2012   Religion and Society GA 3: Examination

GENERAL COMMENTS

Student responses to the 2012 Religion and Society examination showed that, increasingly, more of the general context for the study of religion and society covered in the key knowledge and key skills dot points are being explored. However, the 2012 paper showed some important gaps in that coverage. For example

- the concept of 'a system of belief' was not understood by many students. This systematic connection and development of beliefs is important for an adequate understanding of the beliefs dealt with in Area of Study 3.1
- many students did not have an adequate knowledge of the various ways religious traditions could be challenged over time. This relates to Areas of Study 3.2, 4.1 and 4.2
- students struggled with the historical overview of the ways in which their studied religious tradition has been challenged over time.

Aspects of religion

While students' understanding of the aspects of religion has improved, they still struggled to make more than superficial connections between the aspects and the various religious tradition case studies used for the Areas of Study.

Vision for society

The vision for society of a religious tradition continues to be a stumbling block for many students, who do not show any understanding of its connection to the beliefs of the religious tradition.

The following issues continue to limit the quality of student responses.

- a lack of adequate vocabulary to express ideas
- a lack of supportive quotations and references for responses in Sections B and C
- inability to select appropriate content for questions in Sections B and C. Students should ensure that they use reading time efficiently in order to select appropriate content.

SPECIFIC INFORMATION

Note: Student responses reproduced in this report have not been corrected for grammar, spelling or factual information.

This report provides sample answers or an indication of what the answers may have included. Unless otherwise stated, these are not intended to be exemplary or complete responses.

Section A

Section A focuses on the concepts and terminology from throughout Units 3 and 4, and the general context points of key knowledge in each Area of Study. Students need to consider the study of Religion and Society from general perspectives, in the past and present, and this includes considering religion within predominately single-religion societies and in societies that are multi-faith.

Question 1

Marks	0	1	2	3	Average
%	6	25	35	33	2

Religious beliefs can provide a framework to understand the world and society – a framework that allows people to pose questions and seek answers about the big questions of existence and about how to live. Religious beliefs can enable people to find meaning and purpose in life, and an understanding of life and death.

Responses to this question were generally good, and most students were able to draw together beliefs and the search for meaning. The most successful responses identified the role of beliefs, using phrases such as 'existential questions', giving some examples of such questions and linking these to the role of beliefs. Others expressed the role as being about seeking answers to questions asked. Weaker students merely repeated the question, emphasising 'meaning' without giving an explanation.

The following is an example of a high-scoring response.

> *Throughout time, humanity has sought to answer the existential questions of existence and find meaning in life. As contemporary scholar Raimond Gaita writes, "We are creatures that try to make sense of our world". Religious beliefs may offer one platform*

for answering these questions. However for some individuals they may be no help, thus individuals turn to other platforms for guidance and meaning.

Question 2

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	Average
%	7	12	26	31	24	**2.6**

Responses should have conveyed understanding of the first three of the following points. The fourth point was made in the more successful responses.

- Both reaffirmation and reinterpretation affirm beliefs. That is, they acknowledge an existing belief's validity.
- Reaffirmation retains an existing belief with its current meaning and its current expression.
- Reinterpretation affirms an essential belief but arrives at a new understanding and possibly different expression. It is not a rejection of the initial belief.
- Both processes involve research, reflection, rethinking and arriving at a contextual understanding of the belief within the tradition's system of belief, and within the knowledge and development of the wider society.

Responses were generally good, with most students able to define the terms. The more successful responses explained how reaffirmation and reinterpretation are part of the process of maintaining continuity and indeed the end of the process.

The concept of reinterpretation was well understood; the concept of reaffirmation was less well understood.

When defining a term, many students used that term in their definition; for example, 'reaffirmation is reaffirming the belief'. There is a need for students to widen their vocabulary so that they are able to explain key terms.

Some confusion over the meaning of the terms was evident. Some students included reformulation without explaining the term.

Few students understood that reinterpretation is also a way of reaffirmation, or that reaffirmation can occur in a variety of ways, including reinterpretation.

The following is an example of a high-scoring response.

> *When faced with a factor that threatens the continuity of a religious belief the social structures of religious leadership will engage in discussion and debate undergoing a theological reflection and evaluation to decide what course of action should be taken to maintain continuity. Firstly the belief may be reaffirmed. This is when the religious belief is restated and reiterated contending that the challenging factor holds no real threat to the beliefs as its religious veracity remains true. Alternatively a religion may reinterpret the religious belief, understanding it in a new light, perhaps with a different emphasis, which is more harmonious and relevant in light of the challenging factor as its truth has been recreated.*

Question 3

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	Average
%	11	18	24	24	22	**2.3**

Responses needed to include both internal and external types of challenges. They should have been general in the nature of challenge, not tradition-specific examples. For instance, internally, adherents of the religion may challenge the tradition through different theological understandings or teachings that threaten the existing authority structure, the unity of the tradition or the confidence of the adherents. Similarly, different ritual or ethical practices could threaten any or all of these.

