

B O A R D O F S T U D I E S
NEW SOUTH WALES

Studies of Religion

Stage 6

Syllabus

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1 The Higher School Certificate Program of Study

The purpose of the Higher School Certificate program of study is to:

- provide a curriculum structure which encourages students to complete secondary education;
- foster the intellectual, social and moral development of students, in particular developing their:
 - knowledge, skills, understanding and attitudes in the fields of study they choose
 - capacity to manage their own learning
 - desire to continue learning in formal or informal settings after school
 - capacity to work together with others
 - respect for the cultural diversity of Australian society;
- provide a flexible structure within which students can prepare for:
 - further education and training
 - employment
 - full and active participation as citizens;
- provide formal assessment and certification of students' achievements;
- provide a context within which schools also have the opportunity to foster students' physical and spiritual development.

2 Rationale for Studies of Religion in Stage 6 Curriculum

Religion is an integral part of human experience and a component of every culture. In Australia today, an appreciation of the multicultural nature of society is limited without an adequate understanding of religion, its influence on human behaviour and interactions within a culture. Studies of Religion explores the diversity of religious expression and experience and can provide students with the opportunity to increase their awareness and appreciation of and respect for the cultural diversity of Australian society.

This syllabus is based on an understanding of religion as a distinctive answer to the human need for meaning in life. An understanding of religion integrates, interprets and provides a perspective for the human view of reality. Religion deals with daily living as well as with the ultimate source, meaning and goal of life. Religion generally is characterised by a world view that recognises a transcendent dimension, or belief in divinity or powers beyond the human and/or dwelling within. Certain beliefs, values and activities, both personal and communal, are described as being specifically religious.

There is a variety of valid ways of undertaking the study of religion. Any one approach to the study of religion has strengths and limitations; to this end, aspects of the phenomenological, theological, typological, historical and sociological approaches to the study of religion are employed in this syllabus. Further, this syllabus uses an educational approach that is related to the aims of subjects and courses within the Human Society and Its Environment area.

Studies of Religion allows students to examine critically the role religion plays in enabling believers to make sense of human existence. Throughout the study, therefore, care should be taken not to detach religion from its place in the day-to-day experience of its followers. It endeavours to assist in the provision of a context within which schools have the opportunity to foster students' physical and spiritual development.

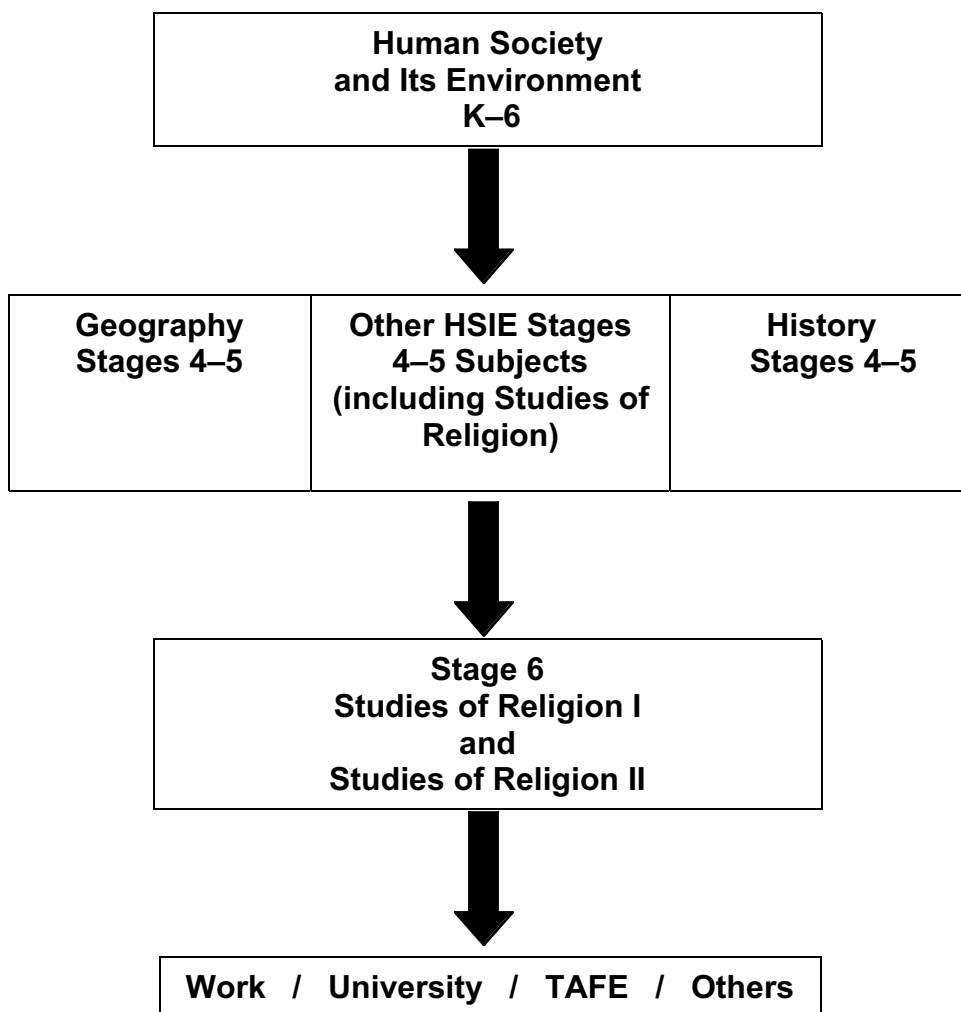
Studies of Religion is designed for students in all schools and does not seek to establish one religious tradition to the exclusion of all others. Thus, it is not possible to complete the course through the study of one religious tradition only. Nevertheless, there is considerable flexibility of design, which enables emphasis on investigation of several religious traditions or substantial study in a particular religious tradition. Studies of Religion, in an overarching sense, provides a flexible structure within which students can prepare for further education and training, employment and full and active participation as citizens.

3 Continuum of Learning for Studies of Religion Stage 6 Students

Studies of Religion forms part of the Human Society and Its Environment continuum of study from Kindergarten to Year 12. It complements other Stage 6 subjects in the area.

Studies of Religion Stage 6 builds on the general religious education in the *Human Society and Its Environment K–6 Syllabus* (1998); the mandatory History and Geography Stages 4–5 courses; and *Studies of Religion Stages 4–5 Syllabus* (1994).

Studies of Religion in the K–12 Continuum



4 Aim

Studies of Religion Stage 6 promotes an awareness, understanding and critical appreciation of the nature of religion and the influence of religious traditions, beliefs and practices in societies and on the individual, with an emphasis on the Australian context.

5 Objectives

Through Studies of Religion, students will develop

knowledge and understanding about:

- the nature of religion
- the influence of religion and belief systems in Australian society
- the expression of religion and belief systems in Australia
- major religious traditions as living religious systems

skills to:

- investigate and engage in effective evaluation, analysis and synthesis of information from a variety of sources
- communicate complex information, ideas and issues in appropriate forms to different audiences and in different contexts

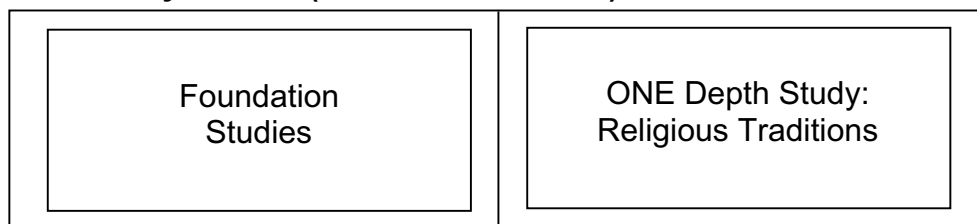
values and attitudes that:

- foster an informed interest in religion
- enable respect for religious beliefs and practices
- contribute to a free, multi-faith and just society.

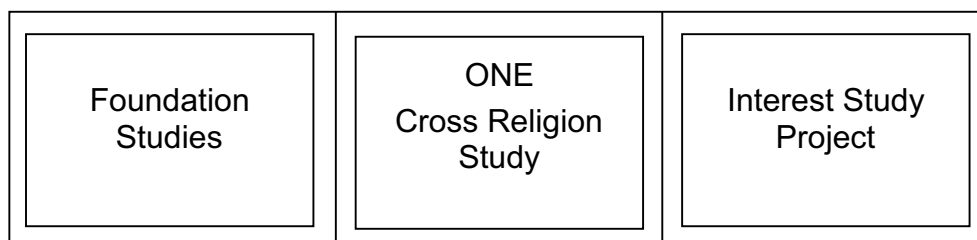
6 Course Structure

Studies of Religion I

Preliminary Course (60 indicative hours)



HSC Course (60 indicative hours)



Preliminary Course

This course is divided into two parts: **Foundation Studies** and **Depth Studies**.

Foundation Studies are compulsory (30 indicative hours).

They are divided into:

Foundation Study 1: The nature of religion

Foundation Study 2: The influence of religion in Australian society from 1788 to 1900.

Depth Studies (30 indicative hours)

Students must study ONE of the following religious traditions:

Depth Study 1: Buddhism

Depth Study 2: Christianity

Depth Study 3: Hinduism

Depth Study 4: Islam

Depth Study 5: Judaism.

HSC Course

This course is divided into three parts: **Foundation Studies**, **Cross Religion Studies** and the **Interest Study Project**.

Foundation Studies are compulsory (30 indicative hours).
They are divided into:

Foundation Study 1: Aboriginal belief systems and spirituality

Foundation Study 2: The influence of religion in Australian society from 1901 to the present.

Cross Religion Studies (20 indicative hours)

Students must study ONE of the following:

Cross Religion Study 1: Religious Rites

Cross Religion Study 2: Religion and Ethics

Cross Religion Study 3: Sacred Writings and Stories

Cross Religion Study 4: Ways of Holiness

Cross Religion Study 5: Teachers and Interpreters

Cross Religion Study 6: Religion and Women.

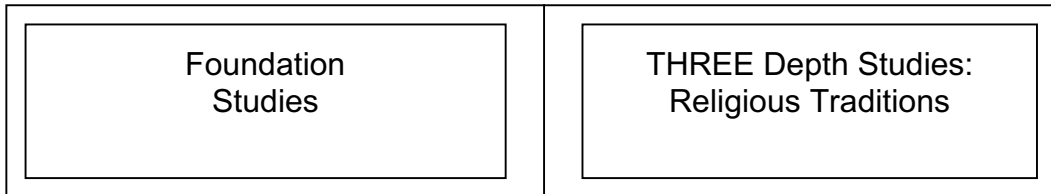
Interest Studies (10 indicative hours)

Students must undertake the study of ONE of the following:

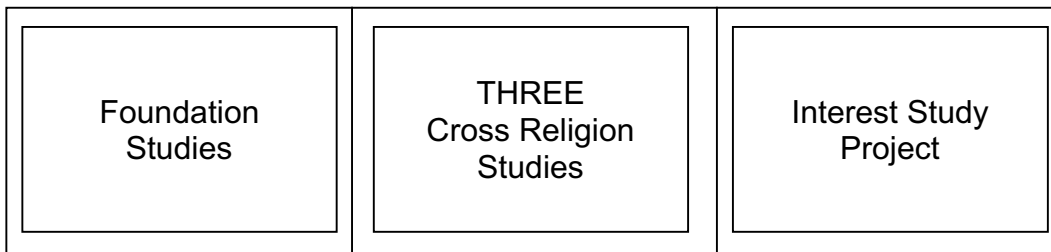
- Religious Biography
- Religion and Architecture
- Religion and Visual Arts
- Religion and Literature
- Religion and Music
- Religion and Ecology
- Religion and the Media
- Religion and Non-religion
- Confucianism
- Shinto
- Sikhism
- Taoism
- Melanesian or Polynesian Religious Tradition
- An Interest Study Reflecting the Ethos of the School and Its Community.

Studies of Religion II

Preliminary Course (120 indicative hours)



HSC Course (120 indicative hours)



Preliminary Course

This course is divided into two parts: **Foundation Studies** and **Depth Studies**.

