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Important information

Accreditation period

Units 1–4: 1 January 2023 – 31 December 2027

Implementation of this study commences in 2023.

Other sources of information

The [*VCAA Bulletin*](https://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/news-and-events/bulletins-and-updates/bulletin/Pages/index.aspx) is the only official source of changes to regulations and accredited studies. The Bulletin also regularly includes advice on VCE studies. It is the responsibility of each VCE teacher to refer to each issue of the Bulletin. The Bulletin is available as an e-newsletter via [free subscription](https://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Footer/Pages/Subscribe.aspx) on the VCAA website.

To assist teachers in developing courses, the VCAA publishes online [Support materials](https://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/curriculum/vce/vce-study-designs/texts-and-traditions/Pages/Index.aspx) (incorporating the previously known *Advice for teachers*).

The current [*VCE and VCAL Administrative Handbook*](https://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/administration/vce-vcal-handbook/Pages/index.aspx) contains essential information on assessment processes and other procedures.

VCE providers

Throughout this study design the term ‘school’ is intended to include both schools and other VCE providers.

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Schools may use this VCE study design in accordance with the VCAA educational allowance, including making copies for students and use within the school’s secure online teaching and learning environment.   
For details, access the full [VCAA copyright policy](https://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Footer/Pages/Copyright.aspx) on the VCAA website.

Introduction

Scope of study

The study of VCE Texts and Traditions considers the place and meaning of sacred texts within their religious traditions. In an attempt to understand the intended meaning of the texts, the study focuses on the original contexts of sacred texts and examines their literary characteristics. The study currently encompasses texts from the Christian, Islamic and Jewish traditions. The main focus of the study is the texts that are seen to be foundational to the traditions being studied. These may be supplemented by texts from other traditions, commentaries, and later texts from the traditions beings studied.

A range of methods exists for interpreting sacred texts and exploring their intended meaning. VCE Texts and Traditions focuses on sociocultural, historical and literary methods of criticism. The process of searching for, and giving expression to, the meaning of sacred texts is called exegesis.

In this study, the term ‘texts’ refers to a body of writings held to be the authoritative core for the religious tradition, often referred to as scriptures. Additional writings that derive their authority from their relationship to the core can also be regarded as authoritative. For Units 3 and 4, the VCAA will publish a list of set texts annually. The term religious ‘traditions’ is understood to refer to established religious communities that continue to play an important part in creating, maintaining and shaping culture. Religious traditions contain ideas, values and beliefs about existence and the sacred and human experience that are expressed in a variety of ways.

Rationale

The study of VCE Texts and Traditions equips students to come to a deeper understanding of the relationship between religious traditions and the written sacred texts that have grown from and shaped those traditions. Examining the sacred texts on which religious traditions are founded enables students to gain a good understanding of the basis of those traditions. These sacred texts become a touchstone of the tradition as it develops and responds to changing circumstances.

Many religious traditions have a special relationship with a set of written texts, often referred to as sacred scriptures. Through this study, students are taught to understand that these written texts have particular authority for the tradition and may act as an important reference and foundation for the tradition’s social organisation, rituals, values and beliefs, and for the behaviours of the tradition’s followers, both historically and in the world today.

Students study the sacred texts in their original social, cultural, religious, political and historical settings, as well as investigate the impact such texts have had throughout history and are having on the world today. Different methods of interpretation are taken into account throughout this study. Students also investigate the texts as pieces of literature and consider how others have been inspired by the interpretation of such writings. They develop the skills to be able to analyse these texts in the form of an exegesis.

The study of VCE Texts and Traditions encourages independent and critical thinking in students that will assist them in work and study, and in fields that require critical thinking about, and research, analysis and interpretation of, written texts.

Aims

This study is designed to develop students’ understanding of religious texts and:

* their interpretation within religious traditions
* the variety of text types associated with religious traditions
* their place and use within religious traditions, societies and cultures
* their historical development and acceptance.

Structure

The study is made up of four units.

* Unit 1: Texts in traditions
* Unit 2: Texts in society
* Unit 3: Texts and the early tradition
* Unit 4: Texts and their teachings

Each unit deals with specific content contained in areas of study and is designed to enable students to achieve a set of outcomes for that unit. Each outcome is described in terms of key knowledge and key skills.

Entry

There are no prerequisites for entry to Units 1, 2 and 3. Students must undertake Unit 3 and Unit 4 as a sequence. Units 1–4 are designed to a standard equivalent to the final two years of secondary education. All VCE studies are benchmarked against comparable national and international curriculum.

A glossary defining terms used across Units 1–4 in the *VCE Texts and Traditions Study Design* is included in the Support materials*.*

Duration

Each unit involves at least 50 hours of scheduled classroom instruction.

Changes to the study design

During its period of accreditation minor changes to the study will be announced in the [*VCAA Bulletin*](https://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/news-and-events/bulletins-and-updates/bulletin/Pages/index.aspx). The Bulletin is the only source of changes to regulations and accredited studies. It is the responsibility of each VCE teacher to monitor changes or advice about VCE studies published in the Bulletin.

