

DANTES

Subject Standardized Tests

Fact Sheet Study Guide

INTRODUCTION TO WORLD RELIGIONS

TEST INFORMATION

This test was developed to enable schools to award credit to students for knowledge equivalent to that which is learned by students taking the course. The school may choose to award college credit to the student based on the achievement of a passing score. The passing score for each examination is determined by the school based on recommendations from the American Council on Education (ACE). This minimum credit-awarding score is equal to the mean score of students in the norming sample who received a grade of C in the course. Some schools set their own standards for awarding credit and may require a higher score than the ACE recommendation. Students should obtain this information from the institution where they expect to receive credit.

CONTENT

The following topics, which are commonly taught in courses on the subject, are covered by this examination.

	<u>Approximate Percent</u>
I. Religion: Dimensions and Approaches	7%
A. Basic dimensions of religion (e.g., sacred stories, ethics, ritual, doctrine)	
B. Approaches to religion (theological, descriptive, historical)	
II. Primal Religions	4%
A. Native North American traditions (e.g., Inuit, Lakota, Hopi)	
B. Native West African traditions (e.g., Yuruba, Dogon)	
III. Hinduism	14%
A. Historical development (early, classical, and modern)	
B. Major themes Spiritual disciplines (yoga) Social dharma Rituals, symbols, and worship	
IV. Buddhism	12%
A. Historical development (Life of Buddha; early Buddhism; Divisions: Theravada, Mahayana, and Vajrayana; modern Buddhism)	
B. Major themes (e.g. Four Noble Truths, Eight-Fold Path nirvana [enlightenment]; rituals, symbols and worship)	
V. Confucianism	13%
A. Historical development(e.g. Early Chinese traditions, life and teaching of Confucius, classical Confucianism)	
B. Major themes (e.g., Goodness [Jen], Gentlemanliness [Chun], Propriety [Li], Government by Virtue [Te], Arts of Peace [Wen], Heaven, Earth and Humans)	
VI. Taoism	6%
(philosophical, religious, ritual)	



SAMPLE QUESTIONS

- VII. Judaism** **Approximate
Percent
15%**
- A. Historical development (Religion of Israel [to 586 B.C.E.], Second Temple Judaism [586 B.C.E. to 70 C.E.], modern Judaism [70 C.E. to present, including expulsion from Spain, the Holocaust])
- B. Major Themes (e.g. nature of God, covenant, Torah, prophecy, rituals, symbols, and worship.)

- VIII. Christianity** **15%**
- A. Historical development (life of Jesus, early and medieval church [50 CE to 1517 including Eastern Church], Gospel [including New Testament], resurrection, rituals, symbols, and worship)

- IX. Islam** **14%**
- A. Historical development (life of Muhammad, formation of the Ummah [community], expansion of the community, Sunni, Shi'a and Sufi, modern Islam [traditions and modernity])
- B. Major themes (e.g., nature of God [Allah and predestination], Qur'an [Koran], Five Pillars of Islam, Shari'ah [community law], Jihad)

Questions on the test require candidates to demonstrate the following abilities. Some questions may require more than one of the abilities.

- Knowledge of basic facts and terms (about 55-60% of the examination)
- Understanding of concepts and principles (about 40-45% of the examination)
- Ability to apply knowledge to specific cases and issues (about 1-5% of the examination)

1. In the life of Moses, the best example of an experience of the sacred is Moses'
 - (A) rescue from the bullrushes
 - (B) meeting with Jethro
 - (C) confrontation with the pharaoh
 - (D) encounter with the burning bush
2. In the myths of tribal societies of both the Americas and Africa, the trickster is a figure whose religious behavior is characterized by which two of the following?
 - I. Officiating at sacrificial rites
 - II. Expanding cultural understanding of the sacred by acting in prohibited ways
 - III. Healing and divining by means of ecstatic trance states
 - IV. Transforming fixed images of the self through unusual activity
 - (A) I and II
 - (B) I and III
 - (C) II and IV
 - (D) III and IV
3. Verdic religion originated with
 - (A) People who were indigenous to India
 - (B) Aryans who came to India ca. 1500 B.C.E. from Central Asia
 - (C) Persians who came to India ca. 700 B.C.E.
 - (D) Greeks who came to India ca. 300 B.C.E. with Alexander the Great
4. In Hinduism, the term "karma" implies
 - (A) duty
 - (B) predestination
 - (C) action and reaction
 - (D) good action
5. Theravada Buddhism upholds liberation through
 - (A) devotion to Brahman
 - (B) one's own moral efforts and spiritual discipline
 - (C) divine intercession
 - (D) worship of Buddha

