Department of Religious Studies
School of Social Sciences

Syllabus for Entrance Examination

for PhD Research Programme in
Department of Religious Studies
Central University of Kashmir
SYLLABUS

Nature and Scope of Religion

Chapter 1st
1. Definitions and concept of Religion
2. The Evolution of a Religious phenomena and tradition
3. Historical development of Religion and Religious Institutions
4. Introduction to World Religions (Aryan/Indian and the Semetic)

Chapter 2nd
1. The Nature of Religious Experience – Traditional and Modern Theories, Indian and Semetic Religions (with Special Reference to Rudolf Otto, William James, Vivekananda, Aurbindo Gosh and S. Radhakrishnan)
2. The Importance of Understanding the World Views (The World Religions And Ideologies)
3. The Sacred and the Profane
4. The Two Aspects of Religious Life: Individual and Collective

Chapter 3rd
1. Reason, Intuition and Revelation
2. Scriptures and Symbols
3. Myth, Theophany, Theonomy
4. Ritual in Religion

Chapter 4th
1. Modern Challenges to Religious Traditions (Materialism, Rationalism, Agnosticism, Atheism and so on)
2. The Inter-faith Dialogue
3. Unity in Diversity in Religious Traditions
4. Reconciliatory Approach

Hinduism

Chapter 1st
1. “Hinduism” Definition
2. Pre-Vedic Religions, origin and antiquity of the Vedas
3. Vedic Texts (Shruti and Smriti)
4. Vedic Religion and Rituals; an introduction to later Vedic Scriptures (Brahmans and Aranyakas)

Chapter 2nd
1. The Emergence and Development of the Upanishads
2. Fundamental Concepts of Classical Hinduism: Brahman-atman, Karma, Mokhsa;
3. The ontology of Upanishads and their influence.
4. Epic Literature: Mahabharata and Ramayana.

Chapter 3rd
1. The Bhagavadgita (commentaries and teachings).
2. The early and late Puranas
3. Classical Hindu Society; The Dharma Shastras- corpus, classification and content.
4. Varna- Asharma-Dharma (Caste and Life stage Law), the Four Goals of life (purusharths)
5. Hindu life – cycle rituals (samaskaras)
Chapter 4th
1. Major Schools of Traditional Hindu Thought
2. Samkhya: Origin and Development
3. Vedanta: Its basic Texts and Early Developments
4. Nyaya

Chapter 5th
1. Medieval Sectarianism
2. External Influences
3. Bakhti Movements
4. Emergence of Devotional Sects

Chapter 6th
1. Reformist Movements in the 19th Century: Ram Mohan Roy and Brahmo Samaj
2. Arya Samaj
3. Rama Krishna Mission
4. Neo-Vedanta

Chapter 7th
1. Neo-Hindu Movements in the West (Hare Krishna Hare Rama Mission)
2. Hindu Mahasabha
3. Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS)
4. Vishwa Hindu Parishad and Shiv Sena

Chapter 8th
1. Twentieth Century Renaissance and Contemporary discourses on Hinduism
2. The rise of BJP and Sangh Pariwar

Islam

Chapter 1st
1. Islamic system of beliefs, worships and values as derived from the Quran and Sunnah.
2. The Quran and Tafsir,
3. Nature of revelation, compilation and preservation of the Quran.
4. Quran; its structure, content and major themes,

Chapter 2nd
1. Quran: its inimitability and uniqueness
2. Translations and major commentaries of the Quran.
4. The Sirah (Life) of the Prophet.

Chapter 3rd
1. Transmission of Hadith and its methodology
2. Principles of authenticity and credibility,
3. Major compilations of Hadith
4. The place and role of Hadith to determine Islamic injunctions.
Chapter 4th
1. Fiqh and Shariah: The Islamic law and jurisprudence.
2. Legislative dimensions of the Quran and Sunnah.
3. Constitutional, criminal, civil and family laws of Islam.
4. Major schools of Islamic law and their distinguishing features.

Chapter 5th
1. Muslim Philosophy: Beginning of Intellectual Discussion in Islam.
2. Impact and Influence of other Religions and Civilisations.

Chapter 6th
1. Origin, Development and Significance of Ilm al-Kalam
2. Important Schools of Ilm al-Kalam or Mutakalimoon: Mu‘tazilah; Ash‘ariah; Matridiyah.
3. Doctrines and Concepts Discussed by Mutakalimoon and their relevance to other religions

Chapter 7th
1. Origin and Development of Tasawwuf.
2. Early Sufis and their main Doctrines
3. Sufis of Medieval Period and their main thrust
4. Emergence of Sufi Silsilas and their chief Characteristics.

