

# CURRICULUM FOR RELIGION, PHILOSOPHIES OF LIFE AND ETHICS

## The objectives of the subject

Religions and philosophies of life reflect humanity's deepest questions, and have throughout history contributed to moulding individuals, communities and society. Knowledge of religions and philosophies of life is important for human beings to understand their existence and to gain an understanding of cultures within one's own society and in societies around the world. Children and adolescents of today encounter an overwhelming amount of cultural influence and traditional values. The Christian faith and traditions have characterised European and Norwegian culture for centuries. At the same time, traditional humanistic values have brought to western cultural heritage a wider scope of understanding. Religious and ethical diversity are becoming more and more important in society in general. Familiarising oneself with different religions, philosophies of life, ethics and philosophies is an important precondition for understanding and interpreting our lives, and for gaining ethical awareness and understanding across religious faiths and cultural borders.

*Religion, Philosophies of life and Ethics* as a generally educative subject shall form the basis for a common platform for greater knowledge and as a frame of reference, and shall help the pupil gain new insight and allow for dialogue that is adapted to the various ages and year levels. Knowledge of religions and philosophies of life, and the function these have as traditions and as actual sources of faith, morals and understanding life are central themes in the subject. The subject shall be a meeting place for pupils from different cultures and backgrounds, where all shall be met with respect. Teaching in the subject shall stimulate general education, making room for wonder and reflection. Furthermore, the subject shall help the pupil learn to talk with other people that have different views of the world where questions of faith and philosophies of life are concerned. This involves respect for religious values, human rights in general and the ethical foundation of all human rights.

The subject shall teach knowledge of Christianity, other world religions and philosophies of life, and ethical and philosophical themes. It shall also teach the significance of Christianity as cultural heritage in our society. For this reason, *Knowledge of Christianity* will be a major portion of the learning content of the subject. This involves allowing for local variations in the scope of subjects between the main subject areas in order to satisfy competence aims for the subject.

*Religion, Philosophies of life and Ethics* is an ordinary school subject intended to bring all pupils together. The Norwegian Education Act demands that the teaching of this subject be objective, critical and pluralistic. This implies that the subject be taught impartially and based on facts, and that the different world religions and philosophies of life shall be presented with respect. Classroom teaching shall not include preaching, proselytising or religious practice. The principles of equivalent education shall be the basis for teaching in the subject. This involves treating all religions and philosophies of life in an academic and professional manner based on the distinctive characteristics and diversity of all religions.

Adapted education is a commanding principle for this subject. Teaching in the subject shall use varied and absorbing working methods, which can contribute to understanding in all aspects of the subject. Care must be used when selecting working methods. The careful choice of working methods is especially important when considering parents, guardians and pupils so that they feel their own religion or philosophy of life is respected and that the subject be experienced without seeming to exercise another religion or forming an affiliation to another philosophy of life. Respect for the views of individuals and local communities should be paramount.

If a pupil applies for exemption from part of ordinary education based on the provisions laid down in Section 2-3(a) of the Norwegian Education Act, then another form of adapted education shall take its place. It is expected that ongoing cooperation be maintained between home and school, which includes good information about how education should be planned and carried out.

## Main subject areas

The subject is structured in main subject areas for which competence aims have been formulated. The main subject areas complement each other, and must be viewed in relation to one another.

*Religion, Philosophies of life and Ethics* have competence aims for year levels 4, 7 and 10.

### Overview of main subject areas:

Year	Main subject areas		
1 - 7	Christianity	Judaism, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism and Philosophies of life	Philosophy and Ethics
8 - 10	Christianity	Judaism, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, Other Religious Diversity and Philosophies of life	Philosophy and Ethics

### Christianity

The main subject area *Christianity* covers Christianity from a historic perspective and how it is understood and practiced in Norway and around the world today. It covers the Bible as a source of cultural understanding and faith, and Christianity's significance for society and culture. This subject area shall deal with the different traditions and religious communities within Christianity.

