

that define or contribute to a person's or group's identity, history, worldview and wellbeing. Indigenous peoples have always made it clear that their heritage is an integral element of their lives and wellbeing, and that their conceptions of, and engagement with, the world may be fundamentally different from that of the dominant society. Yet, historically, they have had limited and generally very ineffective participation in matters concerning their own heritage in colonial contexts. Those concerns have been broadcast both widely and loudly, speaking to the social, spiritual and economic harms they have suffered in the past and still endure today. Government responses to these concerns have generally focused on consultation, rather than obtaining consent. The recent emphasis on reconciliation in settler countries is notable, but too often is a 'feel good' exercise, with no real effort to change fundamentally how things are done.

Worldwide, a growing number of archaeologists, anthropologists and other researchers (often themselves Indigenous) have been working to achieve meaningful inclusion of, and collaborations with, Indigenous communities in projects related to their heritage. However, there remain tremendous challenges in establishing and enacting more respectful, ethical and effective policies to protect objects, practices and places of significance, especially when fundamental differences exist between Western and Indigenous societies over how heritage is perceived or defined. For example, familiar dichotomies that define a Western worldview – such as people vs. nature, natural vs. supernatural, and so on – may be absent in many Indigenous worldviews, meaning that ancestral presences may be part of this existence, not some other realm. This necessitates a more inclusive definition of 'heritage' that is framed within some Indigenous worldviews such as *hishuk ish tsawalk* (Nuu-chah-nulth (indigenous peoples of the Pacific Northwest Coast of Canada) for 'everything is one and all is interconnected'.

Fully recognising, respecting and protecting Indigenous cultural heritage is more than an issue of academic interest. It is bound up with challenging questions about consent, sovereignty and jurisdiction, social justice and human rights, and about how all descendant groups can most effectively control access to, and benefit from, their own heritage. For its part, the United Nations has set a broad mandate with the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, but it is another matter to put this, and the recommendations of various Truth and Reconciliation Commissions, into practice. Thus, despite recognition of the need for change to achieve greater equity, making the transition from theory to practice to policy requires significant effort and understanding, as well as systemic level changes.

The task of protecting heritage objects and sites, of whatever cultural affiliation, falls primarily within the realm of provincial or federal laws and policies, with some protection afforded by intellectual property law. In some cases, there is unequal protection under the law for settler vs. Indigenous human remains, with the latter often considered to be scientific specimens. Additionally, heritage policies are strongly influenced by economic pressures. Protecting heritage sites may thus pit Indigenous peoples against private landowners and other interest groups. Finally, the most powerful manifestation of heritage site protection is largely via the domain of professional cultural resource management, which is today over a \$1 billion-a-year industry. However, some critics note that this profession, which seemingly serves to aid commercial endeavours in complying with heritage laws, effectively facilitates development more than it protects Indigenous peoples' heritage.

- 3) Read the following passage and answer the questions below. [30 marks]

American Secularism: Upholding the Separation of Church and State

American secularism, deeply rooted in the nation's founding principles, represents a foundational aspect of the U.S. constitutional framework. The First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution, which states, "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof," enshrines the separation of church and state as a core tenet of American governance. This principle was a radical departure from many European nations of the time, where religious authorities often held significant political power. By embedding secularism into its constitutional fabric, the United States sought to ensure that governmental authority would remain neutral regarding religious matters, thus protecting individual freedoms and promoting a pluralistic society.

One of the key benefits of American secularism is its role in safeguarding religious freedoms. The separation of church and state allows individuals to practice their religion freely without fear of government interference or coercion. This legal and cultural framework has enabled a diverse array of religious beliefs and practices to flourish in the United States, contributing to the country's rich tapestry of religious pluralism. Secularism ensures that no single religion is privileged over others, thereby fostering an environment where individuals can freely express their beliefs and where minority religions can thrive without facing discrimination.

Moreover, secularism in America plays a critical role in maintaining a neutral and unbiased government. By preventing any religious group from exerting undue influence over state policies, secularism helps ensure that laws and regulations are based on rational, evidence-based considerations rather than religious doctrines. This neutrality is crucial for upholding the principles of equality and justice, as it prevents any religious group from imposing its beliefs on others through legislative or executive actions. In this way, secularism supports a more equitable and fair system of governance that serves all citizens impartially.