Foundation Studies are compulsory (30 indicative hours).

They are divided into:

Foundation Study 1: The nature of religion

Foundation Study 2: The influence of religion in Australian society from 1788 to 1900.

Depth Studies (90 indicative hours)

Students must study **THREE** of the following religious traditions:

Depth Study 1: Buddhism

Depth Study 2: Christianity

Depth Study 3: Hinduism

Depth Study 4: Islam

Depth Study 5: Judaism.

HSC Course

This course is divided into three parts: **Foundation Studies**, **Cross Religion Studies** and the **Interest Study Project**.

Foundation Studies are compulsory (50 indicative hours).
They are divided into:

Foundation Study 1: Aboriginal belief systems and spirituality

Foundation Study 2: The influence of religion in Australian society from 1901 to the present

Foundation Study 3: Religion and media, and belief systems other than religious, in Australia.

Cross Religion Studies (60 indicative hours)

Students must study THREE of the following:

Cross Religion Study 1: Religious Rites

Cross Religion Study 2: Religion and Ethics

Cross Religion Study 3: Sacred Stories and Writings

Cross Religion Study 4: Ways of Holiness

Cross Religion Study 5: Teachers and Interpreters

Cross Religion Study 6: Religion and Women.

Interest Studies (10 indicative hours)

Students must undertake the study of ONE of the following:

- Religious Biography
- Religion and Architecture
- Religion and Visual Arts
- Religion and Literature
- Religion and Music
- Religion and Ecology
- Confucianism
- Shinto
- Sikhism
- Taoism
- Melanesian or Polynesian Religious Tradition
- An Interest Study Reflecting the Ethos of the School and Its Community.

7 Objectives and Outcomes

7.1 Table of Objectives and Outcomes

Objectives	Preliminary Course Outcomes	HSC Course Outcomes
<p>Through Studies of Religion, students will develop:</p> <p>knowledge and understanding about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the nature of religion • the influence of religion and belief systems in Australian society • the expression of religion and belief systems in Australia • major religious traditions as living religious systems 	<p>A student:</p> <p>P1 accounts for religion as a distinctive response to the human search for ultimate meaning and purpose</p> <p>P2 describes the main characteristics of religion and the relationship between religious traditions and their particular cultural context</p> <p>P3 describes the establishment and importance of religious traditions in Australia and the formative influence of Christianity in Australian society</p> <p>P4 explains the origins, history, principal beliefs, rituals and ethical teachings of a religious tradition and the influence of these on the everyday lives of people</p> <p>P5 explains the significance of sacred stories and writings in a religious tradition</p> <p>P6 accounts for diversity and change within a religious tradition</p> <p>P7 evaluates the interaction between a religious tradition and its cultural context and the expression of this religious tradition in Australia today</p>	<p>A student:</p> <p>H1 explains and evaluates the importance of religion in Australia</p> <p>H2 analyses and evaluates the influence of Christianity in Australian society</p> <p>H3 describes Aboriginal belief systems and spirituality</p> <p>H4 analyses significant past and present issues affecting Aboriginal spirituality</p> <p>H5 accounts for the range of religious traditions, faiths and belief systems that exist in Australia</p> <p>H6 describes and analyses the ways in which two religious traditions express a significant aspect of religion</p> <p>H7 explains and appraises social and cultural influences in religious traditions</p> <p>H8 evaluates the role of a significant aspect of religion within the nature and function of religious traditions, with reference to their variants and to the everyday life of believers</p>

Objectives	Preliminary Course Outcomes	HSC Course Outcomes
<p>Through Studies of Religion, students will develop</p> <p>skills to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> investigate and engage in effective evaluation, analysis and synthesis of religious-based information from a variety of sources communicate complex information, ideas and issues in appropriate forms to different audiences and in different contexts 	<p>A student:</p> <p>P8 uses appropriate language and terminology associated with Studies of Religion</p> <p>P9 selects and organises relevant information from a variety of sources and evaluates information and sources for usefulness, validity and bias</p> <p>P10 investigates information from a variety of perspectives and sources and presents the findings of an investigation to a particular audience</p> <p>P11 communicates coherently and responsively to different audiences using appropriate written, oral and graphic forms characterised by complexity of purpose, procedure and subject matter</p> <p>P12 creates well-structured texts to describe, explain, argue, discuss and analyse complex information, ideas and issues relating to religion and belief systems</p>	<p>A student:</p> <p>H9 applies appropriate language and terminology associated with Studies of Religion</p> <p>H10 selects and organises relevant information from a variety of sources and evaluates information and sources for usefulness, validity and bias</p> <p>H11 plans and conducts an investigation, analyses and synthesises information from a variety of sources and presents the findings of an investigation to a particular audience</p> <p>H12 coherently and effectively communicates complex information, ideas and issues using appropriate written, oral and graphic forms</p> <p>H13 uses planning and review strategies to manage effectively the competing demands of complex tasks, making effective use of time and resources</p>

7.2 Key Competencies

Studies of Religion provides a powerful context within which to develop general competencies considered essential for the acquisition of effective, higher-order thinking skills necessary for further education, work and everyday life.

Key competencies are embedded in the Studies of Religion syllabus to enhance student learning. The key competencies of ***collecting, analysing and organising information*** and ***communicating ideas and information*** reflect core processes of historical inquiry and are explicit in the objectives and outcomes of the syllabus. The other key competencies are developed through the methodologies of the syllabus and through classroom pedagogy. Students work as individuals and as members of groups to conduct historical investigations, and through this, the key competencies, ***planning and organising activities*** and ***working with others and in teams***, are developed. When students construct timelines or analyse statistical evidence, they are developing the key competency ***using mathematical ideas and techniques***. During investigations, students will need to use appropriate information technologies and so develop the key competency ***using technology***. Finally, the exploration of issues and investigation of the nature of historical problems contributes towards students' development of the key competency ***solving problems***.

8 Content: Studies of Religion Stage 6 Preliminary Course

8.1 Preliminary Course Studies of Religion I and Studies of Religion II

There are two parts to the Preliminary course for Studies of Religion I and II.

- 1 Foundation Studies
- 2 Depth Study – Religious Traditions

Foundation Studies

In the Preliminary course, the Foundation Study concerning the nature of religion introduces students to the essential concepts of Studies of Religion. It provides an understanding of the nature of religion and the expression of religious thought and practice in various belief systems. In this part of the course, the most suitable way of investigating the major religious traditions is to use them as examples of the diversity of ways in which religious systems understand reality. The religious traditions illustrate the variety of beliefs about the relationship between the divine and the human, the search for meaning and the ultimate goal of human life. These religious traditions all demonstrate a relationship between beliefs and the principles of everyday living. In the Foundation Studies, students are required to work towards outcomes that deal with the general nature of religion, rather than those that are specific to particular religious traditions.

The second Foundation Study in the Preliminary course, The Influence of Religion on Australian Society From 1788 to 1900, necessarily focuses on the primary role of Christianity, the religion professed by the majority of Australians at that time. It traces the establishment and formative influence of Christianity in areas such as education, law, medical care, public morality and social welfare. It is noted that diversity of religious expression has long been a feature of Australia's history.

Preliminary – Foundation Study 1: The Nature of Religion

The focus of this study is the nature of religion as a distinctive response to the human search for meaning in life.

Outcomes

A Student:

- P1 accounts for religion as a distinctive response to the human search for ultimate meaning and purpose
- P2 describes the main characteristics of religion and the relationship between religious traditions and their particular cultural context
- P8 uses appropriate language and terminology associated with Studies of Religion
- P9 selects and organises relevant information from a variety of sources and evaluates information and sources for usefulness, validity and bias
- P10 investigates information from a variety of perspectives and sources and presents the findings of an investigation to a particular audience
- P11 communicates coherently and responsively to different audiences using appropriate written, oral and graphic forms characterised by complexity of purpose, procedure and subject matter
- P12 creates well-structured texts to describe, explain, argue, discuss and analyse complex information, ideas and issues relating to religion and belief systems.

Content

Students learn about:

- a religious view of reality as compared with other views of reality:
 - distinctions between a religious response to the meaning of existence, the origins of the universe, and the cycle of birth and death and other responses to these issues
 - recognition of a religious world view as one that acknowledges a transcendent dimension and has belief in a divine being or powers beyond the human and/or dwelling within humanity
- the characteristics of a religious response to the human search for meaning in life:
 - the beliefs and social structures of religions, including sacred sites, sacred times
 - sacred stories and writing, and sacred symbols
 - ethics
 - rituals

- the approach of Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism and Buddhism to some of the enduring questions of human life and experience:
 - the differences between the approaches of these FIVE religious traditions in TWO distinct groups:

Group 1: Judaism, Christianity and Islam:

- a Semitic root
- emphasis on the revelation of God to people from outside the human spirit
- acceptance that that which has substance or is material is essentially good and that this imperfect world can be transformed

Group 2: Hinduism and Buddhism:

- an Indus civilisation root
- emphasis on the finding of truth from within the human spirit
- acceptance of the essentially spiritual nature of reality and seeking of release from the cycle of rebirth

- the interrelationship of religious traditions and their cultural context:
 - the way religious traditions, through the preservation of essential beliefs and practices, help to consolidate cultural identity
 - the way religious traditions experience diversity and change through dynamic interaction with the surrounding culture.

Students learn to:

- distinguish between religious and other responses to some of the enduring questions of human life and experience
- recognise the characteristics of a religious world view.

Preliminary – Foundation Study 2: The Influence of Religion in Australian Society from 1788 to 1900

The focus of this study is the influence of Christianity and other religious traditions in Australian society from 1788 to 1900.

Outcomes

A student:

- P3 describes the establishment and importance of religious traditions in Australia and the formative influence of Christianity in Australian society
- P8 uses appropriate language and terminology associated with Studies of Religion
- P9 selects and organises relevant information from a variety of sources and evaluates information and sources for usefulness, validity and bias
- P10 investigates information from a variety of perspectives and sources and presents the findings of an investigation to a particular audience
- P11 communicates coherently and responsively to different audiences using appropriate written, oral and graphic forms characterised by complexity of purpose, procedure and subject matter
- P12 creates well-structured texts to describe, explain, argue, discuss and analyse complex information, ideas and issues relating to religion and belief systems.

Content

Students learn about:

- the establishment of Christianity in Australia:
 - Christianity in Britain at the time of the colonisation of Australia
 - the establishment of Christianity in Australia as a consequence of British colonisation and the way in which later immigration increased Christian influence in Australia
 - the acquisition of land for Christian purposes and the contribution by colonial governments towards the costs of clergy, building of churches and building of church schools in Australia

- the primary influence of Christianity in Australian society between 1788 and 1900:
 - the influence of Christianity on at least TWO of the following areas in Australian society:
 - education
 - laws
 - medical care
 - public morality
 - social welfare
 - the interrelationship between the Australian physical and cultural environment and the development of Christianity in Australia
- the arrival of a religious tradition other than Christianity into Australia:
 - the country/ies of origin of new settlers representing ONE religious tradition from Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam or Judaism and the reasons for their migration to Australia.

Students learn to:

- demonstrate the influence of religion in Australian society from 1788 to 1900
- explore the influence of Christianity in at least TWO areas of Australian society from 1788 to 1900.

Depth Studies – Religious Traditions

The purpose of this section is to develop a comprehensive view of one religious tradition as a living religious system that links directly with the everyday life of its believers. Elements raised in the Foundation Studies are covered in greater depth in the study of a religious tradition. In this Depth Study, the particular focus is on the ways in which a religious tradition as an integrated belief system provides a distinctive answer to the enduring questions of human existence. Thus, students will investigate the various components of the religious tradition, its interrelationship with culture and its expression in Australia today.