Monitoring for quality

As part of ongoing monitoring and quality assurance, the VCAA will periodically undertake an audit of VCE Texts and Traditions to ensure the study is being taught and assessed as accredited. The details of the audit procedures and requirements are published annually in the [*VCE and VCAL Administrative Handbook*](https://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/administration/vce-vcal-handbook/Pages/index.aspx). Schools will be notified if they are required to submit material to be audited.

Safety and wellbeing

It is the responsibility of the school to ensure that duty of care is exercised in relation to the health and safety of all students undertaking the study.

Employability skills

This study offers a number of opportunities for students to develop employability skills. The Support materials provide specific examples of how students can develop employability skills during learning activities and assessment tasks.

Legislative compliance

When collecting and using information, the provisions of privacy and copyright legislation, such as the Victorian *Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014* and *Health Records Act 2001*, and the federal *Privacy Act 1988* and *Copyright Act 1968*, must be met.

Child Safe Standards

Schools and education and training providers are required to comply with the Child Safe Standards made under the Victorian *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005*. Registered schools are required to comply with *Ministerial Order No. 1359 Implementing the Child Safe Standards – Managing the Risk of Child Abuse in Schools and School Boarding Premises*. For further information, consult the websites of the [Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority](https://www.vrqa.vic.gov.au/childsafe/Pages/Home.aspx), the [Commission for Children and Young People](https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/) and the [Department of Education and Training](https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/child-safe-standards/policy).

Assessment and reporting

Satisfactory completion

The award of satisfactory completion for a unit is based on the teacher’s decision that the student has demonstrated achievement of the set of outcomes specified for the unit. Demonstration of achievement of outcomes and satisfactory completion of a unit are determined by evidence gained through the assessment of a range of learning activities and tasks.

Teachers must develop courses that provide appropriate opportunities for students to demonstrate satisfactory achievement of outcomes.

The decision about satisfactory completion of a unit is distinct from the assessment of levels of achievement. Schools will report a student’s result for each unit to the VCAA as S (satisfactory) or N (not satisfactory).

Levels of achievement

Units 1 and 2

Procedures for the assessment of levels of achievement in Units 1 and 2 are a matter for school decision. Assessment of levels of achievement for these units will not be reported to the VCAA. Schools may choose to report levels of achievement using grades, descriptive statements or other indicators.

Units 3 and 4

The VCAA specifies the assessment procedures for students undertaking scored assessment in Units 3 and 4. Designated assessment tasks are provided in the details for each unit in VCE study designs.

The student’s level of achievement in Units 3 and 4 will be determined by School-assessed Coursework (SAC) as specified in the VCE study design, and external assessment.

The VCAA will report the student’s level of achievement on each assessment component as a grade from A+ to E or UG (ungraded). To receive a study score the student must achieve two or more graded assessments in the study and receive an S for both Units 3 and 4. The study score is reported on a scale of 0–50; it is a measure of how well the student performed in relation to all others who took the study. Teachers should refer to the current [*VCE and VCAL Administrative Handbook*](https://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/administration/vce-vcal-handbook/Pages/index.aspx) for details on graded assessment and calculation of the study score. Percentage contributions to the study score in VCE Texts and Traditions are as follows:

* Unit 3 School-assessed Coursework: 25 per cent
* Unit 4 School-assessed Coursework: 25 per cent
* end-of-year examination: 50 per cent.

Details of the assessment program are described in the sections on Units 3 and 4 in this study design.

Authentication

Work related to the outcomes of each unit will be accepted only if the teacher can attest that, to the best of their knowledge, all unacknowledged work is the student’s own. Teachers need to refer to the current [*VCE and VCAL Administrative Handbook*](https://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/administration/vce-vcal-handbook/Pages/index.aspx) for authentication rules and strategies.

Unit 1: Texts in traditions

In this unit students examine the place of sacred texts and their literary forms within a religious tradition. Students explore the importance of sacred texts as the source of a tradition and learn how to interpret and describe their meaning for the earlier and continuing tradition.

The process of searching for and giving expression to the meaning of texts is called exegesis. This unit introduces students to basic methods of exegesis to bring about a deeper awareness of how sacred texts came about, and the meaning of those texts for the religious tradition. The skills of exegetical method are introduced to the students.

This unit also explores how sacred texts have been used by people both within and beyond the religious tradition to bring meaning to issues or ideas in a new cultural setting.

This unit requires the study of sacred texts in a variety of literary forms. The texts may come from one religious tradition or from a range of religious traditions.

Texts

There are no prescribed texts for Unit 1. The following criteria should be used to select texts on which   
to base courses for this unit:

* clear identification of the sacred texts in terms of their acceptance by the religious tradition as complete and authoritative (for example, the Bible as accepted by the Jewish or Christian traditions, or the Qur’an as accepted by the Islamic tradition)
* availability of the whole text in the English language (in translation where necessary)
* availability of supporting primary and/or secondary resources at an appropriate level.

Traditions

The following criteria should be used to select a religious tradition or traditions on which to base courses for this unit:

* members of a religious tradition define themselves to a significant extent in terms of the tradition’s essential relationship to a set of sacred texts
* clear identification of the religious tradition in terms of it having an authoritative collection of sacred texts
* availability of historical and other primary and/or secondary material in the English language (in translation if necessary) and at an appropriate level.