Externally, different belief systems of other religions, philosophies, ideologies and science may challenge a religious tradition's beliefs, ethics and ritual practices, authority structure, credibility, even perhaps their continued existence or ability to function effectively.

This question was not well done and answers were often tradition-specific.

Students gave many unnecessary examples of specific historical events. The more successful students were able to say why a natural disaster, war or heresy posed a challenge. Some merely wrote names of people or events, such as Martin Luther and the industrial revolution. Some students confused contemporary examples with historical examples. Few responses referred to the internal/external nature of the challenges.

The following is an example of a high-scoring response.

Internally, a rise of denominations and isms within the tradition may cause disunity and conflict within the tradition.

Internally, the rise of a new leader or death or discrediting of an existing one may challenge the tradition's stability and the integrity of the leadership authority.

Externally, changing scientific and technological circumstances may test the truth and validity of beliefs as currently understood.

Externally, changing political and economic circumstances may test the practicality and ability of enacting rituals and other aspects of a tradition.

Question 4

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	Average
%	15	23	28	21	13	2

In pluralist societies, the role of religion is seen by many as being increasingly separate from the concerns and activities of the wider society. Often, the vision for society held by a tradition is vastly different from what is happening in the society, which is challenging to the tradition. As such, many of the social changes can be in conflict with the values and ethical teachings of the tradition. The multi-ethical viewpoints within a pluralist environment can be challenging, as conflict between religious traditions and interest groups can cause damage to the various traditions.

There were some reflective and interesting responses. However, there was a lack of clarity in most responses.

Students should have communicated a clear understanding of what a pluralist society is. Many students did not distinguish between pluralist and secular societies, and some students did not understand pluralist societies, secular societies or both.

Generally, only one explanation was offered for challenges when there were several possibilities. Many generalisations were made about how religions relate to the society they exist in.

The following are examples of high-scoring responses.

Example 1

As religious traditions often originated from ancient civilizations, their beliefs, values and vision for society have the ability to clash with those of a pluralist, democratic contemporary society, like Australia. Where there is an alignment of values and vision this relationship is harmonious. However when there is not this alignment, or an empathetic accommodation of differences, there can be tension, challenge, intolerance, even open hostility. Within pluralist societies, religious traditions must be open to cooperatively discuss and work through such challenges, thereby enhancing members' understanding of their tradition within a new context and building harmonious relations across the society. This may not be achieved quickly or easily and there may be ongoing tensions and disunity within the tradition itself.

Example 2

A pluralist society that is one that allows for many religions to exist within it can challenge a religious tradition in a number of ways. The ethics and moral code of several religions may clash with each other and or with the ethical and legal system of the civil authorities. The rituals of a particular tradition may have trouble being recognised by the rest of society, they may even violate part of the legal system. Members of a religion need to be able to express their faith through visual symbols without fear of discrimination. But there may be tensions here with cultural or political or legal factors of the wider society. Maintaining the integrity of their beliefs within a pluralist society would involve ongoing reflection and review.

Question 5

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	Average
%	12	16	20	23	17	13	2.6

Responses could have included some of the following points, depending on the aspects chosen.

- Rituals may be reformulated to provide greater meaning to a belief. Rituals – formalised, repeated actions and words with spiritual significance – affirm or assert beliefs so they are continuously brought to the attention of adherents.
- Symbols are visual means of expressing the invisible nature of beliefs and thus make beliefs come alive for the adherents.
- Attendant beliefs may be reinterpreted, even dropped, allowing reaffirmation of the main beliefs of a tradition.
- Social structures may need to be reformulated to accommodate new social circumstances; for example, gender equity.
- Sacred texts can be referred to in order to illustrate the significance of a belief to the tradition. These can also be reinterpreted as new insights into the original language and circumstances are gained through a variety of means, such as archaeological discoveries.

These are some examples, but students could have used any of the other aspects, as long as they explained how these aspects are used to maintain continuity. Students needed to explain more than one aspect, but did not need to use all aspects.

This question assessed students' understanding of the general nature of aspects of religion and their interconnectedness through the focus on how other aspects relate to beliefs. Aspects can help traditions maintain the continuity of their beliefs by allowing for reaffirmation, reinterpretation and reformulation as new circumstances are presented.

Responses could be quite varied. The more successful responses referred to at least two aspects and discussed how they maintained continuity, explicitly mentioning 'over time' or from 'generation to generation'. The most successful responses focused on two aspects and, in general terms, clearly demonstrated how they maintained the continuity of beliefs.

Many students misunderstood the question. Some gave only one aspect in the form of an example from a particular tradition, while others referred to aspects and restated the question. Some did not explain how aspects help to maintain continuity, and others mentioned several aspects.

Responses on rituals and sacred texts were usually stronger than responses on other aspects.

