WEST AFRICAN TRADITIONAL RELIGION

[May not be taken with Christian Religious Studies and Islamic Studies

GENERAL AIMS

At the end of their study of the subject, the candidates are expected to have

1.   gained insight into and have appreciation of the traditional religious beliefs and practices and their impact on the lives of the people,

2.   worked out practical ways of confronting the challenges that face West Africans in utilizing acceptable traditional moral ideas and principles,

3.   understood how our traditional principles can be applied in their daily lives,

4.   analised the major traditional religious factors that influence the political, social and economic life of West African.

SCHEME OF EXAMINATION

There will be two papers, Papers 1 and 2 both of which will be a composite paper and will be taken at one sitting.

 PAPER 1: Will consist of fifty multiple-choice objective questions all of which must be answered within 50 minutes for 40 marks.

PAPER 2: Will consist of three sections, Sections A, B and C, each consisting of three essay-type questions. The sections shall cover the following areas of the syllabus

- Section A: General Introduction to West African Traditional Religion
- Section B: The Individual and the Community
- Section C: Contemporary Society

Candidates will be required to answer four questions in all, choosing at least one question from each section, for a total of 60 marks. The paper will take 2 hours 10 minutes.

DETAILED SYLLABUS

SECTION A: GENERAL INTRODUCTION TO WEST AFRICAN TRADITIONAL RELIGION.

1. **Introduction to the Study of West African Traditional Religion Nature**

       (a) Characteristics of W.A.T.R
           (i) Belief in the Supreme Being
         (ii) Divinities, Ancestors, Mystical Powers etc
       (b) Purpose/Reasons for the study of W.A.T.R

2. **Terms Used to Describe West African Traditional Religion**

       (a) Fetishism and Paganism
         (b) Animism and Ancestral Worship
         (c) Polytheism and Monotheism
         (d) Totemism
      (e) Primitive

3. **Sources of West African Traditional Religion**

       (a) Non-Oral Sources

   - Traditional Arts/Crafts

       (b) Oral Sources
          (i) Names and Attributes of God
    (ii) Theophorous Names
          (iii) Proverbs/Wise sayings
    (iv) Songs/Dirges
       (v) Myths / Legends and Drum Language

4. **Approaches to the Study of West African Traditional Religion**

       (a) Thematic Approach
       (b) Comparative Approach
       (c) Historical Approach
       (d) Enumerative Approach

5. **The Structure of West African Traditional Religion**

   (a) God in West African Belief
   (b) The Ancestors
   (c) The Divinities
   (d) Charms and Amulets

6. **Worship in West African Traditional Religion**

   (a) Worship in W.A.T.R - Introduction
   (b) Main features:
   (i) Prayer/Libation

(ii) Sacrifice

(iii) Spirit possession

SECTION B: **THE INDIVIDUAL AND THE COMMUNITY**

7**.**   **Religious Personalities in West African Traditional Religion.**

(a)   The concept/types of religious personalities

(b) Processes for selecting religious personalities

(c) The functions of religious leaders.

8**.**   **Festivals in West African Traditional Religion.**

(a) Types of Festivals

(b)   The significance of Festivals

9**.**   **Religion and Medicine in W.A.T.R.**

- Religion and Medicine: Introduction

- Herbal Medicine

(c)   Traditional and Orthodox Healing

10. **Concept of Time, Work and Wealth**

(a)   Concept of Time
   (i)   Definition of time in West Africa.
       (ii)   Concept of the Future
       (iii) The Importance of Time

(c)   The Concept of Wealth
                (i)   Meaning/Attitude towards Wealth
                (ii)   Ways of acquiring Wealth
                (iii)   Consequences of acquiring Wealth

11. **Concept of Man and Destiny**
   (a)   Concept of Man

   (b)   Concept of Destiny

12. **Enemies of Life in West African Traditional Religion**

(a) Witchcraft and magic
    (i) Meaning of witchcraft and magic
      (ii) Acquisition of Witchcraft
      (iii) Role of Witchcraft and Magic

(b) Malevolent Spirits

13. **Religion and Ethics in West African Traditional Religion.**

(a) The main Features of Ethics
(b) Sources of Ethics in WATR
    (c) Moral Values/Virtues in West African Traditional Religion
    (d) Taboos and Sin in WATR
(e) Convenant in WATR

14. **Rites of Passage**

    (a) Rites of passage
      (i) Description of the stages; Rites of passage:
        Birth, Naming, Puberty, Marriage and Death,
  (ii) Importance of Rites of Passage

SECTION C: CONTEMPORARY SOCIETY

15. **Traditional Political Institutions in West African Traditional Religion.**

  (a) Chieftaincy
  (i) Structure of chieftaincy institutions
    (ii) Process involving in selecting Chiefs
  (iii) Importance of chieftaincy institution

    (b) Asafo Companies
    (i) Introduction/Background
  (ii) Importance

16. **Religion and Tourism in West African Traditional Religion.**

  (a) Introduction
  (b) Religion and tourism
  (c) The uses of free/leisure time
  (d) Sacred personalities and tourism
  (e) Sacred places and tourism
  (f) Sacred objects and tourism

17. **Religion and Stress Management in West African Traditional Religion.**

(a) Meaning and types of stress situation in West Africa traditional society
  (b) Causes and effects of stress situations

(c)   Management of stress situations

18. The Role of W.A.T.R. in Conflict Resolution and Management

(a)   Introduction - meaning/concept of conflict in West African traditional society.

(b) Causes of conflicts

(c)   Effects of conflicts

(d) Conflict resolution and management in West African society

19. Religion and Reproductive Health in West African Traditional Religion.

(a)   West African Traditional Religion and Reproductive   Health Features: issues of Hygiene, sexuality and Promiscuity/Abortion

(b)   Circumcision Rites and Reproductive Health

20. W.A.T.R. and Modernity

(a)   The impact of foreign religions on (Christianity and Islam) WATR

(b)   The impact of West African Traditional Religion on Christianity and Islam.

(c)   The impact of Science and Technology on West African Traditional Religion.

(d)   West African Traditional Religion and Conservation of the Environment.

(e)   The Impact of Urbanization on West African Traditional Religion.

21. New Religious Movements (NRM) in West African Traditional Religion.

(a) Afrikania Missions (Ghana)

(b) Godianism (Nigeria)

(c)   The future of West African Traditional Religion.