Area of Study 1

The importance of sacred texts to the tradition

The origins of some ancient texts are obscure, while others can be clearly located within defined historical events. Some sacred texts show evidence of development, compilation and editing. However, as the sacred texts exist within the sacred books of a tradition, they indicate a particular sociocultural and historical setting that reflects their meaning for that religious tradition.

Many religious traditions are based on an extensive series of writings that are carefully preserved within, and as, sacred books.

Ancient writings remain rich stores of wisdom and spiritual insight for their religious traditions. The collection of a variety of literary forms into one larger body of sacred texts gives further meaning to each individual text.

An understanding of how the text came to be, how it was accepted by the original community and how it came to be seen to be sacred helps a student understand the text more fully. To look at the development of a text in its original historical setting can bring about new insights into the meaning and purpose of a text.

In this area of study students focus on how texts grew out of a historical setting and how those texts came to be understood as being sacred.

Outcome 1

On completion of this unit the student should understand the history of the formation of the sacred text, and be able to recognise and explain the development and acceptance of the text into the religious tradition.

To achieve this outcome the student will draw on key knowledge and key skills outlined in Area of Study 1.

Key knowledge

* the history of the key moments of the development of the sacred text
* the history of the key moments of the acceptance of the sacred text
* the characteristics of those texts and the ways that some sacred texts perform a function within their wider literary and religious context

Key skills

* identify and explain the key moments of the development of the sacred text
* identify and explain the key moments of the acceptance of the sacred text
* analyse the characteristics and function of a sacred text within its wider literary and religious context

Area of Study 2

The exegesis of texts

In this area of study students undertake textual analysis, which involves an understanding of the sociocultural, political, religious and historical settings of these ancient sacred texts. This gives students an insight into the way the original community might have understood the text. In this area of study, sociocultural refers to the social, cultural and religious influences on a text.

Students focus on developing understanding of the original sociocultural and historical context in which the religious tradition has placed selected texts. They also study the literary aspects as they apply to particular texts, and the meaning that the founding religious tradition attached to the text. This type of analysis is known as exegesis.

Outcome 2

On completion of this unit the student should be able to apply basic exegetical methods to explore the texts within their sociocultural and historical contexts.

To achieve this outcome the student will draw on key knowledge and key skills outlined in Area of Study 2.

Key knowledge

* characteristics of the original sociocultural, political, religious and historical setting of selected religious texts
* exegetical methods appropriate to exploring the meaning of these texts in their sociocultural setting, including literary context, literary forms and techniques, themes, and the meaning for the original audience
* appropriate commentaries and other scholarly works

Key skills

* identify sociocultural, political, religious and historical information relevant to an understanding of selected texts
* apply exegetical methods to a foundational text, including literary context, literary forms and techniques, themes, and the meaning for the original audience
* use commentaries and other scholarly works where appropriate

Area of Study 3

Sacred texts and later traditions

Religious traditions that trace their origins to times well before the 21st century inevitably carry within them evidence of change. Some changes affect the ways sacred texts are understood. The religious tradition’s understandings of the sacred text today are based upon understandings that have developed over time. Such understandings can also stand in tension with the understandings sought by the religious tradition today. In addition, at different points of the tradition, individuals – both from within and outside the tradition – have sought to provide a personal artistic interpretation of a text in ways that can be of value for today’s student of the religious tradition.

In this area of study students focus on interpretations of selected sacred texts at points later than the original founding religious tradition. These interpretations can issue from sources that might carry authority through scholarship, an instituted teaching office, charismatic leadership, or artistic insight. These later interpretations may be contemporary or from an earlier point in history.

Students will focus on at least one of the following for study:

* interpretations by the later religious tradition of selected sacred texts through such means as feasts, festivals, rituals and popular custom
* interpretations of selected sacred texts through artistic forms such as art, literature, film, calligraphy, music or architecture.

The selected focus should be supported by examination of relevant scholarly discussion and religious writings.

Outcome 3

On completion of this unit the student should be able to analyse a range of understandings and interpretations of sacred texts as understood or expressed by the later religious tradition.

To achieve this outcome the student will draw on key knowledge and key skills outlined in Area of Study 3.

Key knowledge

* the ways the later religious tradition showed its understanding of selected sacred texts through such means as feasts, festivals, rituals and popular custom, and/or
* the ways art, literature, film, calligraphy, music, architecture or other artistic forms have provided interpretations of selected texts of the religious tradition
* key aspects of relevant scholarly commentaries and religious writings

Key skills

* analyse meanings attributed to a sacred text by the later religious tradition, and/or
* analyse the interpretation of a sacred text offered in an artistic medium
* identify and summarise scholarly commentaries and religious writings

Assessment

The award of satisfactory completion for a unit is based on whether the student has demonstrated the set of outcomes specified for the unit. Teachers should use a variety of learning activities and assessment tasks that provide a range of opportunities for students to demonstrate the key knowledge and key skills in the outcomes.

