Aligning the P – 12 Religion Curriculum with the Study of Religion Syllabus

It is possible for all Archdiocesan Catholic and ecumenical secondary schools to address the requirements of both the P-12 Religion Curriculum (2012) and the Study of Religion Senior Syllabus (2008).

Schools will still be able to employ a number of the educational approaches to the learning and teaching of Religion outlined in Appendix Two of the Study of Religion Senior Syllabus.

In order to comply with the requirements of both the P-12 Religion Curriculum and the Study of Religion Senior Syllabus, schools may need to review, revise and rewrite their current Study of Religion work programs.

Below are listed the requirements of both the P-12 Religion Curriculum (2012) and the Study of Religion Senior Syllabus (2008).

SYLLABUS REQUIREMENTS FOR THE STUDY OF RELIGION SENIOR SYLLABUS (2008)

Time Allocation:
“The minimum number of hours of timetabled school time, including assessment, for a course of study developed from this syllabus is 55 hours per semester. A course of study will usually be completed over four semesters (220 hours.)” (p.7)

Course Organisation
“A course of study in Study of Religion consists of units of work exploring the core components through a range of topics. ... A minimum of four topics must be studied over the four semester course. Only one school based topic may be studied. Each unit of work based on topics is to be studied for at least half a semester and for no more than a whole semester. ... The core components are to be integrated throughout the selected topics and units of work. Units of work should be developed using the process of inquiry (pp. 7, 8).

Core Components:
Australian religious perspectives
These should include:
- Aboriginal spiritualities and Torres Strait Islander religions
- Religion in the local community
- Religious diversity in Australia

World religions
- A minimum of four of the following religions is to be studied over the course: Hinduism, Judaism, Buddhism, Christianity and Islam
- Other religions may be included in units of work

The nature and significance of religion
The core components are to be integrated throughout selected topics and units of work. The core components may also be taught as a discrete area of inquiry to contextualise, introduce or link to a topic (see Section 6).
When teaching Aboriginal spiritualities and Torres Strait Islander religions, teachers should take care to be sensitive and observe Indigenous protocols. Teachers should access information about Indigenous perspectives on the QSA website <www.qsa.qld.edu.au>.

SOURCE: Study of Religion Senior Syllabus, Queensland Studies Authority, 2008
SYLLABUS REQUIREMENTS FOR ARCHDIOCESAN P-12 RELIGION CURRICULUM (2012)

Time Allocation:

“A minimum of 2.5 hours per week or 40 hours per semester or 80 hours per year of Religion teaching is provided in both primary and secondary schools. Personal development education, liturgy, prayer, hymn practice and other religious practices are not included in this provision” (p.1).

SOURCE: Religious Education Policy, Catholic Education Archdiocese of Brisbane, updated 2001

Course Organisation:

The Archdiocesan P-12 Religion Curriculum details the essential minimum theological content to be taught in all Archdiocesan Catholic and ecumenical schools as prescribed by the Archbishop.

Core content mandatory for all students is specified and elaborated as content descriptions and elaborations which specify religious knowledge, deep understandings and skills under the four strands and sub-strands for each year level.

- Sacred Texts (Old Testament; New Testament; Christian Spiritual Writings and Wisdom)
- Beliefs (Trinity: God, Jesus the Christ, Spirit; Human Existence; Religions of the World)
- Church (Liturgy and Sacraments; People of God; Church History)
- Christian Life (Moral Formation; Mission and Justice; Prayer and Spirituality)

BELIEFS STRAND

In Years 11 and 12, the study of Beliefs in the P – 12 Religion Curriculum aligns with the approach taken in the current Study of Religion Senior Syllabus (2008), namely:

“... [focusing] on the different ways in which societies and cultures express religious beliefs. These have evolved into religions that, while distinct and different, share some elements that could enhance sustainable living in the contemporary world. ... Units of work ... should examine a minimum of four religions selected from Hinduism, Judaism, Buddhism, Christianity and Islam. Because religions are dynamic, they should be considered in both historical and contemporary forms.” (Study of Religion Senior Syllabus, 2008, p. 16).

OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALIGNMENT:

The topics Ritual, Sacred texts, Ultimate Questions and Religion, Values and Ethics provide a straightforward and authentic opportunity to address the requirements of both syllabuses.

SOURCE: Study of Religion Senior Syllabus, Queensland Studies Authority, 2008

Possible areas of inquiry:
- Rituals in World Religions
- Sacred texts as foundation for belief and doctrine
- The idea of God, or Gods, or the holy
- Being human
- The value of life

Unit of Work: Ritual

Integrating core components:
- What similarities and differences are there between rituals of different Religions?
- Why do religious communities express their beliefs in ritual?

