PART 1: UNDERSTANDING RELIGION
Review Questions (pg. 54)
1. What is a religion, and why can the term be problematic?
2. Why did many phenomenologists reject theological approaches to religion?
3. An atheist will always be a more objective student of religion than a believer. How far do you agree or disagree with this statement?
4. What problems might you encounter in studying a religion as an outsider?
5. What did Marx mean when he referred to religion as ‘the sigh of the oppressed creature’?
6. How do Marx and Weber differ in their perceptions of religion?
7. Explain Durkheim’s view of the role of religion in society.
8. Why has there been renewed interest in the sociology of religion in recent years?
9. What can psychology tell us about why people may hold religious beliefs?
10. How has Critical Theory influenced our understanding of religion since the 1960s?

PART 2: RELIGIONS OF ANTIQUITY
Review Questions (pg. 128)
1. Why does studying prehistoric religion present us with so many problems?
2. How far does the evidence of religion in the Neolithic period (c.10,000 – 3000 BCE) reflect the needs of the societies of that era?
3. Why was sacrifice such an important part of the religion of the Maya and the Aztecs?
4. Why was the development of writing so important to religion?
5. Describe the different ways divination and astrology were used in ancient religions.
6. What does the long-term failure of the religious reforms of Amenophis IV of Egypt tell us about the status of religion in Egyptian society?
7. What factors were responsible for the decline of Zoroastrianism from its peak?
8. Explain how Zoroastrianism’s understanding of divine judgment differs from the role of the gods in Greek and Roman religion.
9. Why did the religious traditions of ancient Rome die out?
10. Why are older interpretations of the religions of the Celts so unreliable?
PART 3: INDIGENOUS RELIGIONS

Review Questions (pg. 165)
1. Why is interpreting indigenous religions as ‘primitive religions’ from which ‘more advanced’ examples later emerge so problematic?
2. Why is the concept of respect so pervasive in indigenous religions?
3. Why do so many indigenous religions regard witchcraft and sorcery as problematic?
4. Why might it be more appropriate to refer to ‘beliefs’ rather than ‘religion’ when considering indigenous traditions?
5. Explain why land is so important to Australian aborigines.
6. Explain and compare the role of shamanism in two different indigenous traditions.
7. Why do African religions often lack a distinction between the sacred and the secular?
8. Explain the relationship of the religion of the Bangwa with Christianity.
9. Compare and contrast the beliefs of three indigenous religions.
10. Why is the pairing of opposites in nature so important to native North Americans?

PART 4: HINDUISM

Review Questions (pg. 200)
1. What continuities are there between early Vedic religion and modern Hinduism?
2. Explain the different views of the role of Brahma in Hinduism.
3. Explain the different views of the nature of human existence held by the three main Vedantic schools (Advaita, Vishishtadvaita, and Dvaita).
4. What role do the Ramayana and Mahabharata play in helping to attain liberation?
5. Explain why some believe the term ‘Hinduisms’ to be more appropriate than ‘Hinduism’.
6. Why are Shiva and Vishnu considered to be so important?
7. Why do Hindus understand moksha (liberation) in a variety of different ways?
8. Explain some of the different roles of the guru in Hinduism.
9. Why are some geographical sites seen as sacred in Hinduism?
10. Why has the caste system been so important in Hinduism and Indian society?

PART 5: BUDDHISM

Review Questions (pg. 233)
1. Why is human experience so important for a follower of Buddhism?
2. Explain how the Four Noble Truths help Buddhists attain nirvana.
3. What is Mahayana Buddhism?
4. What is the difference between Theravada and Mahayana Buddhism, and why are they not directly comparable?
5. Why did Sanskrit become so important in Buddhism?
6. What is Tantric Buddhism and why is it regarded as controversial?
7. Why is abstention so important in Buddhist morality?
8. What is Cao Dai, and how does it differ from other Buddhist traditions?
9. Explain the role of meditation in Buddhism.
10. Explain some of the different ways that Buddhism has been affected by encounters with the West.

**PART 6: JAINISM**

Review Questions (pg. 260)

1. What is the role of a *jina*?
2. Explain the main points of disagreement between Digambara and Shvetambara Jains.
3. Why is asceticism so important in Jainism?
4. Explain why Jains do not believe enlightenment is possible during the current cosmic era.
5. Why is the Digambara scriptural canon so much smaller than the Shvetamara canon?
6. Explain the Jain conception of *karma* and its role in trapping a soul in *samsara*.
7. Why do Digambara and Shvetambara Jains have different views about the role of women?
8. Why do Jains have such a strong position on non-violence?
9. What attracts Jains to an ascetic lifestyle?
10. Why does modern life pose so many problems for strict Jains?