The areas of study, including the key knowledge and key skills listed for the outcomes, should be used for course design and the development of learning activities and assessment tasks. Assessment must be a part of the regular teaching and learning program and should be completed mainly in class and within a limited timeframe.

All assessments at Units 1 and 2 are school-based. Procedures for assessment of levels of achievement in Units 1 and 2 are a matter for school decision.

For this unit students are required to demonstrate three outcomes. As a set these outcomes encompass the areas of study in the unit.

Suitable tasks for assessment in this unit may be selected from the following:

* comparative tables
* essays
* exegetical exercises
* multimedia presentations
* short-answer questions
* short reports, including ones based on interviews
* summaries
* textual commentaries.

Where teachers allow students to choose between tasks, they must ensure that the tasks they set are of comparable scope and demand.

Unit 2: Texts in society

In this unit students study sacred texts as a means of investigating social attitudes on issues such as social structures, justice, authority, the environment, racism, gender and others. Therefore, the texts selected for study should be potential sources of ideas about these or other issues in society. Some of the texts may call for change in attitudes and values; others may call for changes in social, religious and political institutions. Some texts may justify or support existing social, cultural, religious and political institutions, works, attitudes and values.

Students consider the social context within which the sacred texts were produced, the conditions under which they are currently read, the reasons for reading them, and the types of authority attributed to them by religious traditions and society in general. They also look at the ways in which the texts shape, and are shaped by, the content of the message contained in them.

Students compare how sacred texts from different religious traditions address these social issues.

Outcomes 1 and 2 should be based on a range of sacred texts from one or more religious traditions.

Outcome 3 should be based on a range of sacred texts from at least two religious traditions.

Texts

There are no prescribed texts for Unit 2. The following criteria should be used to select texts on which   
to base courses for this unit:

* clear identification of the sacred texts in terms of their acceptance by the religious tradition as complete and authoritative (for example, the Bible as accepted by the Jewish or Christian traditions, or the Qur’an as accepted by the Islamic tradition)
* availability of the whole text in the English language (in translation where necessary)
* availability of supporting primary and/or secondary resources at an appropriate level.

Traditions

The following criteria should be used to select a religious tradition or traditions on which to base courses for this unit:

* members of a religious tradition define themselves to a significant extent in terms of the tradition’s essential relationship to a set of sacred texts
* clear identification of the religious tradition in terms of it having an authoritative collection of sacred texts
* availability of historical and other primary and/or secondary material in the English language (in translation if necessary) and at an appropriate level.

Area of Study 1

Sacred texts in the past

In this area of study students investigate the general background to selected texts, using historical research skills and scholarly works to identify people, places and events relevant to the origins of the sacred texts.

To understand a sacred text it should, where possible, be seen in its historical context. Sacred texts are the products of certain times and places. While certain issues are universal and timeless, students learn to understand the social and cultural contexts in which texts evolved.

Outcome 1

On completion of this unit the student should be able to understand the origin and development of selected texts that express a religious tradition’s relationship to its society.

To achieve this outcome the student will draw on key knowledge and key skills outlined in Area of Study 1.

Key knowledge

* when, where, why and how the sacred texts took shape and developed
* the historical people, places and events relating to the development of social attitudes, cultural beliefs and teachings in selected sacred texts
* particular attitudes, beliefs and teachings expressed in selected sacred texts that relate to past ideas, such as social structures, justice, authority, the environment, racism, gender and others

Key skills

* identify when and where the sacred texts took shape and developed
* explain why and how the sacred texts took shape and developed
* identify and describe the historical people, places and events relating to the development of social attitudes, cultural beliefs and teachings in selected sacred texts
* describe a range of social attitudes, beliefs and teachings seen in the past to have been contained in sacred texts
* analyse the development of social attitudes, cultural beliefs and teachings in sacred texts

Area of Study 2

Sacred texts today

In this area of study students focus on how religious traditions use their sacred texts when confronted with particular social issues.

Sacred texts have an impact on the attitudes and values of individuals living today, both as members of a religious tradition and as they engage with wider society. This impact can be felt directly by individuals as they read the texts and by both religious and non-religious communities who are affected. To varying degrees, sacred texts are seen as authoritative and as providing sources of inspiration, guidance or instruction on, for example, issues such as ecology, racism or other social issues. Sacred texts can also stimulate debate both within and outside a religious tradition.

Outcome 2

On completion of this unit the student should be able to understand the type of authority that a religious tradition currently attributes to its sacred texts, how these texts affect the current religious tradition’s understanding of its relationship to society, and the effects of the sacred text upon society today.

To achieve this outcome the student will draw on key knowledge and key skills outlined in Area of Study 2.