Weaker responses merely listed aspects and attempted basic definitions. Some students did not mention any aspects of religion.

The following is an example of a high-scoring response.

Sacred texts serve as a repository for beliefs, enabling them to be continuously passed down the generations. Similarly social structures such as family, schools and community centres allow beliefs to be taught to and experienced by the next generation. Social structures may also provide members with security and comfort in the face of challenging factors and may provide a setting for debate, decision making and unified action to maintain the beliefs continuously. Furthermore, rituals, the deliberate ceremonies and practices that re-enact beliefs and keep them alive in the memory and experience of the believers, can be altered in the face of changing circumstances, enabling beliefs to be maintained through altered expression.

Section B

Question 1a.

Marks	0	1	2	3	Average
%	3	15	30	53	**2.3**

The values of society expressed in this picture are peace, harmony, love (perhaps trivialised as in Cupid), community and the common good (all people are equal and united – all in silhouette, none stand out, all linked together, arm in arm). Other values of society raised in the picture include: the relationship to the natural world, human responsibility, close relationship of the world and all in it to Ultimate Reality (if ultimate reality is seen as the hand), a society where choice is available, an acceptance of change, although some may recognise this may cause a 'fraction' in the society – suggested in the falling letter N. When students speak of the vision for society of a particular religious tradition they may be able to note that the vision is bigger than the world itself (it is just one element) or it is beyond the world – that is, it involves Ultimate Reality.

Students seemed to understand how to interpret the image. Most could identify at least one value and many referred to more than four.

The weakest students merely described the image or created obscure interpretations of meaning or beliefs rather than identifying values. Many did not make direct links between the image and the values they identified, and their responses consisted of generalised comments about love, peace and stewardship.

A few students did not identify actual values, instead asserting ideas they thought were morally right. Expression and vocabulary were often inadequate, with students using expressions such as 'people standing side-by-side' instead of 'community' or 'solidarity'.

The following are examples of high-scoring responses.

Example 1

The values of love, stewardship and unity are expressed in the image in the heart, the hand caring for/holding the world and the people standing together in union, respectively.

Example 2

The gentleness and care with which the hand cups the globe suggests that the 'world is in our hands' –that is, that humanity should value their responsibility to care for the world around them, perhaps by changing the problems that exist within society. The fact that the letter 'N' has escaped the word 'change' and is hanging over the heads of the human silhouettes echoes the words of Ghandi, suggesting the value that humans should 'be the change they want to see in the world'. The letter 'N', the first letter of the word 'now' implies the urgency with which these values should be put into action. Finally the love heart and the word 'choice' suggest that love and freedom are the values which will bring about this change for the better of the universe and humankind.

Question 1b.

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	Average
%	5	9	17	20	23	17	8	**3.3**

Answers needed to relate directly to the image and to the values stated in part a. Students should have mentioned the whole vision for society throughout the response, not just one part. Alternatively, they could acknowledge that the vision may be more than the particular values identified in part a.

Responses needed to be theologically accurate. The most successful responses contained references such as social justice papers, scripture and authoritative writing. Responses also needed to establish a degree of agreement and/or disagreement between the vision of the stated tradition and the societal values identified in part a.

Some students understood the need to articulate the vision for society of the religious tradition but did not clearly express the concepts.

Weaker responses did not include a statement that linked the answers to parts a. and b., such as 'the values shown in the image replicate those of the tradition because…'. Many merely referred to the values in the image and ignored other parts of the vision for society of the religious tradition. There was little use of scripture and few references used.

The following are examples of high-scoring responses.

Example 1

In the Roman Catholic Christian tradition the vision for society held by believers is one focused on achieving the kingdom of God and therefore governed by social justice, wherein everybody has equal access to the opportunities offered by society. Basic human dignity should be always upheld and members of society should work together in solidarity to provide for the poor and disadvantaged. People should use their rights for good and understand their responsibilities adhering to Catholic ethical teachings such as are in the Ten Commandments and the Beatitudes. Hence the values of love, stewardship and unity are of particular importance as it is a Catholic belief that everyone should care for the earth and all of creation.

Example 2

Judaism would largely agree with the values portrayed in the image. Judaism's vision for society is extrapolated from its central beliefs and comprises social and ethical components. Ethically, Judaism values respect and dignified treatment of all as all humans are created in the image of God, 'betzelem Elohim' (Genesis 1:27), this respect also extends to caring for the natural world in keeping with the values in the image. 'Change' and 'choice' as depicted in the image are consistent with Judaism's emphasis on social justice; 'Tikkun Olam' (healing the world) and 'Tikkun Adam' (healing humanity). In keeping with the image, love, 'ahavah' is central to Judaism's vision for society and is the basis for all relationships. However Judaism would disagree with the value of 'change' to some extent when it comes to basic ethical principles about life and sexuality.

Question 1c.

