



Overview:

This course develops skills of interpretation and analysis. It equips students to be independent thinkers and to be strong in powers of persuasion. It encourages open mindedness while examining critically, various religious, philosophical, and ethical belief systems. It will develop essay writing skills and the ability to evaluate issues and develop critical awareness of personal points of view. This course will increase awareness of the beliefs and issues that affect our society today as well as considering on-going controversial issues.

Unit 1: Philosophy of Religion – 2 hours written examination. 33.3% of total A Level

This unit studies philosophical arguments about the existence or non-existence of God as well as the nature and problem of evil. It also studies different views on life after death. It asks whether or not the soul can exist outside of the body. It studies the validity of religious experience and miracles and looks at whether or not religious language has any meaning.

Unit 2: Religious Ethics – 2 hours written examination. 33.3% of total A Level

This unit studies the relationship between ethical theories and religious methods of ethical decision making. It contrasts religious and secular approaches to morality. It considers a variety of ethical issues such as euthanasia and sex and sexuality. It also studies freewill and determinism and considers to what extent the future is already mapped out, as well as the nature and role of conscience in decision making and whether this comes from God or society.

Unit 3: Developments in Christian thought – 2 hours written examination. 33.3% of total A Level

This unit studies Christianity, looking at religious beliefs, values, and teachings. It also studies the significant social and historical developments in that religion as well as the relationship between religion and society.

Expectations:

In order to prepare appropriately for classroom learning, it is expected that all students will have completed the summer homework tasks. Students will need to purchase the core texts that will cover A level study. Additional reading is also expected so that students become familiar with the ideas and arguments of a range of philosophers. Moreover, and so as to better consolidate classroom learning independently, students will also be expected to add to classroom notes, building on arguments and developing more in depth knowledge of key theories. Students can expect to engage in lively whole class discussion and should be prepared to have their world view challenged as well as challenging the viewpoints of others.

Extra-Curricular Activities/Independent Learning Opportunities:

Visits arranged to hear lectures from relevant scholars according to availability and relevance to the course.

Career Pathways:

Due to the nature of this qualification, it can be applied to any university course or career because it develops skills that are valuable and can be applied in many areas – Law, Journalism, Teaching, Media, Social Work, Community Work. The 'Ethics' part of the course will sit well with Advanced Level Biology and will be of value for those thinking of going into medicine.

Good combinations of other subjects to study with Religious Studies are:

History, Geography, Sociology, Psychology, Politics, English, Biology, Business Studies.

Student Testimonials:

"Knowing a deeper meaning to issues that you see every day is amazing. It allows a more open-minded approach to the world that sets you up to go to university. It helps you thrive in your other subjects, particularly ones that help you to explore a deeper meaning."

"A first class subject, encouraging you to not take things on face value but rather question and achieve a greater depth of understanding."

"It changes your perspective on the world, encouraging you to question, form opinions and open your mind to different issues that are relevant in today's world."