

Answer Key for In-Text Questions

Chapter 13

Title: Chapter 13 Questions for Review

Question/Prompt: 1. How are religion and spirituality different?

Correct Answer Example(s):

Religion refers to any system of beliefs about the supernatural and the social groups that gather around these beliefs. In contrast, spirituality refers to an openness to or a search for “sacred” aspects of life, where “the sacred,” broadly defined, is that which stands apart from the ordinary (or profane) and is worthy of worship.

Question/Prompt: 2. What characteristics define a religion?

Correct Answer Example(s):

Your answer should include or relate to the following points:

- Religion is a difficult concept to define, since it encompasses many ideas connected to spirituality and faith, and may mean different things to different people. What all religions have in common, from a substantive and functional perspective, is a set of beliefs. All religions lay claim to an almost unquestionable significance and truth.
- When people think about religion, they tend to think about the belief in a Supreme Being, of veneration for particular prophets of the Supreme Being, and of the worship of these supreme beings and their prophets.
- Religion is a search for divine intervention that is based on faith. It involves sacred rituals and ceremonies and ritual objects. Religious leaders control doctrine from the top down. That is, the top leaders of a religious group make rules that people on the bottom—ordinary followers—must obey. Finally, religion involves loyalty and trust, and remains mostly faithful to its timeless, unyielding traditions.

Question/Prompt: 3. How do symbolic interactionists approach the study of religion?

Correct Answer Example(s):

Symbolic interactionists study how religion gives people a sense of meaning, identity, and purpose. It also considers how religion shapes law and morality in society.

Question/Prompt: 4. Define secularization.

Correct Answer Example(s):

Secularization refers to a steadily dwindling influence of formal (institutional) religion in public life. Also, it is the process by which religious beliefs, practices, and institutions lose their social significance.

Question/Prompt: 5. What are new religious movements?

Correct Answer Example(s):

New religious movements are groups and institutions that share similar religious or spiritual views about the world but are not part of mainstream religious institutions.

Title: Chapter 13 Questions for Critical Thought

Question/Prompt: 1. Canada is a multicultural country. What benefits and conflicts may result when people of so many different religious affiliations live and work together?

Correct Answer Example(s):

Your answer should include or relate to the following points:

- Being exposed to many different religious affiliations can promote acceptance, inclusivity, and tolerance. Further, it can attract skilled immigrants from around the globe to settle in Canada.
- However, religion can cause conflicts between those with different religious beliefs. This can cause different groups to become isolated from each other. Further, it can result in racial and ethnic bias and discrimination.

Question/Prompt: 2. Canada allows freedom of religious practice and expression. To what extent is our society secular? Should all societies be secular? To what extent? Why?

Correct Answer Example(s):

Your answer should include or relate to the following points:

- In Canada, religion is active and diverse, despite the pressures toward secularization. The continued arrival of immigrants from countries where secularization has been weaker stimulates religious enthusiasm and practice.
- Reasons to oppose secularization include:
 - Religion has the power to bring people together and promote social solidarity. When people engage in religious practices, they link themselves to each other as

social beings and create a collective consciousness—a shared way to understand the world.

- Religion gives people a sense of meaning, identity, and purpose, and shapes laws and morality in society.
- Religious institutions provide immigrants with supports. For example, religious organizations help immigrants learn English and prepare for citizenship exams. Some religious movements, such as the Social Gospel in Canada, have helped to improve society, in support of working people, immigrants, and other disadvantaged groups.
- Reasons to support secularization include:
 - Religion can support society's dominant ideology—the set of values that benefit only the ruling class and their interests, to the harm of everyone else. Religions can discourage questioning and protest and interfere with all domains of social life.
 - Religion can exclude women from positions of power and decision-making, in both doctrine and practice. Religion can give women a secondary role and punish women for asserting their rights. In particular, religious fundamentalists have traditional views of family and gender and support a patriarchal world view.
 - At its worst, Christianity-driven patriarchy has been life threatening. The witch craze, reaching its peak in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, took the lives of thousands.