Possible inquiry questions:
- What are the characteristics and purpose of particular rituals?
- How have rituals changed over time or place?
- How does ritual express belief?
- How do rituals position people in their religious tradition?
- What impact do rituals have on groups, individuals and society?
- What do followers of a religious tradition believe about particular rituals?
- Is there any congruity between the rituals of different religions?
- How does knowledge of sacred texts bring understanding to ritual?

Ideas and concepts to investigate:
- The significance of ritual for religion and society
- Calendric rituals, rites of passage, ceremonial rituals, balance rites e.g. Ramadan, Easter, Diwali, Wesak.
- Ritual components such as time, place, participants, and symbols
- Some rituals are linked to practice or communication of the founder of the religion
- Rituals reinforce key texts and dogmas
- There is often diversity within a religion as to how rituals are carried out
- Rituals can change over time or stay the same for many centuries
Unit of Work: Sacred Texts

Integrating core components:
- What roles do sacred texts have in different religions?
- What similarities and differences are there between the sacred texts of religions?

Possible inquiry questions:
- What sacred texts exist in world religions?
- How do individuals and communities use sacred texts to express their religious beliefs?
- What is religious truth? Are there other kinds of truths?
- How are relationships to the divine expressed in sacred texts?

Ideas and concepts to investigate:
- The sacred texts of the major world religions
- A variety of beliefs and practices about the sacredness of texts exist in most religions
- Some sacred texts lay the foundation for belief and doctrine such as life after death, resurrection, reincarnation and belief in one god.
- Sacred texts may include moral codes, practices and laws.

Unit of Work: Ultimate Questions

Integrating core components:
- How do the religious beliefs (ultimate questions) of adherents affect Australian culture?
- How do religions explain the questions of origins, identity, purpose, destiny and the search for meaning?

Possible inquiry questions:
- What do the world religions say about the origin of life and the meaning and purpose of life?
- How does religion help people to make meaning?
- How have artists responded to questions about human existence?
- Why do the world religions explain creation or origin differently?
- Why are relationships to the divine expressed differently in the world religions?
- How do religious beliefs and practice contribute to the good of humanity?
- To what extent has religion claimed to offer authoritative answers to ultimate questions?

Ideas and concepts to investigate:
- Origins – existence of God/gods/the holy, creation/evolution, order/chaos
- Identity – spirituality and belief
- Meaning and purpose – belief systems offer explanations of the meaning and purpose of life through ideas such as moksha, dharma, karma and free will
- Creation stories and other religious myths, legends and texts that give insight to the meaning of life
- Identity is shaped by religious belief, practice and the sense of belonging to a tradition
- There are diverse and dissenting interpretations of religious responses to questions of origins within religious traditions
- Religious beliefs provide a way of dealing with the challenges, difficulties and losses that arise in the course of life
Unit of Work: Religion, Values and Ethics

Integrating core components:
- To what extent do world religions promote ethics and values?

Possible inquiry questions:
- How can religion affect the way an individual lives?
- In what ways do religious traditions shape ethics?
- When does life begin?
- Should life be preserved at all costs?
- How do religious beliefs contribute to the good of humanity?

Ideas and concepts to investigate:
- Ethical responses that have developed within various religious traditions.
- Beliefs which underpin the frameworks in religious traditions.
- Ethical codes and the different interpretations within a particular religious tradition.
- The role religion plays in facing global issues and challenges.
- The response of religious traditions to contemporary issues such as bioethics, biotechnology, euthanasia and cloning.
SACRED TEXTS STRAND

In Years 11 and 12, the study of Christian sacred texts (Old Testament and New Testament) in the P – 12 Religion Curriculum aligns with the approach taken in the current Study of Religion Senior Syllabus (2008) topic, Sacred texts, namely:

“[Sacred] texts may offer insights into life, provide guidance for living ... or express a relationship between a people and the sacred. The contemporary study of sacred texts is influenced by literary and critical theory and employs hermeneutics — the study of interpretation” (Study of Religion Senior Syllabus, 2008, p. 29).

OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALIGNMENT:

The topic Sacred texts provides a straightforward and authentic opportunity to address the requirements of both syllabuses.

SOURCE: Study of Religion Senior Syllabus, Queensland Studies Authority, 2008

Possible areas of inquiry:

- Readings and interpretations of texts
- Texts in context
- Social, cultural and political influences on text

Integrating core components:

- How do Christian sacred texts impact on Australian culture and lifestyle?
- How do Christian sacred texts form and inform the adherents of a particular religion?

