

Exploring World Religions:
Analytical Essays Compilation

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Chapter 1: Understanding Religion

(1) What is a religion? You've read our textbook author's definition; use that definition as a starting point to go further.

Religion offers a haven for some. Human beings are social beings. They need companionship. As a matter of fact, not a single human being can make it on their own. With this, religion offers people a place one can enter to have community. It is not always about worshipping something. As the textbook puts it, "religion often provides a structure for caring for the needy".

It helps some answer some of life's tough questions: Who are we? Where did we come from? Who created us? Why does the universe exist the way it does? The textbook puts it this way, "Religion helps us relate to the unknown universe around us by answer the basic questions of who we are, where we come from, and where we are going?". To some, religion enables them to discover their purpose and life meaning. To others, it gives them a sense of direction.

A religion allows one to join again or reconnect with something. Many of my family members who hold strong in their beliefs in ancestor worship use their religion to speak with spirits from another world. They claimed to reconnect with these spirits to receive blessings and instruction. At times when a family member becomes sick, they will reconnect with these spirits and look for answers to why their loved ones became ill. Whether as a family they did something that was not pleasing to the family spirits or perhaps a deceased family member spirit is hungry in the spiritual world and need them to sacrifice animals and do burnt offering for them, they reconnect with the spirit to receive answer and direction on how to fix the issue. Some use religion in this way.

(2) Discuss some of the characteristics that religions have in common.

One of the characteristics that religion has in common is Sacredness. As the textbook stated, “Sacredness is a distinction made between the sacred and the ordinary”. The ceremonies in these religions emphasize the differences through the different use of languages, clothing, and architecture. Objects, actions, people, and places may hold the same similarity in sacredness.

Another characteristic is material expression. The physical elements such as statues, paintings, musical compositions, and instruments display the characteristic of different religions. Flowers and plants can express these characteristics also. Lastly, clothing, architecture, and at times specific places are the material expressions of all religions.

Lastly, central myths. These are stories. It tells of religious group beliefs. The stories are retold over and over and are often reenacted to reinforced one’s memory and leave a vivid image. Some examples of central myths can be the enlightenment experience of the Buddha, the exodus of the Israelites from oppression in Egypt, or the death and resurrection of Jesus from the Bible. These stories are known to scholars as “myths”, not because they are not true but because the stories are important to the religion that believes in them.

(3) In addition to characteristics in common among religions, there are some patterns with regard to beliefs, world views, etc., that are exhibited by most religions. Discuss these patterns.

The first pattern exhibited by most religions is a view of the world and life. The questions they ask are not very different, but the answers are. An example of this is time. Christianity views time as being linear. In this sense, time is very important. One cannot go back in time. Once today is over, tomorrow is a new day. Everything done today is history tomorrow. On the

other hand, Buddhism views time as cyclical. There is no end. The textbook puts it this way, “The universe simply moves through endless changes, which repeat themselves over grand periods of time”.

The second pattern is the focus of beliefs and practices display. One of these beliefs and practices is sacramental orientation. This orientation focuses on rituals being carried out correctly. An example of this is the making for the Christian sign of the cross, which is done only with the right hand touching, first, the forehead, then one’s chest, lastly each shoulder. Another belief and practice is prophetic orientation. This can be seen on television during the crusades as a minister is preaching to people on behalf of God. Lastly, mystical orientation. In this orientation one finds unity with God, nature, the universe, or reality. Techniques are often used such as sitting still in deep meditation. This practice allows the mediator to connect and experience unity with a higher being.

The third pattern is the view of male and female roles and status in religion. Male imagery seems to be the dominant picture in religion today, but some evidence has suggested that female divinities were once an important role also. Some female deities known such as Astarte, Asherah, Aphrodite, and Freia are well known through different countries and regions. Perhaps because of the growth of cities and states and the need to establish the military defense, the male position was raised above the female. In the future, however, changes may slowly occur. Some examples of this taking place can be seen in Christian denominations. Women are becoming Pastors of churches and they are holding a high administration role.

(4) Having discussed in last week's Discussion Board postings your own reasons for taking this World Religions course, discuss some of the benefits of studying the major religions of the world cited by our textbook author.

Gaining insight into people is one of the benefits of studying the major religion of the world. By understanding and knowing the person's religious background, one may see why the other person thinks and the reason the way they do. A person's attitudes and values may display through their religious practices. This will help build relationships and trust. A different religion does not automatically make a person into some weirdo. Gaining insight into a people is a benefit of studying the major religion.

Another benefit is the appreciation for the arts in the major religion. Unless a person hates art to the inch degree, one will become appreciated to the many forms of painting, sculpture, music, and architecture other major religions possess. The textbook stated, "Because numerous religious traditions have been among the most significant patrons of art, their study provides a gateway to discovering and appreciating these rich works". If one is fascinated by art they will be drawn to study major religion.

Studying the major religion will help one gain insight into everyday life. Religious influence can be spotted everywhere in our culture. For example, the Jewish practice of a six-day work week followed by a day of rest is what many employers in America use to regulate operation hours. Another example is those who take a public stand and oppose abortion and war base on their religious belief. Still another example is Christmas. Christians celebrate the birth of Christ during this time. Decorations and ornaments such as the star on top of the Christmas tree points to the star over the city of Bethlehem in the Bible. Even the word "Christmas" is just

Christ with "mas" added to the end. Studying the major religion will help one gain insight into everyday life.

(5) *What is the origin and meaning of the word "religion"?*

The origin and meaning of the word "religion" are "to join again" and "to reconnect".

(6) *What is the meaning of "sacred"?*

Sacred is the core or origin of everything. It is the deepest level of reality. It is the sense of mystery originating holiness.

(7) *Define and contrast monotheism and polytheism.*

Monotheism is the belief in one God, a divine being with will and intelligence who is just and compassionate and infinite in everything. Polytheism is the belief in many coexisting gods, each in charge of an aspect of reality.

(8) *Define and contrast atheism and agnosticism.*

Atheism is the denial of the existence of any God or gods. Agnosticism argues that the existence of God cannot be proved.

(9) How are symbols used in religion?

Symbols are used in religion to represent and help human beings experience something of greater complexity. For example, water can represent spiritual cleansing; the sun, health; and a mountain for strength.

(10) What is a sacrament? Give two or three examples of sacraments in a religion with which you are familiar.

A sacrament is a ritual and ceremony that are carried out regularly and correctly as the path to salvation.

Three examples of sacraments in my religion would be baptism, the Lord's supper, and anointing of the head with oil.

(11) Contrast linear and cyclical time in the study of religion.

Some religion such as Christianity believes in linear time. Linear means there is an endpoint. Time is very important. Time is moving in a straight line from point A to point B.

Another religion such as Buddhism believes in cyclical, which means there is no end to time; no final point. They believe that the present is more important than the future.

Chapter 2: Indigenous Religions

(1) In chapter 2, the textbook author uses various terms for “indigenous religions”: traditional, aboriginal, indigenous, tribal, nonliterate, primal, native, oral, and basic. Select four or five of these terms and discuss why you believe each of those terms is applicable to the religions covered in this chapter.

The terms “Oral” and “nonliterate” are applicable to the religion covered in this chapter because indigenous religion never had any written text at the start. Most of the indigenous religions were spread without written words. No one can have a hard copy of the original text and teach from it. For this religion to spread as far as it did, it must be through word of mouth.

The word “tribal” correctly describes indigenous religions. Many Natives had their own belief system. They had their own tribes they were part of. Since there were many Native American Nations and languages, one can see that they all had different practices of the religion. One tribe will do things this way and another will do things differently. Indigenous religions existed in groups setting and were passed down to their children generation after generation.

Lastly, the terms “aboriginal” and “basic” fit well with indigenous religions. People from early on who inhabited the land before the colonist arrived had this religion. This religion existed from the start. It was one of the first religions created by man and passed down to many generations. One can ever say that it was the building block and foundation to many religions today.

(2) Why do so many indigenous religions have such a reverence for nature?

In the worldview of indigenous religions, humanity is very much a part of nature. The concept of animism is very much rooted in indigenous religions. Every living thing has a life force. All trees, plants, birds, animals, and human beings possess a life force. Even the motion of water, the sun, moon, stars, clouds, and wind have a life force, not to mention mountains, rocks, and soil. Indigenous religions believe that powerful spirits live in these natural objects.

Indigenous religions also believe that everything can be seen as a part of the same reality. Nothing differentiates the natural and supernatural. Humans and nonhumans are the same. It is as though there is a sense of kinship between the two. The textbook puts it this way: “Everything has both its visible ordinary reality and a deeper, invisible sacred reality”.

According to the indigenous religion, a spirit inhabits everything in the world. With this, all humans must have reverence for all things, including nature. If the animals and plants that humans kill and eat are not respected in the right way, the spirit of the animals and plants can retaliate. To receive blessing from the spirit and avoid any form of harm, humans must have reverence for all creation and care of them.

(3) Discuss several of the sacred practices that are common in indigenous religions.

Some sacred practices that are common in indigenous religions are rites of passage, rules regarding behavior, sacrifice, access to the spirit world, and artifacts.

Rites of passage is a ceremony or event that marks an important life event. One such event is the birth of a child. A woman that is about to give birth must travel by herself to a sacred place built for that purpose. As the textbook states it, “Birth is considered a powerful time for the child and mother”. The blood from birth is believed to have dangerous power. Regarding these

things, a woman must give birth in a sacred place that was built for that purpose, and she must go off by herself to bear her child.

Another sacred practice known as taboo is a rule that forbids certain behavior regarding objects and people. One taboo requires a menstruating woman to separate herself from everyone else because her menstruating blood is considered powerful and dangerous. Another taboo requires certain rituals to be performed for the dead because of the fear of angering the deceased spirit. Also exist is a taboo that regulates social behavior towards a high-rank individual. No one can insult or act inappropriately towards these high-rank officials. In some African peoples, common people are forbidden to eat the food of the king. These sacred practices are rules that forbid certain behaviors in the indigenous religions.

When a taboo is violated, a sacrifice must be made to atone for the person or group. This is considered a sacred practice also. Offering such as food and drink can usually compensate for the person or group. In some cases where the spirits are angry by the broken taboo, an animal sacrifice must take place. The blood of the animal is poured out on the ground or the altar. Proceeding this, all the participants will eat the cooked animal and feed the spirit, and include the spirit in the meal. Another form of sacrifice is human sacrifice. Sometimes cannibalism is practiced also. Some Aztec and Hawaiian religions and tribal people of New Guinea practiced this for some time. When a taboo is dishonored, a sacrifice must be made to atone for the offense.

One sacred practice takes place when a shaman accesses the spirit world. The shaman acts as an intermediary between two worlds, the ordinary and spirit world. The shaman conducts a special ritual to contact the spirit world, receive instruction, and convey the instruction to the people. Instruction received by the shaman is used to help and heal the people. The textbook

describes Shaman this way, “The Shaman understands the primordial unity of things, experiencing a shared identity with animals and the rest of nature”. This is one of the sacred practices in indigenous religions.

The last sacred practices in indigenous religion are the creation of artifacts and arts. Objects such as masks, drums, statues, rattles are religious expressions. These artifacts and arts hold great meaning. As the textbook state it, “They are filled with meaning and remind practitioners of the specifics of the oral tradition”. This form of artistic religious expression does not rely on the written word. The art associated with it tells of their history and story.

(4) Discuss the state of indigenous religions today.

The indigenous religions are active and alive, spreading and adapting to different ways of life and culture. For example, urban areas such as Brazil and the Caribbean are seeing more practice of the Yoruba tradition. Some cities in North America are seeing growth also. More and more people have become aware of the indigenous religions. In countries such a Mexico, Ecuador, and Peru, the government are protecting the rights of the indigenous people more. People are cherishing and protecting the religions.

There are threats, however, to religion in some places, which makes the religion look delicate. The spread of culture, loss of natural environments, traditional languages, and conversion to other religion has taken a toll on the religion. From television to the internet, urban culture is spreading rapidly. One form of this culture change is clothing. Traditional clothing during formal occasions is different from urban clothing like informal clothing, t-shirts, and baseball caps. The loss of lands and the natural environment threaten the indigenous religions. With the natural environment being repurposed and reconstructed into buildings and houses,

one's personal meaning and identity are lost. Losing one's native languages is devastating. Only about 500.000 indigenous people still speak their languages. The last threat is the spread of other religions. Christianity since the start of the nineteenth century has been spreading in sub-Saharan Africa. Many Western denominations and African churches had been formed.

Despite the threats, the indigenous religion has not dimmish but continues to flourish. The textbook describes their survival like this: "In their purest form, they live on in those pockets where modern influence has penetrated the least, such as in Borneo and the Amazon River basin". Some countries like Taiwan, South Korea, and Japan have shamanism existing alongside Buddhism, Christianity, and other religions. In other places such as North America, the Pacific, and in Africa, the traditional culture in canoe building, tattooing, dance, and wood sculpture is still ongoing. Their stories are being retold to the younger generation. Younger Native is relearning the traditional dance and practices. Despite all threats, the indigenous religions continue to slowly grow and had not ceased to exist.

(5) *What is **animism**?*

Animism is the belief and concept that everything in the universe is alive. Everything such as the trees, plants, birds, animals, human beings, the motion of water, the sun, moon, clouds, and wind are alive.

(6) *In general, what is the **relationship between the human and animal worlds** among indigenous religions?*

The relationship between the human and animal words among indigenous religions is kinship. It is as though both are blood-related.

(7) How do indigenous religions, in general, select their “sacred spaces”?

Indigenous religions select their sacred spaces wherever power and holiness are strongest, and wherever they can go to renew their own strength.

(8) How are ancestors viewed in most indigenous religions?

In most indigenous religions ancestors are viewed in high respect. There is little distinction between a god and an ancestor. The spirit of the ancestors are well treated well because of respect for their power.

(9) What “big events” in life are usually marked by ceremonies in indigenous religions?

Big events in life such as the birth of a child, naming of the newborn, a person’s entry into adulthood, a young girl's first menstrual period, marriage, and death are marked by ceremonies in indigenous religions.

(10) What is a taboo? What are some examples of taboos in our modern culture, and are they religious or cultural in nature?

