

Paper One: Religion

Buddhism

Key Beliefs

- The concept of Dhamma (Dharma).
- The concept of dependent arising (paticcasamupada).
- The Three Marks of Existence:
 - anicca (impermanence)
 - anatta (no fixed self)
 - dukkha (unsatisfactoriness of life, suffering).
- The human personality, in the Theravada and Mahayana traditions:
- Theravada: the Five Aggregates (skandhas) of form, sensation, perception, mental formations, consciousness
- Mahayana: sunyata, the possibility of attaining Buddhahood and Buddha-nature.
- Human destiny:
- different ideals in Theravada and Mahayana traditions: Arhat (a 'perfected person') and Bodhisattva ideals
- Buddhahood and the Pure Land.

The Buddha's life and its significance:

- the birth of the Buddha and his life of luxury
- the Four Sights: illness, old age, death, holy man (Jataka 075)
- the Buddha's ascetic life
- the Buddha's Enlightenment.

The Four Noble Truths:

- suffering (dukkha) including different types of suffering
- the causes of suffering (samudaya); the Three Poisons, ignorance, greed and hate
- the end of craving (tanha), interpretations of nibbana (nirvana) and Enlightenment
- the Eightfold Path (magga) to nibbana/nirvana; the pathas the Threefold Way: ethics (sila), meditation (samadhi) and wisdom (panna). Dhammapada 190–191.

Practices

Worship and festivals

- The nature, use and importance of Buddhist places of worship including temples, shrines, monasteries (viharas), halls for meditation or learning (gompas) and their key features including Buddha rupa, artefacts and offerings.
- Puja, the significance and role of puja/devotional ritual in the home and in the temple, including chanting, both as a devotional practice and as an aid to mental concentration, mantra recitation, use of malas.

- Meditation, the different aims, significance and methods of meditation:
- Samatha (concentration and tranquillity) including mindfulness of breathing
- Vipassana (insight) including zazen
- the visualisation of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas.
- The practice and significance of different ceremonies and rituals associated with death and mourning in Theravada communities and in Japan and Tibet.
- Festivals and retreats and their importance to Buddhists in Great Britain today, including the celebrations, origins and significance of:
 - Wesak
 - Parinirvana Day.

Buddhist ethics

- Ethical teaching:
 - kamma (karma) and rebirth
 - compassion (karuna)
 - loving kindness (metta).
- The five moral precepts:
 - do not take life
 - do not take what is not given
 - do not misuse the senses
 - do not speak falsehoods
 - do not take intoxicants that cloud the mind.
- The six perfections in the Mahayanan tradition:
 - generosity
 - morality
 - patience
 - energy
 - meditation
 - wisdom, including how the individual develops these perfections within themselves.

Christianity

Beliefs and teachings

Key beliefs

The nature of God:

- God as omnipotent, loving and just, and the problem of evil and suffering
- the oneness of God and the Trinity: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
- Different Christian beliefs about creation including the role of Word and Spirit (John 1:1-3 and Genesis 1:1-3).
- Different Christian beliefs about the afterlife and their importance, including: resurrection and life after death; judgement, heaven and hell.

Jesus Christ and salvation

Beliefs and teachings about:

- the incarnation and Jesus as the Son of God
- the crucifixion, resurrection and ascension
- sin, including original sin
- the means of salvation, including law, grace and Spirit
- the role of Christ in salvation including the idea of atonement.

Practices

Worship and festivals

Different forms of worship and their significance:

- liturgical, non-liturgical and informal, including the use of the Bible
- private worship.
- Prayer and its significance, including the Lord's Prayer, set prayers and informal prayer.

The role and meaning of the sacraments:

- the meaning of sacrament
- the sacrament of baptism and its significance for Christians; infant and believers' baptism; different beliefs about infant baptism
- the sacrament of Holy Communion/Eucharist and its significance for Christians, including different ways in which it is celebrated and different interpretations of its meaning.