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Average
%	5	9	16	18	19	17	10	7	**3.6**

An appropriate contemporary, social/moral issue and the tradition needed to be clearly identified in students' responses. The focus needed to be on the challenge to the vision, not the issue itself. Students needed to show clearly and in detail what it is about the vision that is being challenged and why. The most successful answers included references, such as social justice papers, scripture and authoritative writing, and referred to images from the picture. These responses identified the challenge to a particular part of the vision and identified which underpinning beliefs and/or ethical principles were involved.

However, some students missed the focus of the question – that is, 'how the vision has been challenged' – and gave unnecessary detail on a particular issue without linking it to the corresponding way it was a challenge to the vision. Some students linked the contemporary issue to beliefs and not the vision for society. Some students confused a historical with a contemporary issue.

The following are examples of high-scoring responses.

Example 1

In modern times embryonic stem cell research has challenged the vision for society held by the Roman Catholic Christian Church. It is considered by the Church as eugenic murder, as obtaining stem cells results in the death of a potential life. Embryonic stem cell research betrays the notion that basic human dignity is to be constantly upheld. It is a Catholic belief that all are worthy of reverence and respect and all have the right to share in a life with God and experience God's grace. This belief applies to the embryonic stem cells as human life is believed to begin at the moment of conception. Thus research on embryonic stem-cells, violates the basic scriptural guidelines of "thou shalt not kill" and "blessed are the merciful", found in the Ten Commandments and the Beatitudes respectively. As expressed by Pope John Paul 11 in his encyclical 'Evangelium Vitae' from 1995, "It is immoral to harvest an embryo simply for exploitation as disposable genetic material".

Example 2

The social issue of Homosexuality, the sexual orientation and behaviour between two individuals of the same sex, and their desires to marry, poses a significant and direct challenge to Judaism's vision for society. Socially the ideal of monogamous, heterosexual marriages, in keeping with the scriptural commandment, 'a man shall be united with his wife and become one flesh' Genesis 2, is compromised. Similarly it is a challenge as homosexual couples cannot naturally be 'fruitful and multiply' Genesis. Nonetheless it is important to note the complexity of the challenge as the ethical component of Judaism's vision dictates love and respect for all humans. Furthermore homosexuality is directly forbidden in scripture, 'you shall not lie with a man as you lie with a woman, it is an abomination' (Leviticus 18:22). In response to this challenge Judaism has not acted monolithically, with each

stream developing a unique response. All streams have engaged in research into the nature of homosexuality returned to the sources of the Torah, Halacha (Jewish Law) and past teachings of the Rabbis in order to develop their theological responses.

Question 1d.

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	Average
%	11	20	29	23	16	**2.2**

The most successful responses dealt with the range of effectiveness, from little to substantial, even inconclusive, and used evidence to support the claims. Some also referred to unexpected effectiveness or negative effects. The more successful responses acknowledged the limits of their ability to estimate effectiveness and explained why. Evidence such as statistics, figures, quotations and analysis of evidence was used to show how students had reached the conclusion about the degree of effectiveness.

Weaker responses focused on the response itself rather than the effectiveness of the response. They included generalisations about effectiveness, such as 'no effect' or 'extremely effective', without giving evidence to support the claims.

The weakest responses simply reiterated the religious tradition's response without making reference to its effectiveness. Most students did not discuss whether the effectiveness was internal or external to the tradition.

The following are examples of high-scoring responses.

Example 1

The Roman Catholic Church has responded to the challenge of embryonic stem cell research in a number of ways and has seen some success from the context of engagement with the issue in the wider society. There have been a number of encyclicals promulgated, Evangelium Vitae 1995, Digitas Personae 2009 and Caritas in Veritate 2008, expressing the Church's viewpoint and reasoning. But the impact of these on the wider society is hard to gauge as it depends on the media coverage given and whether people read, listen or watch what is picked up by the world media. But such publications and the spokespersons for them have kept the debate alive. Probably the most effective action of the Church has been in providing funding for alternative research methods. The Vatican provided fiscal aid to scientists in Rome in 2010 as well as lobbying government officials and scientists to explore alternative methods for achieving the outcomes currently obtained by embryonic stem cell research. There has been successful development in these alternative methods, but they have not yet replaced all research using embryonic stem cells.

Example 2

Internal to the tradition Judaism has been effective in raising awareness and undertaking some changes. The Reform movement has accepted the challenge of Homosexuality and made change which embraces inclusivity. The Conservative movement is split on the issue and the Orthodox movement has rejected change, affirming the existing ethical and theological positions. Certainly the issue has been widely researched and discussed within the various communities of Judaism. There has been media coverage through articles in the Australian Jewish News and documentaries like 'Trembling before God'. Homosexual Reform and Conservative Jews may feel acceptance and equal opportunity with new liturgy created for same sex marriage ceremonies. However Orthodox homosexuals may feel a rejection of their sexuality accompanied by varying degrees of sympathy.