Chapter 8th
1. Important Sufi writings and their main emphasis.
2. Muslim Critics of Philosophy and Sufism.
3. Sufi approach to other Religions.
4. Wahdah al-Wujud and Wahdah al-Shuhud

Chapter 9th
1. Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab: Thought and his Movement
2. Muhammad Ali Sanusi: Life and his Movement
3. Shah Wali Allah al-Dihlawi: Reconciliatory Approach
4. Sayyid Ahmad Beralwi and his Movement.

Chapter 10th
1. Sayyid Jamal al-Din al-Afghani: Thought and Impact
2. Shaikh Muhammad Abdul: Reformation
3. Rashid Rida and his thought
4. Shaikh Hasan al-Banna: Thought and Impact

Chapter 11th
1. Sir Syed Ahmad Khan: Educational Contribution and Rational Trends in Religious Thought
2. Shibli Naumani: Introduction of Scholastic trend
3. Sir Muhammad Iqbal: His concept of Movement and Ijtihad
4. Abul Kalam Azad: Concept of Wahdat-e Din and Pluralism
Chapter 12th
1. Salafi Movement and its impact on Muslim World
2. Deoband Movement: Background and Contribution
3. Tablighi Movement: Impact and Achievements
4. Jama’at-i-Islami : Thought & Impact

Sikhism

Chapter 1st
1. Political, religious and cultural background of Sikhism.
2. Life and Teachings of Guru Nanak Sahib.
3. Historical development of Sikh Panth and Culture.
4. Contribution of Sikh Gurus from Guru Arjun Dev to Guru Tegh Bahadur to the growth of Sikh religious tradition.

Chapter 2nd
2. The Concept of Guru – Guru Granth Sahib: its compilation, basic doctrines and place in Sikh religion –
3. The salient philosophical and theological teachings of Jap Ji Saheb.

Chapter 3rd
2. Dasam Granth – Creation of Khalsa.
3. The distinguishing features of Sikh religio-cultural tradition - Langar – Sangat - Pangat and Gurudwara.

Chapter 4th
1. Challenges of Modernity to Sikh Community.
2. Sikh response to some modern concerns.
3. Gender equality- Sikhs in Diaspora.
4. Bindranwala and aftermath.

Buddhism

Chapter 1st
1. Genesis of Early Buddhism: socio-historical roots, material milieu of the rise of early Buddhism; Buddhism as a protest movement.
2. The Early Biographies of Gotama (The Buddha) , Modern scholarship on the legend of the Buddha.
3. Fundamental Buddhist Thought: The Four Noble Truths—Ariyasaccani, Dukkhavada,
4. The Eight Fold Path ( Astamarga ) Dependent Origination ( Paticcasmuppada ) ; Philosophy of Non- Self ( Anatta /Anatman ).

Chapter 2nd
1. Nirvana and Karma: Concept and Imagery of Nirvana ; Karma / Kamma and rebirth
2. Buddhist moral Ethics (Ceila) : Fundamental Buddhist Ethics; nature of early Buddhist Ethics; transgression and retribution.
3. Formation of the Buddhist Order (Sangha): Stages in the development of the Sangha.
4. The Development and formation of monastic codes; Monastic Initiation; Features of Buddhist monasticism.

Chapter 3rd
2. Tantric Buddhism: appearance and setting; Significant Features of Tantric Buddhism in India; Transgressive elements.

Chapter 4th
1. Spread of Buddhism in its various forms: South and Southeast Asia
2. Decline of Buddhism in India: external factors, internal weaknesses and contradictions.
3. Revival and Transformation of Buddhism: the case of Singhalese Theravada Buddhism; Emergence of Navayana in India.
4. Neo- Buddhist movement in the West.

Jainism

Chapter 1st
1. Historical Development
2. Life of Mahavira
3. The lineage of elders after Mahavira: From Jambu to Bhadrahu
4. Jain council and the Spread of Jainism: Origin and Development of Jain Sangha (Royal patronage and the geographic expansion)

Chapter 2nd
1. Jain Scriptures, Literary Traditions.
2. Jain Canonical Literature (The Svetamdar and Digambar Tradition)
3. Narrative Literature: Jain Puranas, Story Traditions, Saravakcara literature on lay discipline (Himachandra’s Yogasatra)
4. Jain Religious Practices; Asceticim and devotion; Vratas and restrain, temple worship, pilgrimages and other rituals (avasyaka and pratikraman etc)

Chapter 3rd
1. Jain Conception of Time: avasarpini and utsarpini
2. The theory of Karma and Bondage (tatva gnan/ Jain conception of universe and gati)
3. Problems of Humans and their solution
4. Jainism and other Religions

