

Assessment Schedule – 2024

Scholarship: Religious Studies (93603)

Question One

Skill 1: Analysis and critical thinking

The candidate should choose relevant writings and discussions regarding debate about the complementarity of science and religion, and be able to substantiate whether the findings show a willingness of scientific and religious minds to question their strongly held premises, and argue one way or another about this leading to a better understanding of (the possibility of) the complementarity of religion and science. The candidate's examples and understanding should be examined in light of both authoritative academic writings and practice (for instance, in theology and the use of the scientific method). The candidate can also bring in historical examples and contemporary reports to support their examples and analysis. They should demonstrate a clear understanding of the nature of religious and spiritual knowledge, as prescribed by the traditions they identify. They should also examine key assumptions about the nature of religious belief and practice made by experts, both those within religious traditions and those without. Likewise, their use of scientific evidence should be academically sound, but be able to examine key assumptions of those within and without the scientific community. They should make judgements about the nature of the evidence they use in their analysis, and examine opposing viewpoints.

Responses might include:

- exploration of differences between the religious idea of faith being tested and scientific testing of hypotheses
- discussion around scientific objectivity being ideally beyond individual perspective and religious authority being unchallengeable
- reference to what they consider the authoritative sources of key beliefs and theories about the nature of religious / scientific knowledge
- clarification of methodologies used by researchers in science to back up their critical thinking
- use of various theological positions on how to face challenges in our human experience
- analysis of historical debates
- reflection on contemporary issues that inform their debate.

Q1 Score Allocation – Skill 1: Analysis and critical thinking

Below Scholarship				Scholarship		Outstanding Scholarship	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
The candidate: • makes simple assumptions and does not defend them • gives limited or inaccurate alternative viewpoints • dismisses other points of view or is disengaged from them • provides an argument that relies on rhetoric, slogans, or stereotypes • may identify and explain some of the possible key ideas from the question • provides a description of their understanding of debates about the complementarity of religion and science, but demonstrates limited analysis • does not define or analyse key elements of the question • will score a 1 or 2 if there is no attempt at analysis • will score a 3 if they show an attempt at analysis, but this lacks consistency or depth • will score a 4 if there is analysis generally present, but the essay parameters are not clearly defined.				The candidate: • gives a clear, precise interpretation of the question, and answers consistently • bases their answer on clearly articulated reasons or arguments • clearly explains the assumptions their argument makes, and anticipates and defends these assumptions • accurately identifies rival points of view and the assumptions behind them • offers logical reasons for rejecting rival points of view • addresses issues given in the context of the essay question • will score a 5 if there is a lack of clarity, or inadequate consideration of important points, or some unsupported generalisations • will score a 6 if there is clarity and adequate consideration of important points, along with well supported generalisations.		The candidate: • demonstrates perceptive and insightful comprehension of religious ideas related to their chosen approach(es) to understanding the debates about the complementarity of religion and science • chooses the strongest and most representative versions of the views they are discussing • adopts for the sake of argument the alternative viewpoints, and can explain how and why they give the answers they do from the point of view of a person who affirms those viewpoints • explains why someone who holds those views would find their position compelling and reasonable • articulates the assumptions behind various viewpoints and explains why they come to different conclusions • will score a 7 if there are minor weaknesses in critical evaluation, or a lack of sustained reference to source evidence • will score an 8 if the analysis and critical thinking is sustained throughout the response.	

Skill 2: Integration, synthesis, and application of highly developed knowledge, skills, and understanding to complex situations

Candidates must integrate their ideas from their own content knowledge to communicate their argument effectively. They will demonstrate highly developed religious knowledge and skills as they substantiate their ideas and argument in response to the question of whether sceptical scrutiny in both science and religion could be one way of fostering a better understanding of the complementarity of religion and science. Their selection and use of historical, contemporary, scientific, theological, and other debates about the nature of religious and scientific self-examination, and of each party's willingness (or not) to do so, will be appropriate to answering the question. Their synthesised response will show their ability to explore different ways in which lay and professional people question strongly held religious beliefs and scientific theories, and whether any of these might be able to foster a better understanding of the complementarity of religion and science.

Responses might include:

- an insightful unpacking of a range of research that demonstrates limitations and possibilities in writings that ask hard questions in religion and science
- a drawing together of historical and contemporary examples, theological and scientific debates, and a range of authoritative writings to support their argument
- reference to, and an understanding of, the issues addressed by contemporary schools of science and religion
- debate about the range of perspectives and approaches in evidence within science and religion
- discussion of key religious concepts about the meaning of life and the testing of faith that guide people who are committed to their traditions
- choosing key debates they have studied to substantiate their argument.