Question 2a.

Marks	0	1	2	Average
%	43	34	23	**0.8**

A system of belief is a way in which beliefs interact and develop from and into each other. As a total, connected group of beliefs, it aims to provide humans with ways of establishing meaning and purpose in life. It offers ways to help understand Ultimate Reality, the relationship between Ultimate Reality and humanity, the relationship between humans, the meaning of life and death, and the relationship between the natural world and humanity. Beliefs about all of these areas come together to develop a structure or framework (a system) to shape the behaviour of adherents to a tradition, giving them a formula to live by.

Examples were not required and did not aid students' responses, especially if no definition was given. Many students struggled to answer this question correctly, indicating that the general points of the Areas of Study need more attention.

Many students wrote about a religious tradition rather than the connectedness, interdependence and interrelationship of beliefs. Some students simply defined beliefs and ignored the term 'system'. Others did not answer this question.

The following are examples of high-scoring responses.

Example 1

A system of belief is a set of beliefs that one may hold, that collectively express one's position on a particular aspect of life, as well as possibly what is morally or ethically correct.

Example 2

A system of beliefs is the web of divinely revealed, authoritative and true beliefs which form the theological foundation of religious traditions. The notion means that they are all interrelated, working and operating in accordance.

Question 2b.

Marks	0	1	2	Average
%	8	28	64	**1.6**

A variety of answers was acceptable, provided they focused on a valid belief about the Ultimate Reality in the particular tradition (the tradition needed to be identified). The stated belief needed to be more than 'belief in God'; it had to be a distinctive belief about Ultimate Reality for that tradition to allow for development in the subsequent questions. Some students did not read the question completely and so stated an inadequate belief, thus limiting their ability to develop their responses to the subsequent questions.

There were many sound responses to this question that included an appropriate quotation. In general, tradition-specific beliefs about God needed to be stated more clearly.

Too many students listed a string of beliefs rather than giving a brief explanation of one belief as required. Students need to think through which belief would be appropriate to answer subsequent parts of Question 2, before answering this question.

The following are examples of high-scoring responses.

Example 1

In the Roman Catholic tradition, it is a belief that God is the creator and works through his creations – He is immanent, that is God is in all the creation.

Example 2

Although the Jewish tradition conceptualized the belief in ultimate reality through ethical monotheism, one significant belief about the ultimate reality is that He is the creator of the universe and all of its inhabitants, "in the beginning God created the Heavens and the Earth" (Genesis 1:1).

Question 2ci.

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	Average
%	12	26	30	22	10	**1.9**

Question 2cii.

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	Average
%	18	27	27	19	10	**1.8**

Question 2ciii.

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	Average
%	17	26	28	18	11	**1.8**

Question 2civ.

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	Average
%	20	28	28	16	9	1.7

A variety of answers were acceptable for this question, provided they established an appropriate theological relationship with the belief stated in Question 2b.

Students explained the beliefs reasonably well but many did not connect their answers to the belief stated in part b. Stronger responses showed that students had read questions carefully and planned their answers, avoiding the repetition of points. The most successful students broke this question down into at least two parts: one relating to their part b. answer about the tradition's beliefs about humanity, relationships and creation, and the other explaining the beliefs that follow regarding the nature and the purpose of human life. Such students had also answered Question 2a. well.

Few students identified concepts about the nature of humanity. Some asserted that humans were made in the image of God but did not say what this meant for the nature of humans. Others described the purpose of human life too narrowly. Some students found it difficult to establish how the belief stated in part b. related to the beliefs they described in part c. Some omitted the link and wrote only about a belief.

Weak responses repeated the answer to part b. Very weak responses reworded the same answer for each section of part c.

Responses to this question showed that Area of Study 3.1 needs much more precise work in order to establish the actual beliefs and how they connect with each other. In general, students need to have more theological language to assist the expression of their understanding of the beliefs.

The following are examples of high-scoring responses.

Example 1

2ci. Humans are believed to have been created in the image and likeness of God, and their purpose is to seek a harmonious relationship with God, each other and the rest of creation. It is in this way that the loving and compassionate God works through humans, who desire peace and love.

2cii. The relationship between ultimate reality and humanity is that humans are naturally drawn towards God and constantly seek Him out. This relates to the purpose of humans-to seek and improve their relationship with God, and hence is also relevant to the notion of God being immanent throughout his creations.

2ciii. The relationship between humans is to be one consisting of love, compassion and charity. Humans in the teaching of the Christian tradition are always to take care of those around them who are less fortunate than themselves and are to live humbly in the footsteps of Jesus the Christ. This is the direct relation to God's values being spread through humanity via His immanence in the whole of creation.

2civ. According to Jesus' teachings of love and stewardship, humans are to care for the earth and the rest of creation-thus is the generally accepted theory for the relationship and co-existence between humanity and the natural world. Hence God's immanence is evident in humanity's purpose to seek a strong relationship with creation and display love while being good stewards.