Key knowledge

* the type of authority currently attributed to its sacred texts by a religious tradition and by society in general
* the ways in which a religious tradition uses its sacred texts today to understand its relationship to society
* the ways a religious institution or group from within the religious tradition has used sacred texts to inspire and/or guide their work in society today, particularly in relation to social issues within and/or beyond their religious tradition

Key skills

* describe the type of authority currently attributed to sacred texts by a religious tradition and by society in general
* discuss ways in which a religious tradition uses sacred texts to express its understanding of its relationship to society
* analyse the way an institution or a group from within a religious tradition uses sacred texts to inspire or guide others in their work in society today, particularly in relation to social issues

Area of Study 3

Comparing religious traditions

In this area of study students compare religious traditions. Conflict and misunderstandings are sometimes generated by the way different religious traditions view and perceive their relationship with each other. Students explore the similarities and differences between the ways religious traditions approach and depict common social issues in their sacred texts. Examples of common social issues are social structures, justice, authority, the environment, racism, gender and others.

Outcome 3 should be based on a range of sacred texts from at least two religious traditions to allow comparison of these religious traditions’ attitudes to social issues.

Outcome 3

On completion of this unit the student should be able to compare the similarities and differences between the ways sacred texts of two or more religious traditions present a particular social issue.

To achieve this outcome the student will draw on key knowledge and key skills outlined in Area of Study 3.

Key knowledge

* the content related to a social issue common to selected sacred texts from two or more religious traditions
* the reasons that religious traditions offer, based on the teachings and values they find in their sacred texts, for their opinions on the selected social issue
* the similarities and differences between attitudes and approaches to a common social issue, based on the religious traditions’ study of their sacred texts
* a range of challenges involved in comparing sacred texts from different religious traditions

Key skills

* identify the content that relates to a common social issue in selected sacred texts from two or more religious traditions
* compare the values and teachings of at least one sacred text from each of two or more religious traditions in relation to the selected social issue
* analyse some of the reasons for similarities and differences between religious traditions regarding their approach to social issues raised in their sacred texts
* outline the challenges in comparing sacred texts from different religious traditions

Assessment

The award of satisfactory completion for a unit is based on whether the student has demonstrated the set of outcomes specified for the unit. Teachers should use a variety of learning activities and assessment tasks that provide a range of opportunities for students to demonstrate the key knowledge and key skills in the outcomes.

The areas of study, including the key knowledge and key skills listed for the outcomes, should be used for course design and the development of learning activities and assessment tasks. Assessment must be a part of the regular teaching and learning program and should be completed mainly in class and within a limited timeframe.

All assessments at Units 1 and 2 are school-based. Procedures for assessment of levels of achievement in Units 1 and 2 are a matter for school decision.

For this unit students are required to demonstrate three outcomes. As a set these outcomes encompass the areas of study in the unit.

Suitable tasks for assessment in this unit may be selected from the following:

* comparative tables
* essays
* multimedia presentations
* short-answer questions
* short reports, including reports based on interviews
* summaries
* textual commentaries.

Where teachers allow students to choose between tasks, they must ensure that the tasks they set are of comparable scope and demand.

Units 3 and 4

The religious traditions approved for study in Units 3 and 4 are Christianity, Islam and Judaism. Texts for Units 3 and 4 are prescribed annually by the VCAA. To facilitate close reading of the texts, the VCAA will also annually prescribe certain themes and passages for special study taken from the set texts. Students are expected to have a general knowledge of the chosen set texts as outlined in the study design and a detailed knowledge of the themes and passages for special study. This knowledge should be developed over the students’ study of Units 3 and 4.

Set texts, passages for special study and themes will be published annually in the [*VCAA Bulletin*](https://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/news-and-events/bulletins-and-updates/bulletin/Pages/index.aspx).

Unit 3: Texts and the early tradition

The texts of a particular religious tradition are foundational in that they recount, for example, specific events, narratives, laws, prophetic pronouncements and teachings that describe the beginnings and initial development of a religious tradition. In this unit students explore the society and culture from which the religious tradition being studied was formed. They develop an understanding of the historical background that influenced the texts themselves.

Students develop an understanding of how the chosen set text is a response to particular social, cultural, religious, political and historical needs and events. They explore the formation of the text itself, the intended audience of that text, and the message or teaching found within the text. As a means to gaining an understanding of the content and message of a text, students become familiar with the nature of exegetical methods being used today by scholars in the religious tradition of their particular text.

Sociocultural and literary criticisms are two exegetical methods introduced in Unit 3 and developed further in Unit 4. Sociocultural criticism is based on an understanding of the original social, cultural, religious, political and historical experience or situation at the time of the formation of the text. Literary criticism is an exegetical method used to analyse texts according to their structure, literary forms and techniques, and the development of themes. These methods rely on an understanding of the specific formation of the text and its intended audience. This can lead to a more accurate and detailed understanding of the original intention of the sacred text.

Area of Study 1

The background of the tradition

In this area of study students undertake a sociocultural and historical study of a religious tradition. They examine the origin and early development of the selected religious tradition, focusing on people, places and events, and social, cultural, religious and political conditions and institutions important to the development of the religious tradition. This prepares students for Area of Study 2, where they are expected to come to a deeper understanding through exploration of the literary aspects and purpose of the chosen set text.

Students become familiar with the foundational period of the selected religious tradition by drawing background information from a range of foundational texts, documentation outside the religious tradition, and contemporary scholarly resources.

Outcome 1

On completion of this unit the student should be able to identify and explain sociocultural conditions and historical contexts that influenced the early development of the religious tradition.

