



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

# RELIGION AND LIFE

ATAR 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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## Rationale

The Religion and Life ATAR course provides students with opportunities to learn about religion and the interplay that occurs between religion, societies and people. Students develop an informed and critical understanding of this interplay by drawing from a detailed knowledge of one or more religions.

Every religion offers a system of beliefs and practices. In the Religion and Life ATAR course, students explore one or more religions and investigate the characteristics of religion, their origins, foundations, social influence and development over time. They analyse the role religion has played in society and understand the challenges and opportunities religions face.

The connections between religion and life occur in many areas of human activity. Religion motivates and influences how people interact with each other and the world around them.

Students employ research and learning skills that enable them to use a range of primary and secondary sources to investigate the interplay between religion and life.

## Course outcomes

The Religion and Life ATAR 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 interplay between religion and society.

### Outcome 3 – Religious inquiry skills

Students use religious inquiry and learning skills to investigate their understandings of the interplay between 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 the place of religion in society. It examines the responses of people to religion, in particular how people understand the response of religion to their concerns, needs and questions. Students develop the skills required for conducting an inquiry, processing information, and communicating findings about the interplay between religion and life.

#### Unit 2

The focus of this unit is religious identity and purpose. It investigates how religion shapes, forms and supports people in life. The unit also examines how religion impacts on and interacts with, groups in society. Students develop the skills required for conducting an inquiry, processing information, and communicating findings about the interplay between 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 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 structures and processes

The structures and processes at work within a particular religion play an important role in shaping how and why a religion operates. An important part of this is also the organisation and structure of each religion. Such organisational characteristics are constantly being tested or re-shaped by the interplay that takes place between individuals, society, the beliefs of the religion, as well as its history and traditions.

## 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 multifaith 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 ATAR 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 technology (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 the 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 the 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 ATAR 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 Religion and Life ATAR course requires students to focus on at least one religion in their study. A religion, as understood within the course rationale, includes a focus on Aboriginal spiritualities. The interaction of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures with particular religions may also form part of the learning of a unit. Finally, exploring aspects of the past or present context of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples offer 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**

This priority provides an important context for understanding the interplay between religion and life. 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 Asia, in all its diversity, and Australia's engagement with Asia. Students have opportunities 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 they live in. 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 religion and life 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 ATAR course helps build the capacity of students to think and act in ways that are necessary to create a more sustainable future. These course 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 the place of religion in society. It examines the responses of people to religion, in particular how people understand the response of religion to their concerns, needs and questions. Students develop the skills required for conducting an inquiry, processing information, and communicating findings about the interplay between religion and life.

## Unit content

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

### The nature of religion

#### The search for meaning

- the relationship between important life events and the questions people ask about meaning and purpose in their lives
- the concept of religion and being religious

#### Religious belief and practice

- the nature of religious belief
- the key features of one religious belief or teaching
- the key features of one religious ritual or practice

#### Religious structures and processes

- the characteristics of the major divisions or denominations within a world religion

### The influence of religion

#### The place of religion in society

- the place of religion in Australian society

#### Religion in historical contexts

- one important person, event, or issue in the history of a religion in Australia

#### Current issues for religion

- the nature of one current issue in society to which a religion seeks to respond
- the response of a religion to one current issue in society

### Religious inquiry and learning skills

#### Terms and concepts

- use terms and concepts in appropriate contexts to demonstrate relevant knowledge and understanding

**Research**

- frame questions to guide inquiry and develop a coherent research plan for inquiry
- identify, locate and organise relevant information from a range of relevant sources
- practise ethical scholarship when conducting research

**Analysis and use of sources**

- identify the origin, purpose and context of particular sources
- analyse, interpret and synthesise evidence from different types of sources to develop and sustain an academic argument
- evaluate the reliability, usefulness and contestable nature of sources to develop informed judgements that support an academic argument
- analyse and evaluate different interpretations and points of view

**Explanation and communication**

- develop reasoned and supported conclusions
- develop texts that integrate appropriate evidence from a range of sources to explain, support and/or refute arguments
- communicate understanding by selecting and using text forms appropriate to purpose and audience
- apply appropriate referencing techniques accurately and consistently

## Unit 2

### Unit description

The focus of this unit is religious identity and purpose. It investigates how religion shapes, forms and supports people in life. The unit also examines how religion impacts on, and interacts with, groups in society. Students develop the skills required for conducting an inquiry, processing information, and communicating findings about the interplay between religion and life.