Q1 Score Allocation – Skill 2: Integration, synthesis, and application of highly developed knowledge, skills, and understanding to complex situations

Below Scholarship				Scholarship		Outstanding Scholarship	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
The candidate: - draws from one or more disciplines for knowledge and skills, but does not show consistent understanding - refers to sources in debate about the complementarity of religion and science that are not always relevant - draws from these sources in isolation without showing how they fit together or mutually support each other - shows an inaccurate or overly simplistic picture of the information from these sources - uses these sources selectively and does not note any nuance or complexity - will score 1 or 2 if there is a lack of highly developed knowledge and skills, and no attempt at integration or synthesis - will score 3 or 4 for integrated ideas based on knowledge and skills; for a score of 3, there are appropriate pieces of evidence, but these are not integrated well.				The candidate: - draws from one or more disciplines for highly developed knowledge and skills to show understanding - refers to a range of relevant sources concerning debate about the complementarity of religion and science - demonstrates awareness of any debate, subtlety, and nuance in and about these sources - explains how the information from these sources relates to each other, and how they support each other or are in tension with each other - will score a 5 if there is clear, informed integration, but this may not always be consistent, or clearly expressed or applied - will score a 6 if there is a balanced integration of texts and references, with strong synthesis and application, appropriate to the question.		The candidate: - displays a synthesis of highly developed knowledge and skills with independent reflection and extrapolation, very ably showing relationships and connections between religious ideas and the approaches to understanding debate about the complementarity of religion and science they have focused on - demonstrates sophisticated integration and abstraction - demonstrates the implications of various answers beyond the immediate context into other areas where religious and scientific approaches to debate about the complementarity of religion and science intersect - takes principles from one context and shows how these relate to another context in which the relevance was not immediately clear - will score a 7 if there are minor lapses in the consistency of sophistication or independent thought - will score an 8 if they demonstrate sophisticated skills of integration, synthesis, and application consistently throughout their response.	

Skill 3: Logical development, precision, and clarity of ideas

Candidates should communicate their own substantive argument about how a willingness to question and test beliefs and hypotheses, both religious and scientific, might help foster an understanding of the complementarity of religion and science. Their argument should show logical development, precision, and clarity of ideas as they access relevant knowledge and skills in response to the question. They should be able to advance their argument accurately, non-pejoratively, fluently, and logically, establishing a valid position for their answer to the question. The approach(es) (e.g. historical, theological, scientific, philosophical, apologetic) they use to show their understanding of debate around the complementarity of religion and science should be soundly laid out in order to give their argument strength and clarity.

Responses might include:

- deep thoughts, e.g. wonder, could be seen more fully by embracing both scientific and religious openness to self-doubt
- calling out nonsense, fairytales, and pseudo-science, and honour each other's self-questioning as a 'life-long, generations-long in fact, thing'
- not closing down open questions with dead-end answers, but keeping the questions open on both fronts
- addressing effectively, or not, "how might they?"
- an openness to questioning and testing, which is not the answer to making sense of our experience; rather, trusting the authorities in each field
- making sense of our experiences by needing to be open to different perspectives and knowing the honest limitations of each perspective
- that the problem is that neither side really accepts that the other side is really that open to questioning their precious positions
- that most of the debate in this field includes stereotyping, with each camp accusing the other of blind faith or reductionist certainty.

Q1 Score Allocation – Skill 3: Logical development, precision, and clarity of ideas

Below Scholarship				Scholarship		Outstanding Scholarship	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
The candidate: - interprets the question inconsistently / incompletely, or does not address the question at all - asserts a point of view without giving arguments or reasons for this view - provides ideas unsupported by systematic discussion - repeats ideas without developing them further - includes inaccurate information or terminology that has a significant impact on the overall argument • will score 1 or 2 if there is a lack of logical development in the essay • will score a 3 if they have provided a simple argument, but with inconsistencies, inaccuracies, or a lack of clarity • will score a 4 for communicating a relatively simple argument that is explicit.				The candidate: - writes a response that has a logical shape to its development - presents ideas systematically, dealing with different topics consecutively - develops ideas and provides facts that are clearly elucidated, with clarity in the use of terms and religious ideas • will score a 5 if the argument wavers or is not consistent • will score a 6 if they have a balanced and valid argument that is mostly substantiated and is sustained throughout.		The candidate: - provides a novel line of argument that advances the discussion and does not just repeat the standard arguments - chooses the strongest and most representative versions of the views they are discussing, and expounds them with precision and clarity - discusses key rival stances for and against the conclusion they are proposing, and anticipates the main objection(s) to this position - extensively and thoroughly explores the ideas they have chosen - presents an argument with convincing logical development, precision, and clarity, while demonstrating originality • will score a 7 if their argument could be more convincing • will score an 8 for a powerful and sustained argument.	