Chapter 4th
1. Reform and Revivalism: the rise of Jain Sects (the main divisions within Jainism, viz, Mandimargis, Sthankavasis etc.)
2. Monastic organisation: hierarchy within the monastic orders, the religious specialists (monks, bhattarakas etc)
3. The differences between *Digambar* and *Svetambar* Traditions (the contrast between the individualism of *Digambar* tradition and the church-like discipline of the *Svetambar* tradition)
4. Caste among Jains

**Christianity**

**Chapter 1st**
1. Origin and Development of Christianity
2. Scriptures: Old and New Testament
3. Jesus of Nazareth: Life and basic Teachings
4. Death and Resurrection of Jesus

**Chapter 2nd**
1. Apostles and early Followers of Jesus
2. Trinity, Original Sin and Salvation
3. Role of Paul of Tarsus and Introduction of Greek Philosophy in Christianity
4. Church: Its Origin and Growth

**Chapter 3rd**
1. Christian-Jew interaction
2. Rise of Canon, Doctrine and Practices
3. Christians under Roman Empire
4. Constantine and the Legalization of Christianity

**Chapter 4th**
1. Development of Nicene Creed
2. Athanasian, Baptismal & Apostles’ Creed
3. Early sects in Christianity with special reference to Arianism
4. Apocrypha and the Gospel of Barnabas

**Chapter 5th**
1. Early interaction between Islam and Christianity
2. Church-State relations
3. Augustine: the Defender of Christian faith
4. Role of Missionaries

**Chapter 6th**
1. Crusades and Religious Reforms
2. Martin Luther and Catholic Controversy
3. Catholics, Orthodox and Protestants
4. Impact of modern philosophy and French Revolution on Christianity

**Chapter 7th**
1. Modern Movements in Christianity
2. Modern Catholic Church and Later Developments
3. Christians in Indian Sub-continent
4. Medieval Muslim Responses to Christianity
Chapter 8th
1. Christians Missions in India During Medieval Period
2. Advent of Christians in South India and the establishment of first Church
3. Modern Responses to Christian Missionaries
4. Christians and Inter-religious Dialogue

Judaism

Chapter 1st
1. God, Torah, and Israel: Hebrew beginning
2. Origin & Growth of Scriptures
3. Prophets: Abraham, Moses, Saul, David and Solomon
4. Mosaic Covenant

Chapter 2nd
1. Jewish Diaspora
2. Growth of the Rabbinic Tradition and Talmud
3. Judaism’s interaction with Islam
4. Kabbalah

Chapter 3rd
1. Religious Reforms in Judaism
2. Rise of Zionism
3. The Jewish Holocaust
4. Dead Sea Scrolls

Chapter 4th
1. Creation of Israel
2. Arab Israel Conflict
3. Impact of Zionism on Culture
4. Jews in West

Zoroastrianism

Chapter 1st
1. Beginnings of the academics study of Zoroastrianism.
2. Pre-Zoroastrian and the Vedic religion.
3. Zoroastrian religion: monotheistic, dualistic, or polytheistic.

Chapter 2nd
1. Zoroaster: biographical sketch and mission.
3. The Two States & Three Times, Death & life after.

Chapter 3rd
1. Zoroastrianism during the earliest phase: the unrecorded centuries.
2. Zoroastrianism under the Achaemenians.
3. Zoroastrianism under the Seleucids.
4. Zoroastrianism under the Sasanians.
Chapter 4th
1. Advent and spread of the Parsi community in India.
3. Parsis’ religious and social reforms in the 19th and 20th centuries.
4. Zoroastrianism’s influence on the religions of the Middle East

Research Methodology in Religion

Chapter 1st
1. Various Approaches to the Study of Religions
2. Indian Approach: Theory of Unity of Religions
3. Gandhian Theory: All Religions are True
4. Western Approaches to Religion: Anthropological and Sociological Theories

Chapter 2nd
1. Man-Centric Approaches to Religions
2. Society-Centric Approaches: Durkheim, Max Muller and Max Weber
3. Spiritual and Psychological Phenomenon: Jung and Freud
4. Religious Experiences of William James and Luminous of Otto

Chapter 3rd
1. Atheistic Approaches to Religion
2. Marx and Feuerbach
3. August Comte, Nietzsche and Bertrand Russell
4. Richard Dawkins and Christopher Hitchens

Chapter 4th
1. Modern Oriental responses to Study of Religions
2. Dayanand Saraswati and Swami Vivekananda: Unity of Religions or Unity of Religion
3. Isma’il Raji al-Faruqi, Husain Nasr and Ali Shariati
4. Evolutionary theory of Religion