The study of the origins and history of a particular religious tradition should enable students to demonstrate an appreciation of the diversity of expression within and underlying unity of the whole religious tradition. This study is essential preparation for the Cross Religion Studies in the HSC course where knowledge of the variants within a tradition (and, if appropriate, the differing approaches of these variants to the aspect being studied) is required. It will also help them to understand the religious tradition as it exists now. This Depth Study should link directly with Foundation Studies by investigation of the expressions of the religious tradition in Australia and its interaction with Australian society and its environment. In the remaining parts of the study (beliefs, devotional practices and ethical and moral teachings) students may concentrate on a specified, distinct variant of a religious tradition.

For reasons of equity and clarity, the content areas for study for each religious tradition are set out in a similar pattern. Learning experiences are to be appropriate to the distinctive nature of each religious tradition. The religious tradition, or the variant within it, should shape the way in which the religious tradition is studied. Each religious tradition has the same four areas of focus. All aspects are interrelated and the order in which they are listed need not determine the order of study.

The sacred stories and writings of the religious tradition have not been designated as a separate component but are included as an essential area of study relating to the area of focus: origins and history. The sacred stories and writings must infuse all elements of the Depth Study, and reference will be made to them in the other areas of focus (beliefs, devotional practices and ethical and moral teachings) to the extent appropriate to that religious tradition.

Exploration of the beliefs of the religious traditions, or a specified variant, will include beliefs about:

- God or the ultimate reality
- the nature of the human person, the meaning of human life, death and afterlife and, if appropriate, a way or ways of salvation
- the order of the cosmos, the natural world and its relationship to spiritual realities.

Students examine:

- devotional practices and forms of worship
- the purpose and structure of specific ceremonies
- distinctive customs and practices

in relation to the central belief system. The basic teachings about values, the motive for and the pursuit of goodness and principles for living will be studied. These directly affect the everyday lives of believers and their interaction with others.

Throughout the study, this belief system must not be understood in a mere abstract manner, but should be related to its application in the day-to-day experience of its followers, so that students can understand the religious tradition as a living religious system.

Preliminary Depth Study 1: Buddhism

The focus of this study is Buddhism, one of the major religious traditions, as a living religious system.

Outcomes

A student:

- P4 explains the origins, history, principal beliefs, rituals and ethical teachings of a religious tradition and the influence of these on the everyday lives of people
- P5 explains the significance of sacred stories and writings in a religious tradition
- P6 accounts for diversity and change within a religious tradition
- P7 evaluates the interaction between a religious tradition and its cultural context and the expression of this religious tradition in Australia today
- P8 uses appropriate language and terminology associated with Studies of Religion
- P9 selects and organises relevant information from a variety of sources and evaluates information and sources for usefulness, validity and bias
- P10 investigates information from a variety of perspectives and sources and presents the findings of an investigation to a particular audience
- P11 communicates coherently and responsively to different audiences using appropriate written, oral and graphic forms characterised by complexity of purpose, procedure and subject matter
- P12 creates well-structured texts to describe, explain, argue, discuss and analyse complex information, ideas and issues relating to religion and belief systems.

Content

Students learn about:

- the origins and history of Buddhism:
 - the historical and cultural context in which Buddhism began
 - background to Buddhism: Hinduism and the Vedic background of Siddharta Guatama
 - the life of Siddharta Guatama, his birth, childhood and youth, renunciation and great enlightenment
 - the founding of Buddhism and the early development of Buddhism and its spread throughout Asia
 - the diversity and change in the historical development of Buddhism and the development of various sub-groups up until the present
 - division into Theravada, Mahayana, Vajrayana and other groups

- the distribution and practice of Buddhism in Australia today

The following material is mandatory and may be studied with concentration on ONE distinct variant chosen from:

- *Theravada Buddhism*
- *Mahayana Buddhism*
- *Vajrayana Buddhism*

1. the principal Buddhist beliefs about:

- cosmology – no creator god
- the nature of humanity and of suffering – the Four Noble Truths, marks of existence, anicca, dukkha, anatta
- impermanent realms of existence, karma, reincarnation, samsara, nirvana
- the devotional practices of Buddhism and their relationship to belief:
 - public Buddhist worship with reference to the place of corporate celebrations, features of a Buddhist temple, devotional practices at a shrine, invocation of the Three Jewels, rituals for joining the Sangha
 - private Buddhist worship with reference to meditation practices
 - background to and celebrations of feasts, festivals and special days in the Buddhist calendar
 - the influence of these devotional practices on the everyday life of people

1. the ethical and moral teachings of Buddhism and their application to everyday living:

- fundamental Buddhist values
- sources of ethical authority for Buddhist people, eg the Pali Canon, the five precepts and rules for monks
- beliefs about sources of authority that have affected the development of ethical systems and the making of moral choices.

Students learn to:

- account for both diversity and homogeneity in Buddhism in Australia today
- explain the influences on everyday living of Buddhist beliefs and devotional practices
- examine the implications for everyday living of Buddhist ethical and moral teachings.

Preliminary Depth Study 2: Christianity

The focus of this study is Christianity, one of the major religious traditions, as a living religious system.

Outcomes

A student:

- P4 explains the origins, history, principal beliefs, rituals and ethical teachings of a religious tradition and the influence of these on the everyday lives of people
- P5 explains the significance of sacred stories and writings in a religious tradition
- P6 accounts for diversity and change within a religious tradition
- P7 evaluates the interaction between a religious tradition and its cultural context and the expression of this religious tradition in Australia today
- P8 uses appropriate language and terminology associated with Studies of Religion
- P9 selects and organises relevant information from a variety of sources and evaluates information and sources for usefulness, validity and bias
- P10 investigates information from a variety of perspectives and sources and presents the findings of an investigation to a particular audience
- P11 communicates coherently and responsively to different audiences using appropriate written, oral and graphic forms characterised by complexity of purpose, procedure and subject matter
- P12 creates well-structured texts to describe, explain, argue, discuss and analyse complex information, ideas and issues relating to religion and belief systems.

Content

Students learn about:

- the origins and history of Christianity:
 - the historical and cultural context in which Christianity began
 - background to Christianity
 - Judaism and the Jewish Scriptures
 - the Greek and Roman world of the first century CE
 - the founding of Christianity
 - the life of Jesus
 - his birth, teaching and ministry, death, resurrection and ascension

- the early development of Christianity
 - the early church as found in the New Testament
- the diversity and change in the historical development of Christianity and the development of various sub-groups until the present
 - division between East and West: causes and consequences
 - the Reformation and Counter/Catholic Reformation: causes (key theological emphases) and consequences
 - the Evangelical Awakening, colonial expansion and missionary impact
- the distribution and practice of Christianity in Australia today

The following material is mandatory and may be studied with concentration on ONE distinct variant chosen from within the following:

- a Catholic Church
- an Orthodox Church
- a Protestant Church

- the principal Christian beliefs about:
 - the nature of God and the Trinity: creating, sanctifying and redeeming
 - the nature of humanity – created, fallen and redeemed through Jesus Christ
 - the paradox of evil and the place of suffering
 - eschatology – heaven, hell, Christ’s return, final judgement
- the devotional practices of Christianity and their relation to belief:
 - public Christian worship with reference to the place of corporate worship and celebrations; features of worship, features of a church; communion, liturgies, rituals such as those for birth, reconciliation, initiation, marriage, ordination, anointing or death
 - private Christian worship with reference to meditation, personal Bible study, devotions and prayer, retreats
 - background to and celebrations of feasts, festivals, seasons and special days in the Christian liturgical calendar
 - the influence of these devotional practices on the everyday life of people

- the ethical and moral teachings of Christianity and their application to everyday living:
 - fundamental Christian values
 - sources of ethical authority for Christians, eg the Bible, denominational authorities, eg Assemblies, Councils, Synods and the lived tradition
 - beliefs about sources of authority that have affected the development of ethical systems and the making of moral choices.

Students learn to:

- account for both diversity and homogeneity in Christianity in Australia today
- explain the influences on everyday living of Christian beliefs and devotional practices
- examine the implications for everyday living of Christian ethical and moral teaching.

Preliminary Depth Study 3: Hinduism

The focus of this study is Hinduism, one of the major religious traditions, as a living religious system.

Outcomes

A Student:

- P4 explains the origins, history, principal beliefs, rituals and ethical teachings of a religious tradition and the influence of these on the everyday lives of people
- P5 explains the significance of sacred stories and writings in a religious tradition
- P6 accounts for diversity and change within a religious tradition
- P7 evaluates the interaction between a religious tradition and its cultural context, and the expression of this religious tradition in Australia today
- P8 uses appropriate language and terminology associated with Studies of Religion
- P9 selects and organises relevant information from a variety of sources and evaluates information and sources for usefulness, validity and bias
- P10 investigates information from a variety of perspectives and sources and presents the findings of an investigation to a particular audience
- P11 communicates coherently and responsively to different audiences using appropriate written, oral and graphic forms characterised by complexity of purpose, procedure and subject matter
- P12 creates well-structured texts to describe, explain, argue, discuss and analyse complex information, ideas and issues relating to religion and belief systems.

Content

Students learn about:

- the origins and history of Hinduism:
 - the significance of the Bhagavad Gita, the Vedas, the Mahabharata and the Ramayana as source materials of Hinduism
 - the historical and cultural context in which Hinduism began
 - Harappan civilisation and the Aryan invasion of India

- the foundation period of Hinduism
 - Sanskrit, Bhagavad Gita, the Vedas (revealed knowledge)
 - the Epics (remembered knowledge)
- the early development of Hinduism
 - priestly rituals, varnas or classes (brahmins, kshatriyas, vaishyas, shudras) and the development of sub-castes within these varnas
- the diversity and change in the historical development of Hinduism and the development of various sub-groups until the present
 - development of Shaivas and Vaishnavas
 - challenge of Buddhism
 - the classical period and the development of the casteless Bhakti devotional movement
 - the impact of Muslim rule and British colonisation
- the distribution and practice of Hinduism in Australia today

The following material is mandatory and may be studied with concentration on ONE distinct variant chosen from within the following:

- *the Shaivas*
- *the Vaishnavas*
- *the Bhakti devotional movement*

- the principal Hindu beliefs about:
 - the nature of the divine soul (Brahman): manifestations of Brahman in the pantheon, especially Brahma and his consort Saraswati, Vishnu and his consort Lakshmi, Shiva and his consort Parvati
 - the nature of humanity – the innermost essence of the individual (Atman)
 - the cycle of rebirth of souls: following dharma to generate good karma to achieve moksha and escape samsara
- the devotional practices of Hinduism and their relationship to belief:
 - public worship or puja with reference to the features of temple puja, features of a Hindu temple, hymns, offerings, ablutions and pilgrimages, rituals for birth, initiation, marriage or death, sacred sites
 - private Hindu worship with reference to meditation and yoga, family shrines, personal devotion to a deity, gurus, asceticism and prayer, ashramas (stages of life) and varnas and associated duties
 - background to and celebrations of feasts, festivals, special days in the Hindu year and lunar calendar

- the ethical and moral teachings of Hinduism and their application to everyday living:
 - fundamental Hindu values
 - sources of ethical authority for Hindus, eg the Bhagavad Gita, the Vedas, the Mahabharata and the Ramayana, significant individuals, eg gurus and the lived tradition
 - beliefs about sources of authority that have affected the development of ethical systems and the making of moral choices.

Students learn to:

- account for both diversity and homogeneity in Hinduism in Australia today
- explain the influences on everyday living of Hindu beliefs and devotional practices
- examine the implications of Hindu ethical and moral teaching for everyday living.

Preliminary Depth Study 4: Islam

The focus of this study is Islam, one of the major religious traditions, as a living religious system.

Outcomes

A student:

- P4 explains the origins, history, principal beliefs, rituals and ethical teachings of a religious tradition and the influence of these on the everyday lives of people
- P5 explains the significance of sacred stories and writings in a religious tradition
- P6 accounts for diversity and change within a religious tradition
- P7 evaluates the interaction between a religious tradition and its cultural context, and the expression of this religious tradition in Australia today
- P8 uses appropriate language and terminology associated with Studies of Religion
- P9 selects and organises relevant information from a variety of sources and evaluates information and sources for usefulness, validity and bias
- P10 investigates information from a variety of perspectives and sources and presents the findings of an investigation to a particular audience
- P11 communicates coherently and responsively to different audiences using appropriate written, oral and graphic forms characterised by complexity of purpose, procedure and subject matter
- P12 creates well-structured texts to describe, explain, argue, discuss and analyse complex information, ideas and issues relating to religion and belief systems.

