



PHILOSOPHY AND ETHICS

Referred to as **Religious Studies** in your option booklet

Entry Requirement: Grade 7 to 9 in GCSE Religious Studies (Short Course) and 7 in English Language. Grade 6 will be considered at the discretion of the Head of Department.

Examination Board: OCR H573

Course Content and Assessment

This is called A Level Religious Studies and it is a challenging and engaging course which develops students' analytical skills and critical thinking. It will enable students to reflect on and develop their own values, opinions and attitudes and appreciate religious thought and its contribution to societies.

At A Level students study three components on Philosophy, Ethics and the Development in Religious Thought. Assessment is by three two hour written examinations. Each examination is worth 33.3% of the total A level. There is no coursework.

A Level

Component 1: Philosophy of Religion includes:

- Ancient Philosophical influences, Plato and Aristotle
- Religious language- Symbol, the Verification Principle
- Religious Experience – Miracle, a study of how God might interact with humanity
- Attributes of God
- The challenges for religious belief of the problem of evil
- Life and Death – the concept of the soul (Hick and Dawkins)

Component 2: Religious Ethics includes:

- Normative Ethical theories-Virtue Ethics, Deontological and Teleological Ethics
- Ethical theory – applied to Sexual Ethics and Euthanasia
- Ethical language –Meta Ethics (naturalism, intuitionism, emotivism) the teaching of Hobbes (egoism)
- Debates surrounding the ideas of the conscience and free will

Component 3: Development in Religious Thought includes:

- Religious beliefs, values and teachings and how they vary historically in the contemporary world- Presentations of the nature of Christ
- Significant social and historical developments in theology and religious thought, Liberation theology, the Roman Catholic Church's response to secularism
- Sources of wisdom and authority, Knowledge and revelation of God
- Key themes related to the relationship between religion and society

Teaching and Learning Methods

You will be expected to do a great deal of wider reading and to make notes, present your views in front of the class, (use media such as power-point, diamond nine diagrams) work in groups, respond to events in the media and also take notes.

Homework

On this course you will be encouraged to develop a sustained and critical argument (a skill required at university), use technical vocabulary and form your own views on morality by evaluation and analysis. You will be expected to read widely and discuss different scholarly viewpoints.

You will answer examination style questions and learn how to use technical vocabulary. You will also learn how to criticise scholars and think 'outside the box', use logical reasoning and be analytical.

Complementary Subjects

Philosophy and Ethics would complement the Science/Mathematics subjects but would also combine with Humanities subjects. Several of our students also take Sociology and Psychology. It is particularly relevant to students studying medicine or law. University courses which students have gone on to study are in Law, Humanities, Philosophy, Theology, Religion and Ethics, Social Services, English and Psychology.

You will acquire many skills which will enable you to follow a variety of career paths.

Discussion and debating provide a good basis for working with people across a spectrum of cultures, ages and backgrounds.

Trips and Visits

The Department has organised Master Classes where examiners debate issues on the Syllabus. There is also the opportunity for visiting speakers to engage with the students in lessons. It may also be possible to arrange a visit to GlaxoSmithKlein as part of the Ethics module on environmental ethics.

Materials

Students will be required to purchase a text book on the components taught. They will also receive supplementary materials, revision notes and guides and will be expected to further supplement their notes with case studies from the media.

Key Features

This course is a popular choice at A Level because it challenges students to question the nature of reality and truth and to examine the ethics of many stimulating moral dilemmas – issues which are crucial to aspiring university students who think deeply about the world and their place in it. It gives the opportunity to explore the work of some of the world's greatest minds and analyse the impact of their ideas on us today. This course has a high technical content and requires you to be very disciplined in your studies so as to develop the skills to explain complex concepts and evaluate and offer critical analysis of different viewpoints.

If you are very hardworking, have an enquiring mind, enjoy critical thinking and are motivated, then you will have some of the qualities needed to succeed on this course. Please be aware that this course is very different to the SC Religious Studies taught at GCSE. It is technically demanding and learning how to argue and how to analyse concepts and ideas is exciting and challenging. If however, you are someone who wants to be challenged and are hard-working, we look forward to seeing you in September.