create a more sustainable future. These skills promote reflective thinking processes and empower young people to be active participants in society.

# Unit 1

## Unit description

The focus of this unit is religion as a human activity. It explores how people search for meaning in life and the characteristics of religion. Students conduct research and develop the skills required for processing information and communicating findings about religion and life.

## Unit content

This unit includes the knowledge, understandings and skills described below.

### The nature of religion

#### The search for meaning

- experiences that prompt people to ask questions about the meaning and purpose of life
- examples of religious answers to life's questions and experiences
- a definition of religion

#### Religious belief, teaching and practice

- an overview of the main characteristics of a religion
- the major divisions or denominations within a world religion
- the key features of a religious practice, ritual, celebration or event

### The influence of religion

#### The place of religion in society

- an overview of the role religion plays in society

#### Religion in historical contexts

- an overview of the foundation and development of a religion

#### Current issues for religion

- an overview of a current social issue and the response of a religion to this issue

### Religious inquiry and learning skills

#### Terms and concepts

- use correct religious terms and concepts

#### Research

- develop and follow a research plan when conducting an inquiry
- identify, locate and organise relevant information from relevant sources
- practise ethical scholarship when conducting research

**Analysis and use of sources**

- identify the origin, purpose and context of particular sources
- identify different points of view
- identify and use evidence from different types of sources to support a point of view
- evaluate the usefulness of different sources

**Explanation and communication**

- develop texts that accurately use evidence to explain, support or refute arguments
- communicate ideas or understandings suitable for a set purpose and audience
- use basic referencing techniques accurately and consistently

## Unit 2

### Unit description

The focus of this unit is the role religion plays in society. It considers the responses offered by religion to issues that exist in society. Students conduct research and develop the skills required for processing information and communicating findings about religion and life.

### Unit content

This unit builds on the content covered in Unit 1.

This unit includes the knowledge, understandings and skills described below.

#### The nature of religion

##### The search for meaning

- ways people identify with and/or belong to a religion
- challenges people encounter when dealing with moral and ethical issues

##### Religious belief, teaching and practice

- the key features of a religious belief and/or teaching
- an overview of the history of a religious belief and/or teaching

#### The influence of religion

##### The place of religion in society

- the place of religion in Australian society

##### Religion in historical contexts

- an overview of the history of religion in Australia

##### Current issues for religion

- how a religion responds to a current social justice issue

#### Religious inquiry and learning skills

##### Terms and concepts

- use correct religious terms and concepts

##### Research

- develop and follow a research plan when conducting an inquiry
- identify, locate and organise relevant information from relevant sources
- practise ethical scholarship when conducting research

**Analysis and use of sources**

- identify the origin, purpose and context of particular sources
- identify different points of view
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- evaluate the usefulness of different sources

**Explanation and communication**

- develop texts that accurately use evidence to explain, support or refute arguments
- communicate ideas or understandings suitable for a set purpose and audience
- use basic referencing techniques accurately and consistently

## School-based assessment

The *Western Australian Certificate of Education (WACE) Manual* contains essential information on principles, policies and procedures for school-based assessment that needs to be read in conjunction with this syllabus.

Teachers design school-based assessment tasks to meet the needs of students. The table below provides details of the assessment types for the Religion and Life General Year 11 syllabus and the weighting for each assessment type.

**Assessment table – Year 11**

Type of assessment	Weighting
<p><b>Investigation</b></p> <p>Students use religious inquiry and learning skills to plan, conduct and communicate the results of an inquiry. Research formats can include: written reports, oral presentations or multimedia presentations or a combination of these.</p>	30–40%
<p><b>Explanation</b></p> <p>The format for an explanation task can be: multiple choice questions, short answers, structured short written responses, extended writing, such as reports and essays, oral and/or multimedia presentations, including speeches, and/or seminar presentations.</p>	30–40%
<p><b>Source analysis</b></p> <p>Students respond to questions based on one or more sources. Sources can include: religious teachings and practices (extracts from stories, sacred texts and writings, oral traditions, speeches, symbols, artwork, rituals); newspapers (extracts from reportage, analysis, editorials, letters, opinion columns, cartoons); radio, television, video and film (news, current affairs, documentaries, dramas, comedy); and/or websites. The format for source analysis can include: short answers, structured short written responses and/or extended written answers.</p>	30–40%

Teachers are required to use the assessment table to develop an assessment outline for the pair of units (or for a single unit where only one is being studied).

The assessment outline must:

- include a set of assessment tasks
- include a general description of each task
- indicate the unit content to be assessed
- indicate a weighting for each task and each assessment type
- include the approximate timing of each task (for example, the week the task is conducted, or the issue and submission dates for an extended task).

In the assessment outline for the pair of units, each assessment type must be included at least once over the year/pair of units. In the assessment outline where a single unit is being studied, each assessment type must be included at least once.

The set of assessment tasks must provide a representative sampling of the content for Unit 1 and Unit 2.

Assessment tasks not administered under test/controlled conditions require appropriate validation/authentication processes.



## Grading

Schools report student achievement in terms of the following grades:

Grade	Interpretation
<b>A</b>	Excellent achievement
<b>B</b>	High achievement
<b>C</b>	Satisfactory achievement
<b>D</b>	Limited achievement
<b>E</b>	Very low achievement

The teacher prepares a ranked list and assigns the student a grade for the pair of units (or for a unit where only one unit is being studied). The grade is based on the student's overall performance as judged by reference to a set of pre-determined standards. These standards are defined by grade descriptions and annotated work samples. The grade descriptions for the Religion and Life General Year 11 syllabus are provided in Appendix 1. They can also be accessed, together with annotated work samples, through the Guide to Grades link on the course page of the Authority website at [www.scsa.wa.edu.au](http://www.scsa.wa.edu.au).

To be assigned a grade, a student must have had the opportunity to complete the education program, including the assessment program (unless the school accepts that there are exceptional and justifiable circumstances).

Refer to the *WACE Manual* for further information about the use of a ranked list in the process of assigning grades.

## Appendix 1 – Grade descriptions Year 11

<b>A</b>	Demonstrates clarity and method in responses and makes some connection between the issues and ideas relevant to a study of religion and life.
	Gathers, organises and uses a range of relevant sources as evidence to support explanations and arguments and/or respond to problems/issues that are relevant to a study of religion, society or people.
	Develops responses which address all aspects of set tasks, are detailed and accurately use course ideas and terminology.
<b>B</b>	Engages with or shows some grasp of the relationship between issues and ideas associated with a study of religion and life.
	Gathers, organises and uses information in support of explanations, ideas and/or arguments related to a study of religion, society or people.
	Develops responses which tend to address the requirements of set tasks, have some structure and provide a degree of clarity. Uses detail that can be convincing but not always accurate or relevant.
<b>C</b>	Engages with the content of Religion and Life.
	Develops responses which tend to be straightforward, broad or generalised and includes some errors; gaps in knowledge are evident.
	Gathers, organises or uses basic information about religion, society or people.
<b>D</b>	Develops responses which tend to lack clarity and depth, and include the use of supporting detail that may not necessarily be accurate, appropriate or relevant. Reasoning and conclusions drawn may be vague, imprecise or unrefined.
	Demonstrates in responses a narrow, simplistic focus or shows minimal engagement with the intent of tasks and with Religion and Life course content.
	Gathers information that is generally not useful or sufficient, and is not organised or applied appropriately.
<b>E</b>	Develops responses which depend upon general knowledge and/or include inaccurate facts; limited or no reference to supporting detail.
	Does not meet the requirements of a D grade and/or has completed insufficient assessment tasks to be assigned a higher grade.