To achieve this outcome the student will draw on key knowledge and key skills outlined in Area of Study 1.

Key knowledge

* the social, cultural, religious and political conditions and institutions of the society out of which the religious tradition emerged and developed during its foundational period
* the historical context (that is, people, places and events) that relate to the origin and early development of the religious tradition
* the ways that the social, cultural, religious and political conditions and institutions and historical context influenced the foundational period of the religious tradition
* the relevant information from both primary and secondary sources, both within and outside the religious tradition

Key skills

* identify and explain the sociocultural context related to the origin and early development of the religious tradition
* identify and explain the people, places and events that relate to the origin and early development of the religious tradition
* identify and explain the sociocultural conditions and institutions and historical context that influenced the foundational period of the religious tradition
* select, analyse and synthesise relevant information from both primary and secondary sources, both within and outside the religious tradition

Area of Study 2

Audience, purposes and literary aspects of the set texts

In this area of study students develop knowledge of the set text in terms of its major purposes and literary form, structure and techniques. Literary structure refers to the organisation of the text into parts or sections. These parts or sections may be marked by content change or by changes in literary form and techniques. The structure can be looked at from the point of view of the text as a whole, as separate passages, or in the way one part follows another part. Within literary criticism, students examine the formation of texts as well as the texts’ intended audiences.

Outcome 2

On completion of this unit the student should be able to discuss the major purposes of the set text, and analyse literary structure and other aspects related to the formation of the set text, including knowledge of the intended audience.

To achieve this outcome the student will draw on key knowledge and key skills outlined in Area of Study 2.

Key knowledge

* the social, cultural, religious and political conditions contemporary with, and relevant to, the formation of the set text
* the purposes of the set text
* the literary structure of the set text
* the literary forms and techniques in the set text
* the ways that literary forms, structure and techniques function within the set text
* the formation and intended audience of the set text
* a range of scholarly opinion on the formation of the set text, and its purposes, literary structure and techniques

Key skills

* identify the social, cultural, religious and political conditions and historical contexts relevant to the formation of the set text, as well as its purpose and intended audience
* identify the structure of the set text and the literary forms and techniques used in the set text, considering particular passages and the text as a whole
* explain how specific literary forms, structures and techniques contribute to the text
* analyse the specific intended effects of literary techniques in the set text
* use passages from the set text to support discussion and analysis
* examine a range of scholarly opinion related to the formation of the set text and its purposes, literary structure and techniques, using this to inform discussion

Area of Study 3

Interpreting texts

Teachings within texts may be presented in different ways. They may be presented in the form of proverbs, codes of law, rules of behaviour, collections of sayings, prophetic pronouncements, accounts of the lives of significant individuals, or other recognisable literary forms. Texts have also been developed under the influence of a historical context and certain social, cultural, religious and political conditions and institutions. Exploring the context and background of texts further develops the understanding of the purpose, meaning and teachings of those texts, while consideration of literary aspects contributes to knowledge concerning formation, period and audience of those texts.

Students develop their understanding and application of at least two exegetical methods, including sociocultural and literary criticism. In exegetical study, students analyse a text in the light of scholarship and their growing knowledge of the background to the text. This analysis then leads to a synthesis of ideas regarding the purpose, meaning and teachings of any particular text within its original setting.

It is not expected that all passages for special study be addressed in detail by the end of Unit 3. Rather, it is anticipated that exegetical skills formed in Unit 3 will be further developed in Unit 4.

Outcome 3

On completion of this unit the student should be able to understand the nature of exegetical methods and apply them to develop an interpretation of some of the passages for special study.

To achieve this outcome the student will draw on key knowledge and key skills outlined in Area of Study 3.

Key knowledge

* the nature of exegesis in general and of at least two exegetical methods, including sociocultural criticism and literary criticism
* what the set text conveys about historical context and the sociocultural context: that is, the social, cultural, religious and political conditions and institutions within which the text developed
* where and how these conditions and institutions and historical context appear in the passages for special study
* the contextual placement of the passages for special study including, as appropriate:
* how they arose in relation to a particular historical event or circumstances
* the sociocultural context of the passages for special study
* the literary context of the passages for special study
* the literary forms and techniques of the passages for special study
* major ideas and themes of the set text as found in the passages for special study
* the meaning and significance of the passages for special study for the original community
* a range of scholarly commentaries on the interpretation of the passages for special study

Key skills

* understand and apply at least two exegetical methods to selected passages from the set text
* identify and describe the relationship that the purpose, meaning and teachings of texts have to their sociocultural and historical context
* identify and describe the literary and sociocultural context of passages for special study
* apply exegetical methods to the selected passages for special study
* explain the literary forms and techniques of the passages for special study and their effect
* discuss major ideas and themes found in the passages for special study
* discuss the meaning and significance of the passages for special study for the original community
* use scholarly commentaries to inform an exegesis

School-based assessment

Satisfactory completion

The award of satisfactory completion for a unit is based on whether the student has demonstrated the set of outcomes specified for the unit. Teachers should use a variety of learning activities and assessment tasks to provide a range of opportunities for students to demonstrate the key knowledge and key skills in the outcomes.