Question/Prompt: 3. How do new religious movements further complicate the definition of religion? What makes something a religious movement and not just a new club, hobby, or extracurricular activity?

Correct Answer Example(s):

New religious movements (NRMs) refer to groups and institutions that share similar religious or spiritual views about the world but are not part of mainstream religious institutions. There are many different kinds of NRMs that may differ from mainstream religions in terms of membership, beliefs, symbols, practices, and rituals. That said, religious movements are mainly groups of people who share similar views about the world. In contrast, clubs, hobbies, and extracurricular activities mainly revolve around a shared interest or activity.

Question/Prompt: 4. Do you think science and religion are compatible? On a global level, which do you think will prevail? Or will a new relationship between them emerge? Why or why not?

Correct Answer Example(s):

- Many draw a clear boundary between science and religion, based on several important distinctions:
 - Science is a cultural and social orientation toward the search for scientific knowledge, while religion is a search for divine instruction. We base science on

evidence and religion on faith. Science advances through peer review, while religious leaders control doctrine from the top down. Science needs organized skepticism, while religion involves loyalty and trust. And unlike science, which is always striving to advance by disproving previous thinking, religion remains mostly faithful to its timeless, unyielding traditions.

- Religion creates social solidarity in a way that science does not. Also, the seeming inflexibility and timelessness of religious beliefs may be a feature that attracts adherents looking for deep truths and answers to questions that science cannot answer. For example, science can tell us nothing about the meaning of death and suffering.
- Studies about the religiosity of scientists have repeatedly presented science and religion as incompatible ways of thinking, with belief in one undermining belief in the other.
- However, some question this hard boundary between science and religion—or at least, between science and spirituality:
 - Some view both religion and science as valid means of getting broader answers to essential questions.
 - Scientists who view themselves as spiritual or religious are less likely to see religion and science in conflict; and, under some circumstances, nonreligious scientists describe even their most religious peers in favourable terms. All of this evidence suggests integrating religion and science is not as problematic for scientists as some have imagined.
 - So, to summarize, research on scientists shows that people can lead secular, rational lives and still identify themselves as spiritual and sometimes even religious.
- On a global level, religious beliefs, practices, and institutions will likely continue to lose their social significance as secularization continues. Yet, despite the pressures toward secularization, religion continues to have an appeal for people. Many people feel spiritually lost in a consumer-oriented world that they find rootless and unhinged, and seek out principles to live by and values to embrace.

Question/Prompt: 5. Do you think it is possible to find a substitute for religion? Is there anything religion does that other social institutions cannot accomplish?

Correct Answer Example(s):

Your answer should include or relate to the following points:

- One substitute for religion is civil religion, which refers to an organized secular practice that serves the same social functions as traditional religion by bringing people together, directing them, and explaining how the world works.
- The most important and widespread version of civil religion today is nationalism. Since the nineteenth century, nationalism has provided many people in the Global North with a sense of meaning and purpose.

- The seeming inflexibility and timelessness of religious beliefs may be a feature that attracts adherents looking for deep truths and answers to questions that other social institutions cannot answer. For example, science can tell us nothing about the meaning of death and suffering.

Question/Prompt: 6. Do religions bring people together or keep them apart? Explain why you think so.

Correct Answer Example(s):

Religion can bring people together in the following ways:

- Religion has the power to bring people together and promote social solidarity. When people engage in religious practices, they link themselves to each other as social beings and create a collective consciousness—a shared way to understand the world.
- However, some religious movements, such as the Social Gospel in Canada, have helped to improve society, in support of working people, immigrants, and other disadvantaged groups.

Religion can keep people apart in the following ways:

- Many draw a clear boundary between science and religion, with belief in one undermining belief in the other.
- Religion can create conflict between those with different beliefs.
- Religion can support society's dominant ideology—the set of values that benefit only the ruling class and their interests, to the harm of everyone else. For the working class, religion was a way to cope with reality.
- Religion can exclude women from positions of power and decision-making, in both doctrine and practice. In particular, religious fundamentalists have traditional views of family and gender and support a patriarchal world view.