Content

Students learn about:

- the origins and history of Islam:
 - the significance of the Qur'an as source material for Islam
 - the historical and cultural context in which Islam began
 - background to Islam: Arab peninsula and polytheism
 - contact with Judaism and Christianity
 - the founding of Islam
 - the life of Muhammad – his birth, visions, mission, teaching and death
 - the early development of Islam
 - institutionalisation into the Arab world
 - spread into Europe, Africa and Asia

- the historical development of Islam and the development of various subgroups until the present
 - development of Sunni and Shi'a schools
 - struggle against colonial domination
 - modern revival
- the distribution and practice of Islam in Australia today

The following material is mandatory and may be studied with concentration on ONE distinct variant chosen from:

- *Sunni Islam*
- *Shi'a Islam*

- the principal Islamic beliefs about:
 - the nature of God – Allah is unique, all-powerful, all-merciful, with a Divine Plan for all of creation
 - the nature of humanity
 - created with a capacity to choose to submit/conform to the Divine Plan or not
 - in need of Allah's guidance and grace
 - eschatology – heaven, hell, final judgement
 - the five pillars of faith
- the devotional practices of Islam and their relationship to belief:
 - public Muslim worship with reference to the place of corporate worship and celebrations, features of worship, features of a mosque, pilgrimages, rituals for naming, commemoration, initiation, marriage, healing or death
 - private Muslim worship with reference to salat (daily prayer), jihad (personal striving to follow the will of Allah), Sufism (mysticism)
 - background to and celebrations of feasts and festivals and special days in the Hijri calendar
 - the influence of these devotional practices on the everyday life of people

- the ethical and moral teachings of Islam and their application to everyday living:
 - fundamental Muslim values
 - sources of ethical authority for Muslims, eg Qur'an and Sharia law, the Sunna, Hadith and significant individuals
 - beliefs about sources of authority that have affected the development of ethical systems and the making of moral choices.

Students learn to:

- account for both diversity and homogeneity of Islam in Australia today
- explain the influences on everyday living of Muslim beliefs and devotional practices
- examine the implications for everyday living of Islamic ethical and moral teachings.

Preliminary Depth Study 5: Judaism

The focus of this study is Judaism, one of the major religious traditions, as a living religious system.

Outcomes

A student:

- P4 explains the origins, history, principal beliefs, rituals and ethical teachings of a religious tradition and the influence of these on the everyday lives of people
- P5 explains the significance of sacred stories and writings in a religious tradition
- P6 accounts for diversity and change within a religious tradition
- P7 evaluates the interaction between a religious tradition and its cultural context, and the expression of this religious tradition in Australia today
- P8 uses appropriate language and terminology associated with Studies of Religion
- P9 selects and organises relevant information from a variety of sources and evaluates information and sources for usefulness, validity and bias
- P10 investigates information from a variety of perspectives and sources and presents the findings of an investigation to a particular audience
- P11 communicates coherently and responsively to different audiences using appropriate written, oral and graphic forms characterised by complexity of purpose, procedure and subject matter
- P12 creates well-structured texts to describe, explain, argue, discuss and analyse complex information, ideas and issues relating to religion and belief systems.

Content

Students learn about:

- the origins and history of Judaism:
 - the significance of the Tenach as a source material of Judaism
 - the historical and cultural context in which Judaism began
 - background to Judaism: the wandering clan of Abraham and Sarah, their descendants in Egypt, the central concept of covenant
 - the foundation period of Judaism
 - the life of Moses – his birth, childhood and youth, and leading of the Exodus
 - the early development of Judaism
 - the revelation on Mt Sinai, entry into the promised land
 - judges, kings and prophets

- the diversity and change in the historical development of Judaism and the development of various sub-groups until the present
 - diaspora and the rabbinic period
 - emancipation, Zionism and the Holocaust
- the distribution and practice of Judaism in Australia today

The following material is mandatory and may be studied with concentration on ONE distinct variant chosen from:

- *Orthodox Judaism*
- *Conservative Judaism*
- *Reform (Liberal) Judaism*

- the principal Jewish beliefs about:
 - the nature of God's plan for all of creation: one transcendent, immanent, creator God, without form, separate from but continuing to be involved in the world and with people
 - the covenant
 - the nature of humanity: created with superior status, possessing free will and needing to repent
 - eschatology: the afterlife, the messianic age and final judgement
- the devotional practices of Judaism and their relationship to belief:
 - public Jewish worship with reference to the place of corporate worship and celebrations, features of worship, features of a synagogue, liturgies, rituals for birth, initiation, marriage, healing or death
 - private Jewish worship with reference to the central role of the home and community, personal prayer, kashrut, Sabbath observance
 - background to and celebrations of feasts and festivals and special days in the Jewish calendar
 - the influence of these devotional practices on the everyday life of people
- the ethical and moral teachings of Judaism:
 - fundamental Jewish values
 - sources of ethical authority for Jewish people, eg the Tenach and talmudic regulations, significant individuals, eg rabbis and other learned persons in the community
 - beliefs about sources of authority that have affected the development of ethical systems and the making of moral choices.

Students learn to:

- account for both diversity and homogeneity in Judaism in Australia today
- explain the influences of Jewish beliefs and devotional practices on everyday living
- examine the implications of Jewish ethical and moral teaching for everyday living.

9 Content: Studies of Religion HSC Course

9.1 HSC Course Studies of Religion I and Studies of Religion II

There are three parts to the HSC course for Studies of Religion I and Studies of Religion II:

1. Foundation Studies
2. Cross Religion Studies
3. Interest Studies

Foundation Studies

In the HSC course, the first Foundation Study is of the belief systems of Aboriginal Australians and how these form an integral part of Australia's religious heritage. The syllabus does not provide this as a Depth Study. The secret-sacred nature of the core beliefs and knowledge of Aboriginal Australians and the long history of academic invasion of their cultures make it inappropriate for investigation at such a level. Its placement in Foundation Studies, however, enables students to gain appreciation of the central role of religious belief and its integration into all facets of Australian life over many thousands of years.

The second Foundation Study in the HSC course is a study of expressions of religion in Australia from 1901 to the present. This study does not seek to give Christianity a place of privilege within this syllabus but it does recognise that it continues to be professed by the majority of Australians and continues to have a primary influence in Australian society. The diversity of religious expression in Australia, however, continues to grow. There has also been growth in the numbers of those who seek answers to life's fundamental questions through belief systems other than traditional religious models. Nevertheless, this study should demonstrate to students that people who share a religious view of reality have much in common and have an integral place in Australian society and its environment.

HSC Course Foundation Study 1

The focus of this study is Aboriginal belief systems and spirituality.

Outcomes

A student:

- H3 describes Aboriginal belief systems and spirituality
- H4 analyses significant past and present issues affecting Aboriginal spirituality
- H5 accounts for the range of religious traditions, faiths and belief systems that exist in Australia
- H7 explains and appraises social and cultural influences in religious traditions
- H9 applies appropriate language and terminology associated with Studies of Religion
- H10 selects and organises relevant information from a variety of sources and evaluates information and sources for usefulness, validity and bias
- H12 coherently and effectively communicates complex information, ideas and issues using appropriate written, oral and graphic forms.

Content

Students learn about:

- the nature of Aboriginal spirituality:
 - the Dreaming as being fundamental to Aboriginal cultures and societies
 - Aboriginal spirituality and its inextricable connection to the land
 - the diversity of expression of Aboriginal belief systems and spirituality today
 - the integration of Christianity and Aboriginal belief systems by many Aboriginal people
- the differences between Aboriginal beliefs and spirituality and non-Aboriginal religious beliefs and practices:
 - the impact of European colonisation on Aboriginal belief systems and society
 - the effect of missions and missionary activity on Aboriginal belief systems from the original contact period through to more recent times.

Students learn to:

- identify the impact of European colonisation on Aboriginal belief systems and society
- recognise historical misconceptions about Aboriginal belief systems.

Students learn about:

- the Land Rights movement:
 - Aboriginal spirituality and its inextricable connection to the land, eg the Mabo and Wik judgements and other current issues
- the ways in which Aboriginal spirituality has influenced some Christian denominations.

Students learn to:

- analyse the contribution made by Aboriginal spirituality to the understanding of the nature of religious experience in Australia.

HSC Course: Foundation Study 2

The focus of this study is the expression of religion in Australia from 1901 to the present.

Outcomes

A student:

- H1 explains and evaluates the importance of religion in Australia
- H2 analyses and evaluates the influence of Christianity in Australian society
- H5 accounts for the range of religious traditions, faiths and belief systems that exist in Australia
- H7 explains and appraises social and cultural influences in religious traditions
- H9 applies appropriate language and terminology associated with Studies of Religion
- H10 selects and organises relevant information from a variety of sources and evaluates information and sources for usefulness, validity and bias
- H12 coherently and effectively communicates complex information, ideas and issues using appropriate written, oral and graphic forms.

Content

Students learn about:

- the primary influence of Christianity in Australian society within the period 1901 to the present:
 - the influence of Christianity on at least TWO of the following areas in Australian society:
 - education
 - laws and the constitution
 - medical care
 - public morality
 - social welfare
 - the interrelationship between the Australian physical and cultural environment and the development of Christianity in Australia
- responses by some religious traditions to social change and initiatives in community development from 1901 to the present:
 - ministry in rural and outback Australia

- the role of religious traditions in the labour movement, conscription, wars and the Great Depression
- the role and responses of religious traditions in/to at least THREE of the following issues/political debates:
 - abortion
 - divorce
 - euthanasia
 - gambling
 - indigenous rights
 - poverty
 - sexuality
 - the role of women in family, church, workplace and society
 - unemployment
- the development of religious plurality and distribution/profile of religious adherence today:
 - immigration after World War II
 - the ending of the White Australia Policy
 - the formation of the Uniting Church in Australia in 1977
 - New Age religions
 - religious conversion and denominational switching
 - Pentecostalism and the charismatic movement
- recognition of common elements in religious expression and world views in Australia today:
 - religious harmony and inter-faith dialogue
 - ecumenical developments within Christianity, eg the World Council of Churches, National Council of Churches in Australia, the Sydney College of Divinity, the Australian College of Theology
 - joint inter-faith and ecumenical initiatives, eg in times of crisis or tragedy.

Students learn to:

- demonstrate the influence of religion in Australian society in the period from 1901 to the present
- account for increasing diversity in religious adherence in the period from 1901 to the present
- examine common elements within and between religious world views in Australia today.

HSC Foundation Study 3

(Studies of Religion II only)

The focus of this study is religion and media and the expression of religious and other belief systems, with specific reference to Australian society.

Outcomes

A student:

- H1 explains and evaluates the importance of religion in Australia
- H2 analyses and evaluates the influence of Christianity in Australian society
- H5 accounts for the range of religious traditions, faiths and belief systems that exist in Australia
- H7 explains and appraises social and cultural influences in religious traditions
- H10 selects and organises relevant information from a variety of sources and evaluates information and sources for usefulness, validity and bias
- H12 coherently and effectively communicates written, oral and graphic forms characterised by complexity of purpose, procedure and subject matter.

Content

Students learn about:

- religion and its use of print and electronic media to propagate a point of view:
 - how religious views are/can be communicated, eg documentary; talkback; dedicated newspapers, brochures and journals; regular column; editorial
 - how religious media are used as vehicles for/of religious conversion
- the print and electronic media treatment of religious traditions, issues and personalities
 - the concepts of neutrality, bias and objectivity/subjectivity
 - dimensions of traditions/issues/personalities which make these worthy of media interest, for example:
 - extraordinariness
 - controversy
 - counter to prevailing broader culture
 - media presentation of religious personalities, traditions and issues and whether such coverage is accurate and representative, for example:
 - treatment of religious personalities, with reference to the ratio of male/female coverage
 - treatment of religious traditions, with reference to the coverage of traditions other than Christianity

- treatment of religious issues, with reference to the ratio of explicitly ethical as opposed to non-ethical issues
- the media as a vehicle for promoting religious understanding and tolerance, eg coverage of national/international religious festivals, feasts and events.

