

## Stage 2 Religion Studies – 20 Credit

### Assessment Type 4: Investigation (30%)

Select a religious or spiritual phenomenon or a religious issue linked to Australian or global society for investigation.

You should undertake preliminary background research into the phenomenon or issue before seeking more contemporary and contextual information through the use of, for example, interviews, questionnaires, and current media sources.

You will then collect, plan, and organise your materials to produce a comprehensive and integrated written report on your investigation.

**The report should be a maximum of 1000 words for a 10-credit subject, and a maximum of 2000 words for a 20-credit subject.**

Assessment Design Criteria
<b>Knowledge and Understanding</b> The specific features are as follows: KU1 Explanation of different religious beliefs, perspectives, and experiences within and across traditions. KU2 Knowledge and understanding of religious and spiritual ideas, concepts, and issues in selected sources.
<b>Investigation and Application</b> The specific features are as follows: IA1 Development and application of appropriate methods of investigation, including use of inquiry skills. IA2 Application of knowledge and understanding of religions and spiritualities in local and global contexts. IA3 Investigation and explanation of a range of religious and spiritual phenomena. IA4 Clarity of communication, including presentation of conclusions.
<b>Analysis and Evaluation</b> The specific features are as follows: AE1 Analysis of religious and spiritual ideas, concepts, and issues in selected sources. AE2 Analysis of how religion and spirituality in Australia have an impact on, and are influenced by, sociocultural, historical, and/or political events and attitudes. AE3 Critical evaluation of definitions of religion and spirituality.
<b>Reflection</b> The specific features are as follows: R1 Reflection on the personal significance of religions and spiritualities in traditional and contemporary societies. R2 Consideration and explanation of the social significance of religions and spiritualities in traditional and contemporary societies. R3 Exploration of the relevance of religions and spiritualities in contemporary Australia.

## What is Fate and is it Real?

Fate, Latin for predict, is known as 'the universal principle or ultimate agency by which the order of things is presumably prescribed or the decreed cause of events'<sup>1</sup>. It is thought to be a series of inevitable events that have been predestined by fate. Fate is also usually associated with fatalism, which is whatever happens, happens, and nothing can be done about it. Every single human being will believe differently about fate, whether it is through their religious or personal beliefs, as every religion has a different belief on what is fate and whether or not it exists.

Different religious people will have alternate opinions on fate. Buddhists believe, 'Your destiny is shaped according to the combination of conditions pre-determined at birth and other factors that you are able to change through your own efforts'<sup>2</sup>. Some of the factors that are thought to create fate are karma, family, one's own efforts and the influence that is had on others. Karma is known as 'the principle of retributive justice determining a person's state of life and the state of his reincarnations as the effect of his past deeds.'<sup>3</sup> In Buddhism, karma and fate are believed to be closely tied into each other, so that the individuals' own choices and actions will create the karma that will determine their fate.

Muslims believe that fate definitely does exist and that Allah is in charge of determining one's fate. Although this is the case, Muslims believe that Allah has given them free will to choose which path of destiny they go on, but the path is still in the way Allah has dictated it to be. Islamic followers believe strongly about fate, and are known to believe in fatalism, which demands total control of their lives to Allah.

Christians have no set view; some believe that fate does not exist, while others believe in the idea of predestination. Predestination is the notion that the events and consequences in everyone's life have already been determined by God. This view is contrary to the understanding by most Christians that God has given them a free will and the ability to make choices and live with the consequences. The Bible states that God is in charge through a verse in Proverbs, "Men cast lots to learn God's will, but God himself determines the answer"<sup>4</sup>. However, in Revelation; the Bible states "And all were judged according to what they had done"<sup>5</sup>. After analysing these verses, it seems as if God gives people the free will to make their own decisions, which will then affect their future yet most believers have the view that God's decision is final.

<sup>1</sup> Collins English Dictionary -Complete & Unabridged 10th Edition 2009 © William Collins Sons & Co. Ltd. 1979, 1986 © HarperCollins Publishers.

<sup>2</sup> The Essence of Buddha. Pg 140 -<http://www.happy-science.org/fate-and-destiny>

<sup>3</sup> karma. (n.d.). *Collins English Dictionary-Complete & Unabridged 10th Edition*. Retrieved September 17, 2012, from Dictionary.com website:<http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/karma>

<sup>4</sup> Proverbs 21:30, Good News Bible, Published by Bible Societies/Collins, 1976

<sup>5</sup> Revelation 20:13, Good News Bible, Published by Bible Societies/Collins, 1976