Taboo is a rule or rules that forbids certain acts and behaviors regarding certain objects, people, animals, days, or phases of life. Some examples of taboos in our modern culture are polygamy, incest, and marriage between close relations. These taboos are cultural in nature.

(11) What is a shaman, and what role does the shaman play in indigenous religions?

A shaman is someone who acts as an intermediary between the visible, ordinary world, and the spirit world. They make contact in this realm, receive instruction and vision from it, and

relate the message to the people. As the textbook puts it, “A shaman plays the roles of priest, oracle, psychologist, and doctor”

Chapter 3: Hinduism

*(1) Discuss **karma** and its role in Hinduism. (pg. 83)*

Karma is the belief that all living thing that has a life force can be reborn into another form when it loses one form. In other words, if something dies, it is reborn into something else. This process is called and known as reincarnation. This belief of rebirth by Hindus declares that human beings have at one point come from a “lower” form, such as animal, insect, and plants. After this “lower’ form dies, it was reborn into a human being.

This belief is not only limited to the “lower” form being reincarnated to humans only. Karma is also the belief that human beings have the capability of being reborn into “higher” forms of life, such as superhuman beings, and demigods. They can also be reincarnated into a good and wealthy family. This will depend on the decision one makes in life. One saying I am familiar with is this: “what you sow is what you reap”.

The karma controls the course of one’s rebirth. The root word of karma means “to do”, and this implies moral consequences that follow with every act. The textbook describes karma like this, “Karma is the moral law of cause and effect, and belief in karma is a belief that every action has an automatic moral consequence”. One with good karma will have a good rebirth. Those with bad karma will have a painful reborn. This belief allows human beings to choose their future birth. If a person lived a good life, their next life will be even better. If they lived a bad life, their next life will be worst.

(2) Discuss *the life and teachings of Mohandas Gandhi*. Be sure to include information on his reinterpretation of the *Bhagavad Gita*. (pg. 106 – 108)

Gandhi learned the basic ideas of nonviolence from Hinduism and Jainism as a young man. He became a vegetarian because of his belief. Later in life, while Gandhi studied law in London, he became well acquainted with the Christian Bible. He was most impacted by Jesus's call to forgiveness and nonviolence in the Sermon of the Mount (Matt. 5-7) in the New Testament. This influenced his usage of nonviolent protests in the future.

In London, Gandhi also read the **Bhagavad Gita**, which was the religious literary work about Krishna. He discovered and obtained the wisdom of Hinduism outside his own native country. The idea of an active but selfless human being impacted him profoundly. Gandhi wrote, "Such a person is a person who is without egotism, who is selfless, who treats alike cold and heat, happiness and misery, who is ever forgiving, who is always contented, whose resolutions are firm, who has dedicated mind and soul to God, who causes no dread, who is not afraid of others". Gandhi will take his belief and disciple and teach others in the years to come.

In 1915, Gandhi returned to India and sought out independence from Britain through nonviolent protest. He was imprisoned numerous times; however, during it all, he encouraged his followers to remain nonviolent. The textbook describes Gandhi's belief in nonviolence like this: "Gandhi not only believe in nonviolence for its own sake, but he also thought that it gave great moral power to its adherents. He believes that nonviolence could sway those who were cruel, thoughtless, and violent". All possible nonviolent techniques were used by Gandhi, such as marches, hunger strikes, talks, demonstrations, and publicity. Gandhi taught people that violence only fuels more violence and dehumanizes those who are violent, whereas nonviolence creates respect from others, spiritual greatness, and ultimate freedom.

*(3) Discuss the **yogas** and **their role in Hinduism**. (pg. 89)*

Yoga has the meaning of “union”. It is closely related to the words “join” and “yoke”. There are different types of yoga methods. These methods are used to help people live spiritually and experience spiritual freedom. The textbook describes it this way: “A yoga is a way for people to perfect their union with the divine...” People have different personalities and castes, and with it comes different needs and spiritual paths. These different personalities, castes, needs, and spiritual paths will determine the appropriate yoga one will partake in.

The first type of yoga is called **jnana yoga** (“Knowledge Yoga”). Those that practice this type of yoga are mainly priests and intellectuals. Jnana yoga brings understanding to one’s divine self by studying the Upanishads and the Bhagavad Gita. Learning from a spiritual teacher also grants profound insight into one’s divine self. Jnana yoga teaches that everything in the universe is one. Everything is the same. Much the ocean’s waves and drops of water in the waves. Though these may be different entities, they are all the same ocean. Those that practice jnana yoga meditate on this truth.

Karma yoga (“Action Yoga) proposes that all work done unselfishly can be a way to perfection. This yoga is work base. People will usually do things base on compensation, praise received, and pleasure. Karma yoga is a spiritual practice of selfless actions towards others. As the textbook describes it, “It is deeds performed without a desire for any reward”. Those that practice selfless acts towards others practice karma yoga.

Bhakti yoga (“Devotion Yoga”) is like the affection and love a man has towards his wife. The feeling in this relationship with his wife is real and pure. Hinduism utilizes this same passion and devotion to a god as well. Krishna made this statement in the Bhagavad Gita,

“Regard me as your dearest loved one. Know me to be your only refuge”. Much affection is required from mere human beings towards a god. Different forms of devotion such as chants, songs, food offerings, and the anointing of statues are ways to express one’s devotion to the god.

Raja yoga (“Royal Yoga”) is the type of yoga that is associated with meditation. Some of the basic meditation is sitting still, turning inward, and calming and clearing one’s mind. This type of meditation can be done in a short period, which lowers stress and brings peace to a person. If the meditations last for long periods, a new state of consciousness may come about. Raja yoga enables one to empty their mind of thoughts while focusing on something else.

Hatha Yoga (“Force Yoga”) gears toward more physical exercises. Balancing, stretching, and breathing exercises are associated with hatha yoga. These physical exercises were created to aid long periods of meditation. More people are familiar with Hatha yoga than the other. It has become part of daily life for many people around the world.

Kundalini Yoga is a combination of both raja yoga and hatha yoga. There are seven psychic centers called “chakras” that are taught in kundalini yoga. Both mediation and physical exercise enable the meditator to live spiritual energy from one center to the next. This spiritual energy is known as “kundalini”. It is envisioned as a coiled serpent. The chakras are like a gateway for the kundalini to pass through. As it passes through it brings knowledge and happiness to the person, and when the kundalini reaches its peak at the crown of the head, the individual experiences deep pleasure.

*(4) Discuss **Hinduism's view of animals** and how that view might have **originated**. (Pg. 99)*

Hinduism displays great kindness to animals. They do not kill or eat animals. Hinduism views animals as prehuman beings who are still in their spiritual evolution. These animals will be reincarnated into a human being one day. With that, much affection and care are display to animals. There is a sense of closeness with the people and the animal.

Cows receive many adorations. Cows would often time wonder the streets in Indian. People would walk around the animals and vehicles will drive around the cows. This special veneration the cows receive may have come from the pre-Vedic worship in the Indus River valley of the bull or cow. The bull or cow there was a symbol of fertility and economic value. The textbook describes the possession of a cow like this: “to have a cow is to have milk and butter, fuel, and the warmth and comfort associated with a household pet”. Cows are indeed important to Hinduism and great care is given toward the animal.

There are several possible origins of Hinduism's devotion to animals. It is believed that one possible origin of Hinduism devotion to animals came from the ancient deification of powerful animals. The elephant and the tiger are some of these animals. Another may be the human desire to nullify dangerous animals such as the snake, rat, and monkey. And lastly, it may come from the idea that humans and animals originated the same way through reincarnation.

*(5) Compare and contrast the **Vedas and Upanishads**. (pg. 80)*

Both Vedas and Upanishads are written works. Vedas are the earliest sacred books of Hinduism, and Upanishads comprise about a hundred written works that record insights into external and internal reality. The difference between the two is this: only hereditary priests can

be religious matters according to Vedic whereas Upanishads states that a person who has the experiences can be a spiritual master.

*(6) Compare and contrast **brahman and atman.** (pg. 81 -82)*

Atman is the spirit, self, or soul of an individual. A good translation is the “deepest self”. It is the experience of the sacred within oneself.

Brahman is the lived experience. It is something that can be known and not just by believing. It often refers to the experience of the sacred within nature and the external universe.

*(7) What is the **significance of the samsara**, the “wheel of life,” in Hindu belief? (pg. 84)*

Samsara is the circle of constant rebirth. It is the suggestion that struggle, suffering, and the entire world is full of change. It is the belief that everyone is being reborn, having come from different earlier forms and going on to emerge in new forms in the future.

*(8) Explain **Hinduism’s caste system.** (pg. 86)*

Hinduism’s caste system is the division of society into social classes that are created by birth or occupation. It discouraged members of different castes from intermarrying. It is the predominant social system of Hinduism. These social classes are known as the priest (brahmin), the warrior-noble (kshatriya), the merchant (Vaishya), the peasant (shudra), and the untouchable (dalit).

(9) What are the **three gods of the Trimurti**? (pg. 94)

The three gods of the Trimurti are Brahman, Vishnu, and Shiva.

(10) What is a **guru**? (pg. 90, 98, 99)

A guru is a spiritual advisor, teacher. The etymology of the word guru puts it this way: “the one who removes darkness.” People may seek out these individuals and visit them regularly to seek advice. They are recognized as a person of holiness. Men and women can both be gurus.

(11) What is **Hare Krishna** and where did it begin? (Pg. 113)

Hare Krishna is a member of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON). Member of this group worship Krishna, chant daily, has a vegetarian diet, and wear orange robe. The Hare Krishna movement was founded in New York in 1967.

Chapter 4: Buddhism

(1) Summarize the life of Siddhartha Gautama. (pg 120 – 125)

Siddhartha Gautama is “known as the Buddha or the Awakened One.” Siddhartha was born miraculously from his mother’s side, near her heart. His mother’s name was Maya. He was born as “the son of a prince of the Shakya tribe in what is today Nepal, in the lower Himalaya Mountains. Unfortunately, his mother died one week after giving birth to him. He was raised by his aunt.

As a child growing up, Siddhartha’s body was inspected by a sage who predicted that the special markings on his body meant he would grow up to be an illustrious person. This meant he would either follow his father’s footsteps and become a “world ruler” or he would become a spiritual leader. Siddhartha’s father wanted him to do well in life. He kept him safe from being exposed to suffering. Siddhartha got married when he was young. He married a woman who was selected by his father. He and his wife had a son. Siddhartha was well educated and trained as a warrior. This helped him to one day take over his father’s role as a great king, a “world ruler.”

One day, Siddhartha disobeyed his father and did the opposite of what his father did not want him to do. His father had told him to not leave the royal grounds, but he did anyway. He had left to go see a town outside of the premises. He witnessed the “suffering of ordinary life” such as being toothless or having diseases. However, he also witnessed a holy man who appeared to be content with not having any possessions. Eventually, Siddhartha sought out a teacher, something that was common in Indian spirituality. As he traveled from one teacher to another. He learned techniques of meditation and discussed a great length of philosophy with others. However, I still was not able to find his answers.

After spending six years looking for answers to his questions regarding suffering and death, he set out in the company of five other nomadic “seekers” to find the answers he was longing for. Siddhartha lived on little food, water, and rest. He purified himself spiritually and rid himself of all distractions. One night while meditating under a full moon, Siddhartha entered deep states of awareness. The textbook puts it like this: “He saw in his imagination his past lives, fathomed the laws of karma that govern everyone, and finally achieved insight into release from suffering and rebirth”. He finally gained the profound understanding he longed for. To Siddhartha, suffering, aging, and death were now viewed from a new perspective. It is something no one can avoid in life, however, there is the possibility of release through them all. Shortly after this came to his new name: the Buddha, the Awakened One.

For the rest of his life, he traveled to villages in northeast India, teaching his new insight and understanding of life. Many followed him; some donated land, groves, and building to this new movement. Soon, monks and nuns emerge from Buddha’s leadership. His way was a path of moderation. It was a path that one can take to abstain from overindulgence of food, worldly pleasure, and life worries and trouble. It was a life of simplicity, meditations, and detachment.

At age eighty, the Buddha ate some food offering that was spoiled and become extremely ill. Knowing that his death was near he called his disciples to himself and reminded them that everything will eventually die, even the Buddha. In his final words, the Buddha instructed them to trust in their own insights and use self-control to obtain perfection and inner peace. After this, he turned to his right side and died.

(2) Although there are numerous forms of Buddhism, they share the view that reality manifests itself in three characteristics, or marks. Discuss the Three Marks of Reality. (pg 126-128)

The Three Marks of Reality are constant change, a lack of permanent identity, and the existence of suffering. As stated in our textbook, “One of the things the Buddha recommended is that we look at life as it really is. When we do, he said, the first thing we notice is life’s constant change or impermanence.” When changes occur in our life, especially when we least expect them, we are often astonished by them. However, we do not realize that the things we experience in life are never the same. For example, we can become too comfortable with our families, friends, career, etc. without realizing that changes are actually happening. Our family members and friends, including ourselves, are changing especially with our physical appearances. It is interesting when we look back at old photos of ourselves or family members, and we realized how much everyone has grown and changed. “As the Buddha taught, the wise person expects change, accepts it, and even savors it. The wise person might also reflect that just as joys do not last forever, neither do sorrows.”

The second Three Marks of Reality is a lack of permanent identity. This means that each person and each thing is not only changing but is made up of parts that are also changing. This concept is referred to as “no permanent soul” or “no self.” “The Pali term is anatta. It describes the Buddha’s refusal to accept the Hindu notion of timeless, unchanging reality underlying everything – people, things, essences, and god.” An example is a car that consist of different parts such as the engine, tires, gas, brakes, lights, etc. These different parts are what make a car drivable. Without tires, the car would not be able to move. Without the brakes, the car would not be able to stop. Without the engine, we would not be able to start the car. The Buddhist view of this is sensible.