Students learn to:

- recognise the media as an important vehicle in the promotion of religion in Australia.

Students learn about:

- the nature and variety of beliefs of those who do not embrace a religious perspective of life:
 - the trend in the 'no religion' category from census data from the 1961 census to the present
 - various secular and 'non-religious' perspectives that exist in Australian society. Study of perspectives must include atheism, agnosticism and humanism.

Students learn to:

- examine the place and importance of beliefs and belief systems in human experience
- compare and contrast the beliefs and action/activity of ONE secular/non-religious perspective with that of ONE religious tradition considering at least the following (where perspectives are relevant and clear on this/these issue(s)):
 - beliefs:
 - the origin of the universe
 - life after physical death
 - the view of the human person
 - material accumulation and possessions
 - action/activity:
 - environmental concerns and sustainability
 - social responsibility
 - community involvement and outreach
 - daily/weekly/monthly/yearly rhythms of life
 - rites of passage.

HSC Course: Cross Religion Study

Studies of Religion I students to complete ONE Cross Religion Study
Studies of Religion II students to complete THREE Cross Religion Studies

The issues raised in the Foundation Studies and expanded in the Depth Studies of religious traditions are covered in a different manner in the Cross Religion Studies. The purpose of this study is to enable students to understand and clarify religious concepts and issues through examination of their expression in at least TWO religious traditions, with specific reference to the variants of these traditions.

Students will continue to build on their study of the nature of religion. In these Cross Religion Studies, the particular focus is on how the aspects of religion or the lived expression of these aspects by its believers reveal patterns across religious traditions that enable students to enlarge their understanding of religion as an integral part of human experience.

Through this study, students will increase their knowledge and understanding of at least TWO religious traditions, with specific reference to the variants of these traditions. Any religious tradition (and its variants) must be treated on its own terms and the focus is not only on comparison of religious traditions but also on the understanding of the aspect being examined and its expression and place in religious traditions.

The variety of subject matter within this group of Cross Religion Studies, and the five religious traditions within which they may be studied, are intended to maximise student interest and choice. TWO religious traditions chosen from Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam and Judaism (and their variants) must be covered in any Cross Religion Study. No link is prescribed between the religious traditions chosen for the Depth Study and those chosen for the Cross Religion Study. Likewise, students of Studies of Religion II may choose different combinations of religious traditions in each of the studies.

HSC Cross Religion Study 1: Religious Rites

The focus of this study is religious rites.

Outcomes

A student:

- H6 describes and analyses the ways in which two religious traditions express a significant aspect of religion
- H8 evaluates the role of a significant aspect of religion within the nature and function of religious traditions, with reference to their variants and to the everyday life of believers
- H9 applies appropriate language and terminology associated with Studies of Religion
- H12 coherently and effectively communicates complex information, ideas and issues using appropriate written, oral and graphic forms.

Content

In the context of this study, 'rite' refers to a formal act in a religious observance. For the purpose of this study, religious rites are divided into three categories: Passage, Personal Devotion and Public Worship.

Students learn about:

- the nature, role and significance of religious rites:
 - religious rites as significant acts performed/undertaken by believers in celebrating, symbolising and making present the central beliefs of the religious tradition
 - three categories of religious rites:
 - rites of passage, eg initiation, funerals
 - rites of personal devotion, eg prayer, fasting, penance
 - rites of public worship, eg temple ceremonies, liturgies, communion services, feast days, seasons, religious cycles

- religious rites and their effect on the everyday lives of believers:

For this section, students are to study TWO specific religious rites from TWO of the categories for TWO religious traditions.

Note: The rites chosen must be the same across each study.

Buddhism

- rites of passage, eg introduction to Sangha/ordination
- rites of personal devotion, eg meditation, nembutsu
- rites of public Worship, eg temple ceremonies, Wesak

Christianity

- rites of passage, eg baptism, marriage
- rites of personal devotion, eg retreats, rosary, daily devotions, Bible reading, meditation and prayer
- rites of public worship, eg Divine Office, Communion service, Lent, Christmas, Evensong

Hinduism

- rites of passage, eg naming and incorporation, upanayana and female puberty ritual, marriage and death
- rites of personal devotion, eg puja, bhakti, meditation, renunciation, arati
- rites of public worship, eg puja, darshan, pilgrimages, hymn singing, Ganeshe Chaturthi, Divali

Islam

- rites of passage, eg Adhan, Aqiqah, Adq Nikah, Janazah
- rites of personal devotion, eg prayer, pilgrimage
- rites of public worship, eg worship at the mosque and at Mecca, Ramadan, Eid-al Fitr, Eid-al-adha

Judaism

- rites of passage, eg Brit-milah, Pidyon HaBen, Bar/Bat Mitzvah, marriage and divorce, death and bereavement
- rites of personal devotion, eg Sabbath
- rites of public worship, eg synagogue.

Students learn to:

- compare and contrast examples from the same religious rites within TWO religious traditions in relation to TWO of the following:
 - the nature, role and function of officiating celebrants
 - significance of sacred writings
 - use of symbolism
 - social structure
 - human experiences.

HSC Cross Religion Study 2: Religion and Ethics

The focus of this study is religion and ethics.

Outcomes

A student:

- H6 describes and analyses the ways in which two religious traditions express a significant aspect of religion
- H8 evaluates the role of a significant aspect of religion within the nature and function of religious traditions, with reference to their variants and to the everyday life of believers
- H9 applies appropriate language and terminology associated with Studies of Religion
- H12 coherently and effectively communicates complex information, ideas and issues using appropriate written, oral and graphic forms.

Content

In the context of this study, 'ethics' is a justification for reasoning behind human moral behaviour, 'moral' is a description of actual human moral behaviour.

Students learn about:

- the nature, role and significance of ethics:
 - ethical systems within TWO religious traditions. Sources for investigation are:
 - Buddhism: the five precepts, the Noble Eightfold Path, the morality of the monk
 - Christianity: the ten commandments and the ethical systems of the New Testament, the diversity in Christian ethics, eg biblical focus in Protestant ethics, the natural law and teaching authority in Catholic ethics, the Orthodox ethical system
 - Hinduism: the ethical implications of samsara and karma, dharma, appropriateness to one's ashrama
 - Islam: the law (Sharia) found principally in the Qur'an, the Sunna, the obligations of the Five Pillars
 - Judaism: the Torah as the rule of life, a way of life symbolising ethical principles, eg Pesach (freedom), Gemilut Chassadim, community institutions for the old, the sick, the poor

- religious ethics and their effect on the everyday lives of believers:
 - the way in which TWO traditions give ethical guidance to ONE of the following areas:
 - violence, war and peace
 - bioethics, eg cloning, genetic engineering, IVF, euthanasia
 - the environment
 - work ethics and business/professional ethics
 - sexual ethics
 - marriage and divorce.

Students learn to:

- compare and contrast how TWO religious traditions use TWO of the following areas in forming their ethical teachings:
 - sacred stories and texts
 - beliefs
 - individual and communal experiences
 - authority within religious structures
 - conscience and decision-making.

HSC Cross Religion Study 3: Sacred Writings and Stories

The focus of this study is sacred writings and stories.

Outcomes

A student:

- H6 describes and analyses the ways in which two religious traditions express a significant aspect of religion
- H8 evaluates the role of a significant aspect of religion within the nature and function of religious traditions, with reference to their variants and to the everyday life of believers
- H9 applies appropriate language and terminology associated with Studies of Religion
- H12 coherently and effectively communicates complex information, ideas and issues using appropriate written, oral and graphic forms.

Content

Students learn about:

- the nature, role and importance of sacred writings and stories in TWO religious traditions:
 - Buddhism: extracts from Pali canon (tripitaka); Lotus of the Good Law; description of the Paradise of Sukhavati
 - Christianity: extracts from Old Testament; New Testament
 - Hinduism: extracts from the Vedas; Upanishads; Ramayana; Laws of Manu; Mahabharata
 - Islam: extracts from Qur'an; Hadith; Sunna
 - Judaism: extracts from Tenach; Mishnah and Talmud; Midrash
- the origins of sacred writings and stories and the languages in which they were formed and transmitted
- the use of sacred writings and stories in the everyday lives of the believers:
 - the various ways in which sacred writings and stories from TWO religious traditions give support and guidance in TWO of the following:
 - ritual use
 - ethical justification and source
 - direction for the spiritual life
 - gender roles and functions.

Students learn to:

- compare and contrast the interpretation of TWO themes found within sacred writings and stories of TWO religious traditions:
 - death
 - evil
 - fidelity
 - love
 - suffering.

HSC Cross Religion Study 4: Ways of Holiness

The focus of this study is ways of holiness.

Outcomes

A student:

- H6 describes and analyses the ways in which two religious traditions express a significant aspect of religion
- H8 evaluates the role of a significant aspect of religion within the nature and function of religious traditions, with reference to their variants and to the everyday life of believers
- H9 applies appropriate language and terminology associated with Studies of Religion
- H12 coherently and effectively communicates complex information, ideas and issues using appropriate written, oral and graphic forms.

Content

Students learn about:

- the nature, role and importance of the ordinary ways of holiness and special ways of holiness practised by believers in TWO religious traditions
 - examples of ordinary ways of holiness:
 - Buddhism: prayer, meditation, worship at shrines
 - Christianity: prayer, communal worship, reflection on Scripture
 - Hinduism: devotion to gods, meditation, worship at shrines
 - Islam: practice of daily prayer, worship at mosque, pilgrimage
 - Judaism: daily blessings, Shabbat
 - examples of special ways of holiness:
 - Buddhism: the Sangha, higher levels of meditation
 - Christianity: monasticism, the mystical tradition
 - Hinduism: asceticism, mathas, gurus
 - Islam: Sufism

- Judaism: discouragement of apartness and stress on holiness of community

- different ways of holiness and their place in the everyday lives of believers:
 - the ordinary ways of holiness and forms of prayer and devotion practised by believers
 - the special ways of holiness experienced by some members of the religious tradition.

Students learn to:

- compare and contrast how TWO religious traditions understand either the ordinary ways of holiness or special ways of holiness in relation to TWO of the following areas:
 - models and guides
 - special ways of apartness
 - ultimate goal of holiness
 - justification from sacred writings
 - role of authoritative sources other than sacred writings.

HSC Cross Religion Study 5: Teachers and Interpreters

The focus of this study is teachers and interpreters.

Outcomes

A student:

- H6 describes and analyses the ways in which two religious traditions express a significant aspect of religion
- H8 evaluates the role of a significant aspect of religion within the nature and function of religious traditions, with reference to their variants and to the everyday life of believers
- H9 applies appropriate language and terminology associated with Studies of Religion
- H12 coherently and effectively communicates complex information, ideas and issues using appropriate written, oral and graphic forms.

Content

In the context of this study, 'teachers' and 'interpreters' are pivotal individuals OR schools of thought, other than the founder, who are acknowledged as having shaped the religious tradition. The founder is NOT to be studied.

Students learn about:

- the nature, role and importance of pivotal individuals or schools of thought:
 - TWO pivotal individuals or schools of thought, ONE from each of TWO religious traditions chosen from the same period

EITHER from the period of early foundation, for example:

- Buddhism: Asoka
- Christianity: Paul
- Hinduism: Upanishads
- Islam: Khulafa Rashideen
- Judaism: Moses

OR a period of growth, division or crisis, for example:

- Buddhism: growth of Mahayana
- Christianity: Martin Luther

- Hinduism: Sankara
- Islam: Imam Ghazali
- Judaism: Maimonides
- the effect that TWO pivotal individuals or schools of thought from the contemporary period, ONE from each of TWO religious traditions, have had on the everyday lives of believers, for example:
 - Buddhism: Won
 - Christianity: Pope John XXIII
 - Hinduism: Mahatma Gandhi
 - Islam: Sayed Qutb
 - Judaism: Chassidim.