Example 2

2ci. The belief that God is the creator of human life is undeniably connected to belief in the nature and purpose of human life. This is so as God has given life to humankind and thus has given them a "spark of the divine". This spark has meant that by nature humans are to be just, ethical, kind and 'perfect in every manner of existence' (13 principles of faith), just as God the Creator is. This also links to the overall purpose of humans to fulfill God's word and will as being created in God's image, God grants humanity with an intellectual endowment, the ability to make choices based on rationality and awareness of consequence. Thus humanity's purpose in life as granted by God, is to act morally and justly and to make positive decisions.

2cii. Because humans have been brought to this earth by God the creator, they thus share an undeniable relationship. God's relationship with humanity is reciprocal however it is not equal as God is far more supreme and powerful than humanity is, it is written in the Adon Olam liturgy, God is 'alone, unique and beyond compare'. This relationship is strengthened through humanity's positive actions and fulfilment of their obligations as per being created in God's image.

2ciii. The relationship between humans is governed by the belief that each human comes from one source, God, thus each person is a whole world and unique, entitled to be treated by each other with dignity and respect. Humans must act with each other as God the creator acts with humanity. He cares about his creatures, thus humanity is expected to extend his arm to his neighbour, to do random acts of loving kindness.

2civ. The relationship between humans and the rest of the natural world, deals with the beliefs regarding the rights and responsibilities of humans, towards the natural world. These, Judaism holds, have been given by God the creator. The most important responsibility, as described by Rabbi Doctor Norman Lamm, is to act as a 'trustee' with God, to assist God to complete creation, 'to till and to tend' (Genesis), to work the natural world as well as protect it and furthermore to not take advantage and not to destroy what God has created.

Section C

Question chosen	None	1	2	3
%	3	35	27	35

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	Average
%	2	2	3	5	6	6	7	8	9	8	8	6	7	6	5	3	3	2	2	1	1	9

Question 1
Students needed to engage with the stimulus by briefly discussing how or why experience is a teacher – relating to the concept that 'teachers' are there to help us to learn and that learning leads to understanding – and then relate this teaching to religious beliefs. There should have been some discussion of whether experience is really the best teacher.

The more successful answers noted that significant experience is a better teacher, leading to greater understanding, and then related this to religious beliefs.

Students' case studies should not have focused on biography, but on the process of development of the understanding (positive or negative) of beliefs, and how it was the significant life experience that brought about the development, thus acting as 'teacher'.

Students should have shown that the change (if not the event itself) is a process and required a variety of responses (or learnings) by the individual/group, such as reflections, theological study or discussion, ritual and symbol. The most successful answers used the aspects as ways of coping with significant life experience, that is, as the 'teaching tools of experience'.

Case studies included: Cardinal Joseph Bernardin, CS Lewis, The Apostle Paul, Archbishop Romero, William Wilberforce, Bonhoeffer, St Ignatius and Esther Wachsman.

The more successful responses showed how the chosen examples linked to life experiences (generally and specific significant experiences) being a teacher and explained how religious beliefs fitted into this. However, most students moved straight to significant life experiences without any reference to the quotation that spoke of life experiences in general. There were still too many students writing biographies and giving only a short paragraph that dealt with the question.

The main weakness in students' responses was the lack of detail and precision about religious beliefs, which were often expressed as an unexplained change in attitudes. Few engaged the terms 'best teacher', 'where do religious beliefs fit in' or 'life experiences' and instead discussed significant life experiences.

Below is an extract of a successful essay where the student engaged the statements in a discursive way and then proceeded to explain how the case study demonstrated the important role of religious beliefs in enabling experience to be the best teacher in life. This essay could be improved by referring to the statements and question more often throughout the paragraphs.

Significant life experiences punctuate every life, often acting as a turning point and transforming, bringing about a personal development. As the first statement suggests experiences are informative, allowing individuals to learn and grow and foster new understandings of this vast, inscrutable existence, as well as providing them with a mechanism to deal with a similar experience in the future. Thus the second statement poses the theological question, where do religious beliefs fit in? On the one hand this can be viewed as cynical, questioning the necessity for religious beliefs when they can be so easily eroded, atrophied and realigned by experiences. Encounters with intense feelings such as awe and wonder may drastically strengthen religious beliefs,

engendering a heightened sense of commitment. Suffering and death on the other hand may call beliefs into question and cause a loss of faith. Why lead a religious lifestyle if it is so easily impacted by significant life experiences? Some suggest that religious beliefs provide a framework and a mechanism to understand these experiences. But if the religious beliefs do not provide the answers sought they may exacerbate the trauma and incomprehensibility of the experience. Yet often religious precepts provide consolation and solace, enabling a search for meaning in this seemingly 'cold, silent, unfeeling times' (R.Rubenstein) – a question could provide comfort, if not comprehension. For Ester Wachsman of the Jewish religious tradition, it was her religious beliefs, strengthened and reaffirmed after her son's death which allowed her to 'endure, to cope and to rebuild' her life ...