The third Three Marks of Reality are the existence of suffering, also known as dukkha. It is translated as “dissatisfaction” or “difficulty.” In other words, this means that we can never be fully satisfied in life. For example, unexpected things can occur no matter how well we plan out our day of what we are doing, where we are going, or when things will get done. This can cause frustration and misery. Another example is that we feel excited when we are buying a new vehicle. However, we do not realize that this means we have to spend more money on car insurance, repairs, and maintenance for the vehicle. “The Buddha concluded that to live means inescapably to experience sorrow and difficulty.”

(3) Discuss the Four Noble Truths. (Page 128-130)

The Four Noble Truths are a linked chain of truths about life. They comprise the heart of Buddhas’ teachings. Some of the teachings are left unexplained. The Truths are 1) to live is to suffer, 2) suffering comes from desire, 3) to end suffering, end desire, and 4) release from suffering is possible and can be attained by following the Noble Eightfold Path. Some teachings are grouped into fours and eights.

The First Noble Truth is that to live is to suffer. As stated in our textbook, “birth is attended with pain, decay is painful, disease is painful, death is painful.” Every day we are faced with different experiences and challenges. We have to be ready to handle them. For example, as adults, there are times when we get so busy with life that we start to have a “to-do checklist” instead of living in the moment. We forget to enjoy the little things in life and most importantly, spend time with the people we love because we cannot take back the moments and times that passes by.

The Second Noble Truth is that suffering comes from desire. Buddhism believes that the suffering “comes from wanting what you cannot have and from never being satisfied with what you do have.” Trishna (Sanskrit) translates as “desire.” As human beings, we have many different desires such as sleep, clothing, and food. We live in a world where things are constantly changing which can affect our every day desires. For example, some people may chase after material goods to fulfill their desires with hopes that they will feel better. However, this can leave them feeling empty on the inside.

The Third Noble Truth is that to end suffering is to end desire. This Truth means the end of suffering comes to an end when one realizes that what one is craving is true reality, not illusions of reality. This Truth is moderated for laypeople. People are recommended to focus on the present moment instead of the past or future of their desires. “The essence of the Third Noble is this: You cannot always change the outside world, but you can change yourself and the way that you experience the world.”

The Fourth Noble Truth is that release from suffering is possible and can be attained by following the Noble Eighthfold Path. According to our textbook, “the ultimate goal of Buddhism is nirvana” which means “suggests many things: end suffering, inner peace, and liberation from the limitations of the world.” A person will have self-control after they have attained nirvana. This is “also believed to end karma and rebirth after the present life. To reach nirvana, Buddhism recommends following the Noble Eightfold Path.”

(4) Compare and contrast the three main branches of Buddhism: Theravada Buddhism, Mahayana Buddhism, and Vajrayana Buddhism (pg. 135-162)

Theravada Buddhism took on the conservative approach to protect the teaching and practices of Buddhas through many means. As a community of monks, the ideal of reaching perfections through detachment and desirelessness was profoundly taught. The goal of the community is to learn Buddha's teachings and pass them on to the next generation. Monks wore orange robes and go out daily to receive food. Many weddings, funerals, and events are incomplete without the monk's presence. During these gatherings, the monks chant from the sutras to provide blessings to the family members. There is a "temporary ordination" in Theravada Buddhism besides the custom ordination performed to men who want to become a monk. This temporary ordination is believed to greatly influence the formation of young men's characters. This is how Theravada Buddhism took on the conservative approach to protect the teaching and practices of Buddha.

Mahayana Buddhism stresses that all people can attain nirvana and not only monks. Enlightenment and attachment from the world are possible for everyone. Also, Mahayana believes and stresses that enlightenment is a call to compassion. In other words, to stay in a constant state of enlightenment a person must save others through empathy, sympathy, and kindness to save himself. The person who does this is the "bodhisattva", the enlightenment being. As the textbook stated, "kindness is the supreme sign of enlightened awareness". Rituals and speculations, which were discouraged by the Buddha, are allowed in Mahayana Buddhism because of the religious needs people possess. Those that cannot benefit from studies and meditations will be able to achieve enlightenment through the use of ritual, imagery, and

religious objects. With this, one can say that most of all religious and philosophical needs had been met through Mahayana Buddhism.

Vajrayana Buddhism, also known as Tantric Buddhism, opposed the original teaching of Buddhists. In Tantric Buddhism, it has been taught that the body and all its energies could be used to teach awakening. A good example of this is sexual union. This powerful experience of unity can be unitized to attain enlightenment. Hinduism has its influence in Tantric Buddhism, mainly in pairing a male and a female deity, and its commitment and love of many deities. Monks were known as doctors and shamans for the people. The textbook put it this way: “they were expected to bring health, control weather, and protect worshipers from death”. It is also a common belief that spiritual leaders are reincarnations of earlier spiritual leaders who are considered emanations of Buddhas and bodhisattvas, which will solve the problem of transmission of leadership. Rituals, objects, music, and dance plays a major role in Tantric Buddhism. All of this help protect one from the oppression of demons and evil spirit.

(5) Approximately when was Buddhism “born”? What is the title usually assigned to this period of time? (Hint: It was in chapter 3, and it’s the “_____ Age.” We’ll use this term throughout our semester of study, and see the importance of this time period in numerous religions of the world.) (pg 80)

Buddhism was “born” approximately around 500 BCE which is also known as the Axis Age.

(6) What are the Three Jewels of Buddhism? (pg 125)

The Three Jewels of Buddhism is, the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Sangha.

(7) What is ahimsa? (p131)

Ahimsa means to “do no harm.” It “discourages causing not only physical pain but also psychological hurt or the exploitation of another.

(8) How does the Buddhist sense of karma differ from that of Hinduism? (p132)

The Buddhist sense of karma “is thought to accompany and affect the elements of personality that reappear in later lifetimes.” Hinduism’s sense of karma is that it holds on to the soul as it passes from life to life in reincarnation.

(9) What is nirvana? What Hindu concept is similar? (p132)

Nirvana is the thought of as existence beyond limitation. Moksha, which means “liberation”, is the Hindu concept that is similar.

(10) Discuss the unique emphases of Zen Buddhism. (p154)

It is a school of Mahayana Buddhism that began in China and carried to Japan. The name, Zen, is from the seventh step of the Noble Eightfold Plan. The word is chan in Chinese, and zen in Japanese. “Chan refers to the sect in China, and Zen refers to the sect as it developed in Japan.” This is considered meditation-based Buddhism. They do not rely on scripture or rituals because they do it by personal experiences and training.

(11) What factors led to increased interest in Buddhism in the United States in the second half of the 20th century? (p165)

Buddhism is attractive because its essential teachings seem to agree with modern values. Others are fascinated with it being nonviolent as a standard civilized behavior in a multicultural world. A new type of Buddhism emerged of the three groups also known as engaged Buddhism. This movement consists of a variety of people who worked together for social betterment. Because of their work, there are now Buddhist chaplains in the military, websites for dating, and meditation programs in prisons.

Chapter 5: Jainism & Sikhism

(1) Summarize the life of Mahavira. (PAGE 179)

Jainism is somewhat similar to Buddhism, which was an important rival in India. Nataputta Vardhamana is the founder of Jainism. As stated in our textbook, “he is usually referred to by an honorary title, Mahavira, meaning “great man” or “hero.” The dates of when he lived is not certain. Jainism was founded during 599-527 BCE, but there are some scholars who believe he lived later during 540-468 BCE.

Mahavira was born into an aristocratic family of noble clan. Because he was the second son, he did not have a lot of responsibilities such as caring for his parents. His older brother was responsible for this. There are different predictions whether he got married or not. One branch of Jains said that he got married and had a child. Another branch said he never married. However, they all agreed that at the age of thirty, he left home to live the life of a wandering holy man.

After he left the home, he experienced harshness toward himself. He also received harshness from other people. It was reported that he would pull out his hair when he renounced the world. He constantly moved from place to place as a way to avoid any attachments to people and places. After he lost his loincloth, he was entirely naked for the rest of his life. He begged for food and was gentle to avoid causing injuries to any living thing. For example, he was careful when walking down a road as a way to avoid crushing even an ant.

According to our textbook, “after 12 years of meditation, wandering, and extreme mortification, Mahavira, at the age of 42, had an experience of great liberation.” He was no longer in pain, suffering, shame, or loss because he had been completely free from all ties of the world. Because of his experience, he is called a jina, which means conqueror. Interestingly, the

religion Jainism got their name from this title. For the next thirty years, Mahavira taught his doctrines and organized an order of naked monks. He died approximately at the age of seventy-two at the village of Pava, in northeastern India.

(2) Jainism has five ethical requirements which monks and nuns must keep; they are, however, just recommendations for all other followers of the religion. List and discuss the five requirements. (PAGE 181-183)

Jainism has five ethical requirements which monks and nuns must keep. These ethical requirements are quite strict. According to our textbook, some have the flexibility to adjust their practice to their particular life situations. Also, these ethical requirements are not always lived out perfectly by individuals. The five ethical requirements are nonviolence, nonflying, nonstealing, chastity, and nonattachment.

The first ethical requirement is nonviolence, also known as *ahimsa*, which is best translated as “gentleness” or “harmlessness.” Jainism believes that all living beings are equal. According to our textbook, “Jain laypeople avoid occupations that would harm insects or animals” Therefore, “hunting and fishing are forbidden, as are slaughtering or selling animal flesh.” Even farmers avoid farming because they do not want to hurt small animals and insects living in the fields. Jains pursued careers such as business, education, medicine, and law because they do not cause any harm.

The second ethical requirement is nonlying. Jainism insists that one should not only refrain from falsehood, but they should always speak the truth. They believe that lying and exaggeration are dangerous, and can easily hurt other people. They have earned respect due to the mindfulness of their speech and reputation for being honest. According to our textbook, “at

the same time, Jainism teaches that “absolute truth” is impossible to find or express because everyone sees a situation from a unique point of view.”

The third ethical requirement is nonstealing. Jains believe that they should not take anything from anyone unless it is being given to them. In addition, they should not take anything that does not belong to them. When they are given something, they should not take more than what they need. If they do, this can be considered theft in Jainism. As stated in our textbook, “Stealing arises from improper desire and causes pain to others.”

The fourth ethical requirement is chastity. This means that monks and nuns are to abstain from sensual pleasure which is called celibacy. It is required for them to observe this vow. If they are married, this means sexual fidelity to their spouse. They should not have any physical relationship other than with their own spouse.

The fifth ethical requirement is nonattachment. As human beings, we may find ourselves being attached to different things such as our family, home, money, or possessions. Jainism believes that these attachments can become bondages to oneself and take control of them. This could cause someone to fall into sin that can result in greed, selfishness, hatred, etc. According to our textbook, “For monks and nuns, this requirement is interpreted more severely.”

(3) Summarize the life of Nanak. (PAGE 188)

As stated in our textbook, “Nanak, the founder of Sikhism, was born in 1469 in what is today Pakistan.” He was raised in a Hindu family. He was married and had two children. He had many jobs such as a herder and a clerical assistant to a sultan. He and his Muslim friend, Mardana, developed a devotional association. Both of them met during the evenings to sing hymns and to discuss religious ideas.

Nanak had experienced a very powerful revelation. He stayed in the forest for three days after bathing in a river and performing religious ablutions there. He believed he was taken into a divine presence. This is where he had encountered God. He learned from this experience “that there is only one God, beyond all human names and conceptions.”

According to our textbook, “Nanak referred to the fundamental divine reality as the True Name. This phrase signified that all names and terms that human beings apply to God are limited.” This also meant that the divine was past all human conception. He realized that Hindus and Muslims also worshipped the same God. He had claimed that when True Name of God is experience, there is no “Hindu” and there is no “Muslim.”

Nanak left his family and home in order to increase his new understanding and knowledge. His friend, Mardana, also went with him on this journey. Both of them visited holy sites throughout northern India. Nanak preached and made disciples. While he sang devotional songs, Mardana assisted him by playing musical accompaniment. Nanak wore clothing that was a combination of Hindu and Muslim elements. As stated in our textbook, “He wore the Hindu dhoti, uniting it with an orange Muslim coat and a Muslim cap.”

Both Nanak and Mardana continued their journey of devotional teaching until Mardana died in his late sixties. Soon after this took place, Nanak realized his time was coming to an end. Therefore, he gave one of his chosen disciples to take over his authority and work. He died at the age of seventy which was in year 1539. “Nanak is commonly called Guru Nanak and is recognized as the first of a line of ten Sikh gurus (“spiritual teachers”)”, according to our textbook.

(4) Discuss the primary beliefs and practices of Sikhism. (PAGE 192)

Sikhism believes that there is only one God. Nanak believed that when the True Name of God is experienced, there is no “Hindu” and there is no “Muslim.” Sikhism believes in reincarnation and karma. As stated in our textbook, “Because the body and physical world by nature bind and limit the spirit, the spirit must overcome physically as it seeks freedom and absorption in the divine. This process, though may take many lifetimes to accomplish.”

Instead of reflecting one practice, they reflect five practices. The five practices are called the Five K’s. They are Kesh, Khanga, Kach, Kirpan, and Kara. These practices are only observed by those who have entered the Khalsa, the special Sikh order. These practices were adopted to promote strength and self-identity.

Kesh is associated with the lion and its power. This means the hair is worn in a topknot and is covered with a turban or cloth. Khanga is a hair comb to hold the long hair in place. Kach is a special underwear which indicated alertness and readiness to fight. Kirpan is a sword used for defense. Lastly, Kara is a bracelet of iron or steel that symbolizes strength.

(5) What is Jainism’s position on the origin of the world? (PAGE 176)

Jainism rejects belief in a Creator and sees the universe simply as natural forces in motion. It also recognizes spiritual potential of each person.

(6) What is the significance of a broom in Jain teaching?

They walk with a broom to sweep clear the ground before they walk through to avoid any life harm to insects.

(7) Compare and contrast the Digambaras (PAGE 184) and Shvetambaras (PAGE 184).

According to our textbook, “The Digambara branch holds that everything must be renounced, including the last scrap of clothing and the consequent shame of nakedness.” Digambara is known to be beautiful which means “atmosphere-clad” or “clothed-in-sky.” This is referred to the monks’ ideal of going completely naked. The Shvetambara branch means “clothed-in-white.” It also means that monks are dressed in white robes. Shvetambara branch gives women the opportunity to become nuns and to dress in white as well.

