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Mana Tohu Mātauranga o Aotearoa
New Zealand Qualifications Authority

Scholarship 2023 Religious Studies

Time allowed: Three hours
Total score: 24

Check that the National Student Number (NSN) on your admission slip is the same as the number at the top of this page.

You should answer ONE of the questions in this booklet.

Check that this booklet has pages 2–20 in the correct order and that none of these pages is blank.

Do not write in any cross-hatched area (AREA DO NOT WRITE). This area may be cut off when the booklet is marked.

YOU MUST HAND THIS BOOKLET TO THE SUPERVISOR AT THE END OF THE EXAMINATION.

Question	Score
Analysis and critical thinking	
Integration, synthesis, understanding	
Development, precision, clarity	
TOTAL	

ASSESSOR'S USE ONLY

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF RELIGION AND SPIRITUALITY

INSTRUCTIONS

Write an essay about the psychology of religion and spirituality, in response to ONE of the questions below.

Space for planning is provided on page 4 of this booklet. Begin your answer on page 5.

EITHER: QUESTION ONE

“Spiritual emotions such as gratitude, awe and reverence, and love and hope are likely to be generated when people perceive sacredness in various aspects of their lives.”

— Patrick McNamara, neuroscientist, and Robert Emmons, professor of psychology

“Our own words to God become sacred when they are spoken from the heart.”

— Joy Cowley, New Zealand author

People committed to religious and spiritual traditions generally prefer to trust the inspiring leaders and texts from their own traditions as a guide to their religious and spiritual practice.

For whom, and to what extent, are findings from the psychology of religion and spirituality convincing and useful?

OR: QUESTION TWO

“While this work is ongoing, findings to date are unequivocal; various aspects of religion are strongly related to physical and psychological well-being in everyday life in general.”

— Crystal Park, professor of psychology

“If one submits everything to reason, our religion will contain nothing that is mysterious or supernatural.”

— Blaise Pascal, philosopher, mathematician, physicist

Researchers in the field of the psychology of religion and spirituality claim to clarify and expand our understanding of aspects of religious and spiritual experience.

What is it about religious and spiritual perspectives and experiences that makes them such a challenging yet rewarding area of study for researchers?

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The assessment continues on the following page.**

PLANNING

Question Two

Acknowledgements

Material from the following sources has been adapted for use in this assessment:

Page 2

First quote: Emmons, R. A., and McNamara, P. (2006). Sacred emotions and affective neuroscience: Gratitude, costly signalling, and the brain. P. McNamara (Ed.), *Where God and science meet: How brain and evolutionary studies alter our understanding of religion* 1, (p 12). Praeger Perspectives.

Second quote: Cowley, J. (2018). *Veil Over The Light – Selected Spiritual Writings*, (p 65). FitzBeck Publishing.

Third quote: Park, C. (2005, November 16). Religion as a Meaning-Making Framework in Coping with Life Stress. *Journal of Social Issues*, 61(4), pp 707–729. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-4560.2005.00428.x>

Fourth quote: Pascal, B. *Pensées*, Fragment 162:II, 602. <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/pascal/sourced> 2/03/2023