Possible inquiry questions:

- What kinds of questions can we ask about Christian texts? (E.g. Is literal interpretation of Old Testament texts required to form and inform adherents?)
- How can Christian sacred texts, culture and life operate independently from each other in Australia today?
- What approaches might be available to study Christian sacred texts?
- How are Christian sacred texts interpreted?
- How do individuals and communities use sacred texts to express their religious beliefs?
- What evidence (e.g. about ways of interpreting text) has been uncovered and how can it be used?
- What interrelationships (e.g. synoptic gospels) have been identified?
- What approaches or methods of reading and analysing Christian sacred texts are available?
- What is the significance of Christian sacred texts for individuals, communities or traditions?
- How are women portrayed in Christian sacred texts and does this reflect their role in contemporary society?
- In what ways does Christian sacred text shape and inform individual piety?
- Do males and females read Christian sacred texts differently?
- Does the adherent have to fully understand the contexts of the sacred text? Why?
- To what extent does the interpretation and translation of sacred text need to relate to present culture?
- How is it possible for contemporary readers to interpret ancient stories?

Ideas and concepts to investigate:

- Christian sacred texts may derive from historical events, oral traditions or religious experience: artefacts, expressive arts, legends, laws, hymns, chants, rituals
- Approaching the text — sociological, political, theological, feminist, philosophical, literary approaches
- Religious traditions acknowledge sacred texts as being authoritative
People interpret Christian sacred texts differently: contextually, historically, mythically, legally, fundamentally, literally

Exegesis: meaning, context, purpose

Christian sacred texts use a variety of genres: history, prophecy, poetry, myth, narrative, law, gospel, epistle

Ways of reading sacred text: critical readings (feminist, reader response), hermeneutical reading

Experiences communicated in sacred texts may reflect and connect with personal experiences and emotions of a reader

Sacred texts provide insights that may help people respond to global issues and challenges, for example ethics, justice, reconciliation

Sacred texts provide guidance for living

Sacred texts may include moral codes, practices and laws

Sacred texts are subject to various interpretations: hermeneutics/interpretation; contextual analysis; liberalism/fundamentalism; community of readers

Most religions develop belief systems and recommend particular lifestyles based on sacred texts

Feminists and others have challenged traditional interpretations of texts

Possible opportunities for alignment with other Study of Religion Senior Syllabus topics:

**Ultimate questions:**

Christian sacred texts include themes about life, death, pain, suffering, belief, doubt, joy, sorrow

**School-based topic:**

How do individuals and communities use sacred texts to express their religious beliefs? (e.g. spirituality)
CHURCH STRAND

In Years 11 and 12, the study of Church in the P – 12 Religion Curriculum aligns with the approach taken in the current Study of Religion Senior Syllabus (2008), namely:

“Study of Religion helps students to:

- Understand and appreciate the purpose, meaning and significance of religion in the lives of individuals and communities … To understand religion, students will examine different beliefs, practices, values, customs and ethical stances of individuals and religious communities.
- Respect and appreciate the beliefs, attitudes and values of others while retaining one’s own beliefs and values. … Religion is central to much social and political history and has been a powerful force throughout history. At times it has been the source of tension and even violence, but it has also inspired noble acts and dramatic social reform.” (Study of Religion Senior Syllabus, 2008, p. 3).

OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALIGNMENT:

The topics Religion-state relationships, Ritual, Sacred texts, Ultimate Questions, Religion, Values and Ethics and School-based Topic provide a straightforward and authentic opportunity to address the requirements of both the P-12 Religion Curriculum and the Study of Religion Senior Syllabus.

SOURCE: Study of Religion Senior Syllabus, Queensland Studies Authority, 2008

Unit of Work: Religion-State Relationships

Integrating core components:

- What is the history of religion-state relationships in Australia?

Possible inquiry questions:

- How has religion influenced the state?
- Should religion concern itself with social issues?
- How has the relationship between religion and state changed over time and if so how?
- How has religion contributed to colonisation?
- What examples are there of religious groups who have been oppressed by political regimes? How have groups dealt with oppression?
- What has been the impact of democracy/socialism/communism on relations between religious groups and states?
- What has been the impact of religion–state relationships on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander spiritualties, religions and peoples?
- To what extent have religious leaders commented on issues under consideration by the state?
- How have religious traditions promoted human rights?
- What influence has Vatican City and the World Council of churches had on world policy?