### Judaism, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism and Philosophies of life

The main subject area *Judaism, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism and Philosophies of life* covers these religions and selected philosophies of life from a historic perspective, their written traditions as sources of cultural understanding and beliefs, and how these religions and philosophies of life are understood and practiced around the world and in Norway today. At lower secondary level, the main subject area shall also give insight into other religions and philosophies of life that are represented in Norway, including the diversity of other religions and philosophies of life.

### Philosophy and ethics

The main subject area *Philosophy and Ethics* covers philosophical ways of thought and ethical reflection. Some central philosophers are included, and basic questions about the meaning of life, moral choices and basic ethical principles are central themes in the subject. The main subject area also covers attitudes and current ethical questions encountered by children and adolescents today in their local communities and in the world in which we live. The main subject area also deals with how ethics, religion and philosophies of life interrelate.

## Teaching hours

Teaching hours are given in 60-minute units:

### PRIMARY LEVEL

Years 1 to 7: 427 hours

### LOWER SECONDARY LEVEL

Years 8 to 10: 157 hours

## Basic skills

Basic skills are integrated in the competence aims for this course in areas where they contribute to the development of and are a part of basic subject competence. In *Religion, Philosophies of life and Ethics (RLE)*, basic skills are understood as follows:

*Being able to express oneself orally* in RLE involves using spoken language to communicate and explain religions and philosophies of life, ethics and philosophy. Oral skills such as conversation, dialogue, storytelling skills and reports and expositions are means to experience wonder, reflect on ideas and learn argumentation. A great deal of emphasis is placed on storytelling as an oral form of expression in the subject.

*Being able to express oneself in writing* in RLE involves being able to express knowledge and viewpoints about religion and philosophies of life, ethics and philosophy. Writing clarifies thoughts, experiences and one's own views, and is helpful as a tool in interpreting, argumentation and communicating. Writing in RLE also involves encountering different kinds of written aesthetic forms of expression, and making use of these.

*Being able to read* in RLE involves experiencing and understanding written texts. Reading is used to gather information, interpret what one reads and reflect on this, and use facts and analytical skills when encountering stories and subject matter from traditional means of communication and in modern multimedia channels.

*Numeracy* in RLE involves being able to apply different ways of viewing historic time and ways of presenting yearly cycles, finding one's way through religious texts, encountering mathematical expressions and numerical symbolism, and interpreting and using statistics. Being able to recognise and use geometric patterns in aesthetic expression and architecture presupposes simple proficiency in calculating.

*Being able to use digital tools* in RLE is helpful to explore religion and philosophies of life to find different presentations and perspectives. An important skill is being able to use available digital material such as images, texts, music and film in a manner that unites creativity with a conscious use of source criticism. Digital media brings new possibilities for communication and dialogue about religion and philosophies of life. These media also create the opportunity for wider access to study material about current ethical questions.

## Competence aims

### Competence aims after year level 4

#### Christianity

*The aims of the education are to enable the pupil to*

- relate the content of the most important texts from the Genesis and the Exodus in the Old Testament Pentateuch
- relate the content of the most important texts from evangelical presentations of the life of Jesus and his life's work as described in the New Testament
- listen to and talk about some stories of the apostles and saints
- describe local churches, find traces of historical Christianity in their local community and district, and present these finds in different ways
- talk about Christianity and how religious practice is expressed in maxims, rules of conduct, prayer, baptism, church worship and holidays
- be familiar with Christian hymnal traditions and some chosen songs, also Sami ones
- recognise Christian art and make use of aesthetic expressions related to Christianity

#### Judaism, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism and Philosophies of life

##### Judaism

*The aims of the education are to enable the pupil to*

- relate the life and work of Moses, the revelation of the Torah, and the content of central parts of the Torah
- talk about Judaism and how religious practice is expressed in maxims, rules of conduct, prayer, Torah readings, food traditions and holidays

- recognise Judaic art and make use of aesthetic expressions related to Judaism

## Islam

*The aims of the education are to enable the pupil to*

- relate the life of the prophet Mohammed, the revelation of the Koran and the content of central parts of the Koran
- talk about Islam and how religious practice is expressed in maxims, rules of conduct, prayer, Koran readings, food traditions and holidays
- recognise Islamic art and make use of aesthetic expressions related to Islam