The areas of study and key knowledge and key skills listed for the outcomes should be used for course design and the development of learning activities and assessment tasks.

Assessment of levels of achievement

The student’s level of achievement in Unit 3 will be determined by School-assessed Coursework. School-assessed Coursework tasks must be a part of the regular teaching and learning program and must not unduly add to the workload associated with that program. They must be completed mainly in class and within a limited timeframe.

Where teachers provide a range of options for the same School-assessed Coursework task, they should ensure that the options are of comparable scope and demand.

The types and range of forms of School-assessed Coursework for the outcomes are prescribed within the study design. The VCAA publishes Support materials for this study, which include advice on the design of assessment tasks and the assessment of student work for a level of achievement.

Teachers will provide to the VCAA a numerical score representing an assessment of the student’s level of achievement. The score must be based on the teacher’s assessment of the performance of each student on the tasks set out in the following table.

Contribution to final assessment

School-assessed Coursework for Unit 3 will contribute 25 per cent to the study score.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Outcomes** | **Marks allocated** | **Assessment tasks** |
| **Outcome 1**  Identify and explain sociocultural conditions and historical contexts that influenced the early development of the religious tradition. | **30** | The student’s performance will be assessed using one of the following:   * extended responses * a report * short-answer questions. |
| **Outcome 2**  Discuss the major purposes of the set text and analyse literary structure and other aspects related to the formation of the set text, including knowledge of the intended audience. | **30** | The student’s performance will be assessed using one of the following:   * an essay * extended responses * a report * short-answer questions * a textual commentary. |
| **Outcome 3**  Understand the nature of exegetical methods and apply them to develop an interpretation of some of the passages for special study. | **40** | The student’s performance will be assessed using one or more of the following:   * textual notes * annotated passages * an exegetical framework report. |
| **Total marks** | **100** |  |

External assessment

The level of achievement for Units 3 and 4 is also assessed by an end-of-year examination, which will contribute 50 per cent to the study score.

Unit 4: Texts and their teachings

In this unit students continue to apply exegetical methods to the passages for special study begun in Unit 3, but to greater depth.

Some texts are regarded as essential for the continuation of a religious tradition because they function as a means of communicating teachings or understandings about the relationship between the human and the transcendent. These understandings are often expressed through themes in the particular texts.

Some of the themes contained in the foundational texts have been reinterpreted at different times by the religious tradition. In this unit students study a significant theme contained in the set text and consider the interpretation of the text in light of the theme.

Area of Study 1

Interpreting texts

In this area of study students further develop the knowledge and skills required to write exegeses on passages from the set texts begun in Unit 3 Area of Study 3 (Interpreting texts). As the course progresses, students produce exegetical exercises that demonstrate developing skills. Students should be able to write exegeses for all the passages for special study, drawing on the key knowledge and key skills for this outcome.

As exegetical methods are further developed, students consider the social, cultural, religious and political conditions and institutions and historical context within which the set text developed. They also further consider the literary aspects of form and techniques evident in the text, and how these and the sociocultural and historical contexts would have affected the original audience’s understanding of the purpose, meaning and teachings of the text.

Outcome 1

On completion of this unit the student should be able to apply exegetical methods to develop an interpretation of all the passages for special study.

To achieve this outcome the student will draw on key knowledge and key skills outlined in Area of Study 1.

Key knowledge

* the historical context conveyed by the set text and the sociocultural context (that is, the social, cultural, religious and political conditions and institutions) within which the text developed
* where and how these conditions and institutions and historical context appear in the passages for special study
* the contextual placement of the passages for special study including, as appropriate to the religious tradition:
* how they arose in relation to a particular historical event
* the literary context of the passages for special study in relation to their placement within the text
* the sociocultural context of the passages for special study
* the literary forms and techniques of the passages for special study
* major ideas and themes of the set text as found in the passages for special study
* the meaning and significance of the passages for special study for the original audience
* a range of scholarly commentaries on the interpretation of the passages for special study

Key skills

* analyse and explain the relationship that the purpose, meaning and teachings of texts have to their sociocultural and historical context
* explain the significance of the literary context and features of the passages for special study
* apply exegetical methods appropriate to the religious tradition to explain contextual placement of the passages for special study
* discuss major ideas and themes found in the passages for special study
* discuss the meaning and significance of the passages for special study for the original audience
* use scholarly commentaries to inform an exegesis

Area of Study 2

Religious themes and their teaching purpose

Foundational texts fulfil their purpose through the development and teaching of particular themes. These themes are developed throughout the text. As students work through the set text, with a particular focus on the passages for special study, they develop an understanding of how the themes in the text work together to create the text as a means of instructing the original audience.

In this area of study students will further investigate themes that are published annually by the VCAA, and come to an understanding of how these themes develop in the set text and how these themes would have created meaning for the original audience.

Outcome 2

On completion of this unit the student should be able to discuss themes arising from the passages for special study and analyse their social, cultural, religious and historical context, and the importance of the themes to the original audience.

To achieve this outcome the student will draw on key knowledge and key skills outlined in Area of Study 2.