Question Two

Skill 1: Analysis and critical thinking

The candidate should show an understanding of religious and scientific perspectives on the perceived challenges of how they might work on real life issues together, both from their own authority and in conjunction with each other. The candidate's examples and understanding should be examined in light of both authoritative academic theories (theological, scientific, historical, etc.) and well-chosen examples of religious and scientific perspectives, arguments, and authority. The candidate can also bring in historical examples and contemporary reports to support their examples and analysis. They should also examine key assumptions about religious perspectives on what science is, and vice versa. They should make judgements about the nature of the evidence they use in their analysis.

Responses might include:

- exploration of differences between religious / scientific approaches to issues, and what the stumbling blocks to working together are
- reference to examples of what science and religion have already done for humankind's betterment
- clarification of methodologies used by religious and scientific authorities to back up their critical thinking
- analysis of examples of good work done in one field or another and the barriers to science-religious cooperation
- reflection on contemporary issues that inform their debate.

Q2 Score Allocation – Skill 1: Analysis and critical thinking

Below Scholarship				Scholarship		Outstanding Scholarship	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
The candidate: • makes simple assumptions and does not defend them • gives limited or inaccurate alternative viewpoints • dismisses other points of view or is disengaged from them • provides an argument that relies on rhetoric, slogans, or stereotypes • may identify and explain some of the possible key ideas from the question • provides a description of their understanding of the debate about the complementarity of science and religion, but demonstrates limited analysis • does not define or analyse key elements of the question • will score 1 or 2 if there is no attempt at analysis • will score a 3 if they show an attempt at analysis, but this lacks consistency or depth • will score a 4 if there is analysis generally present, but the essay parameters are not clearly defined.				The candidate: • gives a clear, precise interpretation of the question, and answers consistently • bases their answer on clearly articulated reasons or arguments • clearly explains the assumptions their argument makes, and anticipates and defends these assumptions • accurately identifies rival points of view, and the assumptions behind them • offers logical reasons for rejecting rival points of view • addresses issues given in the context of the essay question • will score a 5 if there is a lack of clarity, inadequate consideration of important points, or some unsupported generalisations • will score a 6 if there is clarity and adequate consideration of important points, along with well supported generalisations.		The candidate: • demonstrates perceptive and insightful comprehension of religious ideas related to their chosen approach(es) to understanding debate about the complementarity of science and religion • chooses the strongest and most representative versions of the views they are discussing • adopts for the sake of argument the alternative viewpoints, and can explain how and why they give the answers they do from the point of view of a person who affirms those viewpoints • explains why someone who holds those views would find their position compelling and reasonable • articulates the assumptions behind various viewpoints and explains why they come to different conclusions • will score a 7 if there are minor weaknesses in critical evaluation, or a lack of sustained reference to source evidence • will score an 8 if the analysis and critical thinking are sustained throughout the response.	

Skill 2: Integration, synthesis, and application of highly developed knowledge, skills, and understanding to complex situations

Candidates must integrate their ideas from their own content knowledge to communicate their argument effectively. They will demonstrate highly developed religious knowledge and skills as they substantiate their ideas and argument in response to the perceived challenges of science and religion working together on real life issues. How do they understand religious and scientific perspectives and actions that they identify? Their selection and use of historical, contemporary, scientific, theological, and other debates and case studies within religion and science will be appropriate to answering the question. Their synthesised response will show their ability to explore pertinent examples of religious and scientific perspectives and actions, and examine these in relation to the planet and humankind's betterment.

Responses might include:

- an insightful unpacking of examples of science and religion working individually and together on real-life issues
- exploration of divides in scientific and religious understandings of aspects behind the issues
- a drawing together of historical and contemporary examples that highlight areas that could have been more successful had science and religion worked together
- reference to, and an understanding of, issues addressed by contemporary schools of theology and science
- debate about the range of perspectives and approaches in evidence within religious traditions and schools of science
- clarification of what they understand religious and scientific approaches to real life issues involves, theoretically and practically
- a realistic and hopeful solution to real-life issues brought about by science and religion moving beyond their differences.