## Hinduism

*The aims of the education are to enable the pupil to*

- tell about one of Hinduism's gods or goddesses
- talk about Hinduism and how religious practice is expressed in maxims, rules of conduct, prayer, Puja, food traditions and holidays
- recognise Hindu art and make use of aesthetic expressions related to Hinduism

## Buddhism

*The aims of the education are to enable the pupil to*

- relate Siddhartha Gautama's life and his awakening as the Buddha
- talk about Buddhism and how religious practice is expressed in maxims, rules of conduct, prayer, meditation and holidays
- recognise Buddhist art and make use of aesthetic expressions related to Buddhism

## Philosophies of life

*The aims of the education are to enable the pupil to*

- listen to and talk about texts and stories that express a humanistic worldview nb
- talk about how the humanistic philosophy of life is expressed through maxims, rules of conduct and ceremonies
- recognise humanistic art and make use of aesthetic expression related to Humanism

## Philosophy and ethics

*The aims of the education are to enable the pupil to*

- tell about the philosopher Socrates
- express thoughts about life, loss, sorrow, good and evil and respond to others' thoughts
- talk about family customs in everyday life and holidays that are common for religions and philosophies of life
- lead a simple dialogue about conscience, ethical rules of conduct and values
- cite the Rule of Reciprocity and be able to put this rule into practice
- talk about respect and tolerance, and counteract bullying in real life
- use the United Nations' Convention on the Rights of Children to understand children's rights and equality, and be able to find examples of this in the media and on Internet

## Competence aims after year level 7

### Christianity

*The aims of the education are to enable the pupil to*

- explain the structure of the Bible, find their way through biblical texts and reflect on the relationship between the Bible, language and culture
- give an account of central stories from the Old Testament from the history of the patriarchs to the prophets
- give an account of central stories from the New Testament from Jesus to the prophets
- tell about central events and persons from the history of Christianity, from the earliest congregations to the Reformation
- tell about central events and persons in the history of Christianity in Norway up to the Reformation

- describe the main features of pre-Christian Sami beliefs, and the subsequent transition to Christianity
- talk about Christianity and the Christian way of viewing life and ethics with an emphasis on their idea of god, their view of humanity, current ethical challenges and selected Christian texts
- talk about the content of the Ten Commandments, the Lord's Prayer, the Apostolic Faith and some songs and Psalms
- explain the Christian manner of measuring historic time and the events of the Christian church year, and describe Christian holidays, festivals and central rituals
- give an account of religious communities that are represented in their local community and district
- describe church edifices and other Christian places of worship, reflect on their significance and use, and use digital tools to search for information and make presentations about this
- present different forms of expression from art and music related to Christianity

## **Judaism, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism and Philosophies of life**

### **Judaism**

*The aims of the education are to enable the pupil to*

- explain what Tanak, Torah and Talmud are, and talk about important stories from the Jewish faith
- talk about Judaism, the Jewish way of viewing life and ethics with an emphasis on their idea of god, their view of humanity, creed, current ethical challenges and selected Jewish texts
- explain the Jewish calendar and manner of calculating historic time, and describe Jewish holidays, festivals and central rituals
- describe the temple and the synagogue, reflect on their significance and use, and use digital tools to search for information and make presentations about this
- present different forms of expression from art and music related to Judaism

### **Islam**

*The aims of the education are to enable the pupil to*

- explain what the Koran and Hadith are and talk about central stories from Islamic faith
- talk about Islam, the Islamic way of viewing life and ethics with an emphasis on their idea of god, their view of humanity, the Articles of Faith, the Five Pillars, current ethical challenges and selected Islamic texts
- explain the point of departure for the Islamic manner of calculating historic time, and describe Islamic holidays, festivals and central rituals
- describe the mosque, reflect on its significance and use, and use digital tools to search for information and make presentations about this
- present different forms of expression from art and music related to Islam

### **Hinduism**

*The aims of the education are to enable the pupil to*

- talk about central stories from Hinduism
- talk about Hinduism, the Hindu manner of viewing life and ethics with an emphasis on some of their gods and goddesses, their manner of viewing existence and divinity, of viewing humanity, current ethical challenges and selected texts
- explain the Hindu calendar of festivals and describe Hindu festivals and central rituals
- describe the temple, reflect on its significance and use, and use digital tools to search for information and make presentations about this
- present different forms of expression from art and music related to Hinduism