In the Bible, the writer also gives an example of times where God has been flexible, and changed his mind; one example would be when Hezekiah asks to be saved, after God had already told him what his plan was. "About this time King Hezekiah fell ill and almost died. The prophet Isaiah son of Amoz went to see him and said to him, 'The Lord tells you that you will not recover. Get ready to die'. Hezekiah turned his face to the wall and prayed. 'Remember, Lord, that I have served you faithfully and loyally, and that I have always tried to do what you wanted me to.' And he began to cry bitterly. Isaiah left the king, but before he had passes through the central courtyard of the palace the Lord told him to go back to Hezekiah, ruler of the Lord's people, and say to him, 'I, the Lord, the God of your ancestor David, have heard your prayer and seen your tears. I will heal you, and in three days you will go to the Temple. I will let you live fifteen years longer'<sup>6</sup>. This chapter in the Bible shows that God can alter his decision and change a person's fate if they cry out to him. This is also shown in the book of James, when he writes 'You do not have what you want because you do not ask God for it'<sup>7</sup>. So in summary, the Bible shows through various stories and incidents that God has overall say of what happens in a person's life. However, He gives people the freedom to decide whether they will obey or disobey the will of God and there are circumstances where God will change his decision or a person's fate if they cry out in prayer to him.

After interviewing an Elder of the \*\*\*\*\* Baptist Church about what he believes when it comes to fate, it is clear this individual does not believe in fate. This is because he believes that the choices that people make and God's intervention can change their destiny. He talked about his personal experiences and how he came to form this view. This particular gentleman has just recently been in recession for Non-Hodgkin's lymphoma cancer and through this incident he believes that has become closer to God and he has shared this experience with others. He believes "If I chose to just resign myself to the cancer, I am sure that by now (one and a half years later) I would be dead. I chose to undergo chemotherapy, which was effective on the cancer cells but more importantly, there were many people that diligently prayed to God for my recovery. I believe that it was a combination of my choice and God's intervention that resulted in my healing. If left to fate (no intervention), the outcome would have been very different."

<sup>6</sup> 2 Kings 20:1-6, Good News Bible, Published by Bible Societies/Collins, 1976

<sup>7</sup> James 4:2, Good News Bible, Published by Bible Societies/Collins, 1976

He also talked about his meetings with people who do have strong belief in fate. One of his personal experiences was when he was travelling in Pakistan on the back of a truck. With him were an Islamic priest, and a few other men. One of the men nearly fell off the back of the truck, which would have surely killed him, but someone grabbed him just in time. Afterwards, the Islamic priest was furious at the man who had just saved his life, as he had 'interfered with the will of Allah' for he believed that it was that man's fate to have fallen off the truck and be killed. The Baptist elder thought that this was a bit extreme and if this attitude prevailed as a norm, then no one would attempt to save anybody from misfortune. The elder rightly pondered the question; 'what if the priest was falling off the truck; would he want someone to save him?' Another experience that took place while being in this community that believes strongly that fate is inevitable, was how people seemed to travel with reckless abandonment and when questioned about this behaviour, would reply in Arabic, a quote from the Koran, "The Will of Allah". As they screamed by each other on roads, barely missing the buses next to them, they believed they would only crash if that was Allah's will and that is their fate. After returning to Australia, he explained he was very glad to finally back on roads where he felt safe, knowing that people on the road are concerned for their own safety.

Voltaire, a French philosopher that is reputed as one of world's greatest thinkers, explains what fate means in his quote, "Each player must accept the cards life deals him or her. But once they are in hand, he or she alone must decide how to play the cards in order to win the game".<sup>8</sup> Through this quote, Voltaire says that fate is when a person is given a series of choices or 'cards' in life. After given these choices, it is up to the player to decide how they 'play the game' and the decisions made will then determine whether or not they will win or lose.

Another visual that is usually used when describing fate is a series of paths. It is said that there are times in life where there is an option to travel down multiple paths that lead onto different futures. Sometimes paths connect up with others people's paths, which results in marriage; other times there is more than one way to reach the same destination. Religious people believe that Allah or God lead or guide them towards the correct path. Others believe that they have full control over their own paths, so they are by themselves while choosing necessary yet life altering decision. In both these cases above, it is necessary to believe in fate for these examples to be relevant in a realistic setting.