Ideas and concepts to investigate:

- Religion has had an influence on capital punishment, abortion, slavery, cloning, conscription
- Religion has provided support to alleviate suffering and poverty through almsgiving, social justice and welfare agencies
- Religious traditions and human rights
- United Nations and the influence of Pacem in Terris
- Religion has often exerted a major influence on social and political issues:
  - state religious laws
  - conscientious objection
  - freedom
Religion has shown great resilience in times of sociopolitical breakdown or political suppression. Religion has at times been a rallying point for dissent using activism and pronouncements by leaders and movements:

- Solidarity (Poland)
- passive resistance (Gandhi)
- nonviolence
- peace

Extremist organisations claiming religious affiliation have perpetrated sensational or violent actions.

Unit of Work: Ritual

Integrating core components:

- Why do religious communities express their beliefs in ritual?
- How do signs and symbols communicate the essence of different religions?

Possible inquiry questions:

- What is ritual? Why do we have rituals?
- What are some approaches and models used for analysing rituals?
- How does ritual express belief?
- How does the ritual incorporate sacred / religious / secular texts?
- Is there anything in this ritual which might be difficult for people of other religions or cultures to understand?
- How does the ritual attempt to meet the spiritual and emotional needs of the participants?
- To what extent are rituals in this religion culturally specific or universal?
- In what way/s have secular rituals taken on elements of religious rituals (e.g. civil marriages, funerals)
- How has this ritual changed over time or place?
- How does ritual teach or tell the story of a religion?
- How do historians assist in examining ritual?

Ideas and concepts to investigate:

- Models and approaches used to analyse rituals (refer to Lovat, van Gennep, Durkeim, Turner)
- Ritual components such as participants, set form, symbols, dress, transforming role, hierarchical and role relations
- Rituals reinforce key texts and dogmas
- Ritual transformations – old status to new state of being (such as marriage, Holy Orders)
- Cultural particularity and cultural diversity within rituals
- Christian rituals in East and West
- Aspects of culture, age, gender, liberalism, orthodoxy and fundamentalism influence ritual, past and present
- Rituals can change over time or stay the same for many centuries

Unit of Work: Sacred Texts

Integrating core components:

- How have sacred texts formed and informed the adherents of a particular religion?

Possible inquiry questions:

- How are sacred texts used? (e.g. in liturgy, in rituals, as guidance for living, as foundation of Church teaching)
- What part does scripture play in public gatherings of this religion? (e.g. liturgy)
- To what extent do sacred texts reveal historical events, places and people?
- How have religious groups recorded and transmitted their significant stories and experiences?
- What is the significance of sacred texts for individuals, communities or traditions, past and present?
Ideas and concepts to investigate:

- Sacred texts provide guidance for living
- Experiences communicated in sacred texts may reflect and connect with personal experiences and emotions of a reader
- Sacred texts have been important to the lives of many people through the ages
- Sacred texts were mainly written in patriarchal times

Unit of Work: Ultimate Questions

Possible inquiry questions:

- How do I reach my full potential? How do I serve the community?
- What is the relationship between the individual and the community?
- How can religion affect the way an individual lives?
- To what extent is spirituality part of the human condition?
- What beliefs about what happens after death are expressed in Christian funeral liturgy?
- Are there divergent responses within and between religious traditions to ultimate questions over time?
- How have artists, musicians, philosophers, scientists, mystics responded to such questions?

Ideas and concepts to investigate:

- Freedom, decision making and identity
- Community life depends on active involvement of individuals
- To be human is to be spiritual
- Ideas about death and dying
- There have been diverse and dissenting interpretations of religious responses to questions of origins within religious traditions
- Religious beliefs have provided a way of dealing with the challenges, difficulties and losses that have arisen in the course of life
- Responses to ultimate questions have been informed by sacred texts, tradition, reason, the arts, science and personal experience

Unit of Work: Religion, values and ethics

Integrating core components:

- How have religions transmitted their values and ethics over time?

Possible inquiry questions:

- How have religions encouraged their members to live an ethical life over time?
- In what cultural, historical and religious context did various ethical frameworks emerge?
- What role has Religion played in facing global issues and challenges, past and present?
- How have religious beliefs contributed to the good of humanity?

Ideas and concepts to investigate:

- Ethics and the law continually change
- Ethical frameworks are developed within particular historical contexts
- Cultural and historical adaptations of religious ethical practice

Unit of Work: School-based topic

Scope of Inquiry

Any of these possible areas of inquiry could be examined from the perspective of significant continuity and change in a variety of historical and cultural contexts:

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<th>Religion in action (health, community and science)</th>
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<td>Religion and the environment</td>
<td>Religion and social change</td>
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<tr>
<td>Religion and literature</td>
<td>Religion and human rights</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women in religion</td>
<td>Religions and peace building</td>
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CHRISTIAN LIFE STRAND

In Years 11 and 12, the study of Christian Life in the P – 12 Religion Curriculum aligns with the approach taken in the current Study of Religion Senior Syllabus (2008), namely:

“Study of Religion helps students to:

- Understand and appreciate the purpose, meaning and significance of religion in the lives of individuals and communities ... To understand religion, students will examine different beliefs, practices, values, customs and ethical stances of individuals and religious communities.
- Respect and appreciate the beliefs, attitudes and values of others while retaining one’s own beliefs and values.
- Understand that religions are dynamic and living, not static, with transformative power for their adherents” (Study of Religion Senior Syllabus, 2008, p. 3).

OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALIGNMENT:

The topics Religion-state relationships, Ritual, Sacred texts, Ultimate Questions, Religion, Values and Ethics and School-based Topic provide a straightforward and authentic opportunity to address the requirements of both the Christian Life Strand of the P-12 Religion Curriculum and the Study of Religion Senior Syllabus.

SOURCE: Study of Religion Senior Syllabus, Queensland Studies Authority, 2008

Unit of Work: Religion-State Relationships

Possible inquiry questions:
- How has religion influenced the state?
- Should religion concern itself with social issues?
- To what extent have religious leaders commented on issues under consideration by the state?
- How have religious traditions promoted human rights?
- What influence has Vatican City and the World Council of churches had on world policy?

Ideas and concepts to investigate:
- Religion has had an influence on capital punishment, abortion, slavery, cloning, conscription
- Religion has provided support to alleviate suffering and poverty through almsgiving, social justice and welfare agencies
- Religious traditions and human rights
- United Nations and the influence of Pacem in Terris
- Religion has often exerted a major influence on social and political issues:
  - state religious laws
  - conscientious objection
  - freedom
Unit of Work: Ritual

Possible areas of inquiry:
- pilgrimages and ritual tourism
- ritual meditation and prayer
- the arts in ritual

Possible inquiry questions:
- How does ritual express belief?
- How does the ritual attempt to meet the spiritual and emotional needs of the participants?
- What is the diversity of practice around this ritual?
- How does ritual teach or tell the story of a religion?

Ideas and concepts to investigate:
- Rites of personal devotion such as prayer, meditation, prostration
- Prayer and meditation rituals across religions
- Symbolic objects and symbols
- Rituals point people to the divine
- Some rituals are linked to practice or communication of the founder of the religion
- Cultural particularity and cultural diversity within rituals
- There is often diversity within a religion as to how rituals are carried out.
- Boundaries, sacred space

Unit of Work: Sacred Texts

Integrating core components:
- How do sacred texts form and inform the adherents of a particular religion?

Possible inquiry questions:
- How are sacred texts used? (e.g. in prayer, in rituals, as guidance for living, as foundation of Church teaching)
- What is the significance of sacred texts for individuals, communities or traditions?
- In what ways do sacred texts shape and inform individual piety?
- Can sacred texts provide us with criteria for examining current issues?

Ideas and concepts to investigate:
- Sacred texts provide guidance for living
- Sacred texts provide insights that may help people respond to global issues and challenges for example ethics, justice, reconciliation
- Sacred texts may include moral codes, practices and laws

Unit of Work: Ultimate Questions

Possible inquiry questions:
- How do I serve the community?
- What is the relationship between the individual and the community?
- How can religion affect the way an individual lives?
- To what extent is spirituality part of the human condition?
- How do religious beliefs and practices contribute to the good of humanity?
- What is the relationship between the individual and the community?

Ideas and concepts to investigate:
- Conscience
- Freedom, decision making and identity
- Volunteers, citizenship and global concerns
- Ideas about suffering, pain, punishment, merit, reward, sin, evil, consequences, common good
Community life depends on active involvement of individuals
To be human is to be spiritual
Religious beliefs have provided a way of dealing with the challenges, difficulties and losses that have arisen in the course of life

Unit of Work: Religion, values and ethics
Possible inquiry questions:
- What are ethics and morals?
- How can religion affect the way an individual lives?
- How do religions encourage their members to live an ethical life?
- Do people always think of moral codes, laws and consequences before they act?
- What role has Religion played in facing global issues and challenges, past and present?
- How do religious beliefs contribute to the good of humanity?

Ideas and concepts to investigate:
- Religious moral codes
- Defining the common good
- Religion has a role to play in facing global issues and challenges: justice, tolerance, reconciliation, peace, ecology, nonviolence, respect and appreciation for others

Unit of Work: School-based topic
Scope of Inquiry
- Religion and the environment
- Religion in action (health, community and science)
- Religion and social change
- Religion and human rights
- Religions and peacebuilding