### **Buddhism**

*The aims of the education are to enable the pupil to*

- talk about central stories from Buddhist texts

- talk about Buddhism, the Buddhist manner of viewing life and ethics with an emphasis on Buddha, their view of existence, of viewing humanity, the Teachings, the social order, current ethical challenges and selected texts
- explain the Buddhist calendar of festivals and describe Buddhist festivals and central rituals
- describe the temple and monastery, reflect on their significance and use, and use digital tools to search for information and make presentations about this
- present different forms of expression from art and music related to Buddhism

## Philosophies of life

*The aims of the education are to enable the pupil to*

- talk about what a philosophy of life implies
- explain what a humanistic philosophy of life is, and talk about the humanistic manner of viewing life and ethics with an emphasis on the understanding of reality, their view of humanity, current ethical challenges and selected texts from the humanistic tradition
- talk about the history and distinctive characteristics of the Norwegian Humanist Association and humanistic philosophies of life from around the world
- describe celebrations and central ceremonies from a Norwegian Humanist's point of view
- present different forms of expression from art and music related to Humanism

## Philosophy and ethics

*The aims of the education are to enable the pupil to*

- explain what philosophy and ethics are
- tell about Plato and Aristotle, and discuss some of their ideas
- talk about current philosophical and ethical questions, and discuss challenges related to these themes: poverty and wealth, war and peace, nature and environment and Information & Communication Technologies and society
- talk about ethics related to different family constellations, the relationship between the sexes, gender identity roles and the relationship between the generations
- discuss and elaborate on some questions about values that the indigenous Sami people are concerned with in modern times
- talk about ethnic, religious and ethical minorities in Norway, and reflect on the challenges of multicultural society
- talk about philosophy, religion and philosophy of life as a basis for ethical thinking, and be able to discuss and elaborate on moral role models from the past and present
- discuss racism and how anti-racist work can prevent racism
- explain important parts of the United Nations' Declaration of Human Rights, and talk about the significance of this

## Competence aims after year level 10

### Christianity

*The aims of the education are to enable the pupil to*

- explain the distinctive aspects of Christianity and Christian belief in interpreting life compared with other traditions: similarities and fundamental differences
- identify central biblical texts, and explain the relationship between the Old and New Testaments
- discuss and elaborate on selected biblical texts from the Prophets, the poetic biblical texts in the Bible, the Words of Wisdom, one Gospel and one of the Letters of Paul, and explain the distinctive characteristics and main ideas of these
- discuss and elaborate on the different views of biblical interpretation
- gather digital information about, and present current questions that are of concern to many Christians
- give an account of the most important events in Christian history from the Reformation to modern Norway and for the world in general, and for Christianity's position in the world today
- explain the main features of Roman Catholic, Orthodox and Protestant traditions

- give a presentation of the Norwegian Church, Læstadianism and Sami church life
- present an overview of other evangelical Free Church societies and Christian movements, including the Pentecostal Movement
- discuss and elaborate on Christianity's significance for culture and society
- explore Christianity's position and distinctive characteristics in a country outside of Europe, and discuss and elaborate on questions related to Christian missions, humanitarian work and ecumenical activity
- describe and reflect on the distinctive characteristics of art, architecture and music related to Christianity

## **Judaism, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, Other Religious Diversity and Philosophies of life**

### **Judaism**

*The aims of the education are to enable the pupil to*

- explain the distinctive aspects of Judaism and Jewish belief in the interpretation of life compared with other traditions: similarities and fundamental differences
- discuss and elaborate on selected texts from Jewish written traditions
- gather digital information about, and present current questions that are of concern to many Jews
- present an overview of the diversity of Judaism, important historic events and Judaism's position in Norway and the world today
- describe and reflect on the distinctive characteristics of art, architecture and music related to Judaism

