

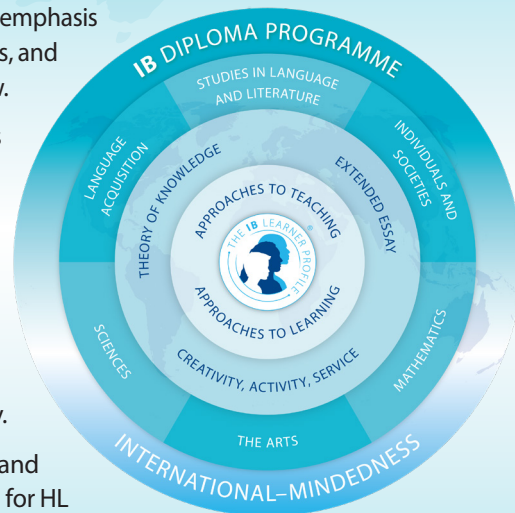
# Individuals and societies: Religion and society

First assessment 2029

The Diploma Programme (DP) is a rigorous pre-university course of study designed for students in the 16 to 19 age range. It is a broad-based two-year course that aims to encourage students to be knowledgeable and inquiring, but also caring and compassionate. There is a strong emphasis on encouraging students to develop intercultural understanding, open-mindedness, and the attitudes necessary for them to respect and evaluate a range of points of view.

The course is presented as six academic areas enclosing a central core. Students study two modern languages (or a modern language and a classical language), a humanities or social science subject, an experimental science, mathematics and one of the creative arts. Instead of an arts subject, students can choose two subjects from another area. It is this comprehensive range of subjects that makes the Diploma Programme a demanding course of study designed to prepare students effectively for university entrance. In each of the academic areas students have flexibility in making their choices, which means they can choose subjects that particularly interest them and that they may wish to study further at university.

Normally, three subjects (and not more than four) are taken at higher level (HL), and the others are taken at standard level (SL). The IB recommends 240 teaching hours for HL subjects and 150 hours for SL. Subjects at HL are studied in greater depth and breadth than at SL. In addition, three core elements—the extended essay, theory of knowledge and creativity, activity, service—are compulsory and central to the philosophy of the programme.



## I. Course description and aims

The DP religion and society course is grounded in an academic approach to the study of religion that seeks to understand better the roles religion plays in the lives of individuals and communities. It utilizes religious studies methods to explore how religious individuals and communities influence and are influenced by their social, political, economic, geographical and historical contexts.

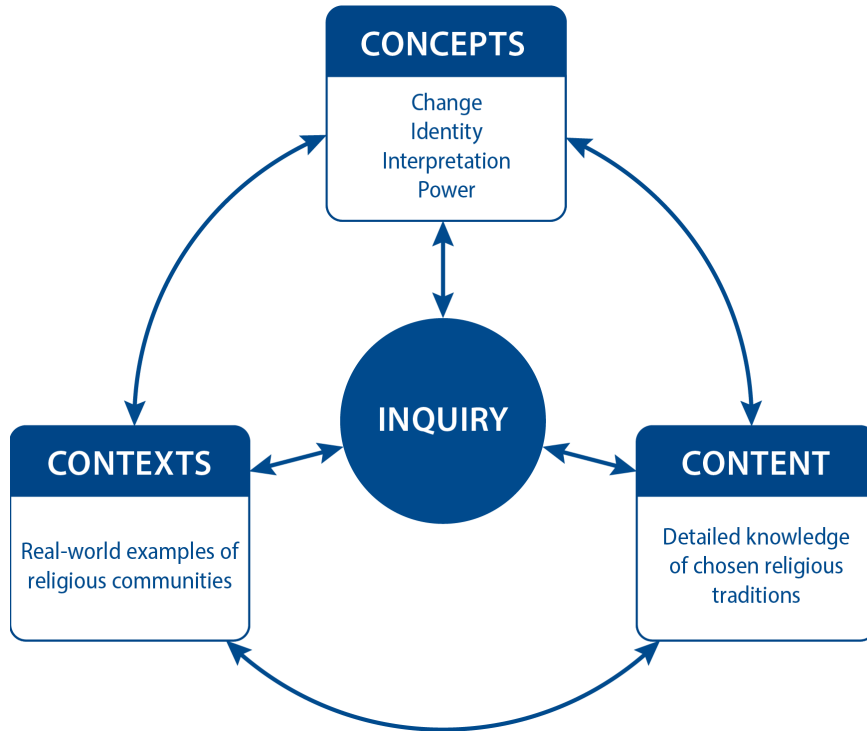
In this course, students explore the intersection of religion and society through situated examples of religious communities using four concepts that structure an inquiry-based approach: change, identity, interpretation and power. Through their inquiry across several religious traditions, students are empowered to analyse critically how religion intersects with the lives of individuals and societies.