<sup>8</sup> Voltaire, [http://www.manifestyourpotential.com/life/game of life/fate destiny/quotes fate and destiny famous.htm](http://www.manifestyourpotential.com/life/game%20of%20life/fate%20destiny/quotes%20fate%20and%20destiny%20famous.htm)  
Accessed 16/09/2012

To gain more background information about what individuals believe on the topic of fate, a short survey was created to find out what the general public believe about fate. The survey was distributed to a number of students, to two ministers of religion and to several other adults. These are the questions and some sample responses:

**Q1. This sought the gender and religious background of the respondents:**

**Q2. Do you believe in fate?**

"Yes", "No" "Sometimes"

**Q3. Why or Why not?**

Sample responses:

*"I believe there is fate because some things that happen in life and I consider this to be fate"*

(Anglican student)

*"I do not believe in fate because if we have no choice in how we live our life then how can be responsible for our actions and how can God condemn us for something that we had no control"* (Baptist adult)

*"All our actions lead to what happens in the future, but our life is already planned (in order) before we are born"* (Christian, adult)

*"I believe in fate because everything happens for a reason"* (Agnostic, adult)

*"I do not believe in fate because I am in charge of my own life"* (Atheist, student)

After analysing all this information about fate, it seems that there are four main views that have been expressed by the average person, which are;

- 1 You have the ability to be in control of your own life, therefore fate does not exist
- 2 There is a higher being or God that is in charge of your life and this higher being knows how your life will turn out or that everything happens for a reason, therefore fate exists.
- 3 You are in charge of making the small choices throughout your life; as where the bigger picture is left up to a higher being.
- 4 Or fate does exist, as everything happens for a reason.

In summary, the survey shows that most Christians believe the third view, that you have the freedom to make choices in the life that will affect your fate, but God is ultimately in charge of your life. Atheists, or people that state they are non-religious, either believe the two extremes, option one or four, where fate does not exist as they are in charge of their own life and nothing can tell them otherwise, or fate does exist as everything happens in life has a purpose and a reason behind it, which will lead to a series of inevitable events.

In conclusion, the belief in fate will alter depending on the religious views of the individual person. Christians are told through the Bible that fate, to an extent, does exist, in which God can be in control of peoples destiny, but as humans, free will is also given to people to make their own mistakes and be judged by the decisions that are made. Other religions, including Atheism, seem to be on either end of the scale, either believing strongly about fate, or not believing in fate at all.

Bibliography

Brother \*\*\*\*, \*\*\*\*\* College \*\*\*\*\* Principal and Religion Teacher  
Ms \*\*\*\*, \*\*\*\*\* College \*\*\*\*\* , Religious Teacher

D\*\*\*\* H\*\*\*\*, \*\*\*\*\* Baptist Church, Elder

S\*\*\*\*\* G\*\*\*\*, \*\*\*\*\* Baptist Church, Pastor

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Assessment Comments	
This investigation is a B grade, and was used as a benchmark in 2012.	
Knowledge and Understanding	
KU1	The different religious beliefs in relation to fate are explained well (Buddhist/Muslim/Christian beliefs, paragraphs 2-4).
KU2	Mostly clear and detailed knowledge of religious concepts shown, informed by references to sacred texts and relevant websites. The evidence demonstrates mostly 'well-informed understanding'. Referencing is somewhat inconsistent. For example, references are made to appropriate Bible stories to enhance points made, but the Muslim beliefs (paragraph 3) are not referenced.
Investigation and Application	
IA1	Clear and appropriate investigation methods used including internet, sacred texts and primary sources via interviews and surveys.
IA3	Some depth of investigation shown through the use of interviews/surveys/online research into the three different religions, and how within these traditions there may still be disagreement in terms of understanding of fate.
IA4	The communication style is at times conversational but mostly clear. Conclusions are gathered throughout. Some reasoned conclusions are drawn (for example, the sections on page 4 relating to Voltaire and to the 'path' analogy). Generally informed reasoning is demonstrated by inconsistent referencing.
Analysis and Evaluation	
AE1	Clear and critical analysis of religious ideas in selected sources is shown at the bottom of page 1 comparing the differing presentations of fate in the Bible. At times the student voice is lost, with large quotes and references from sources.
AE2	Informed analysis of the way that the religious views of fate affect attitudes to fate in contemporary society, for example, regarding illness and accidents. Scripture is used and then is compared to contemporary views.
Reflection	
R2/R3	Overall the investigation shows a well-informed explanation of fate and how it is significant in contemporary society, using interviews and surveys. The investigation also shows the relevance of fate for believers, and how it may direct their actions, for example, marriage.