Students learn to:

- compare and contrast the effects brought about by TWO pivotal individuals or schools of thought from the same period, ONE from each of the TWO religious traditions, with reference to TWO of the following areas:
 - challenge to the tradition
 - extent and significance of the change
 - reaction and response by the religious tradition
 - changes in society requiring adaptation of teachings
 - continuing impact today.

HSC Cross Religion Study 6: Religion and Women

The focus of this study is religion and women.

Outcomes

A student:

- H6 describes and analyses the ways in which two religious traditions express a significant aspect of religion
- H8 evaluates the role of a significant aspect of religion within the nature and function of religious traditions, with reference to their variants and to the everyday life of believers
- H9 applies appropriate language and terminology associated with Studies of Religion
- H12 coherently and effectively communicates complex information, ideas and issues using appropriate written, oral and graphic forms.

Content

In the context of this study, religion and women will be considered in THREE periods: the founding period, the intervening period and the contemporary period.

Students learn about:

- the role and importance of women

TWO women, ONE from each of TWO religious traditions:

- EITHER in the early years of the tradition, in the life of the founder or in religious stories, the manner in which this woman responded to the founder or made choices that affected the lived expression of the tradition, for example:
 - Christianity: Mary or another New Testament woman
 - Hinduism: Sita of the Ramayana
 - Islam: A'isha
 - Judaism: Deborah, Ruth, Esther
- OR a woman who helped form the history of the tradition or who contributed to the historical development and cultural understanding of the religious tradition; a woman who, by her life, teaching and attitude, challenged or preserved the tradition and in some cases made a significant impact on its development, for example:

- the Buddhist document attributed to women: the Therigatha
 - Christianity: Hildegard of Bingen
 - Hinduism: Mira bai
 - Islam: Raia'al Adawiyyah
 - Judaism: Beruiah
- the effect contemporary women have had on the everyday lives of believers
 - the contribution of individual women, ONE from each of TWO religious traditions, each considering ONE of the following areas:
 - social welfare
 - education
 - ethical decision-making
 - ecumenism
 - inter-faith dialogue.

Students learn to:

- compare and contrast the views held by TWO significant women, ONE from each of TWO religious traditions from the same period, about TWO of the following issues:
 - models of divinity
 - gender roles
 - expressions of spirituality
 - language
 - status within the tradition.

HSC Course – Interest Study Project (ISP)

The aim of the Interest Study Project (ISP) is to allow students to apply the knowledge and skills gained from the Depth Studies to other areas of interest. The ISP gives the student the opportunity to apply the knowledge and skills gained in their studies to an area of interest outlined in this section of the syllabus. There are three key dimensions to the ISP.

Firstly, the student is to create a focus question. This question provides the context in which the student does research and it should clearly limit the scope and coverage of the research undertaken. The focus question must be a precise and specific question. The focus question is to be created from the content within ONE of the areas of focus.

Secondly, the ISP diary documents the evolution and refinement of the Focus Question, together with the process details of the study. As students engage in research and investigation all aspects of this are to be recorded in the diary. Diary entries are to reflect the type and scope of the study being undertaken. The diary is to be 600–800 words (or equivalent) in length.

Thirdly, the ISP report. The report addresses the focus question and documents the findings of the study. It gives the student an opportunity to apply the knowledge and skills gained in their studies to an area of interest outlined in this section of the syllabus. The students will base their reports on personal research. The report is to be 1000–1200 words (or equivalent) in length.

There are four kinds of interest study.

1. The seven Interest Studies which enable students to investigate the relationship of religious beliefs and experiences to various aspects of human life, society and culture. In these studies, students must draw on at least one of the religious traditions specified in the Depth Studies. Each of the seven areas selected give students the opportunity to look at the specific contribution of religious beliefs and experiences to a religious tradition. Each of these Interest Studies has THREE areas of focus, (A), (B) and (C). The focus question is to be selected from ONE of the areas of focus.
2. There are five Interest Studies which enable students to make a substantial study of a significant Asian, Melanesian or Polynesian religion using the same approach as that specified in the Depth Study of one religious tradition. Each of these Interest Studies has THREE areas of focus. The areas of focus are divided into areas (A), (B) and (C). The focus question is to be selected from ONE of the areas of focus.
3. An Interest Study which enables students to investigate the relationship of religious beliefs to a non-religious belief system.
4. An Interest Study, approved by the school, which will enable students to examine a significant issue that is reflected in the ethos of the school and its community.

All students are to complete ONE ISP. Studies of Religion I students may choose from any of the Interest Studies.

Studies of Religion II students may choose from any of the Interest Studies, except Religion and Media and Religion and Non-religion.

The ISP will be assessed as part of school-based assessment.

Interest Study: Religion and Biography

Outcomes

A student:

- H9 applies appropriate language and terminology associated with Studies of Religion
- H10 selects and organises relevant information from a variety of sources and evaluates information and sources for usefulness, validity and bias
- H11 plans and conducts an investigation, analyses and synthesises information from a variety of sources and presents the findings of an investigation to a particular audience
- H12 coherently and effectively communicates complex information, ideas and issues using appropriate written, oral and graphic forms
- H13 uses planning and review strategies to manage effectively the competing demands of complex tasks, making effective use of time and resources.

Content

Students learn about:

- (A) the actions of one famous historical or contemporary individual of faith and principle
 - critical issues that shaped the actions of the individual
 - motivating forces that shaped the actions of the individual
- (B) the influence of one famous historical or contemporary individual of faith and principle
 - the social context of their influence
 - the cultural context of their influence
 - the nature and extent of their influence
- (C) responses to the individual
 - the responses made by their religious institutions
 - the responses made by social institutions.

Students learn to:

- design a focus question and refine it according to independent research
- create and keep a diary that reflects research methodology, problem-solving and conclusions
- conduct independent research and present the findings of this research
- acknowledge sources appropriately.

Interest Study: Religion and Architecture

Outcomes

A student:

- H9 applies appropriate language and terminology associated with Studies of Religion
- H10 selects and organises relevant information from a variety of sources and evaluates information and sources for usefulness, validity and bias
- H11 plans and conducts an investigation, analyses and synthesises information from a variety of sources and presents the findings of an investigation to a particular audience
- H12 coherently and effectively communicates complex information, ideas and issues using appropriate written, oral and graphic forms
- H13 uses planning and review strategies to manage effectively the competing demands of complex tasks, making effective use of time and resources.

Content

Students learn about:

- (A) religious response through architecture
 - the expression of feelings, beliefs and ideas in religious architecture in one religious tradition
- (B) religious expression in the design of buildings used for worship
 - examples include mosque, synagogue, church, temple, shrine
- (C) ways in which religious beliefs and experiences are expressed in, animated by, or constructed in religious architecture
 - use of religious symbolism.

Students learn to:

- design a focus question and refine it according to independent research
- create and keep a diary that reflects research methodology, problem-solving and conclusions
- conduct independent research and present the findings of this research
- acknowledge sources appropriately.

Interest Study: Religion and the Visual Arts

Outcomes

A student:

- H9 applies appropriate language and terminology associated with Studies of Religion
- H10 selects and organises relevant information from a variety of sources and evaluates information and sources for usefulness, validity and bias
- H11 plans and conducts an investigation, analyses and synthesises information from a variety of sources and presents the findings of an investigation to a particular audience
- H12 coherently and effectively communicates complex information, ideas and issues using appropriate written, oral and graphic forms
- H13 uses planning and review strategies to manage effectively the competing demands of complex tasks, making effective use of time and resources.

Content

Students learn about:

- (A) religious response through the visual arts
 - the expression of feelings, beliefs and ideas in images and objects: examples taken from drawing, design, painting, graphics, photography, sculpture, ceramics, textiles and fibre, jewellery and wearables, including those of use in rituals, film and video, mixed media artforms, earthworks, body and art and the artist as performer
- (B) the context for visual images and objects
 - the cultural and social context
 - the religious context
 - the meaning of visual images and objects
- (C) how religious beliefs and experience are expressed in, animated by or constructed in the visual arts
 - how other people discover meaning in visual images and objects
 - how people make various uses of visual images and objects.

Students learn to:

- design a focus question and refine it according to independent research
- create and keep a diary that reflects research methodology, problem-solving and conclusions
- conduct independent research and present the findings of this research
- acknowledge sources appropriately.

Interest Study: Religion and Literature

Outcomes

A student:

- H9 applies appropriate language and terminology associated with Studies of Religion
- H10 selects and organises relevant information from a variety of sources and evaluates information and sources for usefulness, validity and bias
- H11 plans and conducts an investigation, analyses and synthesises information from a variety of sources and presents the findings of an investigation to a particular audience
- H12 coherently and effectively communicates complex information, ideas and issues using appropriate written, oral and graphic forms
- H13 uses planning and review strategies to manage effectively the competing demands of complex tasks, making effective use of time and resources.

Content

Students learn about:

- (A) religious expression in literature
 - religious feelings, beliefs and ideas as expressed in literature: examples drawn from fiction such as novels, short stories, drama, poetry and film as well as non-fiction such as essays, histories, diaries, films and documentaries
- (B) the interrelationship between religion and literature
 - the social and cultural context on which the literature draws
 - the influence of literature on religious and social values
- (C) how religious beliefs and experience are expressed in, animated by or constructed in literature
 - how people discover meaning in literature
 - how people make various uses of literature.

Students learn to:

- design a focus question and refine it according to independent research
- create and keep a diary that reflects research methodology, problem-solving and conclusions
- conduct independent research and present the findings of this research
- acknowledge sources appropriately.

Interest Study: Religion and Music

Outcomes

A student:

- H9 applies appropriate language and terminology associated with Studies of Religion
- H10 selects and organises relevant information from a variety of sources and evaluates information and sources for usefulness, validity and bias
- H11 plans and conducts an investigation, analyses and synthesises information from a variety of sources and presents the findings of an investigation to a particular audience
- H12 coherently and effectively communicates complex information, ideas and issues using appropriate written, oral and graphic forms
- H13 uses planning and review strategies to manage effectively the competing demands of complex tasks, making effective use of time and resources.

Content

Students learn about:

- (A) religious expression and music
 - the expression of feelings, beliefs and ideas in religious music
 - how music expresses and intensifies spiritual experience, prayer and ritual
- (B) various forms of religious music
 - examples, which may include mantra, chant, hymn, song, instrumental
 - contemporary music styles and their relationship to religious music may be an option
- (C) how religious beliefs and experiences have been expressed in, animated by and constructed in music
 - music as a response to, and an expression of, human experience
 - how people make various uses of, and discover meaning in, music.

Students learn to:

- design a focus question and refine it according to independent research
- create and keep a diary that reflects research methodology, problem-solving and conclusions
- conduct independent research and present the findings of this research
- acknowledge sources appropriately.

Interest Study: Religion and Ecology

Outcomes

A student:

- H9 applies appropriate language and terminology associated with Studies of Religion
- H10 selects and organises relevant information from a variety of sources and evaluates information and sources for usefulness, validity and bias
- H11 plans and conducts an investigation, analyses and synthesises information from a variety of sources and presents the findings of an investigation to a particular audience
- H12 coherently and effectively communicates complex information, ideas and issues using appropriate written, oral and graphic forms
- H13 uses planning and review strategies to manage effectively the competing demands of complex tasks, making effective use of time and resources.

Content

Students learn about:

- (A) human use of and interaction with nature, as reflected in one religious tradition
 - the historical and contemporary religious response to human use and preservation of the environment
 - the use of sacred writings where appropriate
- (B) changing views within religion in respect of human interaction with the natural environment
 - how religious views about the world and nature have influenced the attitudes of people towards using, protecting and interacting with the natural environment
- (C) religious response to environmental issues
 - issues that could be considered are pollution, global warming, ozone depletion, forest use and preservation and protection of endangered species.