(8) Sikhism is often described as a combination of the beliefs and practices of two major world religions, although that description is often rejected by followers of the religion as too simplistic. Name the two religions and one belief or practice drawn from each of the two. (PAGE 187)

The two religions are Hinduism and Islam. Hinduism recognizes many gods and promotes vegetarianism. Other the other hand, Islam recognizes only one god and allows the killing and eating of many animals.

(9) In what area of the modern-day world did Sikhism originate? (PAGE 187)

Sikhism originated in an area called the Punjab, which today is part of northwestern Indian and eastern Pakistan.

(10) Name and describe the sacred book of Sikhism. (PAGE 191)

The primary book of Sikh scripture was called the Adi Granth. The book is divided into three parts. The Japji is the first and most important part. It is a long poem written by Guru Nanak who summarized the religion. According to our textbook, “Its opening words declare, “There is only one God whose name is true, the Creator, devoid of fear and enmity, immortal, unborn, self-existent.” The second part was about thirty-nine rags, also known as “tunes” by Guru Nank and later gurus. Lastly, the third part was a collection of different works which included poems and hymns from Hindu, Muslim, and Sikh gurus and saints.

(11) What is the history of the Sikh military tradition? (PAGE 192)

Sikhs were employed by the British as soldiers due to their military training. The Sikhs experienced painful dislocation after the British left the Indian subcontinent in 1947. In to avoid conflict, more than two million people left Pakistan. Most of them settled in northwestern India with hopes that some Sikhs will become an independent state.

Chapter 6: Daoism and Confucianism

*(1) Discuss the principles of **yin and yang**. (PAGE 202)*

According to our textbook, “after about 100 BCE the Chinese commonly thought that the universe expressed itself in opposite but complementary principles: light and dark, day and night, hot and cold, sky and earth, summer and winter.” The pairs of equal opposites attract and complement each other. The names for the principles are yang and yin. This symbol is represented by a circle of light and dark. It also represents the complementary but opposing forces of the universe that generate all forms of reality.

The principles of yin and yang are not the same as good and evil. As stated in our textbook, “Yang is not expected to win against the force of yin, or vice versa. Rather, the ideal is a dynamic balance between the forces.” The light side of the circle represents yang. Some examples of yang are white, sun, young, warm, etc. The dark side of the circle represents yin. Some examples of yin are cold, old, north, black, etc.

There are two small dots of the different colors that is a representative seed of the opposite. They are interdependent. This means one cannot exist without the other. Some people think of yin and yang as waves of energy or like breathing in and out. The yin and yang concept in Chinese culture has developed over thousands of years.

(2) Make your best effort to explain in your own words *the Dao as developed in the Tao Te Ching*. (PAGE 204-206)

First of all, according to our textbook, the Tao Te Ching is also known as the Daodejing. It is generally one of the world's greatest books. The title is translated as "the classical book about the Way and its power. The book is also known as the Laozi which is called after the legendary author. It had a huge impact on Chinese culture.

The Dao was a very important reference. It had information that taught people how to live every day according to the practice. This was almost like a resource guide with tips to help people. However, the Dao was more than its description of what it is. The Dao does not even have a name. It's as if it was an unknown mystery. The Dao is actually not a person who exists.

Because the Dao is not a person who exists, it cannot have a personality. If it was a real person, he or she will have a personality that may be similar or different to ours. The origin of the Dao is nature. This is why it says that the Dao produced like the rest of nature. Overall, the Dao has received a wide range of interpretations because of the mystery behind it.

(3) Summarize the life of Confucius. (PAGE 220)

Confucius was born approximately in 551 BCE. This was during a time when China was not a single empire. Instead, it was a group of small kingdoms. His name was Kong Qiu. However, he was later known as Kong Fuzi which meant “Master Kong.”

Confucius’ family was known to be noble. They had to flee due to political danger to the state of Lu, also known as the south of present-day Beijing. Confucius’ mother raised him as a child because his father had died. Confucius’ mother raised him to become an educated gentleman. As stated in our textbook, “He enjoyed chariot riding, archery, and playing the lute.” He may have held a minor government post as a tax collector. This may have helped his mother and his education. After his mother died during his late teens, he became a teacher.

Confucius was successful in his career as a teacher. During 500-496 BCE, he became a government minister. He had always wanted to play an influential part with the government. He later got married and had two children, a son, and a daughter. After living outside his home state for fifteen years, he finally returned to Lu and participated as a senior advisor. He died about 479 BCE.

(4) The phrase “*training in virtue*” is often associated with Confucianism. What are the virtues that are to be cultivated in all the relationships of the follower of Confucianism? (PAGE 219)

According to our textbook, “The *Doctrine of the Mean* recommends several types of training – including training in the cultivation of personal equilibrium and harmony. Confucians hold that the best training does not contaminate character but, by cultivating virtues, gives it definition and clarity. Confucius believed that each human being is capable of being good, refined, and even great. He was convinced that human beings could not achieve such qualities if they were isolated. He believed that human beings become full people through the assistance of other people and then through fulfilling obligations to them.

Education is essential. It meant more than knowledge for Confucius. This involved skills development in poetry, music, art, writing, manners, and religious ritual. Education was valued because it helped bring lessons from the past into the present. Because education was valued, Confucius thought it was the way to being wise and living a happy life.

It was believed that *human beings should be respectful of others*. We should care for people who are young as well as the elders. As stated in our textbook, Confucius’ idea of a perfect society was one in which every member of society is cared for and protected, and no one feels abandoned. If people played their social roles correctly, then society would be perfect. These social responsibilities soon lead to the five great relationships as described below.

(5) Explain *wu wei*. (PAGE 210)

Wu wei is the ideal of effortlessness. It literally means “no action.” Another translation is “no strain” or “effortlessness.” The ideal implies the avoidance of unnecessary action or of action that is not spontaneous.

(6) Briefly discuss the life of *Lao Tzu*. (PAGE 204)

The name Lao Tzu means “old master “ or “old child.” It is unknown whether Laozi ever existed. He may have been a real person, the blending of historical information about several figures, or a mythic creation. Laozi’s birth is noted as 600 BCE. He was born old. He became a state archivist, or librarian, for many years. He carried an ox and traveled to the far west of China. He was recognized as an esteemed scholar and was forbidden from crossing until he had written down his teachings which resulted in the Daodejing. This was a short book about five thousand Chinese characters. He took his teachings to India.

(7) In what *areas of the world is Daoism popular today*? (PAGE 238-239)

Daoism is increasingly popular in cities in China, Taiwan, and elsewhere in East Asia.

(8) How is the *Dao of Daoism* (PAGE 203) *different* than the *Dao of Confucianism* (PAGE 219)?

For Daoism, everything is a part of the rhythm of nature – the Dao. The observations are about philosophical insights, guidelines for living, exercises for health, and practices for attaining longevity and inner purity. In Confucianism, human beings do not automatically become what they should be. It is based on human conduct as opposed to religion and belief in God.

(9) What were the *two ideals of Confucius*? (PAGE 220)

The two ideals of Confucius were that he wanted to produce a harmonious society, and he wanted to nurture “excellent” individuals who could lead it. He believed that these ideals were complementary: excellent individuals would keep society harmonious, and a harmonious society would nurture excellent individuals.

(10) List and briefly discuss the *five great relationships of Confucianism*. (PAGE 222-223)

The five great relationships of Confucianism are Father-son, elder brother-younger brother, husband-wife, elder-younger, and ruler-subject.

Father-son: Family is the foundation of society, and the relationship between father and son is at its core. Parents are responsible for their children’s education and moral formation. Children are to be respectful and obedient to their parents, including caring for them as they get older.

Elder brother-younger brother: An elder brother must assume responsibilities for raising younger siblings. This responsibility is shifted to the eldest son should the father passed away.

Husband-wife: Both spouses are responsible for each other's care. The husband is an authoritative protector and the wife is a homemaker and wife.

Elder-younger: Due to younger people needing care, older people have responsibilities to care for them. As a sign of respect, younger people must show respect to older people.

Ruler-subject: Above all, a ruler must act like a father who assumes responsibilities and care for people who are like his children.

*(11) Discuss the **connection between calligraphy and Confucianism**. (PAGE 234)*

Confucianism values the written word that calligraphy has been the greatest influence of Confucianism on the arts. Calligraphy is considered one of the greatest of the Chinese arts because it contains so many elements of value. A work of calligraphy represents physical beauty.

Chapter 7: Shinto

(1) Summarize the *Shinto creation myth*. (PAGE 248)

There was primeval chaos in the beginning with the creation myths. It was populated by several generations of deities, or spirits, called kami. There were two kami: Izanami and Izanagi.

Izanami means “female who invites.” Izanagi means “male who invites.” Both of these became the cosmic parents who created the first islands of Japan. Both Izanagi and Izanami gave birth to kami, who were nature deities. One of them was known as a fire god. Because of his birth, Izanami burned and died. Izanagi grieved and travel to the underworld to find Izanami. He was ashamed of her ugliness which was caused by the fire. There were maggots crawling through her body.

Izanagi was sad and lonely. He felt dirty after being in contact with the underworld and with death. He decided to cleanse himself in water as a sign to regain purity. As stated in our textbook, “As he washed, from his tear-filled eyes emerged the spirit of the sun, Amaterasu and the spirit of the moon, Tsukiyomi. Amaterasu means “shining in heaven” and Tsukiyomi means “moon night possessor.” From here came the spirit of the wind also known as Susanowo (“impetuous male”). Finally, the sun goddess Amaterasu sent her grandson to bring order to the islands of Japan. From him, the myth continued. Then there was Jimmu, who was the first human emperor of Japan.

This story was interesting for several reasons. First of all, the kami of sun, moon, and wind into a family relationship. There were harmonizing stories of several kami. There was a declaration of Japan to be divine in origin. This has had serious consequences throughout Japan's history. Secondly, Amaterasu was portrayed as a female, whereas the kami of the moon, Tsukiyomi, is a male. Thirdly, this story expressed a concern with purity which is an important focus of Shinto. In addition, this story is also interesting because the islands of Japan believe they are the creation and the home of divine spirits.

*(2) Discuss the essential beliefs of **Shinto**. (PAGE 252-253)*

Shinto is sensitive to the mysterious powers of nature. Kami are seen as powers in or near this world instead of a distant realm or living human being. Their presence can be felt while looking at a waterfall or standing in a grove of trees. The kami can cause dread. This means that someone may feel time is dreading when they were lost on an ocean.

Interestingly, kami are treated as persons and they have names. The purpose of this is so that human beings are able to approach them and feel connected to them. There are lesser kami. There is the spirit of the fire, the deity of grain, ocean spirits, mountain spirits, and spirits of great trees, rivers, and waterfalls. They also have animal spirits especially if they have mysterious cunning. For example, the badger, the fox, and the snake. Ancestors live close by and they are ready to see their descendants. This happens if the ancestors have also become kami. According to our textbook, "Shinto is thus a way of maintaining a connection with family and clan members."

In the tenth century, ancient Shinto ritual and prayers were recorded. Shinto does not have clear code of ethics. However, there is a type of morality that flows from the Shinto system of values and its way of looking at life. Surprisingly, there is no internal guilt found in Shinto. They do not have a God who commands or judges' people nor a sense of original sin. Instead, they believe that people are good and life on earth is good. As stated in our textbook, "Shinto worships fertility and new life, and sex is viewed positively, without guilt." **Shinto focuses away from death.** This is the opposite of life and growth. Shinto also counteract with what brings sickness or death because they worship the life force. Shinto believes that we need to keep our bodies, houses, and clothes clean and bright. In order to purify ourselves with blessings, we need to wash them to get rid of the dirt. Due to kami being everywhere, there are high demands when living with them. You visit them at their homes, show respect for nature, and for architectural use of elements.

(3) *Discuss how **Shinto has been used throughout history to give the Japanese a sense of national identity.** (PAGE 251)*

According to our textbook, "When in the nineteenth century the West challenged Japan to modernize, Shinto was enlisted by the Japanese as a cultural counterweight that would preserve the "Japanese spirit." In 1868, a man by the name of Mutsuhito, went to the throne and assumed real power. This history is known as the Emperor Meiji, or as the Meiji Emperor. This was where he started to begin a process of bringing Japan into the modern world. He brought in European

and American experts to build governmental, military, and educational systems according to Western models.

During this time, it was a turning point for Japanese history. This time was also known as the Meiji Restoration. Unfortunately, Shinto was required to separate from Buddhism. Because of this separation, the places of worship had to make a decision on whether they were going to be Shinto or Buddhist. According to our textbook, “Japan’s leaders stressed the divine origins of the emperor and began to tie Shinto to a growing spirit of nationalism.”

In 1882, the national religion called State Shinto was established. Shinto was a tool in the national buildup. As stated in our textbook, “Thousands of shrines received a special national status, with government financial support and control by the Home Ministry.” All of the other nongovernmental Shinto shrines and organizations were treated well. For example, they were treated as independent and self-supporting institutions. Altogether, they were considered Sect Shinto.

All of these changes set the stage for the exploitation of Shinto during the militaristic expansion that occurred after Japan’s victory in 1905 during the Russo-Japanese War. During the military buildup during the 1930’s and World War II, the government continuously increased the use of State Shinto to produce patriotism. After World War II ended, Japan was demanded to become a secular country. State Shinto was abolished by the government. However, it returned to private religious practice.

(4) Discuss how Shinto has maintained its relevance in modern Japan. (PAGE 265)

As stated in our textbook, “Shinto could have died out as a result of the successful growth of Buddhism, or it could have easily faded away when Japan adopted Western science and technology. Yet, Shinto is a unique example of an early nature religion that is still vital in the modern world.” As of today, Shinto is still relevant. Shinto has upheld their traditional importance on nature. They have taught this modern world the importance of caring and respecting the environment. For example, trees, wood, flowers, plants, etc.

A lot of Shinto’s values fit with modern sensibilities. This includes “low-key, nonjudgmental moral views; inclusiveness; an emphasis on healing and living contentedly in this world; a positive view of the body; and the practice of esthetically pleasing rituals.” Shinto is meaningful to other indigenous religions.

