VCE Religion and Society

Year 11

Unit 1: In this unit students explore the origins of religion, identifying the nature and purpose of religion past and present. They investigate the contribution of religion to the development of human society and then focus on the role of religious traditions in shaping personal and group identity. Students examine how religious traditions are affected and changed by individuals and groups. The unit provides the opportunity for students to understand the often complex relationships that exist between individuals, groups, religious traditions and the society in which they live.

Unit 2: Choosing which values to live by in principle and in practice is fundamental to being human. Ethics is a discipline that investigates the various methods for making ethical decisions; it involves reflection on what ‘right’ and ‘wrong’, and ‘good’ and ‘bad’ mean when applied to human decisions and actions. Ethical questions are raised at the personal, family, local, wider community, national and global level.

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

Year 12

Unit 3: In this unit students begin by studying the religious beliefs developed by one or more than one religious tradition in response to the big questions of life. They explore the ways in which these religious beliefs create meaning for religious traditions and their members. The religious beliefs of any religion arise from the beliefs held about ultimate reality, and these in turn inform particular beliefs about human existence; about its meaning, purpose and destiny. Religious beliefs may be expressed through the other aspects of religion, such as myths and other stories, sacred texts and other religious writings (such as formal creeds), rituals, symbols, social structures, ethical principles and oral or written codes of behaviour, religious experience and spirituality.

Unit 4: The focus of Unit 4 is the interaction of religious traditions and the societies of which they are a part. Religious traditions are dynamic, living institutions that contribute in many ways, both positively and negatively, to wider societies – stimulating, supporting, as levers for change or resisting changes in those societies.

In this unit students explore challenge and response in historical and contemporary contexts. Students investigate historical challenges to religious traditions arising internally and externally. They explore the challenge to religious traditions in contemporary pluralistic society for action on behalf of social justice and for assessment of new problems arising from social and technological change.
Assessment: Units 1, 2 and 3 in Religion and Society consists of three Outcomes, Unit 4 in Religion and Society consists of 2 Outcomes that students need to satisfactorily complete in order to gain an S for each unit of the subject. These Outcomes consist of one or more tasks selected from the following: a report in written format, a report in multimedia format, an essay, a case study, analytical exercises, structured questions, a media analysis, a test, extended responses, oral presentations, debates and exams. Units 3 and 4 Religion and Society have an end of year examination set by VCAA, which will contribute to 50% of the final assessment.

Suggested Pre-requisites: There are no pre-requisites for the study of Religion and Society.