The religion and society course invites students to develop religious literacy skills as ethical, empathetic and reflexive learners. Engaging in the study of religion and society will enable students to:

- conduct conceptual inquiry into religion
- examine the complexity of religious identities, expressions and experiences
- investigate the intersection of religion and contemporary lives
- develop as informed, open-minded, respectful and engaged students.

## II. Curriculum model overview

Learning and teaching in the DP religion and society course is guided by inquiry. Students engage in a critical and reflective exploration of religion, acquiring in-depth content knowledge of selected religious traditions through specific concepts and within real-world contexts. The inquiry framework of concepts, contexts and content allows for the exploration of diverse religious expressions and experiences.



- **Concepts** structure the inquiry into the intersections of religion and society. There are four specified concepts in the course: change, identity, interpretation and power. The four concepts are each explored further through two themes. The framework of concepts and themes allows students to build lasting understandings about the nature and role of religion in various societies.
- **Content** in the course refers to the detailed subject-specific knowledge about religion and the selected religious traditions. Content in religion and society is purposefully not predetermined but open-ended. This provides an opportunity for teachers to design a course that encourages inquiry-based learning.
- **Contexts** situate the inquiry in time and place using real-world examples of religious communities. Contexts help define the nature and the scope of the content studied. By studying contexts, students engage with religious traditions as the lived experiences of people throughout the world.

The course is organized in two parts, which should be considered as interwoven, with knowledge and understandings from each section used to illustrate and reflect on the other. In part 1, “Foundations of the study of religion and society”, students explore how religion and society is studied through the lens of three **enduring understandings**. Foundational theories and methodologies that underpin the field of religious studies provide students with the skills and background knowledge to understand and analyse religious traditions. In part 2, “Exploring religion and society”, students develop a strong **conceptual understanding** of the nature and impacts of religion throughout the world. They will use and reflect on the knowledge gained in part 1 to engage in conceptual inquiry into characteristics and complex societal interactions of religious traditions.

Syllabus component	Recommended number of teaching hours
<b>External assessment</b>	<b>130</b>
<b>Part 1: Foundations of the study of religion and society</b> <b>Enduring understandings</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Definitions of religion are contextual</li> <li>Diverse frameworks are used to describe and categorize religious traditions</li> <li>Academic and devotional approaches differ in objectives and methods of study</li> </ul>	20
<b>Part 2: Exploring religion and society</b> <b>Conceptual understandings</b> At least three religious traditions are studied through all of the following concepts and themes. <p><b>Change</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Theme 1.1: Responses and adaptations to change</li> <li>Theme 1.2: Attempts to affect change in society</li> </ul> <p><b>Identity</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Theme 2.1: Identity within religious communities</li> <li>Theme 2.2: Identity in relation to others</li> </ul> <p><b>Interpretation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Theme 3.1: Interpretation of texts and narratives</li> <li>Theme 3.2: Interpretation of the world around us</li> </ul> <p><b>Power</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Theme 4.1: Power within religious communities</li> <li>Theme 4.2: Relations with political powers</li> </ul>	110
<b>Internal assessment</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>The inquiry report</b> An inquiry into an aspect of the religious identities, expressions or experiences of a group and/or individual adherents.	20

### III. Assessment model

The course assesses students' knowing and understanding, applying and analysing, and evaluating and synthesizing of six different elements of the course. These elements are:

- subject-specific terminology and content
- definitions, frameworks and approaches in the study of religion
- concepts for the academic study of religion
- real-world examples from various religious communities and academic texts about the study of religion
- diverse perspectives on religious identities, expressions and experiences
- claims and arguments for communication in academic discourse.

The table below shows how the different elements of the course are assessed in different ways. It also shows, in parentheses, the assessment component (paper 1, paper 2 and the internal assessment [IA]) for this assessment objective.