Students learn to:

- design a focus question and refine it according to independent research
- create and keep a diary that reflects research methodology, problem-solving and conclusions
- conduct independent research and present the findings of this research
- acknowledge sources appropriately.

Interest Study: Religion and the Media

(Studies of Religion I only)

Outcomes

A student:

- H9 applies appropriate language and terminology associated with Studies of Religion
- H10 selects and organises relevant information from a variety of sources and evaluates information and sources for usefulness, validity and bias
- H11 plans and conducts an investigation, analyses and synthesises information from a variety of sources and presents the findings of an investigation to a particular audience
- H12 coherently and effectively communicates complex information, ideas and issues using appropriate written, oral and graphic forms
- H13 uses planning and review strategies to manage effectively the competing demands of complex tasks, making effective use of time and resources.

Content

Students learn about:

- (A) use of print and/or electronic media by religion
 - the propagation of a religious point of view
 - the presentation of religious traditions
 - the accuracy of presentation
- (B) Australian print and/or electronic treatment of religion
 - the portrayal of religion in print and/or electronic media in Australia
 - the treatment of relevant traditions, issues and personalities
- (C) Influence of the print and/or electronic media
 - the effects of the media on both religion and society
 - the means of communication of religious values.

Students learn to:

- design a focus question and refine it according to independent research
- create and keep a diary that reflects research methodology, problem-solving and conclusions
- conduct independent research and present the findings of this research
- acknowledge sources appropriately.

Interest Study: Religion and Non-religion

(Studies of Religion I only)

Outcomes

A student:

- H9 applies appropriate language and terminology associated with Studies of Religion
- H10 selects and organises relevant information from a variety of sources and evaluates information and sources for usefulness, validity and bias
- H11 plans and conducts an investigation, analyses and synthesises information from a variety of sources and presents the findings of an investigation to a particular audience
- H12 coherently and effectively communicates complex information, ideas and issues using appropriate written, oral and graphic forms
- H13 uses planning and review strategies to manage effectively the competing demands of complex tasks, making effective use of time and resources.

Content

Students learn about:

- (A) the nature and variety of beliefs of those who do not accept a religious perspective to life
 - non-religious lifestyles in Australia – possible strands include:
 - agnosticism
 - atheism
 - hedonism
 - humanism
 - materialism
- (B) beliefs which affect the lifestyles of people who do not accept a religious perspective to life
 - how some of these beliefs influence the everyday lives of believers/adherents
- (C) reasons why people follow this belief system
 - explore the variety of reasons, for example:
 - dissatisfaction
 - exploration of different ideas.

Students learn to:

- design a focus question and refine it according to independent research
- create and keep a diary that reflects research methodology, problem-solving and conclusions
- conduct independent research and present the findings of this research
- acknowledge sources appropriately.

Interest Study: Confucianism

Outcomes

A student:

- H9 applies appropriate language and terminology associated with Studies of Religion
- H10 selects and organises relevant information from a variety of sources and evaluates information and sources for usefulness, validity and bias
- H11 plans and conducts an investigation, analyses and synthesises information from a variety of sources and presents the findings of an investigation to a particular audience
- H12 coherently and effectively communicates complex information, ideas and issues using appropriate written, oral and graphic forms
- H13 uses planning and review strategies to manage effectively the competing demands of complex tasks, making effective use of time and resources.

Content

Students learn about:

- (A) the origins and historical development of Confucianism
 - the teachings of Kung Fu-Tzu (Confucius) as found in the Analects
 - the teachings of Mencius
 - the development of Confucianism as a state cult
 - neo-Confucianism
- (B) the interrelationship of beliefs, rituals and practices and the ethical and moral teachings of Confucianism
 - the Confucian concept of humanity (jen) as the goal of conduct and Way of Heaven
 - the five relationships
 - the ideal person (chun-tzu)
 - correct ritual action (li)
- (C) the influence of Confucianism
 - the relationship to Buddhism and Taoism
 - the relationship to Chinese religions and culture.

Students learn to:

- design a focus question and refine it according to independent research
- create and keep a diary that reflects research methodology, problem-solving and conclusions
- conduct independent research and present the findings of this research
- acknowledge sources appropriately.

Interest Study: Shinto

Outcomes

A student:

- H9 applies appropriate language and terminology associated with Studies of Religion
- H10 selects and organises relevant information from a variety of sources and evaluates information and sources for usefulness, validity and bias
- H11 plans and conducts an investigation, analyses and synthesises information from a variety of sources and presents the findings of an investigation to a particular audience
- H12 coherently and effectively communicates complex information, ideas and issues using appropriate written, oral and graphic forms
- H13 uses planning and review strategies to manage effectively the competing demands of complex tasks, making effective use of time and resources.

Content

Students learn about:

- (A) the origins and historical development of Shinto
 - origins in the seventh century BCE
 - the lack of a founder
- (B) the interrelationship of beliefs, rituals and practices and the ethical and moral teachings of Shinto
 - the unification of rites and myths under the Yamato rulers
 - the belief in nature gods, the 8 million kami; Ameratsu the Sun-Goddess; the concept of hito, the person becoming heavenly
 - Shinto mythology as recorded in the Kojiki and Nihongi
 - daily worship and the features of shrines
 - festivals (matsuri)
- (C) the influence of Shinto
 - the interaction with Japanese society and culture
 - the interrelationship with Zen Buddhism.

Students learn to:

- design a focus question and refine it according to independent research
- create and keep a diary that reflects research methodology, problem-solving and conclusions
- conduct independent research and present the findings of this research
- acknowledge sources appropriately.

Interest Study: Sikhism

Outcomes

A student:

- H9 applies appropriate language and terminology associated with Studies of Religion
- H10 selects and organises relevant information from a variety of sources and evaluates information and sources for usefulness, validity and bias
- H11 plans and conducts an investigation, analyses and synthesises information from a variety of sources and presents the findings of an investigation to a particular audience
- H12 coherently and effectively communicates complex information, ideas and issues using appropriate written, oral and graphic forms
- H13 uses planning and review strategies to manage effectively the competing demands of complex tasks, making effective use of time and resources.

Content

Students learn about:

- (A) the origins and historical development of Sikhism
 - the identification with the Punjab
 - the founding vision of Guru Nanak
 - the Ten Gurus, especially Guru Gobind Singh
 - the Scriptures (the Guru Granth)
- (B) the interrelationship of beliefs, rituals and practices and the ethical and moral teachings of Sikhism
 - 2. the belief in one God (Akal Parkh) and the spiritual universe; the way of salvation; the temple (gurdwara) and the Golden Temple at Amritsar
 - 3. rites of initiation
 - 4. the Five Ks
- (C) the influence of Sikhism
 - the place of Sikhism in India
 - the interaction with Indian society

- the practice of Sikhism in Australia.

Students learn to:

- design a focus question and refine it according to independent research
- create and keep a diary that reflects research methodology, problem-solving and conclusions
- conduct independent research and present the findings of this research
- acknowledge sources appropriately.

Interest Study: Taoism

Outcomes

A student:

- H9 applies appropriate language and terminology associated with Studies of Religion
- H10 selects and organises relevant information from a variety of sources and evaluates information and sources for usefulness, validity and bias
- H11 plans and conducts an investigation, analyses and synthesises information from a variety of sources and presents the findings of an investigation to a particular audience
- H12 coherently and effectively communicates complex information, ideas and issues using appropriate written, oral and graphic forms
- H13 uses planning and review strategies to manage effectively the competing demands of complex tasks, making effective use of time and resources.

Content

Students learn about:

- (A) the origins and historical development of Taoism
 - the legend of Lao Tzu
 - the development of philosophical, mystical and popular forms of Taoism
 - the interplay of Yang and Yin in the pattern of life
- (B) the interrelationship of beliefs, rituals and practices and the ethical and moral teachings of Taoism
 - Tao as the ultimate reality and way of life in harmony with nature
 - the principle of spontaneous or passive human action
 - the writings: the Tao Te Ching and Chuang Tzu
- (C) the influence of Taoism
 - the interaction with Chinese society and culture
 - the interrelationship with Confucianism

- the interrelationship with Buddhism.

Students learn to:

- design a focus question and refine it according to independent research
- create and keep a diary that reflects research methodology, problem-solving and conclusions
- conduct independent research and present the findings of this research
- acknowledge sources appropriately.

Interest Study: Melanesian or Polynesian Religious Tradition

Outcomes

A student:

- H9 applies appropriate language and terminology associated with Studies of Religion
- H10 selects and organises relevant information from a variety of sources and evaluates information and sources for usefulness, validity and bias
- H11 plans and conducts an investigation, analyses and synthesises information from a variety of sources and presents the findings of an investigation to a particular audience
- H12 coherently and effectively communicates complex information, ideas and issues using appropriate written, oral and graphic forms
- H13 uses planning and review strategies to manage effectively the competing demands of complex tasks, making effective use of time and resources.

Content

Students learn about:

- (A) the origins and historical development of Melanesian or Polynesian religious traditions
 - the distribution of a Melanesian or Polynesian religious tradition throughout the Pacific region
 - the diversity of religious expression in the Pacific region
- (B) the interrelationship of beliefs, rituals and practices and the ethical and moral teachings of a Melanesian or Polynesian religious tradition
 - the belief in nature gods/spirits; cosmology
 - the integration of belief with rituals and ethical teaching
- (C) the influence of Melanesian or Polynesian religious traditions
 - the contemporary expression of a Melanesian or Polynesian religious tradition
 - the expression of a Melanesian or Polynesian religious tradition in Australia today.

Students learn to:

- design a focus question and refine it according to independent research
- create and keep a diary that reflects research methodology, problem-solving and conclusions
- conduct independent research and present the findings of this research
- acknowledge sources appropriately.

Interest Study: Reflecting the Ethos of the School and Its Community

Outcomes

A student:

- H9 applies appropriate language and terminology associated with Studies of Religion
- H10 selects and organises relevant information from a variety of sources and evaluates information and sources for usefulness, validity and bias
- H11 plans and conducts an investigation, analyses and synthesises information from a variety of sources and presents the findings of an investigation to a particular audience
- H12 coherently and effectively communicates complex information, ideas and issues using appropriate written, oral and graphic forms
- H13 uses planning and review strategies to manage effectively the competing demands of complex tasks, making effective use of time and resources.

Content

Students learn about:

- the ethos of the school and its community
- issues raised in the Foundation Studies.

Students learn to:

- develop knowledge and skills gained in the Depth Studies that are consistent with the course: the approach and style should be similar to that indicated for other Interest Studies
- design a focus question and refine it according to independent research
- create and keep a diary that reflects research methodology, problem-solving and conclusions
- conduct independent research and present the findings of this research
- acknowledge sources appropriately.

10 Course Requirements

Studies of Religion I

For the Preliminary course:

- 60 indicative hours are required to complete this course.

For the HSC course:

- 60 indicative hours are required to complete this course
- completion of Interest Study Project.

Studies of Religion II

For the Preliminary course:

- 120 indicative hours are required to complete this course.

For the HSC course:

- 120 indicative hours are required to complete this course
- completion of Interest Study Project.

11 Post-school Opportunities

The study of Studies of Religion Stage 6 provides students with knowledge, understanding and skills that form a valuable foundation for a range of courses at university and other tertiary institutions.

In addition, the study of Studies of Religion Stage 6 assists students to prepare for employment and full and active participation as citizens. In particular, there are opportunities for students to gain recognition in vocational education and training. Teachers and students should be aware of these opportunities.

11.1 Recognition of Student Achievement in Vocational Education and Training (VET)

Wherever appropriate, the skills and knowledge acquired by students in their study of HSC courses should be recognised by industry and training organisations. Recognition of student achievement means that students who have satisfactorily completed HSC courses will not be required to repeat their learning in courses in TAFE NSW or other Registered Training Organisations (RTOs).