## Performance Standards for Stage 2 Religion Studies

	Knowledge and Understanding	Investigation and Application	Analysis and Evaluation	Reflection
<b>A</b>	Insightful explanation of different religious beliefs, perspectives, and experiences, within and across traditions. Clear and in-depth knowledge and perceptive understanding of religious and spiritual ideas, concepts, and issues in selected sources.	Sustained and logical development and application of appropriate investigation methods, including highly productive use of inquiry skills. Insightful and appropriate application of knowledge and understanding of religions and spiritualities in local and global contexts. In-depth investigation and detailed explanation of a range of religious and spiritual phenomena. Well-informed, clear, and well-structured communication, and well-reasoned presentation of conclusions.	Perceptive and critical analysis of religious and spiritual ideas, concepts, and issues in selected sources. In-depth and well-informed analysis of the various ways in which religion and spirituality in Australia have an impact on, and are influenced by, sociocultural, historical, and/or political events and attitudes. Insightful and critical evaluation of definitions of religion and spirituality.	Insightful and critical reflection on the personal significance of religions and spiritualities in traditional and contemporary societies. Well-informed and perceptive consideration and explanation of the social significance of religions and spiritualities in traditional and contemporary societies. Well-informed and perceptive exploration of the relevance of religions and spiritualities in contemporary Australia.
<b>B</b>	Well-considered explanation of different religious beliefs, perspectives, and experiences, within and across traditions. Mostly clear and detailed knowledge and well-informed understanding of religious and spiritual ideas, concepts, and issues in selected sources.	Clear development and application of appropriate investigation methods, including productive use of inquiry skills. Well-considered and appropriate application of knowledge and understanding of religions and spiritualities in local and global contexts. Some depth of investigation and accurate explanation of a range of religious and spiritual phenomena. Mostly well-informed, clear and structured communication, and reasoned presentation of conclusions.	Clear and critical analysis of religious and spiritual ideas, concepts, and issues in selected sources. Detailed and well-informed analysis of the various ways in which religion and spirituality in Australia have an impact on, and are influenced by, sociocultural, historical, and/or political events and attitudes. Considered and critical evaluation of definitions of religion and spirituality.	Thoughtful and critical reflection on the personal significance of religions and spiritualities in traditional and contemporary societies. Well-informed consideration and explanation of the social significance of religions and spiritualities in traditional and contemporary societies. Well-informed exploration of the relevance of religions and spiritualities in contemporary Australia.
<b>C</b>	Some considered explanation of different religious beliefs, perspectives, and experiences, within and across traditions. Generally relevant knowledge and informed understanding of religious and spiritual ideas, concepts, and issues in selected sources.	Competent development and application of appropriate investigation methods, including generally productive use of inquiry skills. Appropriate application of knowledge and understanding of religions and spiritualities in local and global contexts. Competent investigation and explanation of a range of religious and spiritual phenomena. Explanation may include some inaccuracies. Generally informed, clear, and structured communication, with some reasoned conclusions.	Generally clear analysis of religious and spiritual ideas, concepts, and issues in selected sources. Informed analysis of some of the ways in which religion and spirituality in Australia have an impact on, and are influenced by, sociocultural, historical, and/or political events and attitudes. Some critical evaluation of definitions of religion and spirituality, tending towards description.	Considered reflection on the personal significance of religions and spiritualities in traditional and contemporary societies. Generally informed consideration and explanation of the social significance of religions and spiritualities in traditional and contemporary societies. Informed exploration of the relevance of religions or spiritualities in contemporary Australia.
<b>D</b>	Description of aspects of more than one religious belief, perspective, or experience, within or across traditions. Identification and some consideration of one or more religious and/or spiritual ideas, concepts, or issues in a selected source or sources.	Application of aspects of an investigation method, including inconsistent use of some inquiry skills. Application of some basic knowledge of religions or spiritualities in local and global contexts. Partial investigation and explanation of aspects of religious and spiritual phenomena, with limited detail and some inaccuracies. Disjointed and partly informed communication, with inclusion of some summary comments.	Description and some attempted analysis or consideration of aspects of religious or spiritual ideas, concepts and issues, with partial reference to sources. Description and some attempted analysis or consideration of one or more ways in which religion and spirituality in Australia have an impact on, and are influenced by, events or attitudes. Some recognition and description of definitions of religion or spirituality.	Some reflection on the personal significance of religions or spiritualities in traditional and contemporary societies. Some basic consideration and description of the social significance of a religion or spirituality in a traditional and contemporary society. Partial exploration of the relevance of religions or spiritualities in contemporary Australia.
<b>E</b>	Identification of one or more beliefs, perspectives, or experiences, in a religious tradition. Limited consideration of any religious or spiritual ideas, concepts, or issues in a selected source.	Attempted application of aspects of an investigation method, including identification of one or more sources of information. Attempted application of some emerging awareness of religions or spiritualities. Communication of some awareness of a religious phenomenon. Attempted communication of limited information.	Attempted description of a religious or spiritual idea, concept, or issue, with limited reference to any sources of information. Description of limited aspects of religion or spirituality in Australia. Listing of some definitions of religion or spirituality.	Recognition of the personal significance of an aspect of religion or spirituality in traditional or contemporary societies. Limited consideration of the social significance of religions or spiritualities in traditional or contemporary societies. Attempted exploration of an aspect of the relevance of religion or spirituality in contemporary Australia.