### **Islam**

*The aims of the education are to enable the pupil to*

- explain the distinctive aspects of Islam and Islamic belief in the interpretation of life compared with other traditions: similarities and fundamental differences
- discuss and elaborate on selected texts from Islamic written traditions
- gather digital information about, and present current questions that are of concern to many Muslims
- present an overview of the diversity of Islam, important historic events and Islam's position in Norway and the world today
- describe and reflect on the distinctive characteristics of art, architecture and music related to Islam

### **Hinduism**

*The aims of the education are to enable the pupil to*

- explain the distinctive aspects of Hinduism and Hindu belief in the interpretation of life compared with other traditions: similarities and fundamental differences
- discuss and elaborate on selected texts from Hindu written traditions
- gather digital information about, and present current questions that are of concern to many Hindus
- present an overview of the diversity of Hinduism, historic events and Hinduism's position in Norway and the world today
- describe and reflect on the distinctive characteristics of art, architecture and music related to Hinduism

### **Buddhism**

*The aims of the education are to enable the pupil to*

- explain the distinctive aspects of Buddhism and Buddhist beliefs in the interpretation of life compared with other traditions: similarities and fundamental differences
- discuss and elaborate on selected texts from Buddhist written traditions
- gather digital information about, and present current questions that are of concern to many Buddhists

- present an overview of the diversity of Buddhism, important historic events and Buddhism's position in Norway and the world today
- describe and reflect on the distinctive characteristics of art, architecture and music related to Buddhism

## Religious diversity

*The aims of the education are to enable the pupil to*

- talk about and explain what religion is, and show how religion is expressed in different ways
- show the ability to carry on a dialogue about religion and the most important questions in life, and show respect for all religions and philosophies of life
- discuss current questions that arise in the meeting between religion, culture and society
- gather information about and point out the distinctive characteristics of some religions around your local community and around the nation, including Sikhism, the Bahá'í religion, Jehovah's Witnesses and the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints
- give an account of new religious movements and talk about the different forms of neo-religious and nature-religious practices, including indigenous nature religions
- explore a religion's position and distinctive characteristics in a country outside of Europe, with and without the use of digital tools

## Philosophies of life

*The aims of the education are to enable the pupil to*

- talk about and explain what a philosophy of life is, and show how such a philosophy of life is expressed in different ways
- explain the distinctive characteristics of Humanism compared with religions and other philosophies of life: similarities and fundamental differences
- discuss and elaborate on the different texts that present a humanistic view of life, and discuss current questions that concern many Humanists
- present an overview of the diversity of humanistic traditions, important historic events and Humanism's position in Norway and the world today
- understand and describe humanistic ideas and values in art, architecture and music
- describe the main features of a philosophy of life that is not based on Humanism
- present examples of different criticisms that different denominational traditions have toward religion

## Philosophy and ethics

*The aims of the education are to enable the pupil to*

- present some significant philosophers and discuss their ideas
- reflect on philosophic themes related to identity and ways of interpreting life, nature and culture, life and death, right and wrong
- give an account of the concepts *ethics* and *morals* and use ethical analysis with a point of departure in basic ethical ways of thought
- hold a dialogue with others about the relationship between ethics, religion and philosophies of life
- discuss and elaborate on ethical questions related to human worth, human rights and equality, in among other ways by basing yourself on real role models
- discuss and elaborate on ethical choices and current themes in local and global society: social and ecological responsibility, technological challenges, peace work and democracy
- reflect on ethical questions related to interpersonal relationships, family and friends, forms of cohabitation, heterosexuality and homosexuality, youth culture and body culture
- reflect on the relationship between religion, philosophies of life and knowledge
- show respect for the faiths and beliefs of human beings, their rituals, holy objects and holy sites

## Subject assessment

Provisions for final assessment:

***Overall achievement marks***

<b>Year level</b>	<b>Provision</b>
Year 10	Pupils shall receive one final assessment mark.

***Examination for pupils***

<b>Year level</b>	<b>Provision</b>
Year 10	Pupils may be selected for an oral examination. The oral examination will be prepared and marked locally.

***Examination for external candidates***

<b>Year level</b>	<b>Provision</b>
Year 10	See the provisions in force for primary school education for adults.

The provisions for assessment are stipulated in the regulations of the Norwegian Education Act.