According to our textbook, “Shinto and its offshoots have gone wherever Japanese people have settled.” Some of these places were Brazil, Peru, and the United States. In addition, it is especially found in Hawaii, California, and the state of Washington. There are some people who believe that Shinto is a universal religion. Because of this, they want it to spread to non-Japanese people. Shinto is not a missionary religion. Shinto is believed to originate from geographical isolation of Japan such as the mountains, forests, and waterfalls.

(5) *Who was the founder of Shinto? (PAGE 247)*

Shinto has no known person or group as its founder.

(6) *Discuss the relationship between Buddhism, Confucianism, and Shinto in Japan. (PAGE 249)*

The religions reached an accommodation and several patterns emerged. According to our textbook, “Shinto was often associated with agriculture, fertility, and birth, while Buddhism was called on for philosophy, help with serious illnesses, funerals, and the afterlife.” Shinto frequently took place at a Buddhist place of worship or some Buddhist rites for the kami. On the other hand, Buddhist temples often had a Shinto shrine on their grounds. In addition, Shinto adopted Buddhist practices of using incense, preaching sermons, and venerating statues.

Confucianism was introduced to both Japan and Chinese culture. This fitted well with Japanese practices. They were similar in the veneration of ancestors and the loyalty given to family and clan. Confucianism supported education, family, and government. This also included loyalty, discipline, respect for the emperor, and reverence for ancestors and elders, etc. Most of these values were reinforced by Shinto.

(7) What are *kami*? (PAGE 248)

Kami are chaos that came to be populated by several generations of deities, or spirits. There are two kami – Izanamni (“female who invites”) and Izanagi (“male who invites”) became the cosmic parents who created the first islands of Japan.

(8) What is the *importance* of *New Year’s in Shinto*? (PAGE 257)

New Year’s is a very special time in Shinto practice. The home must be thoroughly cleaned in order to make it attractive to spirits. These spirits are invited to visit the home. The main door or gate is decorated with special arrangement called the *kadomatsu* also know as “entry pine.” This pine is composed of three pieces of cut green bamboo (signifies persistence), a small branch of pine (signifies freshness and life throughout the winter), and, if possible, a sprig of plum (first sign of life in early spring). Overall, the branches of greenery in kadomatsu symbolizes human virtue. Rice signifies wealth and fertility, and the mochi anticipates the planting of rice in the spring. The themes of the entire holiday season are cleansing and the renewal of life.

(9) What *observances* are a part of *Shinto worship*? (PAGE 254)

Shinto is the belief in and worship of kami (the essence of spirit that can be present in all things). They believe that the natural state of human beings is purity which comes from everyday occurrences. People visit shrines for blessings at important times in their lives. They recite prayers and give offerings.

(10) What are some *traditional Shinto observances of the seasons* and *why are they so important to the religion?* (PAGE 257-258)

Shinto has marked the seasons with special practices, especially for planting and harvesting rice. With their respect for nature, reverential objects and small shrines are sometimes placed in the midst of forests, in fields, or on mountains. In addition, they have respect for the spirit of ancestors. They pour water or tea over gravestones and by leaving offerings of food and flowers. Shinto practice purification with water. This is a practice that must be very ancient because it appears in several myths about the kami. Another practice is climbing a sacred mountain to gain union with the spirit of that mountain. Daily worship occurs in the home.

(11) *Where has Shinto spread outside of Japan?* (PAGE 265)

They have spread particularly Brazil, Peru, and the United States. It is especially found in Hawaii, California, and the state of Washington.

Chapter 8: Judaism

(1) Summarize *Judaism's creation myth*. (P. 277)

Judaism's creation myth started in the Hebrew Bible in the book of Genesis chapters one through eleven. In the beginning, God created everything. He separated the light from darkness and land from water. He did all this over six days. At the end of each day, He saw that everything was good. There was nothing wrong with what He created. On one of those days, God created the Garden of Eden. The garden was filled with plants, trees, fruit trees, birds, and exotic animals. Finally, on the sixth day, God rested from all His work.

In the garden, God created the first man, Adam, from the dust of the earth and breathed the breath of life into him. Adam was made in God's likeness. The textbook says it this way, "Adam is a copy of God himself, for the human being". God gave him the task of taking care of the garden. Not long after this Adam became lonely. Seeing this God decided to create a companion for him from one of his bones. While Adam was asleep God formed Eve, the first woman, from the bone to be Adam's companion. Eve was a copy of Adam.

Both Adam and Eve lived in the Garden of Eden and ate from the fruits in the Garden. They were allowed to eat any fruits they desire except the forbidden fruit, the fruit of the knowledge of good and evil. Sometime after this Eve disobeyed God and ate the fruit of the knowledge of good and evil. Afterward, she urged Adam to do the same. Adam followed her, and at that moment sin entered the world. As a result of their disobedience, God banished both

from the Garden of Eden. From here on out Adam and Eve lived outside of the Garden and must work for their own food.

The story of creation moves quickly after this. After being banished, Adam and Eve had sexual intercourse and had Cain and Able. There was rivalry between both and eventually, Cain killed Able. Following this story is the Great Flood. During those days people were extremely wicked, and God decided to wipe out the entire human race with a great flood. But God spared one man along with his family, Noah. God told Noah to build an Ark and bring aboard animals. When the rain came down, it flooded the entire world. The floodwater killed off all people outside of the Ark. After 40 days and 40 nights, the water declined, and a rainbow appeared as a sign of God's promise to never again destroy the world with a flood.

*(2) Compare and contrast the **four Jewish factions (sects)** that developed in the second century B.C. (P. 292)*

The first Jewish faction is the Sadducees. They were members of the priestly families and lived mainly in Jerusalem. The Sadducees had the responsibility of the temple's activities. They held high social status because of their priestly duties. They also maintained the Temple as needed. Their whole life revolved around the temple. As the textbook puts it, "The fact that they derived their living from the temple worship would have made them traditional".

Pharisees were the second faction. The Pharisees' focus was on preserving Hebrew piety through careful observation of laws and traditions. This is how they distinguished

themselves from other sects. The Pharisees are known as holy people, almost perfect. The majority of Pharisees were very self-righteous people. However, many of them do not practice what they preach, which in turn made them hypocrites according to Jesus (Matthew 23). The difference between the Sadducees and Pharisees was their different views on the supernatural aspects of religion. For instance, Pharisees believed in angels, demons, heaven, and hell, while Sadducees did not.

Zealots, a rebel group who opposed foreign influences and the Roman rule of Israel was the third religious faction among the Jews. The Zealots received the name “robber” from the Romans. The name Zealots were assigned to them when wars started between the Jews and the Romans. These patriots used violent tactics to achieve their goals when necessary and as needed. They were a dangerous group. People often see them as the gangster in those days who opposed Roman rule for Jewish liberty.

Lastly, the Essenes were the fourth religious faction among the Jews. There were several thousands of Essenes. They lived a communal and celibate life. Residing primarily in the desert area near the Dead sea, they rejected animal sacrifices and avoided meat and wine. Seeing themselves as an advanced guard, the Essenes prepared for the time when God would end the old world of injustice and bring about a new world of mercy and peace. The textbook describes them this way, “They described themselves as ‘sons of light,’ fighting against the forces of ‘darkness.’” It is possible that they may share in some of the ideas associated with the Zealots and Pharisees since their center was close to Jerusalem.

(3) *With regard to Judaism's future, discuss **the significance of the two huge events that occurred in the 1930s and 40s—the Holocaust and the creation of the State of Israel.*** (P. 300)

With the rise of Adolf Hitler in 1933 as German chancellor and head of the Nazi Party, a wave of anti-Jewish persecution went underway. Hitler viewed the Jews to be subhuman polluters of a pure but mythical Aryan race. He also believed that Jewish financiers and industrialists conspired against Germany and gave the Allied an upper hand in the victory over Germany in World War 1. Hitler sought to purify racial classes in Germany and political revenge on the Jews. The plans were to exterminate all European Jews. The Jews residing in countries under Germany's control were made to bear yellow stars in public. Eventually, they were deported to concentration camps. Those that can work lived in horrible condition, starved and contracted horrible diseases. The rest were killed upon arrival. About one-third of Jews in the world were murdered. However, this will open the door for the creation of the State of Israel in the coming decade.

The result of the Holocaust created the state of Israel. With a century full of anti-Jewish restrictions and persecutions (from the outbreak of anti-Semitism in France and the Holocaust), it created in the hearts of many Jews a desire for a Jewish nation. Living within the boundaries of another country was not the same as living in one's own country. There was always a limitation. The Jews had to depend on others to defend them. With the creation of the state of Israel, they hoped to experience liberty and the free practices of their faith. Also, they can create their own military and defend themselves as needed.

When World War II came to an end, the newly created United Nations voted to divide the British Mandate of Palestine into two states, and one of them was for the Jews. The Jews accepted the U.N plan and created the state of Israel. As a result, five million Jews reside in the State of Israel as of today. There was now a place called home for the Jews. Traditional practices and faith are now practiced freely. Jews defend themselves and do not have to rely on another country to come to their aid. The desire for the Jewish nation was now a reality instead of just a dream. The culture that was almost wiped out was now blooming and flourishing again.

*(4) Discuss the **four observance-based divisions of modern-day Judaism**. (PAGE 309-311)*

The four observance-based divisions of modern-day Judaism are Orthodox, Conservative, Reform, and Reconstructionist. All four of these branches have emerged together, but not in order. According to our textbook, “Traditional Judaism is often called Orthodox.” It did not have a special name until after the Reform movement began. There is different support for the state of Israel and the need for secular education for **Orthodox Jews**. Based on the information, Orthodoxy is like a branch of Judaism to retain traditional practices and beliefs. Some examples include services are to be conducted completely in Hebrew and are led by male rabbis, Orthodox synagogues separate males and females, with females often sitting in an upstairs gallery, Orthodox women who are married sometimes cover their heads with a kerchief when outside the home, Orthodox Jews closely follow rules that prohibit any manual labor on the Sabbath.

Conservative Judaism began in the 19th century. It traces its origins back to Germany. This branch accepts change. However, they are careful with change by using study and discussion as guidance. It began as a response to the perceived excesses of the Reform

movement. As stated in our textbook, “In the United States, almost half of all practicing Jews belong to this branch.” **Reform Judaism** started in Germany by some Jews who wanted to enter the mainstream of European culture. They wanted to leave the ghetto life altogether. Moses Mendelssohn was a major thinker and writer during this movement. He helped shape Reform and Orthodox Judaism. He stated Judaism could be combined with civil culture and embrace ideals of the European Enlightenment of the eighteenth century. This includes human dignity, democracy, secular education, individual liberty, and the development of science.

Reconstructionist Judaism is the newest and smallest branch of Judaism. It was founded by Mordecai Kaplan who was a Lithuanian who came to the United States as a kid. He was a leader of the Society for the Advancement of Judaism. He encouraged Jews to be familiar with elements of traditional Judaism. He also allowed them to have the freedom of individual interpretation. The elements of belief interpreted by the Jews, including angels, prophecy, and the Messiah, were taken as useful symbols by Reconstructionism. It sees Judaism as a “changing cultural force, with many elements and manifestations.”

*(5) What important event in Judaism’s history **happened in A.D. 70 (70 C.E.)**? (PAGE 273)*

The **destruction of the Second Temple of Jerusalem by the Romans** was an important event in Judaism’s history that happened in 70 CE.

*(6) What is the **Torah**? (PAGE 275)*

The Torah is the sacred core of the Hebrew Bible. It consists of stories of the creation of the world, Adam and Eve, Noah, and the Hebrew patriarchs and matriarchs. The Torah introduces Moses and his brother, Aaron. It includes laws about daily conduct and religious ritual. The Torah comprises of five books.

(7) Judaism is a patriarchal (“having to do with a father”) religion. Who was the first patriarch, and what impact did his life have on the religion? (PAGE 280)

Abraham was the first patriarch. He was called by God to leave his home for another land. The passage was important to Judaism because it is seen as establishing a claim to the religion that is now called Israel.

(8) When Israel became a monarchy at the end of the period of the judges, only three people reigned over the kingdom before it split apart. Who were the three? (PAGE 287)

The three kings who reigned over the kingdom before it split were King Saul, King David, and King Solomon.

(9) What important event happened in 586 or 587 B.C.? (PAGE 288-289)

The period of exile in Babylonia (586-539 BCE) was a monumental turning point in the history of Judaism. During the exile, the Jews began to meet weekly to discuss the scriptures and to pray. They also began to assimilate influences from the surrounding Babylonian culture.

(10) What was the Second Temple? (PAGE 290)

The Book of Psalms which contained the lyrics of 150 hymns is often called the hymnbook of the Second Temple.

(11) Identify some of the primary religious practices of modern-day Judaism. (PAGE 302-307)

A primary religious practice of modern-day Judaism is the Jewish Sabbath. The seventh day of the week is considered a special day because it is thought to sanctify the entire week. The Sabbath is a day of prayer and relaxation. Another religious practice is the Holy Days. Jewish religious calendar is lunar which means each month starts with the new moon. New Year's Day is Rosh Hashanah. The Jewish religious years begin at the end of the harvest season when all debts can be paid off. They also have the High Holydays, late-harvest festival, winter festival, and the Jewish Passover. They also have Jewish Dietary Practices because they valued cleanliness regarding food. In addition, they are devoted to prayers throughout the day from morning until nighttime.

Ch. 9 Christianity

(1) Summarize the life of Jesus. (PAGE 322-)

Jesus was born about two thousand years ago in a town called Bethlehem. His parents were Joseph and Mary. There were three wisemen who followed a guiding star that led to where Jesus was born. During his early years, he helped his father with carpentry work in Galilee. Most of what we know about Jesus comes from the four gospels of the New Testament in the bible.

The New Testament included stories about Jesus. However, there was very few information about Jesus until he began his ministry of teaching and healing when he was in his late 20s. Jesus gathered twelve disciples and they moved from place-to-place teaching about the coming of what he called the Kingdom. After preaching for no more than three years, Jesus was arrested in Jerusalem by the authorities because they felt he was a threat to the public. Jesus was whipped, nailed to a cross, and crucified.

