



AS/A2 Religious Studies Course Outline

Overview

The overall aims of this course are to provide an understanding of a variety of key issues in the Philosophy of Religion and Ethics. This course involves a study of philosophical arguments about the existence of God and selected problems in the philosophy of religion. Ethics comprises a study of ethical concepts and dilemmas. This course aims to enable students to think more clearly and logically, spot flaws in arguments and express themselves fairly but firmly in group discussions. They will find themselves having impassioned discussions inside and outside the classroom as they follow in the footsteps of some of the great thinkers. Students will have an opportunity to develop their interest in and enthusiasm for a rigorous study of religion and relate it to the wider world. They will treat the subject as an academic discipline by developing knowledge, understanding and skills appropriate to a specialist study of religion. They should adopt an enquiring, critical and reflective approach, reflecting on and developing their own values, opinions and attitudes in the light of their learning. Many different types of students can benefit from this course and enjoy analysing the issues and debating the arguments using evidence, not just opinion.

Course Structure & Content

AS:

Unit 1 - Foundations

Students study two units on Philosophy and ethics and Philosophy of Religion. This unit comprises a study of philosophical arguments about the existence of God and selected problems in the philosophy of religion. Ethics comprises a study of ethical concepts and dilemmas. Topics covered include a study of the design and cosmological arguments, The problem of evil and miracles, morality, utilitarianism, situation ethics, issues of war and peace, and sexual ethics.

Unit 2 - Investigations

This unit provides for a balance of teacher-directed and more independent student enquiry. It offers a choice between these methods of teaching and learning by giving students the opportunity to undertake individual research into a topic in which they are particularly interested.

A2:

Unit 3 Developments

This unit has been designed to build on the knowledge, understanding and skills developed in unit 1. Topics covered include, religious experience, ontology, arguments for and against atheism, life after death, religious language, deontology, natural moral law, virtue ethics, emotivism, objectivity, relativism, subjectivism, justice, law and punishment.

Unit 4 - Implications

Students will consider, examine or discuss: the consequences of holding certain opinions, views or beliefs, including their own how a particular belief or value could affect other people, either for good or ill how other people's lives might be affected if a certain belief were widely held or a certain value widely applied. Students will consider implications in terms of how far particular beliefs and values might affect people's understanding or awareness, including their own, of religion and human experience.

Assessment:

All units are externally assessed with the assessment set and marked by the examination board.

Assessment Objectives (EDEXCEL):

Having followed the course students should be able to:

- Select and demonstrate clearly relevant knowledge and understanding through the use of evidence, examples and correct language and terminology appropriate to the course of study.
- Critically evaluate and justify a point of view through the use of evidence and reasoned argument.
- In addition, Advanced GCE students should demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the connections between different elements of their course of study.
- In addition, Advanced GCE students should relate elements of their course of study to their broader context and to specified aspects of human experience.

Entry qualifications

Students would be expected to have a good level of achievement in a range of GCSE courses including Science and Humanities subjects.

Career Prospects

This qualification supports progression into further education, training or employment. Successful completion of this course will give students access to a range of career and higher education opportunities. Religious Studies combines well with almost all other humanities subjects such as General Studies, History, Geography and English. In addition, if taken with Mathematics and sciences, Religious Studies will give students a broad-based curriculum. The course provides students with the opportunity to develop skills in collecting, synthesising and interpreting information from a range of sources, and to consider issues from a range of perspectives. These skills are highly valued by a range of professions, such as public services and the caring professions.