Q2 Score Allocation – Skill 2: Integration, synthesis, and application of highly developed knowledge, skills, and understanding to complex situations

Below Scholarship				Scholarship		Outstanding Scholarship	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
The candidate: - draws from one or more disciplines for knowledge and skills, but does not show consistent understanding - refers to debates that are not always relevant - draws from these sources in isolation without showing how they fit together or mutually support each other - shows an inaccurate or overly simplistic picture of the information from these sources - uses these sources selectively and does not note any nuance or complexity - will score 1 or 2 if there is a lack of highly developed knowledge and skills, and no attempt at integration or synthesis - will score 3 or 4 for integrated ideas based on knowledge and skills; for a score of 3, there are appropriate pieces of evidence, but these are not integrated well.				The candidate: - draws from one or more disciplines for highly developed knowledge and skills to show understanding - refers to a range of relevant sources regarding debate about the complementarity of religion and science - demonstrates awareness of any debate, with subtlety and nuance in and about these sources - explains how the information from these sources relates to each other, and how they support each other or are in tension with each other - will score a 5 if there is clear, informed integration, but this may not always be consistent or clearly expressed or applied - will score a 6 if there is a balanced integration of texts and references, with strong synthesis and application, appropriate to the question.		The candidate: - displays a synthesis of highly developed knowledge and skills with independent reflection and extrapolation, very ably showing relationships and connections between religious ideas and the approaches to understanding debates about the complementarity of religion and science they have focused on - demonstrates sophisticated integration and abstraction - demonstrates the implications of various answers beyond the immediate context into other areas where religion and science have methodologies that intersect - takes principles from one context and shows how these relate to another context in which the relevance was not immediately clear - will score a 7 if there are minor lapses in the consistency of sophistication or independent thought - will score an 8 if they demonstrate sophisticated skills of integration, synthesis, and application consistently throughout their response.	

Skill 3: Logical development, precision, and clarity of ideas

Candidates should communicate their own substantive argument about what challenges there might be to science and religion working together on real-life issues. Their argument should show logical development, precision, and clarity of ideas as they access relevant knowledge and skills in response to the question. They should be able to advance their argument accurately, non-pejoratively, fluently, and logically, establishing a valid position for their answer to the question. The approach(es) (e.g. historical, scientific, theological) they use to show their understanding of debate about the complementarity of religion and science should be soundly laid out in order to give their argument strength and clarity.

Responses might include:

- finding a common value, like the love of life
- the challenge of getting beyond the stereotyping of others, and the 'blame game'
- moving beyond each side's failures, in the past, to work together
- the challenge to be truly humble and really work for the common good
- an acknowledgement that challenges will, of course, be many, but the urgency of these issues should see cooperation without selfishness
- an acknowledgement that the challenge of bettering the world is bigger than the best intentions of science and religion, even when they work together.

Q2 Score Allocation – Skill 3: Logical development, precision, and clarity of ideas

Below Scholarship				Scholarship		Outstanding Scholarship	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
The candidate: - interprets the question inconsistently / incompletely, or does not address the question at all - asserts a point of view without giving arguments or reasons for this view - provides ideas unsupported by systematic discussion - repeats ideas without developing them further - includes inaccurate information or terminology that has a significant impact on the overall argument • will score 1 or 2 if there is a lack of logical development in the essay • will score a 3 if they have provided a simple argument, but with inconsistencies, inaccuracies, or a lack of clarity • will score a 4 for communicating a relatively simple argument that is explicit.				The candidate: - writes a response that has a logical shape to its development - presents ideas systematically, dealing with different topics consecutively - develops ideas and provides facts that are clearly elucidated, with clarity in the use of terms and religious ideas • will score a 5 if the argument wavers or is not consistent • will score a 6 if they have a balanced and valid argument that is mostly substantiated and is sustained throughout.		The candidate: - provides a novel line of argument that advances the discussion and does not just repeat the standard arguments - chooses the strongest and most representative versions of the views they are discussing, and expounds them with precision and clarity - discusses key rival stances for and against the conclusion they are proposing, and anticipates the main objection(s) to this position - extensively and thoroughly explores the ideas they have chosen - provides an argument with convincing logical development, precision, and clarity, while demonstrating originality • will score a 7 if their argument could be more convincing • will score an 8 for a powerful and sustained argument.	

Cut Scores

Scholarship	Outstanding Scholarship
13–18	19–24