6. In the Four Noble Truths, the Buddha proclaims that the cause of suffering is
- (A) lack of proper teachers
 - (B) aggression and violence
 - (C) craving
 - (D) original sin
7. Which of the following Chinese figures transmitted Confucian teachings?
- I. Mencius (Meng-zi)
 - II. Hsun tzu (Xun-zi)
 - III. Mo tzu (Mo-zi)
 - IV. Chu His (Ju Xi)
- (A) I and II only
 - (B) III and IV only
 - (C) I, II and III only
 - (D) I, II and IV only
8. In the Tao Te Ching, Lao Tzu indicates that the best way of living is a life of
- (A) passivity
 - (B) assertiveness
 - (C) natural simplicity
 - (D) social commitment
9. The Covenant of Judaism refers to
- (A) ancient agreements between Israel and neighboring peoples
 - (B) a pact initiated by Yahweh with a particular people
 - (C) a contract among Jewish religious leaders
 - (D) an agreement negotiated by the Hebrew people and the Egyptians
10. A religious observance commemorating the Exodus is
- (A) Mishnah
 - (B) Passover
 - (C) Yom Kippur
 - (D) Rosh Hashonah
11. The New Testament Gospels are primarily
- (A) complete biographies of Jesus of Nazareth
 - (B) summaries of Christian ethics
 - (C) proclamations of Jesus as Risen Lord and Messiah
 - (D) eyewitness accounts of four apostles
12. Which of the following is NOT one of the Pillars of Islam?
- (A) Muslims are expected to go on a pilgrimage to Mecca at least once in their lives, if financially and physically capable.
 - (B) Muslims have to seek the intercession of Muhammad to achieve paradise.
 - (C) Muslims are expected to fulfill their charitable duties
 - (D) Muslims have to engage in prayer every day.

STUDYING FOR THE EXAMINATION

The following is a list of reference publications that were being used as textbooks in college courses of the same or similar title at the time the test was developed. Appropriate textbooks for study are not limited to those listed below. If you wish to obtain study resources to prepare for the examination, you may reference either the current edition of the following titles **or** textbooks currently used at a local college or university for the same class title. It is recommended that you reference **more than one textbook** on the topics outlined in this fact sheet. You should **begin by checking textbook content against the content outline** included on the front page of this Fact Sheet/Study Guide **before** selecting textbooks that cover the test content from which to study. Textbooks may be found at the campus bookstore of a local college or university offering a course on the subject.

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

Hopfe, Lewis M. *Religions of the World*. New York: MacMillan, current edition.

Ludwig, Theodore. *The Sacred Paths*. New York: MacMillan, current edition.

Nielsen, Niels C. et al. *Religions of the World*. New York: St. Martin's Press, Inc., current edition.

Noss, David, and John Noss. *A History of the World's Religions*. New York: Macmillan, current edition.

Smart, Ninian. *The Religious Experience*. New York: Schribner, current edition.

Current textbook used by a local college or university for a course on the subject.

CREDIT RECOMMENDATIONS

The Center for Adult Learning and Educational Credentials of the American Council on Education (ACE) has reviewed and evaluated the DANTES test development process and has made the following recommendations:

Area or Course	
Equivalent:	Introduction to World Religions
Level:	Baccalaureate
Amount:	Three (3) semester hours
Source:	ACE Commission on Educational Credit and Credentials

INFORMATION

Colleges and universities that would like to review copies of tests, have additional information about the national norming, or assistance in local norming or score validation studies should write to: DANTES Program, Mail Stop 11-P, The Chauncey Group International, 664 Rosedale Road, Princeton, New Jersey 08540.

It is advisable that schools develop a consistent policy about awarding credit based on scores from this test and that the policy be reviewed periodically. The Chauncey Group will be happy to help schools in this effort.

Correct responses to sample questions: 1.D; 2.C; 3.B; 4.C; 5.B; 6.C; 7.D; 8.C; 9.B; 10.B; 11.C; 12.B.

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