Jesus died on a Friday and he was buried quickly nearby. The burial took place before sunset because the Jewish Sabbath was to begin. On the Sabbath, no work could be done. When the followers went to the tomb on Sunday to care for Jesus' body, they found the tomb empty. In the New Testament, it says forty days later, Jesus ascended into the sky and promised to return again.

(2) *Summarize the life of Paul. (PAGE 329-331)*

Paul was originally named Saul who was born in Tarsus which is a town south of present-day Turkey. Both of his parents were Jewish. Paul had gone to Jerusalem to study about traditional Judaism. In the beginning when he was a Pharisee, he was opposed to the “Jesus Movement.” He thought it was a dangerous messianic Jewish cult that could divide Judaism.

Paul came to a new understanding of Jesus. As stated in the bible, Paul pondered the meaning of Jesus for three years. In addition, he was on his way from Jerusalem to root out a cell of early Christian believers. After numerous years of studying, he was convinced that Jesus’ life and death were the major events of a divine plan. He was also convinced that Jesus had entered this world in order to renew it.

Paul soon discovered that his mission in life was to spread the gospel of Christ to others. He started to visit a local synagogue. He read Jewish scriptures to share his belief that Jesus was the Messiah whom they had been waiting for. Most Jews did not believe Paul because they were expecting a royal Messiah instead of a poor man. He also preached that if a person accepts Jesus and show’s God’s love will come into a right relationship with Jesus instead of keeping the Jewish laws. This is known as righteousness. Paul did not abandon moral rules. His notion was for people to do good deeds spontaneously. “According to Paul, our awareness of God’s love will inspire us to live in a new and loving way.” He saw Jesus as a manifestation of divinity. He also saw Jesus as a cosmic figure – the preexistent image of God, the Wisdom of God, and the Lord of the universe.

(3) Discuss the Crusades and the Inquisition. (PAGE 352)

Christians over Europe journeyed to the land where Jesus had lived and died during the fourth and fifth centuries. Jerusalem was taken over by Muslims in the seventh century. During the eleventh century, Christian pilgrimage became severely restricted. For their own safety in pilgrimage and access to what is known as the “Holy Land,” Europeans thought they had the ability to seize control the land of Israel and adjacent territory. Crusades is defined as attempts to take over the Holy Land.

In 1099, the First Crusade began. In 1099, Jerusalem was taken after a bloody battle. Israel was taken in control by the Europeans. They were in control for almost two hundred years until 1291. There were sufferings among Muslims and Christians. Most crusaders died due to sickness. There were a lot of Eastern Christians who died at the hands of crusaders because they were mistaken for Muslims. The Crusaders harmed Christianity for their benefit similar to a soldier who kills for religious reasons. This was quite foreign to the commandments of Jesus.

The Inquisition got its name from its purpose which is to “inquire” into people’s religious beliefs. They set up an organization with hopes to guarantee the purity of Christian belief. They also expected to root out variant forms of Christianity. In the thirteenth century, the Inquisition was first active in southern France. The same inquisitorial procedure was also active in Spain. Jews and Muslims were required to convert to Christianity or to leave Spain when the Spanish territories were taken over by Christian rulers. People who left went to Morocco and Egypt. However, for people who stayed, they were required to accept baptism and publicly practice Christianity. Some people continued to practice Christianity while some were caught being “false Christians.”

*(4) Discuss the **two sacraments common to virtually all Christian groups**, and briefly mention some additional sacraments accepted by various groups. (PAGE 369-370)*

Sacraments are defined as the most important rituals thought of as active signs of God's grace. This can sometimes be referred to as ordinances. Some practices of Christianity include baptism, confirmation, reconciliation, marriage, ordination, and anointing of the sick. Baptism is a ritual that involves cleansing with water. This is a universal practice used in Christianity as an initiation rite. Some Christians practice this ritual by immersing the body in water, but there are some Christians who only sprinkle the head with water. As stated in our textbook, "Baptism came to Christianity from Judaism, where ritual bathing was an ancient form of purification." Baptisms are seen as a sign of moral purification, new life, and readiness for God's kingdom. It also calls to mind the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus. Baptism can include the use of streams and rivers.

Another sacrament is the Eucharist which is "good gift" in Greek. It is also known as the Lord's Supper. In the beginning during Paul's time, Christians gathered once a week to imitate Jesus' last supper which is also known as a Passover meal. During this meal, they ate bread and drank wine. They spend time recalling Jesus' death and resurrection. The Lord's Supper is a representation of sharing Jesus' life and death. For some denominations, the bread represents Jesus' body and the wine represents his blood. Although all Christians participate in this meal, the practice varies in how they do it and how often they partake in it.

Some additional sacraments are confirmation, reconciliation, marriage, ordination, and anointing of the sick. Confirmation also known as "strengthening" is a blessing of believers after

baptism. Reconciliation occurs when a person repents of his or her wrongdoings. This takes place before a priest or a minister. Marriage is a commitment between two people with the priest or minister as the public witness of the commitment. Lastly, anointing of the sick is when a priest prays with the person and anoints them with oil.

(5) It's been said that "all that separates Jews and Christians is one thing—their view of whether the Messiah has already come or is yet to come." Christians accept Jesus as the Messiah. What is a "Messiah," anyway, and why did most ancient (and modern) Jews not accept that Jesus was the Messiah? (PAGE 322)

The name "*Messiah*" means "anointed" and refers to the ceremony of anointing a new king with olive oil. Most ancient Jews did not accept that Jesus was the Messiah because they thought that the Messiah would be a king or a military leader who was descended from King David.

(6) What are the "two great commandments" of Christianity? (PAGE 328)

Jesus' teachings are also called as the Two Great Commandments. It also combines two strong elements: a love for God and an ethical call for kindness toward others.

(7) Briefly describe the contents of each of the four types of literature in the New Testament—gospels, history, epistles, and apocalyptic (Revelation). (PAGE 332-336)

The four gospels are written remembrances of Jesus' words and deeds, recorded some years after his death by people who believed in him. It contains powerful stories and images and have been the source of great inspiration for much later Christian art. The four gospels are unique because it has four different stories about the same person.

The Acts of the Apostles is the second part of the Gospel of Luke. Sometimes scholars refer the two books together as Luke-Acts. The Gospel of Luke portrays Jesus moving toward his sacrifice in Jerusalem. Acts portrays Paul in a parallel journey to his final sacrifice in Rome. The heart of the two books is a beautiful image of a stone that is dropped in a pond with ever-widening ripples. This is similar to the life of Jesus as it makes ever-widening ripples as it spreads in a growing circle to the ends of the earth.

The word epistle means "letter." The letters were written to instruct, encourage, and to solve problems. These can be written either formal or long. It has been written to churches and individuals. Epistles were originally sermons. It can be divided into two groups: the Pauline Epistles and the Universal Epistles.

The final book of the New Testament is known as Revelation. It was possibly written around 100 CE. This book was written as an encouragement for Christians who were under threat of persecution. The book explains that suffering will be followed up triumph because goodness is over evil. Numbers and images were used as symbols to explain the meaning clear to only to Christians.

(8) What was the form of Christianity that developed in Russia, Bulgaria, Romania, and Greece? (PAGE 344)

The Eastern Orthodox Christianity was developed in Russia, Bulgaria, Romania, and Greece.

(9) Who was the first “reformer” of the Protestant Reformation, and what did he seek to accomplish? (PAGE 335)

Martin Luther was the first “reformer” of the Protestant Reformation. It ultimately created the Protestant branch of Christianity. He became a professor in a college and taught courses in the Bible.

(10) What are some of the distinctives of the Mormons? (PAGE 365-367)

Mormons accept the Christian Bible. They usually read the King James Version (KJV). They believe that several other works are equally inspired. The most important is the Book of Mormon. There are more than one hundred million copies of the Book of Mormon that have been distributed. Although Mormons follow the Christian practice of using baptism as a ritual, they are unusual because they also practice baptism by proxy for deceased relatives. This was practiced by some early Christians. Mormons maintain the largest source of genealogical records in the world. Devout Mormons meet for study and worship each Sunday. Its hierarchy is male because they emphasize different gender roles for men and women. The Prophet is the church

president who is at the top of the church hierarchy. Mormons have strong choral tradition. They sing hymns and solo works at services.

(11) What challenges does modern science pose to Christianity? (PAGE 379)

A challenge that modern science pose to Christianity is on miracles because Christianity speaks regularly of miracles such as healings and Jesus' resurrection. There have been critical approaches to the study of nature and scriptures. Another challenge is the theory of evolution. Being less theoretical is a challenge as well. This is the focus on material realities such as money and possessions. The "Prosperity Christianity" teaches that God will repay those who contribute "love offerings." Some people have defended by arguing this form of Christianity is like a continuation of practical features that have long distinguished Christianity.

Chapter10: Islam

(1) Summarize the life of Muhammad. (PG 391)

Muhammad (570-632 CE) was born in Mecca. Today it is known as Saudi Arabia. In the Muslim sacred book called the Qur'an ("recitation") is information that we know about him. The information is from his sermons and revelations. More information about him is from remembrances by his early followers.

Muhammad's father had died before Muhammad's birth. His mother died during his adolescent days. After the death of his mother, he lived with his grandfather for two years, then his grandfather died as well. From there he lived with his uncle, Abu Talib. As an adult, Muhammad was employed as a caravan driver for Khadijah, his future wife. As stated in the textbook, "This marriage brought financial, spiritual, and emotional support to Muhammad". Muhammad depended heavily on her until her death. After her death, Muhammad remarried several times. Some believe he married his wives out of mercy for them because widows in those days needed a husband for financial support and legal protection.

Traveling was part of Muhammad's occupation, and as a caravan worker, he gained insight into other religions. He learned the different views in his religion and how other religions vary from his. Muhammad meditated quite often, and whenever he does him he will go into caves. At age forty, while he was on a religious retreat in a cave at Mount Hira, he obtained his first revelation as a bright presence came to him and held before his eyes a cloth covered with writing. He doubted the revelation at first but after consulting with his wife, he accepted it as a genuine message from God. As more revelations appeared to Muhammad, he shared his

experience with friends, families, cousins, and wife. These people were the first Muslims, which means, “people who submit” to God (Allah).

Though his messages were about kindness, taking care of the poor and weak, others did not receive his message well. Muhammad taught that there was only one God to worship and forbid the worship of other gods. He demanded that statues and images of gods should be destroyed. Furthermore, He spoke against lending money with high interest and denounced the failure to make and to keep fair contracts. These messages threatened businesspeople. Soon after this persecution broke out in Mecca, and by 622 CE, Muhammad and his followers left for Yathrib. This will mark the start of the Islamic community.

In Yathrib, Muhammad banished or executed those who opposed him. Over time, he took control of the Yathrib. It was here that he set up the first Islamic mosque. Though he was very successful in Yathrib, his goal was to return to Mecca one day. By 630 CE, Muhammad and his Muslim soldiers defeated the people of Mecca, took over the city, and spread his religious philosophies. Towards the end of Muhammad’s life, he viewed himself “as the last of the long line of prophets who transmitted God’s word to humanity”. He considered himself to be an instrument of God. In 632 CE, Muhammad died in Yathrib.

*(2) Discuss the **Five Pillars of Islam**. (PG 398-401)*

As stated in our textbook, all Muslims must accept and practice the Five Pillars. The Five Pillars support one’s faith. Listed are the Five Pillars: Creed, Prayer, Charity to the Poor, Fasting during Ramadan, and Pilgrimage to Mecca. [The first pillar is Creed](#). The one sentence that makes a person a Muslim is the sentence, “There is no God but Allah, and Muhammad is his

messenger.” The Muslim creed is simple and highlights that there is only one God and that God is a unity. They believe that God is the prophet and messenger.

The second pillar is prayer. Muslims are to pray five times a day. This includes before dawn, at midday, midafternoon, sunset, and nighttime. A minaret is when prayers are called from the top of a tower as an announcement and reminder for prayer. The prayer begins with Allahu akbar which means “God is supreme.” The prayer continues to “I witness that there is no God but ‘Allah; I witness that Muhammad is the messenger of Allah; hasten to prayer.” Prior to praying, one must partake in a ritual purification with water, washing the hands, arms, face, neck, and feet. However, if water was not available, one may use sand as the ritual purification. There is one person who is the leader when there are groups of people praying together. The day of public prayer is on Friday. According to our textbook, Muhammad believe that public prayer on Friday was God’s will.

The third pillar is charity to the poor. A practice by Islamic Is for all believers to contribute certain percentages of their total income including herds and produce, yearly to the poor. It estimates roughly to 2.5%. Besides donating to the poor, a good Muslim is required other acts of kindness that is considered part of their everyday life. The fourth pillar is fasting during Ramadan. People are to fast during a specified period of time. The purpose of fasting is to discipline oneself. Fasting is seen as a way to help with one’s spiritual health. As stated in our textbook, “it is also an important bond that unites Muslims during the period of shared fasting, which is known as Ramadan.” It is the ninth month of the Muslim calendar. This fasting consists of avoiding all food, liquid, tobacco, and sex from dawn until dusk. However, there are exceptions for pregnant women, travelers, and the sick, and they are expected to make up for the fasting at a later time.

The fifth pillar is the Pilgrimage to Mecca. Pilgrimage is defined in our textbook as “a religious journey by a believer to a sacred city or site – is a common practice in many religions.” It also people to explore such as traveling and experiencing new things. People from different backgrounds come together as a sense of unity. Every Muslim person, both men, and women are required to visit Mecca at least once in their lifetime. Only Muslims can visit the city since Islam is in the middle of Mecca. The practice of Pilgrimage to Mecca had begun prior to Muhammad being born. Pilgrims go to Mecca and are required to arrive for the Hajj by the seventh day of the month. Women do not have any special clothing. However, the men do. They wear two pieces of white, seamless cloth. Pilgrims continue to the Grand Mosque which consists of four sides of pillared colonnades. In the middle of the courtyard is the dark Kaaba shrine. Pilgrims walk seven times counterclockwise around this Kaaba after they purify themselves with water. They also recall Hagar and her son. On the eighth day of the month, they visit the Kaaba one more time before they go to Mina located outside of Mecca. They then travel to the plain of Arafat from Mecca on the ninth day. The tenth day is known as the Day of Sacrifice. Pilgrims return to Mina and they throw seven small stones at three walls that were originally columns. They select an animal for themselves and their families to be sacrificed. The options for the animals can be a sheep, goat, cow, or camel. After the sacrifice of the animal, the men’s heads are shaved while the women’s hair is cut. They trim all their fingernails and toenails as a sign of a new and purified life.

