

# Religious Studies (Philosophy, Ethics and Theology)

Examination board: OCR

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A Level Religious Studies is a fascinating, rigorous, academic subject that will hone a range of transferable skills including critical analysis, 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 philosophical, ethical and theological ideas and concepts. The course allows for study of the work of key thinkers who have shaped western thought such as Freud, Aristotle, Descartes, Hume, Plato, Dawkins and many more! It is an exciting subject to study: the topics are always interesting and informative.

This is a popular A Level subject and pupils gain excellent results every year. It 'fits' with all A Levels and degree courses: it truly is a door opener to vast range of career choices. In recent years, pupils have studied A Level Religious Studies alongside a whole host of subjects: Maths, Biology, Chemistry, English Literature, Psychology, Economics, Geography and Modern Languages to name but a few. Recent leavers have taken up degree courses in English, Law, Psychology, P.P.E., Medicine, Dentistry, Philosophy, Modern Languages, Anthropology, Engineering, Veterinary Science and even Mathematics! Those

reading Philosophy, RS and Theology have progressed to varied careers including the Civil Service, law, management, work with leading charities, and academia. KEHS leavers pursuing Theology, Philosophy and Ethics degree courses have recently studied at Oxford, Durham, Cambridge, Birmingham, Edinburgh, Nottingham, Leeds, Cardiff, Manchester, Kings (London) and UCL. Indeed, we have a 100% success rate of enabling Oxbridge applicants to study the subject at Oxford and Cambridge in recent years.

We teach the OCR specification (H573). This course incorporates the study of Ethics, Philosophy and Christianity. Assessment objectives include A01 (Knowledge and Understanding) and A02 (Analysis and Evaluation), with more weight placed on the latter (as this is worth 60% and the A01 40%). There is no coursework or non-examination assessment.

The A Level course is divided equally into three sections; Philosophy; Ethics; and Christianity. These are broken down again into six equal sections 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 that 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>

Assessment is 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 are essay based. There is a choice of four essay questions in total on each paper; each candidate must answer three out of these four.

To develop and enrich the pupils' understanding of the content, extension lessons are offered each week. They involve a range of activities, including the opportunity to hear from visiting academic speakers, discussions surrounding the analysis of key philosophical texts and opportunities for questioning which stretches and challenges the thinking of the pupils. We also invite pupils to participate in the

regional round of the schools' Philosothon. Other opportunities for extension occur through the trips. These include attending the A Level Candle conferences and the visit to Cadbury World, where we learn more about ethical business practices.