Curriculum areas	Knowledge and understanding	Application and analysis	Evaluation and synthesis
<b>Subject-specific terminology and content</b>	Know and understand terminology and content (paper 1, paper 2, IA)	Apply terminology and content (paper 1, paper 2, IA)	
<b>Definitions, frameworks and approaches in the study of religion</b>	Know and understand the foundations to the study of religion (paper 1)	Apply and analyse definitions, frameworks and approaches (paper 1)	
<b>Concepts for the academic study of religion</b>	Know and understand concepts (paper 1, paper 2, IA)	Apply concepts (paper 1, paper 2, IA)	
<b>Real-world examples from various religious communities</b>	Know and understand real-world examples (paper 1, paper 2, IA)	Apply (paper 1, paper 2, IA) and analyse (paper 2) real-world examples	
<b>Academic texts about the study of religion</b>	Know (IA) and understand (paper 1, IA) academic texts	Analyse academic texts (paper 1, IA)	Evaluate and synthesize academic texts (IA)
<b>Diverse perspectives on religious identities, expressions and experiences</b>	Understand diverse perspectives (paper 1, paper 2, IA)	Analyse diverse perspectives (paper 1, paper 2, IA)	Evaluate and synthesize diverse perspectives (paper 2, IA)
<b>Claims and arguments for communication in academic discourse</b>	Understand claims and arguments (paper 1, paper 2, IA)	Analyse claims and arguments (paper 1, paper 2, IA)	Evaluate and synthesize claims, and formulate arguments (paper 1, paper 2, IA)

In some ways, the table above demonstrates how the objectives of the course are progressive and build on each other. For example, it would be difficult to evaluate a source without first understanding it. Nonetheless, it does not necessarily follow that the “Evaluation and synthesis” column is inherently more complex or challenging than the previous columns. For example, to “understand” a concept is a demanding cognitive challenge, and to apply it even more so. It is better to see these ways of thinking about various parts of the course as interconnected and interdependent.

### Paper 1

In paper 1, students are assessed on their analysis of academic texts about religion, applying subject-specific terminology and content to communicate claims and arguments. In their analysis, students must demonstrate knowledge of definitions, frameworks and approaches to the study of religion, and real-world examples from various religious communities. Applying the course’s concepts, the texts and their own knowledge, students must evaluate and synthesize diverse perspectives on religious identities, expressions and experiences.

### Paper 2

In paper 2, students analyse and evaluate diverse perspectives on religious identities, expressions and experiences to create claims and arguments for communication in academic discourse. For this, students must apply and synthesize their knowledge of concepts, subject-specific content and real-world examples from various religious communities.

### Internal assessment

In the IA, students conduct an inquiry into a topic of interest by applying one of the course’s concepts. Students demonstrate knowledge and understanding of religious traditions, analyse and evaluate diverse sources, and engage in reflexivity about the inquiry process.

## Assessment at a glance

Assessment component	Weighting
<b>External assessment (2 hours 45 minutes)</b>	<b>70%</b>
<p><b>Paper 1 (1 hour 15 minutes)</b></p> <p>Section A is based on a short stimulus focused on an aspect of part 1 of the syllabus. Students respond to three questions using the stimulus and examples they have studied from part 2 of the syllabus.</p> <p>Section B is based on a short authentic text and consists of one extended response question. Students respond to the question using the text, concept(s) and example(s). (25 marks)</p>	30%
<p><b>Paper 2 (1 hour 30 minutes)</b></p> <p>In section A, students respond to two extended response questions, from a choice of four, focused on specific aspects of the required content from part 2 of the course.</p> <p>In section B, students respond to one essay question, from a choice of two, focused on a concept of the course. (27 marks)</p>	40%
<b>Internal assessment (20 hours)</b>	<b>30%</b>
<p><b>Inquiry report (20 hours)</b></p> <p>This component is internally assessed by the teacher and externally moderated by the IB at the end of the course.</p> <p>Students conduct an inquiry into an aspect of religious identity, expressions or experiences of a group and/or individual adherents of their choice. They formulate an inquiry focus and select, analyse and evaluate sources in their inquiry. (25 marks)</p>	30%

## IV. Sample questions

### Paper 1

#### Section A

1. (a) Outline one feature that the stimulus uses to define religion.
1. (b) Describe how this feature is demonstrated in one religious tradition you have studied.
1. (c) Explain the limitations of this definition of religion using an example from a religious tradition you have studied.

#### Section B

Discuss the claims in the given text. In your response, you must use at least one example from a religious tradition studied and one of the following four concepts:

- change
- identity
- interpretation
- power.

### Paper 2

#### Section A

- Concept: Change

Explain why one adaptation has taken place in a religious community.

- Concept: Identity

Explain how one expectation regarding orthopraxy (right action) impacts group religious identity.

#### Section B

- “Personal belief is the most important expression of religious identity.” Discuss this statement.
- “Individuals in religious communities have a shared understanding of the world.” Discuss this statement.

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