*(3) In addition to the Five Pillars covered above, discuss some of the **other expected religious practices of Muslims.** (Pg 405)*

In addition to the Five Pillars described above, there are some other expected religious practices of Muslims. They include dietary restrictions, the prohibition against usury and gambling, circumcision, marriage, and death rituals. The purpose of these practices is to help provide a pattern for everyday living. Muslims believe that control and prohibitions increase social order and happiness. They value pleasure in this world. Although they fast during the day of Ramadan, they come together as a family in the evening for a meal together.

For dietary restrictions, the Qur'an prohibits the consumption of wine and pork. The reason being is because they view the pig as a scavenger animal and the meat can transmit disease. In addition, wine is prohibited because they see it as violence and addiction. With prohibition against usury and gambling, the charge of interest on loans is forbidden. During Muhammad's day, interest rates were very high. They say that gambling was a waste of money and time; therefore, it was forbidden.

As stated in our textbook, "Male circumcision is a religious requirement in Islam, although it is not actually demanded by the Qur'an. Circumcision at about age 7 or 8 is common." This practice is also common among many Christians. Circumcision is seen as a measure to prevent infections. In eastern Africa, Muslim girls are also circumcised. The purpose of this is to decrease sexual desire and to help her remain a virgin until she is married and to be faithful to her husband afterward. Marriage is considered a civil contract in Islam. It is a tradition in Muslim societies for marriages to be arranged by the parents. This is in a written contract. Money for the bride is offered and a part of the contract. A marriage ceremony takes place at home and this is when there are witnesses present to sign the contract. A wife can initiate divorce

as well as a husband. According to our textbook, “The general simplicity of marriage ceremonies is characteristics, too, of death and funerals.” After a person dies, the body is buried in a plain white shroud. This is the same shroud for a male who made the pilgrimage as stated earlier. The deceased’s face is turned toward Mecca at the burial. The headstone is an undecorated stone marker that symbolizes the equality of all people in death.

(4) Discuss the role of women in Islam, covering both the history of the religion as well as in modern-day times. (Pg. 434)

Before Islam came about, restrictions on females in Arabia were harsh. For instance, unwanted female babies were either buried alive or left on their own to die. Women were treated like property. They were bought and sold like livestock. Men obtained as many wives as they desired. Women were not allowed to have rights pertaining to land or money. A woman could not initiate divorce. Restrictions on women were severe in those days.

Though Muhammad helped improve women’s individual rights, some see it still as oppression of women. A good example can be seen in Women’s attire. At first, women were required to wear modest clothing during Muhammad’s day, but as time went on, a more extreme form of veiling emerged. In some countries, women must cover their entire bodies outside of the home. Still, in other places, hands and face are to be covered.

In some Islam, culture women are not allowed to travel outside their home without a friend. A male figure must give them permission before traveling outside their home. Some critics had pointed out that this limits women's full potential. Such restriction makes it difficult for women to attend school, meet with peers, participate in recreational activities, and obtain certain employment opportunities. Some Islam cultures are extremely controlling and binding.

However, women are starting to push back against such restrictions. In Saudi Arabia, where women were not allowed to drive cars, it has been legalized that women operate a motor vehicles. Furthermore, the denial of voting for women in Saudi Arabia has been changing whereas previously it was an area mainly for men to participate in. In the mosque, the practices of limiting women to either pray at home or in a special area reserved for women are now being challenged. In some countries, women have joined men during prayer times in the mosques. Some women have even led the public prayers of both men and women.

(5) The religion is called “Islam,” while followers of the religion are called “Muslims.” What are the meanings of the two words? (PG 396)

Islam means “surrender” or “submission,” indicating wholehearted surrender to God. Islam can also mean the community of all believers, suggesting inclusion in a large family. Muslims refer to God as Allah. The word *al* means “the” and *ilah* means “God” and it simply means “the God” or “God.”

(6) Describe the contents of the Qur’an.

Qur’an (Koran) means “recitation.” As stated in our textbook, “It recalls the origins of these sacred writings in the sermons of Muhammad.” The name also means that Qur’an is best recited. Qur’an has been translated into various languages. However, the Arabic version is fully authoritative. According to our textbook, “The Qur’an is believed to be of divine origin, considered as God’s Word that was revealed to Muhammad during the approximately 20 years from his first revelation in 610 CE until the end of his life.” People became concerned about his

death that variations would occur. Abu Bakr who was Muhammad's first successor started the work in order to finish the caliphate of Uthman. This ended in 656 CE.

The Qur'an is known to be a body of sermons and utterances. Images and themes are constantly repetitive. A variety of topics are covered including people such as Adam, Eve, Noah, Abraham, Jacob, David, and more. It includes practical everyday life. For example, money, marriage, and inheritance. It includes religious beliefs such as judgment, fasting, and the pilgrimage.

There are 114 chapters, or suras, in the Qur'an. The names are from images or topics. The short suras contain the early teachings of Muhammad. The long suras are of details of ideal Islamic life was revealed to him. There are some handwritten copies of the Qur'an that are considered to be great artworks. There are passages of the Qur'an carved in stone or wood on buildings. The chanting of Qur'an in Arabic is also seen as an art form.

(7) Summarize the Shiite-Sunni division within Islam. (Pg 412 – 416)

Shiites received their name from the word shia, which means "faction". This group of Muslims followed Ali. Shiites believe that a God-given spiritual power called "the Light of Muhammad" was passed to 12 successors.

Sunni takes its name from the word sunnah, which means "tradition" or "example". Sunni develops a religious, political, legal, and cultural system close to their belief. Unlike Shiite Islam who has a clear division, Sunni created interpretations of Islam that run the spectrum from ultraconservative to very liberal.

(8) What is the Islamic ideal with regard to the separation of church and state? (Pg 425)

Islamic does not believe in the ideal of the separation of church and state. Their ideal does not separate religious and secular spheres. Traditional Islam seeks the “rule of God” in all aspects of everyday life. Including God leads to human fulfillment. Taking God out of the picture leads to humanity's demise.

(9) What is the view of Islam regarding secularism? (Pg. 435)

Since secularism seeks to create political institutions that are independent of any established religion, this had caused dismay in some Islamic countries. Islam believes that anything that does not involve God is bad. For instance, science. Science promotes secularism. Though science is not evil, however, nowadays science pursued views of the universe apart from God. Indifference, Islamic tradition believes that any view of the universe apart from God is to live without God. This is why Islam can not accept secularism.

(10) What countries are predominantly Muslim today? (Pg. 437)

Philippines, China, and Malaysia have the most Muslim population today.

(11) What factors seem to be dominant in the conflict between Islam and most of the western world? (Pg. 441)

Islam public prayer must be performed on Fridays, however, in the western world, Fridays are a workday. Interest on loans is forbidden which is contrary to Western business practice. Wine is forbidden in Islam but in Western countries, wine is loved and cherished. The meat eaten by Muslims must be slaughtered according to religious rules whereas, in America,

they have meat factories. Gambling is forbidden to Islam, In western culture, gambling is allowed.

Chapter 11L Alternative Paths

(1) Discuss the development and beliefs of Contemporary Paganism. (PAGE 451)

According to our text book, “Contemporary Paganism is a general name for religious movements that attempt to return to earlier, nature-based religions – these are mainly religions associated with early cultures of Europe.” The term *pagan* was used to refer early, nature-based religions. It came from a Latin term for “countryside” (*pagus*). Nature religions lived longer in rural areas than in cities. Contemporary Paganism believe that older pagan practices and rituals did not die after Christianity grew in Western Europe.

Celtic mythology is the most common forms of Contemporary Paganism. This was the foundation for it. As stated in our textbook, “The best-known manifestation of the Contemporary Pagan movement is Wicca. *Wicca* is an Old English word that suggests association with magic, separation, and holiness.” Wicca worships goddesses and gods rooted in nature. There are some Wiccans who speak of multiple deities. However, there are some who prefers to speak of a single divine reality that has male and female aspects. The female aspect is seen as “the Goddess” while the male aspect is seen as “the God.” it was noted in our textbook that “Wicca teaches that the divine manifests itself in opposites that are reminiscent of yin and yang – dark and light, female and male, and so on.” Women play a prominent role as bearers of knowledge and as leaders of ritual.

Both the moon and the sun are seen as sacred symbols. The Wiccan yearly calendar’s structure comes from this. Wiccans celebrate the solar cycle with eight seasonal turning points. This is known as Sabbats which includes the solstices and equinoxes. Esbats is defined as the times of full moons and it is often marked by ritual gatherings. The lunar cycle at the new and

full moons are celebrated by the Wiccans. There are three stages that Wiccan groups recognizes. Initiation is the first stage following the second or third stage which is known to start an independent coven (worship group). “Contemporary Wiccans call themselves *Witches*, and they use this term for both females and males.”

The Wiccan Rede is known as “advice” or “counsel.” As stated in our textbook, “The Wiccan rede is a rule of tolerance: “An [if] it harm none, do what you will.” People are free to what they want as long as it does not hurt others. This rule applies to animals as well. Therefore, Wiccans are vegetarian. Another moral belief is the Law of the Triple Return. It states, “Whatever you do, good or bad, will return to you threefold.”

(2) Discuss the development and beliefs of Scientology. (PAGE 461-463)

Scientology is from Indian spirituality. It was found as a religion is 1954 by L. Ron Hubbard. According to our textbook, “Beginning as a human-potential movement in the early 1950s, Scientology evolved quickly into the religion that is now called the Church of Scientology. In order for people to understand the human process of knowing, Hubbard created a hybrid name which he united the words *scientia* and *logos*. The word *scientia* is a Latin word that means “knowledge.” The word *logos* is a Greek word that means “reason” and “understanding.”

Scientology is known to be parallel with many religions, specifically with Gnosticism and some schools of Hinduism. There is a belief that there is a spiritual purpose to life. The term *thetan* is defined as the core of the human being that is a soul or spiritual reality. This is considered a state of imprisonment. In other words, one is being captive to the material world which is known as MEST. This is the acronym for matter, energy, space, and time. MEST is found in both Hinduism and Buddhism.

The first minor teaching of Scientology was the belief of rebirth. There were people who verbally expressed what they needed in order to overcome challenges from their past and current lives. This was also seen as karma and reincarnation. As stated in our textbook, “Although Scientologists do not use the terms *moksha*, *nirvana*, or *enlightenment*, those ideas were strongly suggested.” There are different stages that Scientologists have in order for an individual to work toward an increased of understanding and liberation. The first stage is called a pre-clear. The individual has reached a state of mental liberation, also called clear, is called an operating thetan (or OT). During this time, the individual continues on the path of mental liberation. The individual is encouraged to get help from another person known as a spiritual counselor called an auditor. During this time, processes take place which is where the auditor assist the less-experienced individual. This process includes the usage of mental images and questions. It helps with new ways of mental focusing and individual growth. There are fees included with going through the different stages.

(3) Discuss the development and beliefs of Rastafarianism. (PAGE 465-467)

Rastafarianism began in Jamaica in the 1930s. This religion is strongly influenced by Christianity. According to our textbook, “Jamaican culture grew up in communities of runaway slaves and their descendants, who wished to lead communal lives in Jamaica’s mountains. Ironically, Protestant revivalism and Bible reading, derived from British Christianity, helped Jamaicans express their longing for independence. Rastafarianism emerged out of this milieu.”

Marcus Garvey was the most important figure of Rastafarianism. He was born in Jamaica in 1914. He organized the Universal Negro Improvement association (UNIA). This taught a

pioneering form of black pride. He taught his followers to take pride in their African origins, rid themselves of their oppression, and unite in a world federation. He had a desire for schools to teach about African culture. He wrote many plays. The most influential play that he wrote was called *The Coronation of the King and Queen of Africa*.

Followers were taught to look to Africa for the crowning of a native king who would be their redeemer. In 1930, a nobleman by the name of Ras Tafari, was crowned emperor of Ethiopia. *Ras* means “head” or “leader,” and *Tafari* means “awe-inspiring.” As stated in our textbook, “Many Jamaicans also accepted the belief of Ethiopians that their emperor was descended from the biblical King Solomon and the biblical Queen of Sheba.” Additionally, they also believe that Haile Selassie was a new appearance of Jesus. Rastafarians believe Haile Selassie is still alive in his spiritual body. He died in 1975.

First of all, there is a belief that there is one God who is referred by *Jah*. This name is similar to *Yahweh* and *Jehovah*. Secondly, there is a belief that Haile Selassie was and is divine. He was known as the King of Kings and Lion of Judah. Thirdly, “all Rastafarians believe that the Bible not only is the word of God, but that it also holds hidden meanings that are important for people of African descent.” Lastly, Rastafarians believe seeking liberation from society that oppresses them.

A practice they believe is the use of *ganja* (marijuana). They called it “holy herb.” Another practice is for one’s hair to grow into long coils, called dreadlocks. Usually, they avoid pork and shellfish as part of their diet. Therefore, they are vegetarians. They have a symbolic use of four colors that they adopted. The color black represents people of African origin. The hills of Jamaica and hope for the future is represented by green. The color red represents the blood shed by martyrs for the cause of liberation. Lastly, gold represents Ethiopia.

(4) Discuss the development and beliefs of Baha'i. (PAGE 468-469)

Baha'i is traced to the Shite Islam of Persia. Baha'I is a monotheistic religion. In 1844, Siyyid Ali Muhammad declared that he was the long-awaited Mahdi who was the last Imam that returned to earth. The religion's name Bab, means "gate" or "door." He preached that there was going to be another divinely sent messenger who would be greater stature and would bring full revelation from Allah. Due to conflicts with orthodox Muslims, the Bab was out in prison and executed in 1850.

