



EXAM INFORMATION

This exam was developed to enable schools to award credit to students for knowledge equivalent to that learned by students taking the course. This exam covers topics such as dimensions and approaches to religion; indigenous religions; Hinduism; Buddhism; Confucianism; Daoism; Judaism; Christianity; Islam; Shintoism; Hellenic and Roman traditions; and contemporary religious movements.

The exam contains 100 questions to be answered in 2 hours.

Form Codes: SS496, ST496, SY496, SZ496

CREDIT RECOMMENDATIONS

The American Council on Education's College Credit Recommendation Service (ACE CREDIT) has evaluated the DSST test development process and content of this exam. It has made the following recommendations:

Area or Course Equivalent: Introduction to World Religions

Level: Lower-level baccalaureate

Amount of Credit: 3 Semester Hours

Minimum Score: 400

Source: www.acenet.edu

EXAM CONTENT OUTLINE

The following is an outline of the content areas covered in the examination. The approximate percentage of the examination devoted to each content area is also noted.

I. Definition and Origins of Religion – 5%

- Basic dimensions of religion (e.g. ethics, ritual, doctrine)
- Approaches to religion (e.g. natural and revealed theology, descriptive, historical)

II. Indigenous Religions – 5%

- Native North American traditions (e.g. Inuit; Lakota; Hopi; Cherokee, Navajo, terminology)
- Native Central and South American traditions (e.g. Incan; Mayan, Aztec)
- Native West African traditions (e.g. Yoruba; Dogon; BaVenda)
- Native Middle Eastern traditions (e.g. Mesopotamian, Canaanite)
- Central Asian and Siberian Traditions

III. Hinduism – 11%

- Historical Development (e.g. Vedic, Classical, Medieval, and Modern periods, terminology)
- Major traditions (e.g. Theistic paths)
- Doctrine and Practice [e.g. major philosophical systems, spiritual disciplines (the 4 paths of Yoga); moksha; festivals, the caste system]

IV. Buddhism – 11%

- a. Historical development (e.g. life of Buddha, terminology)
- b. Major traditions (Theravada, Mahayana and Vajrayana)
- c. Doctrine and practice (e.g. Four Noble Truths, Noble Eight-Fold Path, Three Jewels, rituals, symbols, festivals)

V. Confucianism – 5%

- a. Historical development (e.g. ancient Chinese tradition, life of Confucius, classical Confucianism, terminology)
- b. Doctrine and practice (e.g. ritual, filial piety, loyalty, humaneness, genteel behavior, festivals)

VI. Daoism – 4%

- a. Historical development (e.g. ancient Chinese tradition, Lao Tzu, terminology)
- b. Doctrine and practice (e.g. Dao, wu wei, rituals)

VII. Shintoism – 4%

- a. Historical development (e.g. influence on Buddhism, influence within Japanese culture, WWII, terminology)
- b. Doctrine and practice (e.g. three forms of Shinto, Kami, festivals)

VIII. Judaism – 11%

- a. Historical development (e.g. ancient Israelites, First Temple period, Second Temple period, modern Judaism, The Holocaust, Kabbalah, Anti-Semitism, terminology)
- b. Denominations (e.g. Orthodox, Conservative [Masorti], Reform [Liberal/Progressive]; Reconstructionist)
- c. Doctrine and practice (e.g. Torah, Talmud, covenant, rituals, symbols, festivals)

IX. Christianity – 17%

- a. Historical development (e.g. life of Jesus, early church, medieval church, The Reformation, modern church, terminology)
- b. Major traditions (e.g. Roman Catholic, Orthodox, Protestant)
- c. Doctrine and practice (e.g. Old and New Testaments, crucifixion and resurrection, Trinity, Creeds, rituals, symbols, liturgical calendar)

X. Islam – 17%

- a. Historical Development (e.g. life of Muhammad; rise of Empire; Golden Age; Ottomans/Mughals; modern Islam, terminology, Islamophobia)
- b. Major traditions (e.g. Sunni, Shi'a, and Sufi)
- c. Doctrine and practice (e.g. Allāh, Qur'an, Five Pillars of Islam, resurrection and judgment; predestination, Sharia/Fiqh; jihad, festivals)

XI. Religious Movements and Syncretism – 10%

- a. Before 1000 C.E. (e.g. Zoroastrianism, Jainism, Mystery Cults)
- b. After 1000 C.E. (e.g. Baha'i, Sikhism)
- c. Contemporary Religious Movements (e.g. Mormonism, Jehovah's Witnesses, Scientology, New Age etc.)

REFERENCES

Below is a list of reference publications that were either used as a reference to create the exam or were used as textbooks in college courses of the same or similar title at the time the test was developed. You may reference either the current edition of these titles or textbooks currently used at a local college or university for the same class title. It is recommended that you reference more than one textbook on the topics outlined in this fact sheet.

You should begin by checking textbook content against the content outline provided before selecting textbooks that cover the test content from which to study.

Sources for study material are suggested but not limited to the following:

1. John Esposito, Darrell J. Fasching, Todd T. Lewis, Peter Feldmeier. World Religions Today, 7th Edition, 2021, Oxford University Press
2. Hopfe, L. and Woodward, M., Religions of the World. 13th ed. Pearson.
3. Fisher, M., Living Religions. 10th ed. Pearson. 2017

SAMPLE QUESTIONS

All test questions are in a multiple-choice format, with one correct answer and three incorrect options. The following are samples of the types of questions that may appear on the exam.

1. In Hinduism, the term “karma” implies
 - a. duty.
 - b. predestination.
 - c. action and reaction.
 - d. good action.
2. Vedic religion originated with
 - a. people who were indigenous to India.
 - b. Aryans who came to India ca. 1500 B.C.E. from Central Asia.
 - c. Persians who came to India ca. 700 B.C.E.
 - d. Greeks who came to India ca. 300 B.C.E. with Alexander the Great.
3. Theravada Buddhism upholds liberation through
 - a. devotion to Brahman.
 - a. one’s own moral efforts and spiritual discipline.

- b. divine intercession.
- c. worship of Buddha.

4. In the Tao Te Ching, Lao Tzu indicates that the best way of living is a life of

- a. passivity.
- b. assertiveness.
- c. natural simplicity.
- d. social commitment.

5. The New Testament Gospels are primarily

- a. complete biographies of Jesus of Nazareth.
- b. summaries of Christian ethics.
- c. proclamations of Jesus as Risen Lord and Messiah.
- d. eyewitness accounts of four apostles.

Answers to sample questions:

1-C, 2-C, 3-B, 4-C, 5-C