Prior to her son's death, Wachsman had lived a life founded on the beliefs of her three fold love, love of her G-d, love of her people, and love of her land Israel and her heritage, G-d's Law...

The experience of the death of her son engaged in an interplay with Wachsman's religious beliefs. Having believed in an ethical, merciful G-d, the death of her son tested her faith, she could not understand the suffering of the innocent, the disillusion of unanswered prayers. She found the theology of suffering as a result of sin incomprehensible in the circumstances of her son and herself...

Yet Wachsman's life was entirely founded on her three fold love and so she felt no alternative but to find a way to maintain and strengthen her beliefs, reconciling them with this traumatic experience.

Question 2
Responses needed to relate to the maintenance and continuity of belief, not historical challenge (though it is set in the past), therefore students needed to present a theological essay. Students needed to look at a belief or beliefs as developed and dealt with by the tradition over at least two time periods. Students should have used appropriate terminology (for example, reaffirmation, application to new circumstances, reinterpretation). Responses should have explained how the aspects (more than one but not all eight) have been used to confront issues, and work with hierarchy and adherents to clarify beliefs, allowing the tradition to survive (and perhaps to thrive).

Responses could have shown difficulties that arose and how (or whether) the tradition changed and yet maintained continuity – that is, the ways of maintaining continuity. Reference to various aspects of religion would have been useful. Responses should have clearly established why it is important to maintain continuity (identity, uniqueness, nature and purpose). Students should also have clearly identified which factors are at play (and over a time period) to cause review of beliefs.

Good responses showed how effective the maintenance and continuity of distinctive beliefs have been within the tradition for its survival. The most successful responses discussed that while maintaining that, although the continuity of beliefs is vital for survival, it is not the only strategy used by religions.

Topics included: Eucharist, penance, authority to forgive sins, real presence, the Christian church and science, Galileo, enlightenment, resurrection, Messiah, trinity and Jesus' incarnation.

Although there were some very competent responses, many answers would have been more successful if there had been discussion of the strengths and limitations of the various strategies used to maintain continuity of beliefs.

Some weaker responses focused on changes to ritual over the centuries without making a link to how these changes were a means of maintaining the continuity of the beliefs underpinning the rituals.
Most students did not answer the question directly and there were many historical inaccuracies. Some students wrote about one aspect, some wrote about several; other students ignored them. Most students wrote about one period only.

Students needed to conclude with to what extent the statement in the question was true for the tradition used; this required more than one sentence – the whole essay should have shown how true it was through the examples used.

The following is an extract from a high-scoring response. The student then proceeded to explain how the establishment of this school of learning and the learned role of the Rabbis created the basis of continuing practices that were used repeatedly over time to meet challenges to distinctive beliefs in the Jewish tradition.

Religious traditions are made up of a set of distinctive interwoven beliefs truths precepts which form the theological foundation of the traditions. Beliefs provide the stability, uniqueness and credibility for the tradition and separate it from other religious traditions. It is essential that these beliefs are maintained, sustained, kept meaningful and relevant by the religious tradition. For if these beliefs are placed into doubt or appear to be, or are lost, the religious tradition may no longer be able to be understood, members may abandon it and its very existence may be jeopardised. In light of such an event religious traditions have developed a number of maintenance practices designed to confront challenging circumstances and ensure both the continuity of the

distinctive beliefs as well as the tradition. It is due to these maintenance practices that overtime religious traditions have survived. Max Dimont, Jewish historian wrote, 'world history has hurled six challenges at the Jews, each a threat to their very survival. The Jewish tradition rose to each challenge and lived to meet the next.'

A paradigm through which to investigate the Jewish tradition's resilience through the use of maintenance practices is the challenge of the late second temple period to the belief in revelation. Prior this challenge the distinctive belief in revelation was primarily understood by normative Jews as the belief that G-d has revealed His nature and His will at certain moments to humanity as well as the Jewish people in particular. The most climatic revelation was at Mount Sinai where before all of the members of the tradition G-d handed Moses 'the whole instruction, the laws and the rules' (Deuteronomy 5). This is known as the 'Torah Min Hashamayim' or Torah from heaven, the giving of the sacred written and oral law. This belief in revelation was expressed through the social structure of Temple, the spiritual centre of the Jewish people. The temple is described by author Schiffman in his novel 'From Text to Tradition' as "the most efficacious manner in which to reach G-d and secure his favour". The other key expression of this belief in revelation is through the ritual of sacrifice which took place at the temple.