Despite its advantages, American secularism is often subject to debate and contention. Some critics argue that the strict separation of church and state can lead to the marginalization of religious voices in public discourse. They contend that religious values and perspectives can contribute positively to societal debates and that secularism sometimes restricts the ability of religious individuals and groups to engage in public life fully. These debates highlight the ongoing struggle to balance the principles of secularism with the desire to include diverse perspectives in public discussions and policymaking.

Additionally, the practical application of secularism in America can be complex and inconsistent. While the Constitution provides a clear directive for separating religion from government, the interpretation and implementation of this principle can vary significantly across different levels of government and in various legal contexts. For instance, debates over issues such as school prayer, religious displays on public property, and the accommodation of religious practices in the workplace demonstrate the ongoing challenges in maintaining this separation. These issues reflect the dynamic and sometimes contentious nature of secularism as it is applied in contemporary American society.

In conclusion, American secularism is a cornerstone of the nation's democratic framework, embodying the principle of separating religion from state affairs to ensure fairness and neutrality. By enshrining this principle in the Constitution, the United States has created a legal and cultural environment where religious freedoms are protected, and governmental authority remains impartial. Although secularism faces challenges and criticisms, its role in fostering a diverse and inclusive society underscores its importance. Embracing secularism helps to uphold democratic values and ensures that all citizens, regardless of their religious beliefs, are treated with respect and fairness.

Ultimately, the enduring significance of American secularism lies in its ability to provide a foundation for a just and equitable society. By maintaining a clear boundary between religious institutions and state functions, secularism promotes a government that is guided by principles of reason and equality rather than sectarian interests. This separation is essential for creating a society where diverse beliefs can coexist and where all individuals have the opportunity to participate fully in public life, contributing to a more harmonious and inclusive nation.

1. What does the passage imply about the nature of government in many European states at the time the United States was established? (3 marks)
2. Based on the passage, comment on how secularism fosters religious/cultural pluralism and democracy. (5 marks)
3. According to the passage, what are laws and regulations based on in a secular state? (3 marks)
4. What is the criticism of secularism that is cited in the passage? Do you agree with that criticism? Explain. (5 marks)
5. What is the point that the author makes where she/he refers to school prayer, religious displays on public property, and the accommodation of religious practices in the workplace? (6 marks)
6. Should Sri Lanka become a secular state? Briefly discuss two arguments in support of your position. (8 marks)



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கலைத்தேர்வுப் பரீட்சை (வெளிவாரி- புதிய பாடத்திட்டம்) 300 வது தேர்ச்சி மட்டம் - ஆகஸ்ட்- 2024
Bachelor of Arts (External - New Syllabus) Examination 100 Level - August 2024

(ENGE 101 – Writing and Comprehension)

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There are 3 questions in the question paper.

ANSWER ALL THE QUESTIONS.

- 1) Write an essay of at least 250 words on ONE of the following prompts. (Please note that you are free to adopt any view on the topic.) [40 marks]
 - a. There is national level consensus that English should be promoted in schools. Some argue that schools should switch completely to English as the medium of instruction. Some others argue that English should be promoted as a strong second language while keeping Sinhala/Tamil as the medium of instruction. Where do you stand in this debate? Discuss.
 - b. While some argue that aesthetics and literature should be made compulsory up to the G.C.E. Ordinary Level exam, some others argue that they should be offered as optional subjects so that only those who are interested in those subjects can take them. What is your position? Discuss.
 - c. The practice of living together, where prospective marriage partners live together for an extended period of time before they decide whether they want to enter the union of marriage, is popular in western countries. While some argue that the practice of living together is not appropriate for countries like ours some others argue that we should be open to that practice. What is your position in this regard? Discuss.
- 2) Write a précis, summarising the passage given below, according to the following instructions. Use your own words as far as possible. Simply reproducing sentences from the original text will not earn you full marks. [30 marks]
 - a. Provide the passage with a title. Mention it at the beginning.
 - b. Write the précis in approximately 195 words.
 - c. State the number of words you have used at the end of the précis.

'Heritage' can be defined as the objects, places, knowledge, customs, practices, relationships with other species, stories, songs and designs, passed between generations,