Key knowledge

* themes arising from the passages for special study, and how they reflect the set text’s original social, cultural, religious and historical context
* the way themes are developed throughout the set text
* the teaching purpose of these themes, with a focus on the original audience
* current scholarship that analyses the set themes

Key skills

* discuss significant themes arising from the passages for special study by:
* describing the themes
* explaining the themes within the social, cultural, religious and historical context of the set text
* identify how the themes are developed throughout the set text
* analyse the importance of the themes to the original audience
* use appropriate scholarship to inform the discussion about the themes

Area of Study 3

Themes in the later tradition and the later use of scripture

At various periods of its history, the later religious tradition has responded to themes and teachings arising out of foundational texts. These themes are often modified or recontextualised to respond to new understandings that develop as a response to changes both within and beyond the religious tradition.

In this area of study students examine the way a textual theme has been interpreted by the religious tradition at a later time in history. Consideration is given to the impact of these interpretations on the religious tradition. Students will also analyse how the text is used to justify the interpretations of the theme by the religious tradition. This theme may be from the prescribed themes list or could be another theme arising from the set text.

Outcome 3

On completion of this unit the student should be able to analyse and evaluate how a textual theme has been interpreted within the religious tradition at a later stage of history and understand how the text is used to justify the interpretation.

To achieve this outcome the student will draw on key knowledge and key skills outlined in Area of Study 3.

Key knowledge

* the way a theme is developed in the set text
* the ways that the later tradition discussed and understood the theme that has arisen from the text, and why the theme was interpreted in that way
* the ways that the later religious tradition explained its interpretation of the theme by using the original set text
* the ways that the religious tradition was affected by later interpretations of the theme arising from the set text
* the way documents or writings from a period later than the set text have explored the theme

Key skills

* describe how a theme is developed in the set text
* examine how the later religious tradition’s understandings about, and teachings on, the theme have changed at a particular period of history, reflecting the impact of particular circumstances
* evaluate the relevance of the original sacred text to the religious tradition’s understanding of the theme at the later stage
* explore the relationship between the interpretations by a later religious tradition and its foundational texts
* analyse how the later religious tradition was affected by interpretations of the theme
* use passages from the set text and documents or writings of the later religious tradition to support discussion and analysis

School-based assessment

Satisfactory completion

The award of satisfactory completion for a unit is based on whether the student has demonstrated the set of outcomes specified for the unit. Teachers should use a variety of learning activities and assessment tasks to provide a range of opportunities for students to demonstrate the key knowledge and key skills in the outcomes.

The areas of study and key knowledge and key skills listed for the outcomes should be used for course design and the development of learning activities and assessment tasks.

Assessment of levels of achievement

The student’s level of achievement in Unit 4 will be determined by School-assessed Coursework.

School-assessed Coursework tasks must be a part of the regular teaching and learning program and must not unduly add to the workload associated with that program. They must be completed mainly in class and within a limited timeframe.

Where teachers provide a range of options for the same School-assessed Coursework task, they should ensure that the options are of comparable scope and demand.

The types and range of forms of School-assessed Coursework for the outcomes are prescribed within the study design. The VCAA publishes Support materials for this study, which include advice on the design of assessment tasks and the assessment of student work for a level of achievement.

Teachers will provide to the VCAA a numerical score representing an assessment of the student’s level of achievement. The score must be based on the teacher’s assessment of the performance of each student on the tasks set out in the following table.

Contribution to final assessment

School-assessed Coursework for Unit 4 will contribute 25 per cent to the study score.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Outcomes** | **Marks allocated** | **Assessment tasks** |
| **Outcome 1**  Apply exegetical methods to develop an interpretation of all of the passages for special study. | **50** | One or more exegetical exercises. |
| **Outcome 2**  Discuss themes arising from the passages for special study and analyse their social, cultural, religious and historical context, and the importance of the themes to the original audience. | **30** | An essay. |
| **Outcome 3**  Analyse and evaluate how a textual theme has been interpreted within the religious tradition at a later stage of history and understand how the text is used to justify the interpretation. | **20** | A report  OR  An extended response. |
| **Total marks** | **100** |  |

External assessment

The level of achievement for Units 3 and 4 is also assessed by an end-of-year examination.

Contribution to final assessment

The examination will contribute 50 per cent to the study score.

End-of-year examination

Description

The examination will be set by a panel appointed by the VCAA. All the key knowledge and key skills that underpin the outcomes in Units 3 and 4 are examinable.

Conditions

The examination will be completed under the following conditions:

* Duration: 2 hours
* Date: end-of-year, on a date to be published annually by the VCAA
* VCAA examination rules will apply. Details of these rules are published annually in the [*VCE and VCAL Administrative Handbook*](https://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/administration/vce-vcal-handbook/Pages/index.aspx)
* The examination will be marked by assessors appointed by the VCAA.

Further advice

The VCAA publishes specifications for all VCE examinations on the VCAA website. Examination specifications include details about the sections of the examination, their weighting, the question format(s) and any other essential information. The specifications are published in the first year of implementation of the revised Unit 3 and 4 sequence together with any sample material.