

# Religious Studies

Examination board – OCR

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A level Religious Studies is a rigorous academic subject which will hone a range of transferable skills including critical analysis, making judgements, evaluation, synthesis and the ability to carry out independent research. You will be invited to consider a wide range of differing views and perspectives on human life, exploring key theological, philosophical and ethical ideas and concepts. The course also allows for the study of the work of Freud, Aristotle, Descartes, Hume, Plato and Dawkins to name but a few.

This is a popular Advanced level subject, and in the past students have combined A level Religious Studies with a wide range of subjects (Arts and Sciences); recent leavers have taken up degree courses in English, Law, Psychology, P.P.E., Medicine, Dentistry, Philosophy, Languages, Anthropology and even Mathematics. Those reading Theology have progressed to varied careers including Law, medicine, dentistry the Civil Service, Management, Ministry, charity work, and R.S. teaching. Theology, Philosophy and Ethics degree courses have recently been followed at Oxford, Durham, Cambridge, Birmingham, Edinburgh, Nottingham, Leeds, Cardiff, Manchester, Kings (London) and Princeton (USA).

The course is open to all pupils, whatever their religious background (or lack of it). GCSE Religious Studies, though very helpful, is not essential, as long as you are prepared to undertake required reading to 'bridge the gap'.

We follow the OCR specification (H573) which incorporates an equal blend of Ethics, Philosophy and the study of Christianity. Assessment objectives will include A01 (Knowledge and Understanding) and A02 (Analysis and Evaluation) with more weight being placed on the latter (as this is worth 60% and the A01 40%). There is no coursework.

## Assessment

Assessment will be through three written examinations, each lasting two hours. One paper will be on the Philosophy of Religion, another on Ethics and the final one on Christianity. The examinations will be essay based. For each paper, there will be a choice of four essay questions in total and three must be answered out of these four.

This blend of religious, philosophical and ethical enquiry promises to be stimulating and to provide excellent content and transferable skills applicable to a wide range of university courses. At the heart of lessons will be the kind of lively debate that characterises Religious Studies lessons at KEHS.

## GCSE Entry Requirements

We would like students to have achieved grade 7 – 9 at GCSE.



*The School of Athens, Raphael (1509 – 1511)*

## OCR A Level Content

The A level course is divided equally into 3 sections; the philosophy of religion; ethics; and Christianity. These are broken down again into 6 equal sections which are as follows:

Philosophy content	Ethics content	Christianity content
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The theories of Plato and Aristotle. This looks at ideas surrounding what it means to be a human being. (I.e. do we have a soul or are we just a physical body?).</li> <li>2. Is it possible to prove God exists? (Cosmological argument, the Ontological argument, the argument from design and Religious Experience).</li> <li>3. Does the existence of Evil mean God does not exist? Do the advancements in science mean God is no longer necessary?</li> <li>4. Who or what is God? Are we free? Can we be free if God exists?</li> <li>5. Pre-20<sup>th</sup> Century ideas surrounding religious language.</li> <li>6. 20<sup>th</sup> ideas surrounding religious language.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Can human nature inform people of what is right and wrong? Should we show love to other people? (Natural Moral Law of Aquinas and Situation Ethics of Fletcher).</li> <li>2. Is it right to undertake an action because it brings us pleasure? Should we always follow our duties? (Utilitarianism and Kantian Ethics).</li> <li>3. Should people be able to decide when they die? (The application of Natural Moral Law and Situation Ethics to euthanasia). Can a business ever be ethical? (The application of Kantian Ethics and Utilitarianism to business ethics).</li> <li>4. Meta-ethical theories.</li> <li>5. What is the Conscience? Can it only be from God? Can it tell us what is good?</li> <li>6. Should sexual relations only ever take place within a heterosexual marriage? (The application of Situation Ethics, Utilitarianism, Natural Moral Law and Kantian ethics to sexual ethics).</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Insight: Augustine's teaching on human nature and teachings about death and the afterlife.</li> <li>2. Foundations: Knowledge of God's existence and the person of Jesus Christ.</li> <li>3. Living: Christian Moral principles and actions.</li> <li>4. Development: religious pluralism, theology and society.</li> <li>5. Society: gender, society and theology.</li> <li>6. Challenges: the challenges of secularism, liberation theology and Marx.</li> </ol>