Registered Training Organisations, such as TAFE NSW, provide industry training and issue qualifications within the Australian Qualifications Framework.

The degree of recognition available to students in each subject is based on the similarity of outcomes between HSC courses and industry training packages endorsed within the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF). Training packages are documents that link an industry's competency standards to AQF qualifications. More information about industry training packages can be found on the National Training Information Service (NTIS) website (www.ntis.gov.au).

Recognition by TAFE NSW

TAFE NSW conducts courses in a wide range of industry areas, as outlined each year in the *TAFE NSW Handbook*. Under current arrangements, the recognition available to students of Studies of Religion in relevant courses conducted by TAFE is described in the *HSC/TAFE Credit Transfer Guide*. This guide is produced by the Board of Studies and TAFE NSW and is distributed annually to all schools and colleges. Teachers should refer to this guide and be aware of the recognition available to their students through the study of Studies of Religion Stage 6. This information can be found on the TAFE NSW website (www.tafensw.edu.au/mchoice).

Recognition by other Registered Training Organisations

Students may also negotiate recognition into a training package qualification with another Registered Training Organisation. Each student will need to provide the RTO with evidence of satisfactory achievement in Studies of Religion Stage 6 so that the degree of recognition available can be determined.

12 Assessment and Reporting

12.1 Requirements and Advice

The information in this section of the syllabus relates to the Board of Studies' requirements for assessing and reporting achievement in the Preliminary and HSC courses for the Higher School Certificate.

Assessment is the process of gathering information and making judgements about student achievement for a variety of purposes.

In the Preliminary and HSC courses those purposes include:

- assisting student learning
- evaluating and improving teaching and learning programs
- providing evidence of satisfactory achievement and completion in the Preliminary Course
- providing the Higher School Certificate results.

Reporting refers to the Higher School Certificate documents received by students that are used by the Board to report both the internal and external measures of achievement.

NSW Higher School Certificate results will be based on:

- **an assessment mark** submitted by the school and produced in accordance with the Board's requirements for the internal assessment program
- **an examination mark** derived from the HSC external examinations.

Results will be reported using a course report containing a performance scale with bands describing standards of achievement in the course.

The use of both internal assessment and external examinations of student achievement allows measures and observations to be made at several points and in different ways throughout the HSC course. Taken together, the external examinations and internal assessment marks provide a valid and reliable assessment of the achievement of the knowledge, understanding and skills described for each course.

Standards Referencing and the HSC Examination

The Board of Studies will adopt a standards-referenced approach to assessing and reporting student achievement in the Higher School Certificate examination.

The standards in the HSC are:

- the knowledge, skills and understanding expected to be learned by students – the *syllabus standards*

- the levels of achievement of the knowledge, skills and understanding – the *performance standards*.

Both *syllabus standards* and *performance standards* are based on the aims, objectives, outcomes and content of a course. Together they specify what is to be learnt and how well it is to be achieved.

Teacher understanding of standards comes from the set of aims, objectives, outcomes and content in each syllabus together with:

- the performance descriptions that summarise the different levels of performance of the course outcomes
- HSC examination papers and marking guidelines
- samples of students' achievement on assessment and examination tasks.

12.2 Internal Assessment

The internal assessment mark submitted by the school will provide a summation of each student's achievements measured at points throughout the course. It should reflect the rank order of students and relative differences between students' achievements.

Internal assessment provides a measure of a student's achievement based on a wider range of syllabus content and outcomes than may be covered by the external examination alone.

The assessment components, weightings and task requirements to be applied to internal assessment are identified on page 93. They ensure a common focus for internal assessment in the course across schools, while allowing for flexibility in the design of tasks. A variety of tasks should be used to give students the opportunity to demonstrate outcomes in different ways and to improve the validity and reliability of the assessment.

12.3 External Examinations

In Studies of Religion Stage 6, the external examinations include written papers for external marking. The specifications for the examination in Studies of Religion Stage 6 are on pages 95–96.

The external examination provides a measure of student achievement in a range of syllabus outcomes that can be reliably measured in an examination setting.

The external examination and its marking and reporting will relate to syllabus standards by:

- providing clear links to syllabus outcomes
- enabling students to demonstrate the levels of achievement outlined in the course performance scale
- applying marking guidelines based on established criteria.

12.4 Board Requirements for the Internal Assessment Mark in Board Developed Courses

For each course, the Board requires schools to submit an assessment mark for each candidate.

The collection of information for the HSC internal assessment mark must not begin prior to the completion of the Preliminary course.

The Board requires that the assessment tasks used to determine the internal assessment mark must comply with the components, weightings and types of tasks specified in the table on page 93.

Schools are required to develop an internal assessment program which:

- specifies the various assessment tasks and the weightings allocated to each task
- provides a schedule of the tasks designed for the whole course.

The school must also develop and implement procedures to:

- inform students in writing of the assessment requirements for each course before the commencement of the HSC course
- ensure that students are given adequate written notice of the nature and timing of assessment tasks
- provide meaningful feedback on students' performance in all assessment tasks
- maintain records of marks awarded to each student for all assessment tasks
- address issues relating to illness, misadventure and malpractice in assessment tasks
- address issues relating to late submission and non-completion of assessment tasks
- advise students in writing if they are not meeting the assessment requirements in a course and indicate what is necessary to enable the students to satisfy the requirements
- inform students about their entitlements to school reviews and appeals to the Board
- conduct school reviews of assessments when requested by students
- ensure that students are aware that they can collect their Rank Order Advice at the end of the external examinations at their school.

12.5 Assessment Components, Weightings and Tasks

Assessment should include a range of tasks.

Preliminary Course

The suggested components, weightings and tasks for the Preliminary course are set out below.

Studies of Religion I

Component	Weighting	Tasks and suggested weightings include
Foundation Studies 1 and 2	25	Research (Primary and/or Secondary) 20
Depth Study	25	Oral 10 Test 20
Marks	50	50

Studies of Religion II

Component	Weighting	Tasks and suggested weightings include
Foundation Studies 1 and 2	25	Primary Research 25 Secondary Research 25
Depth Study	75	Oral 10 Test 40
Marks	100	100

There should be a balance between the assessment of:

- knowledge and understanding outcomes and course content and
- skills outcomes and course content.

HSC Course

The internal assessment mark for Studies of Religion Stage 6 is to be based on the HSC course only.

Studies of Religion I

Component	Weighting	Tasks may include
Foundation Studies 1 and 2	25	Research (Primary and/or Secondary)
Cross Religion Studies	15	Oral Test
Interest Study Project	10	
Marks	50	

Studies of Religion II

Component	Weighting	Tasks may include
Foundation Studies 1 and 2	25	Primary Research Secondary Research
Foundation Studies 3	15	Oral
Cross Religion Studies	50	Test
Interest Study Project	10	
Marks	100	

There should be a balance between the assessment of:

- knowledge and understanding outcomes and course content and
- skills outcomes and content.

The weightings allocated in the above table must be maintained. Teachers can use their discretion in determining the manner in which they allocate tasks. It is suggested that 3–5 tasks are sufficient to assess the HSC course outcomes.

Students should be advised of the assessment criteria when the assessment task is distributed.

Oral Task: A formal oral presentation that students prepare in advance.

Primary research involves:

- clarifying research purpose
- selecting an appropriate instrument (questionnaire, interview, observation)
- constructing the questionnaire, interview or determining the process of observation
- analysing and organising the data collected
- evaluating the findings and the process of application.

Secondary research involves:

- formulating or answering questions on a topic
- locating and organising information from a variety of sources (written, audiovisual, multimedia)
- evaluating the information and sources
- evaluating the methods used to obtain information.

12.6 HSC External Examination Specifications

HSC Examination Specifications Studies of Religion I

*Time allowed – One and a Half hours
(Plus 5 minutes reading time)*

Section I – Foundation Studies **(30 marks)**

Part A – Foundation Studies 1 and 2 *(10 marks)*

- There will be TEN multiple-choice questions.
- All questions will be COMPULSORY.
- All questions will be of equal value.

Part B – Foundation Study 1 *(10 marks)*

- There will be ONE short-answer question with parts.
- All parts of the question are COMPULSORY.

Part C – Foundation Study 2 *(10 marks)*

- There will be ONE short-answer question with parts.
- All parts of the question are COMPULSORY.

Section II – Cross Religion Studies **(20 marks)**

- There will be SIX structured extended-response questions.
- The questions will consist of THREE parts.
- All questions are of equal value.
- Candidates will select ONE question corresponding to the Cross Religion Study undertaken in the course.

HSC Examination Specifications Studies of Religion II

*Time allowed – Three hours
(Plus 5 minutes reading time)*

Section I – Foundation Studies (40 marks)

Part A – Foundation Studies 1 and 2 (10 marks)

- There will be TEN multiple-choice questions.
- All questions will be COMPULSORY.
- All questions will be of equal value.

Part B – Foundation Study 1 (10 marks)

- There will be ONE short-answer question with parts.
- All parts of the question are COMPULSORY.

Part C – Foundation Study 2 (10 marks)

- There will be ONE short-answer question with parts.
- All parts of the question are COMPULSORY.

Part D – Foundation Study 3 (10 marks)

- There will be ONE short-answer question with parts.
- All parts of the question are COMPULSORY.

Section II – Cross Religion Studies (60 marks)

- There will be SIX structured extended-response questions.
- The questions will consist of THREE parts.
- All questions are of equal value.
- Candidates will select THREE questions corresponding to the Cross Religion Studies undertaken in the course.

12.7 Summary of Internal and External Assessment

Studies of Religion I

External Assessment	Weighting	Internal Assessment	Weighting
<i>Section I – Foundation Studies</i>	30	<i>Foundation Studies 1 and 2</i>	25
Part A – Foundation Studies 1 and 2 Part B – Foundation Study 1 Part C – Foundation Study 2		<i>Cross Religion Studies</i>	15
<i>Section II – Cross Religion Studies</i>	20	Assessment of the above components may include the following tasks: – Primary Research – Secondary Research – Oral – Test	
		<i>Interest Study Project</i>	10
	50		50

Studies of Religion II

External Assessment	Weighting	Internal Assessment	Weighting
<i>Section I – Foundation Studies</i>	40	<i>Foundation Studies 1 and 2</i>	25
Part A – Foundation Studies 1 and 2 Part B – Foundation Study 1 Part C – Foundation Study 2 Part D – Foundation Study 3		<i>Foundation Studies 3</i>	15
<i>Section II – Cross Religion Studies</i>	60	<i>Cross Religion Studies</i>	50
		Assessment of the above components may include the following tasks: – Primary Research – Secondary Research – Oral – Test	
		<i>Interest Study Project</i>	10
	100		100

12.8 Reporting Student Performance against Standards

Student performance in an HSC course will be reported against standards on a course report. The course report includes a performance scale for the course describing levels (bands) of achievement, an HSC mark located on the performance scale, an internal assessment mark and an examination mark. It will also show, graphically, the statewide distribution of examination marks of all students in the course.

Each band on the performance scale (except for band 1), includes descriptions that summarise the attainments typically demonstrated in that band.

The distribution of marks will be determined by students' performances against the standards and not scaled to a predetermined pattern of marks.

13 Glossary

All words contained in this glossary have a specific meaning in the context of the Studies of Religion syllabus. This glossary does not attempt to ascribe any absolute definition to terms. It is designed to assist teachers in interpreting this syllabus and to assist student learning.

depth study	in the Preliminary course, a Depth Study focuses on a single religious tradition. In the HSC course, the Depth Study is a Cross Religion Study that focuses on an aspect of religion from the perspective of two religious traditions
denomination	a general church grouping sharing the same principles and organisation within a particular variant of Christianity
phenomenological	understandings derived from the interpretations of those directly involved in the phenomenon under study; in this context, the understandings of believers of a particular religious tradition
religious tradition	in the context of Religious Traditions Depth Studies and Cross Religion Studies, religious tradition refers only to the following: Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism
typological	understandings derived from the study of features common to religious traditions
variant	a major branch of a religious tradition