There was a man by the name of Baha'u'llah who was a follower of Bab. He was in prison and experienced several divine revelations. He was banned from Iran after he was released from prison. He went to many different places such as Iraq, Turkey, Egypt, and Palestine. He focused on the Babist movement. In 1863, he professed that he was indeed the messianic figure whom the Bab had prophesied.

As stated in our textbook, "The Baha'I faith is among the most universalistic of religions. While it retains its monotheistic origins, the religion defines God and other religious realities in terms broad enough to appeal to a wide range of people." They see all religions as partially true. During their services, they read selections from scriptures of many world religions. They attempt to overcome the differences between religious and scientific endeavors. They believe in the afterlife. They believe that people have an immortal soul after death. The souls can develop in realms beyond the earth. They also believe in improving life in this world. For example, equality between men and women, an end to poverty, and education for everyone. They want to end

prejudice and encourage intermarriage. Ba'ha'is cannot drink alcohol or smoke. They do not allow polygamy. However, they do allow divorce.

(5) What is syncretism? (PAGE 457)

Syncretism along with synthesis and symbiosis are used to describe the mixture, suggesting a happy blend of complements.

(6) Discuss the development and beliefs of Santeria. (PAGE 456-457)

Santeria is the best-known religious movement that resulted from Yoruba religions and Christianity. It is influenced by Spanish colonial Catholicism and grew up in Cuba. The term Santeria means “saint-thing” or “saint-way.” It was originally a negative way of identifying the movement. However, majority of religious practitioners use the term. Santeria believes in personal relationships through divination, sacrifice, initiation, and mediumship.

(7) Discuss the development and beliefs of Voodoo. (PAGE 456)

Voodoo is known to be prominent. It is influenced by French Catholicism which was developed in Haiti. The word *Voodoo* comes from the Fon word *vodun* that means “mysterious power.” The word Voodoo has some negative connotations. The fundamental principle is that everything is spirit and that God does not interfere.

(8) Discuss the development and beliefs of Candomble. (PAGE 456)

Candombie was influenced by Portuguese Catholicism which was developed in Brazil. They believe in a supreme creator and many minor deities.

(9) Discuss the development and beliefs of Theosophy. (PAGE 459--460)

Theosophy means “divine wisdom” in Greek. According to our textbook, “Theosophy refers to mystical movements of all types, but it also refers specifically to a movement, begun in the nineteenth century, that attempts a synthesis of esoteric (hidden) religious knowledge.” There are teachings from all sources including Hindu Vedanta, the Jewish Kabbalah, and Gnosticism. Madame Helena Blavatsky was a Russian writer who was the founder of Theosophy. The Theosophical Society began in 1875. They believe in a deeper spiritual reality and direct contact through intuition, mediation, and revelation.

(10) Not applicable

(11) Discuss the development and beliefs of Cao Dai. (PAGE 463-464)

Cao Dai is known as one of the world’s most unusual religions. As stated in our textbook, “Also called the Cao Dai Way, it blends elements of Daoism, Confucianism, Buddhism, and belief in spirits, along with elements of Christian monotheism. It has a pope and an organizational structure that is reminiscent of Catholicism.” Cao Dai is a title for God that means “high palace” or “high tower.” The primary teaching is that all religions are based on revelations

of God. They believe that God inspired all the great religious founders and teachers. There are three great phases that is part of God's revelation. The first revelation is called the First Alliance came in the distant past when there were mystic figures that brought divine revelation to the world. There was an early incarnation of Laozi. The Second Alliance was during the thousand-year period of religious ferment. This was when the birth of Laozi, Confucius, Siddhartha Gautama, Jesus, and Muhammad. The Third Alliance started in the nineteenth century. This was when Victor Hugo, Sun Yat-sen, and the Vietnamese scholar Trang Trinh Nguyen Binh Khiem, pursued the ideals of justice and liberation. This continued in the revelations of Ngo Van Chieu and his followers. Cao Dai believes in God the Father as well as a celestial Universal Mother, heavenly spirits, and souls of the living and the dead. Cao Dai encourage the avoidance of drugs and alcohol, luxury, as well as lies and hurtful speech. They do not allow the killing of living beings which was noted that they are vegetarians due to this. People attend services at churches about four times a day, every six hours, beginning at dawn. They practice mediation and breathing exercises.

Chapter 12: The Modern Search

Chapter 12 discusses the impact that religion has on society as well as the impact that society has on religion. The first two questions discuss religion's impact on society, while the last two questions discuss society's impact on religion. For each of the questions, write an extended essay (about double the length of the previous essay questions you've been answering) that explores the role of religion in these ethical issues. Note that the questions really don't ask for your opinion on the issue, although you may choose to express it.

(1) Select one of the seven ethical questions (like Fertility assistance) starting on pages 484 in the 8th edition.

As a Christian, I do not believe in the termination of pregnancy. When a woman is in the conception stage, life is already formed inside of her. Though the living being inside is considered an embryo or a fetus, I believe a living soul exists inside the being. The embryo has a heartbeat and they are slowly forming in the womb. The Bible stated, "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart; I appointed you..." (Jeremiah 1:4 NIV). In this statement, we can see God has a purpose for every human being. There may be illegitimate parents, but there is no such thing as an illegitimate child. With that, I do not believe in the termination of pregnancy.

I believe embryos and fetuses are considered human being right from the start of conception and obtain basic human rights. The Bible Jeremiah 29:11 tell of God's plans for every human being from conception until death, "'For I know the plans I have for you', declares

the LORD, ‘plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future’” (Jeremiah 29:11 NIV). Though the biblical context may be different during the time this scripture was written, the idea is that God has a plan and purpose for every human being. Another Bible verse I believe strongly supports this ideal is Genesis 2:7 which states, “Then the LORD God formed a man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being.”. When God breathed into Adam the breath of life, God gave human being a spirit and soul. When conception takes place inside the womb of a woman, a human being with a spirit and soul is conceived thus obtaining basic human rights as all other human beings.

There is no such thing as moral differences between early abortion and late-term abortion. Abortion is abortion no matter how early or late it takes place. In a real way, abortion is the act of killing a baby. It is the same as someone taking the life of another person without their consent. There are some cultures that sacrifice their own children to demons or idols, which is just as bad as abortion. In the Bible, the book of Ezekiel 16: 20-21 stated, “And you took your sons and your daughters, whom you had borne to me, and these you sacrificed to them to be devoured. Were your whorings so small a matter that you slaughtered my children and deliver them up as an offering by fire to them?”. Children are supposed to be a product of love and not lust. When a child is aborted, they become a product of lust.

Abortion indeed is a difficult topic to talk about as much as I believe it is wrong. In the past I have encountered some who asked, “What about a woman who was assaulted and became pregnant, can she have an abortion?”. Another question asked was, “What if it was a life and death situation? What if the mother can potentially die because of giving birth? Is abortion accepted then?”. Still another question, “The child will have many mental health issues if born,

should I get an abortion?’. These are all real questions people had asked me. Though I do not have any children of my own I would say that it is better to trust in God and have a child. I believe children are a gift from God, and every child has a part in God’s plan. A woman who was assaulted and became pregnant as a result can give the newborn to an adoption agency instead of having an abortion. In the second case, a mother who can potentially face death should still trust in the Lord. It is God who will sustain her. The advancement of technology can aid the labor process and reduce the likelihood of death. For the third question, though the child may develop health issues or other health risks, the woman should trust in God and have the child. Abortion indeed is a difficult topic to talk about as much as I believe it is wrong; however, I believe there is always an alternative path one can take and not resort to abortion.

(2) Select a second ethical question from the same list and discuss the impact of religion on the question.

Fertility assistance through drugs is a difficult topic to talk about. I have seen the good and bad that have come out of this. I personally know people who thought about having fertility assistance but later decided not to, only to find out a few months later they are pregnant. I also know others who utilized this assistance and conceive their first child. What one decides to do will greatly be based on what they believe in. As a Christian, I do not believe one should use fertility assistance.

As a Christian, I will advise people to trust in the Lord regarding natural conception. Children are a gift from God. Since they are a gift from God for parents to love, raise, and prepare for life, God will enable conception if it is His will. Trusting in God and allowing Him to carry his plans through will always have a better result. There is a youth pastor I know whose wife did

not conceive until age forty. Years prior to giving birth many people advised him to remarry (his non-believing relatives, of course). But they trust in God. Eventually, they adopted two kids. Within just a few years of the adoption, they became pregnant. To this day I still do not understand why they became pregnant so late in marriage. One thing I do know for certain because they trusted in God, He unfolded his plans for them according to His time. This reminds me of Abraham from the Bible. If he trusted in God, they would have eventually become pregnant in God's timing. However, he trusted in himself and his wife and eventually slept with this wife's servant. They end up banishing both the servant and her son.

When one trusts in fertility assistance rather than God, the question "is the survival of one or a few babies worth the potential loss of the others?" comes into play. The person who goes through with this must constantly ask this question. To avoid questions like this, one should trust in God and His timing. In the Bible, the book of Lamentations stated, "The Lord is good to those who wait for him, to the soul who seeks him. It is good that one should wait quietly for the salvation of the Lord". Also, Proverbs 3: 5-6, it states, "Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and he shall direct your paths. Still some other Bible verses from Psalm 37: 4-7 stated, "Take delight in the Lord, and he will give you the desires of your heart. Commit your way to the Lord; trust in him and he will do this." Though everyone may have a different take on the topic of fertility assistance, I believe trusting in God with conception is far better than trusting in man-made technology. What one learned from trusting in God outweighs the large investment of money into fertility assistance. Also, the question of whether one life is more important than the other would not be asked.

(3) Excluding science and ethics, choose one of the other modern influences discussed in Chapter 12: the new world order, multiculturalism and interfaith dialogue, women's rights movements, reassessment of human sexuality, science and technology, secularism, and environmental challenges. Discuss the impact the modern influence is having on religion.

The Women's Rights Movement sought equal rights and opportunities for women. It includes women's equal access to employment, marriage, and education. In addition, it includes fairer wages and birth control. As stated in our textbook, "The nineteenth century was the century in which slavery was abolished worldwide. The current century may someday be seen as the time when women worldwide have begun to achieve real equality."

For a very long time, women were limited to what they were able to do. For example, they were not able to obtain an education. In most cultures, women are expected to be stay-at-home wives or moms. They cared for the home, children, cooked and cleaned while the husbands worked. Another example is that women were not allowed to enter into marriage with someone of their choice. In some cultures, marriages are already pre-arranged at a young age by the parents. Some other examples that limited women include voting, holding office, owning land, traveling, and having professional careers.

As things began to change, women were no longer restricted. In many cultures, women began to work and earned their own incomes. This led women to numerous job opportunities including in government, business, and the arts. However, there are some religions that have yet to allow women to have leadership roles. According to our textbook, "This has been especially true of smaller groups, such as some of the New Religions derived from Shinto and those Christian churches – such as the Christian Science Church and the Foursquare Gospel Church –

whose founders were women. Christian churches in the Lutheran, Episcopal, and Anglican traditions now ordain women as priests and bishops.”

Interestingly, as stated in our textbook, “In Christianity, the Catholic and Orthodox Churches so far have staved off pressures to ordain women. In Judaism, females have been ordained in the Reform and Conservative branches; but the Orthodox still will not accept the notion of a female rabbi.” In Buddhism, there are still concerns with the community of nuns. They have played only a small role in leadership.

In some religions, there are interests that envision the divine as being female or that value its feminine aspect. There were some religions that have worshipped a major female deity, such as Astarte, or in which women have had an important role. For example, there was an interest in Christianity with medieval female mystics such as Hildegard of Bingen, Margery Kempe, and Mechthild of Magdeburg. According to our textbook, “Hinduism is being appreciated not only for its female divinities but also for the many female gurus it has produced.” There are still studies being done on Shinto and shamanistic religions for women's roles.

(4) Choose a second modern influence from the same list and discuss the impact the modern influence is having on religion.

With access to science and technology, it has definitely impacted our lives one way or another. This kind of resource has taught us new information and helped us to make decisions. Some other science and technologies include lightning and electricity; telephone and electric light; and researchers in preventing diseases. As stated in our textbook, “Some religions have tried to reject or even ignore the contributions of science, arguing that science displaces God, questions religious belief, and undermines morality.” However, there are times when this could

affect people from different cultures, beliefs, and practices. Some topics that raised questions in some religious traditions are fertility assistance, birth control, ethical termination of pregnancy, ethical termination of adult life, organ transplantation genetic manipulation and stem-cell research, and species rights. Below are two examples of the impact of modern influence on religion.

With science and technology, for instance, it has been possible for some women to conceive with fertility assistance. This process includes fertility drugs and in vitro fertilization. However, there may be some cultures that do not believe in infertility assistance. For example, the Catholic Church believes that this is never acceptable. The reason being is because it removes conception from the martial act and seems the baby is treated as a product. Personally, I know of a couple from my home church where the wife could not conceive for a long time. The couple actually considered going through with in vitro fertilization (IVF). However, when they were getting ready to start the process, the wife found out that she was pregnant. It is the couple's testimony that everything happened in God's timing and this helped them grow stronger in their faith. They were able to save a ton of money by not moving forward with the IVF process.

Due to science and technology playing a huge role in today's society, doctors and clinics have access to resources when it comes to an abortion process Abortion is one of the most significant moral issues of our day. This is a very sensitive topic for some people and religions. For instance, Christians believe in God's Fifth Commandment of "You shall not murder." This means people should fear God and not hurt or harm others. God forbids us to take the life of another person, especially abortion. This is a sin according to God whether it is legal or not. Some people may feel guilt and great sorrow if they decide to move forward with the abortion or

have had an abortion in the past. Christians believe in repentance of their sin in order to remain close to God; therefore, they will repent from their sin of abortion and ask for forgiveness.

Overall, “the scientific approach to reality potentially can help to make the earth a more pleasant place for human beings to inhabit than it was in the past centuries.” We can all say and agree that science has definitely played a huge part in our society today. This includes medicine, medical treatments, infant mortality, life spans, etc. Science and religion are closely interconnected in the scientific study of religion. They can both work together to emphasize dialogue.