However the rise of factors to the tradition both internally and externally, challenged this understanding and expression of the belief in revelation. .... The first of these factors was the internal split between rival sects, the Pharisees and the Sadducees whose major difference was in their understanding of the belief in revelation. .... The second and external factor was the destruction in 70 CE Jerusalem of the Second Temple. This placed immense pressure on the tradition, Jews faced a major spiritual crisis as the Temple was the key and only way the Jews knew to express the belief in revelation. ...

As the very survival of the tradition relied on a response, a notable Jewish scholar, Yochanan Ben Zakai, escaped the Jerusalem siege and established the social structure of a Jewish school of learning at Yavneh, a place where the response to the challenge of the belief in revelation could be debated, discussed, researched and prayed over, 'a blueprint for Jewish survival is articulated here'. Zakai firstly unequivocally reaffirmed the belief in revelation. This maintenance practice involves a straight restatement of the belief and its enduring value and necessity to the tradition. The many theologians under the guidance of Zakai then reassessed and reinterpreted the belief in revelation, as the circumstances were such that if the belief was to be maintained, its understanding must take on a slightly different meaning. This was achieved by the codification of the Oral Law as an equally authoritative and divine scripture.

Question 3
Students needed to choose an appropriate historical challenge, and clearly identify the challenge and the religious tradition.

In their introduction, students needed to show where (even if it was not directly related to this challenge) the tradition and society have been close and also when they have clashed. Students also needed to set the context of the challenge, paying particular attention to the relationship between society and tradition at the time.

Responses needed to clearly show which, why and how the aspects were being challenged, and whether the challenge was internal and/or external. For internal challenges where there was no interaction with the wider society, the response could have engaged with the stimulus, showing that this particular challenge caused the tradition to change course, independent of the relationship with society. Responses needed to show how the tradition has responded, and the effect on the tradition and society in terms of moving in parallel paths, in conflict, making changes. It was relevant to argue there was no change to the relationship of the religion to society.

Topics included: the industrial revolution, protestant reformation, catholic reformation, enlightenment, Holocaust, Irish penal laws, Marxism, Pope Leo XIII and Rerum Novarum, Martin Luther and evolution.

The more successful responses referred back to the question/statement continually throughout their essay, showing how the material in each paragraph related to the question. However, most responses showed that the general points in the key knowledge of Area of Study 4.1 require much more careful exploration. These are: knowledge of a range of significant historical internal and external challenges that have faced religious traditions and knowledge of an historical overview highlighting a range of significant historical internal and external challenges faced by one or more than one religious tradition.

Many students lacked adequate information about the historical development of the traditions studied.

Some students misread the question and discussed a contemporary challenge.

The following is an extract from a sophisticated response addressing the statement consistently and competently without directly quoting or paraphrasing the points in the statement. The student went on to elaborate on the views of a number of the key thinkers of the Enlightenment (of Christian and Jewish origin), showing how they were like-minded in some cases and differed widely at other times. The French Revolution is highlighted as a time of major change for the

relationship between Christian states and the Jewish communities, and between developing sects within Judaism as the tradition struggled to come to terms with the changes in the wider society. The student proceeded to illustrate how each of the resultant sects in Judaism paralleled or clashed with the developments in the Christian tradition and in the evolving secular society.

Society and religion hold a dynamic interrelationship that is continuously evolving and adapting. The challenge of modernity posed many new ideologies that Judaism both rejected and welcomed. Influential Jews established new denominations that correlated their values with those of the wider society, whilst others saw change as unnecessary and forbidden.

Throughout Europe since the beginning of the sixteenth century Jews lived in isolated areas called 'ghettos'. Within these ghettos Jews developed their own autonomous government. Despite the Jewish people's long history of living in the Diaspora, they were not accepted as equal citizens and were reduced to the lowest economic level, only earning an adequate income through power-broking. Jews in the ghettos were monolithic, all had their hopes centred on a Messiah who would redeem them; a distinctive belief since the destruction of the Second Temple in 70 CE. The Memoirs of Gluekel of Hameln describes the ghetto of Altona as having 'great love and a close community spirit... and in general enjoyed a better life the richest man', thus suggesting that Jews were content with their situation as they maintained a decent standard of living and upheld their Jewish identity. The synagogue became both the house of worship and the house of study, but due to European law it had to be below the height of the churches. Apart from the vast majority of Jews confined behind ghetto walls were a small number of privileged Jews, known as Exception or Court Jews (Schutz-Jude). These Jews worked as private advisors (often financial) for princes and were allowed to reside outside the ghetto. This small number of Jews was not enough to make Europe more accepting, thus the separation between the Jewish community and their 'host' countries continued with Jews having very few rights outside the ghetto.

The European Enlightenment was a philosophical, social and intellectual movement throughout the middle of the eighteenth century. John Locke, the principal founder declared that 'human beings are born with natural right of life, liberty and property'. This movement was significant for Jews as thinkers, (of Christian origin and Jewish) were suddenly arguing for equal rights between people of all religions. The Church's power and influence came under threat as thinkers argued for a natural religion that accorded with reason and science.