**PART 7: CHINESE RELIGIONS**

Review Questions (pg. 277)

1. How have the concepts of yin and yang influenced religion in China?
2. Explain the importance of the ‘consciousness of concern’ in the history of Chinese religion.
3. Is Confucianism a religion? Explain your answer.
4. Mencius or Hsün-tzu: who was more important in the development of Confucianism—and why?
5. What are the aims and beliefs of the Taoist religion?
6. How do Confucianism and the Taoist religion differ?
7. How have Confucianism, Buddhism, and Taoism influenced each other in China?
8. How and why does Christianity in China today differ from Christianity elsewhere?
9. Explain the role of ancestor worship in China.
10. How far has Maoist Communism been responsible for shaping religion in China since 1949?
**PART 8: KOREAN AND JAPANESE RELIGIONS**

Review Questions (pg. 294)

1. Explain the importance of *yin* and *yang* in Sinkyo.
2. Why is ritual sacrifice important in Sinyo?
3. Explain the role of the Mudang in traditional Korean life.
4. How has Confucianism influenced Sinkyo?
5. How has geography influenced the development of religion in Japan?
6. What is the purpose of Shinto shrines?
7. How does Japanese Buddhism differ from varieties found elsewhere?
8. How has Buddhism shaped wider Japanese culture?
9. Why have elements of Shinto been controversial in recent decades?
10. How are the religious traditions of Korea and Japan similar—and how do they differ?

**PART 9: JUDAISM**

Review Questions (pg. 342)

1. Explain the differences between the religion of the ancient Judeans and rabbinic Judaism.
2. What were the implications for Judaism of the destruction of the Temple in 70 CE?
3. Why was medieval Europe often such an inhospitable place for Jews?
4. Explain the importance of the covenant to Judaism.
5. How important are Maimonides’ Thirteen Principles of the Faith for Judaism?
6. Explain the different roles of Tanakh, Mishnah, and Talmud in rabbinic Judaism.
7. Why are there such different views within Judaism about the coming of the Messiah?
8. Explain the main differences between Orthodox and Reform Judaism.
9. Why is the state of Israel so important in Judaism today?
10. How is modern Judaism able to contain such diverse views on questions of belief and practice?

**PART 10: CHRISTIANITY**

Review Questions (pg. 386)

1. Why did Christianity separate from Judaism?
2. How important was the decision in 313 CE to make Christianity the Roman state religion for the future of the religion?
3. Why is it so important in Christianity that Jesus is the Son of God, rather than merely a prophet?
4. Why is the death and resurrection of Jesus so important to Christians?
5. Explain why Jesus’ teaching was so radical at the time.
6. Why is baptism important in Christianity?
7. Explain the doctrine of the Trinity, and how it differs between Orthodox and Western Churches.
8. What was the Reformation, and what did its leaders hope to achieve?
9. How do the Catholic, Anglican, and Reformed traditions differ from one another?
10. ‘Christianity is no longer a European religion.’ How far do you agree or disagree with this statement?

PART 11: ISLAM
Review Questions (pg. 428)
1. Why is Muhammad so important in Islam?
2. Explain the role in Islam of traditions from other religions.
3. How and why do Sunni and Shi’a Muslims differ in their view of the succession to Muhammad?
4. Explain how decisions in Shari’a, the Muslim legal system, are reached.
5. How does Muslim doctrine on the Qur’an demonstrate its huge importance to Islam?
6. What is Sufism, and why is it inappropriate to refer to it as a ‘sect’ of Islam?
7. Explain tawhid, the Muslim doctrine of monotheism.
8. How far do the Five Pillars reflect Islam as the religion of a united community?
9. Why is Mecca so important to Islam?
10. Why do some Muslims today believe their religion to be incompatible with Western secularism?

PART 12: SIKHISM
Review Questions (pg. 455)
1. Explain the role of Guru Nanak’s example in Sikhism.
2. Why does Sikhism reject asceticism?
3. Why is the Adi Granth so revered?
4. Why does Sikhism reject the caste system?
5. How have Hinduism and Islam influenced Sikhism?
6. How do Sikhs believe they can overcome chaurasi (the cycle of death and rebirth)?
7. How far was the Tenth Guru responsible for shaping Sikhism?
8. Explain the importance of the Khalsa in Sikhism.
9. What factors are responsible for the tension between Sikhism and the Indian state in recent decades?
10. How important is the Rehat Maryada to the development of Sikhism in recent decades?

PART 13: RELIGIONS OF TODAY’S WORLD
Review Questions (pg. 485)
1. Explain the differences between Christian and atheistic existentialism.
2. Why did postmodernism pose problems for traditional religion in the twentieth century?
3. What factors do you think explain the growth of new religious movements (NRMs) since the late nineteenth century?
4. Explain the core beliefs of the Bahá’í faith.
5. Why is engagement with political issues so important in the Bahá’í faith?
6. What factors explain the decline of traditional religion in the West?
7. What factors explain the growth of religion outside the West in recent years?
8. Can religion and politics ever be entirely separated?
9. How has globalization shaped religion since the late twentieth century?
10. ‘Fundamentally, religion and modern secularism are incompatible.’ Discuss this statement with reference to at least three religious traditions.