### Unit content

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

#### The nature of religion

##### The search for meaning

- examples of how people are influenced and shaped by religion
- how people respond to the meaning and purpose offered by religion

##### Religious belief and practice

- the relationship between one particular religious belief or teaching and the lives of people
- the relationship between one particular religious ritual or practice and the lives of people

##### Religious structures and processes

- the main structures and processes of a particular religion

#### The influence of religion

##### The place of religion in society

- reasons for and against the involvement of religion in society

##### Religion in historical contexts

- the impact an event or issue in history had on a religion

##### Current issues for religion

- a comparison of societal and religious views on one current issue in society

#### Religious inquiry and learning skills

##### Terms and concepts

- use terms and concepts in appropriate contexts to demonstrate relevant knowledge and understanding

##### Research

- frame questions to guide inquiry and develop a coherent research plan for inquiry
- identify, locate and organise relevant information from a range of relevant sources

- practise ethical scholarship when conducting research

**Analysis and use of sources**

- identify the origin, purpose and context of particular sources
- analyse, interpret and synthesise evidence from different types of sources to develop and sustain an academic argument
- evaluate the reliability, usefulness and contestable nature of sources to develop informed judgements that support an academic argument
- analyse and evaluate different interpretations and points of view

**Explanation and communication**

- develop reasoned and supported conclusions
- develop texts that integrate appropriate evidence from a range of sources to explain, support and/or refute arguments
- communicate understanding by selecting and using text forms appropriate to purpose and audience
- apply appropriate 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 ATAR 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 the religious inquiry and learning skills to plan, conduct and communicate the results of an inquiry.</p> <p>Research formats can include: written reports, oral presentations or multimedia presentations, or a combination of these.</p>	25%
<p><b>Explanation</b></p> <p>The format for explanations can be: structured short written responses, extended writing such as reports and essays, oral and/or multimedia presentations including speeches and/or seminar presentations.</p>	20%
<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.</p> <p>The format for source analysis can include: structured short written responses and/or extended written answers.</p>	25%
<p><b>Examination</b></p> <p>Typically conducted at the end of each semester and/or unit. In preparation for Unit 3 and Unit 4, the examination should reflect the examination design brief included in the ATAR Year 12 syllabus for this course.</p>	30%

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
A	Excellent achievement
B	High achievement
C	Satisfactory achievement
D	Limited achievement
E	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 ATAR 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, clearly and concisely, a high degree of knowledge and understanding of all key course content.
	Gathers and organises relevant information that is used effectively in a body of work and/or in support of concepts about the role religion plays in society and/or in the lives of people.
	Develops responses which make effective use of information and ideas, are organised around key concepts and supported by appropriate examples.
	Effectively uses a range of communication techniques to ensure that religious understandings are coherently expressed accurately and with clarity.
<b>B</b>	Provides detailed and mostly accurate accounts of religious ideas, concepts, events, issues and people. Engages with more complex ideas and tasks; sometimes misrepresenting or missing key elements.
	Gathers suitable information that is organised and used to support ideas and/or arguments that relate to the role religion plays in society and/or in the lives of people.
	Develops responses which are detailed and demonstrate planning.
	Expresses religious ideas in mostly clear ways and includes the use of suitable supporting examples and/or terminology.
<b>C</b>	Demonstrates relevant religious ideas but uses or applies these inconsistently; gaps in knowledge are evident.
	Gathers information that relates to the focus of an inquiry and begins to organise information that, at times, may be used uncritically, or in support of biased or stereotypical points of view, particularly in regard to matters dealing with the role religion plays in society and/or in the lives of individuals.
	Develops responses which provide detail but sometimes lack accuracy or do not use relevant examples.
	Expresses religious ideas, particularly those concerning religion and its interaction in the world, in ways that can at times be irrelevant, disjointed or confused.
<b>D</b>	Demonstrates a use of religious concepts and ideas that is confused, treated superficially or inappropriately or incorrectly uses information.
	Gathers information that is not reviewed adequately for relevance, lacks adequate organisation, and/or is not used correctly to support ideas/concepts related to the role religion plays in society and/or in the lives of individuals.
	Develops responses which indicate a lack of comprehension of task demands and/or provide unconnected or erroneous facts and detail.
	Develops explanations which are frequently simplistic or misrepresent basic religious ideas and terminology, especially those dealing with religion and the way religion interacts with people.
<b>E</b>	Does not meet the requirements of a D grade and/or has completed insufficient assessment tasks to be assigned a higher grade.