The role and importance of pilgrimage and celebrations including:

- two contrasting examples of Christian pilgrimage: Lourdes and Iona
- the celebrations of Christmas and Easter, including their importance for Christians in Great Britain today.

The role of the church in the local and worldwide community

- The role of the Church in the local community, including food banks and street pastors.
- The place of mission, evangelism and Church growth.
- The importance of the worldwide Church including:
 - working for reconciliation
 - how Christian churches respond to persecution
 - the work of one of the following: Catholic Agency For Overseas Development (CAFOD), Christian Aid, Tearfund.

Paper Two: Themes

Theme B: Religion & Life

The origins and value of the universe

The origins of the universe, including:

- religious teachings about the origins of the universe, and different interpretations of these
- the relationship between scientific views, such as the Big Bang theory, and religious views.
- The value of the world and the duty of human beings to protect it, including religious teaching about stewardship, dominion, responsibility, awe and wonder.
- The use and abuse of the environment, including the use of natural resources, pollution.

The use and abuse of animals, including:

- animal experimentation
- the use of animals for food.

The origins and value of human life

The origins of life, including:

- religious teachings about the origins of human life, and different interpretations of these
- the relationship between scientific views, such as evolution, and religious views.
- The concepts of sanctity of life and the quality of life.
- Abortion, including situations when the mother's life is at risk.
- Ethical arguments related to abortion, including those based on the sanctity of life and quality of life.
- Euthanasia.
- Beliefs about death and an afterlife, and their impact on beliefs about the value of human life.

Theme D: Religion, Peace and Conflict

Religion, violence, terrorism and war

- The meaning and significance of:
 - peace
 - justice
 - forgiveness
 - reconciliation.
- Violence, including violent protest.
- Terrorism.

- Reasons for war, including greed, self-defence and retaliation.
- The just war theory, including the criteria for a just war.
- Holy war.
- Pacifism.

Religion and belief in 21st century conflict

- Religion and belief as a cause of war and violence in the contemporary world.
- Nuclear weapons, including nuclear deterrence.
- The use of weapons of mass destruction.
- Religion and peace-making in the contemporary world including the work of individuals influenced by religious teaching.
- Religious responses to the victims of war including the work of one present day religious organisation.

Theme E: Religion, Crime and Punishment

Religion, crime and the causes of crime

- Good and evil intentions and actions, including whether it can ever be good to cause suffering.
- Reasons for crime, including:
 - poverty and upbringing
 - mental illness and addiction
 - greed and hate
 - opposition to an unjust law.
- Views about people who break the law for these reasons.
- Views about different types of crime, including hate crimes, theft and murder.

Religion and punishment

- The aims of punishment, including:
 - retribution
 - deterrence
 - reformation.
- The treatment of criminals, including:
 - prison
 - corporal punishment
 - community service.
- Forgiveness.
- The death penalty.
- Ethical arguments related to the death penalty, including those based on the principle of utility and sanctity of life.

Theme F: Religion, Human Rights and Social Justice

Human rights

- Prejudice and discrimination in religion and belief, including the status and treatment within religion of women and homosexuals.
- Issues of equality, freedom of religion and belief including freedom of religious expression.
- Human rights and the responsibilities that come with rights, including the responsibility to respect the rights of others.
- Social justice.
- Racial prejudice and discrimination.
- Ethical arguments related to racial discrimination (including positive discrimination), including those based on the ideals of equality and justice.

Wealth and poverty

- Wealth, including:
 - the right attitude to wealth
 - the uses of wealth.
- The responsibilities of wealth, including the duty to tackle poverty and its causes.
- Exploitation of the poor including issues relating to:
 - fair pay
 - excessive interest on loans
 - people-trafficking.
- The responsibilities of those living in poverty to help themselves overcome the difficulties they face.
- Charity, including issues related to giving money to the poor.