

Exam Board: OCR
Qualification: H573
Assessment Information: 3 exams each 120 minutes
[Link to official specification](#)

Department Information:
Philosophy and Religion at A Level will encourage you to think more deeply about some of the most important questions in the world. We follow OCR syllabus, exploring philosophy, ethics and the development of Christian thought. A-Level Religious Studies allows you to develop the skills of analytical, critical and logical thinking.

ACHIEVE in the curriculum:
The OCR specification allows students to develop their ambition as they learn the skills to complete 40 mark essay questions. Students develop integrity as they study some difficult ethical concepts such as euthanasia. And versatility as students are gaining a breadth of knowledge from Philosophy, Ethics and Developments in Christian Thought.

Curriculum Aims & Intent:

This qualification is designed to develop a greater understanding and appreciation of religious beliefs and teachings, as well as the disciplines of ethics and philosophy of religion. Students will develop their skills of critical analysis in order to construct balanced, informed arguments and responses to religious, philosophical and ethical ideas. The course will encourage students to develop their interest in a rigorous study of religion and belief and relate it to the wider world; adopt an enquiring, critical and reflective approach to the study of religion; and reflect on and develop their own values, opinions and attitudes in the light of their study. Throughout the year students will have the opportunity to build upon the depth of the knowledge they studied at GCSE, as well as exploring some new and more complex concepts.

Resources:

Oxford A Level Religious Studies for OCR: L Ahluwalia and R Bowie OCR. ISBN: 978-0-19-837533-3
Philosophy of Religion for AS and A2: M Taylor. ISBN 9781138127081
The Philosophy of Religion: P Cole. ISBN-10: 0340724919
OCR Philosophy and Ethics AS: Taylor, Eyre, Knight. ISBN: 9780435303624
OCR Religious Ethics for AS and A2: J Mayled Ethical Theory: M Thompson. ISBN-10: 0415468256
<http://www.ocr.org.uk/qualifications/as-a-level-gce-religious-studies-h173-h573-from-2016/>
<https://peped.org/>
<https://divinityphilosophy.net/>
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/>
<https://thepanpsycast.com/>
<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/plato/>
<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/ancient-soul/>
www.teachphilosophy101.org
www.reddit.com/r/philosophy
www.philosophybites.com

How we keep parents informed:

Year 12 - Progress reports are published 4 times per year, in October, January, March and July, with a face-to-face parents' evening in November.

How parents can help their child:

Students should be completing their own independent reading and learning to accommodate what is being taught/set by their teachers –

therefore ensuring your child has access to some of the above resources and are frequently using them.
 Ensuring that students are rewriting and improving their essays based on feedback.
 Encouraging your child to complete extra essays in their own time alongside what is set in class, good practice is also timing these in 40 minutes without notes, especially as we progress throughout the year.

What we study and when:					
Term	Unit, Topic Or Summary Of Work Covered	Knowledge, Understanding & Skills Developed	ACHIEVE / Personal Development Focus	How The Work Is Assessed	Careers Links
1	Philosophy - Ancient Philosophical Influences	This unit explores the philosophical views of Plato, in relation to understanding of Reality, the Forms, the analogy of the cave. And the philosophical views of Aristotle, in relation to understanding of reality, the four causes, the Prime Mover. Students will then explore evaluation through the comparison of Plato's Form of the Good and Aristotle's Prime Mover and the comparison and evaluation of Plato's reliance on reason (rationalism) and Aristotle's use of the senses (empiricism) in their attempts to make sense of reality.	Ambition and endurance as students start to explore the 40 mark essay questions. Versatility as students explore different scholarly views.	Students will complete a 40 mark essay with preparation and revision notes to help them.	Evaluative essay style writing skills.
	Philosophy - Soul, Body and Mind	This unit explores the philosophical language of soul, mind and body in the thinking of Plato and Aristotle. And metaphysics of consciousness, including substance dualism and materialism. Students will then explore evaluation through materialist critiques of dualism, and dualist responses to materialism; whether the concept of 'soul' is best understood metaphorically or as a reality; and the idea that any discussion about the mind-body distinction is a category error.		Students will complete a 40 mark essay with preparation and revision notes to help them.	
	Ethics - Natural Law	This explores Aquinas' natural law, including telos, the four tiers of law, the doctrine of double effect and the primary and secondary precepts. Students will then explore the evaluation of whether or not natural law provides a helpful method of moral decision-		Students will complete a 40 mark essay with preparation and revision notes to help them.	

		making; whether or not a judgement about something being good, bad, right or wrong can be based on its success or failure in achieving its telos; whether or not the universe as a whole is designed with a telos, or human nature has an orientation towards the good; whether or not the doctrine of double effect can be used to justify an action, such as killing someone as an act of self-defence.		
2	DCT – Knowledge of God	This unit will study the knowledge of God’s existence through Natural knowledge of God’s Existence such as an innate human sense of the divine and as seen in the order of creation. And through the revealed knowledge of God’s existence through faith and God’s grace and revealed knowledge of God in Jesus Christ. Students will then explore the evaluation of whether or not God can be known through reason alone; whether or not faith is sufficient reason for belief in God’s existence; whether or not the Fall has completely removed all natural human knowledge of God; whether or not natural knowledge of God is the same as revealed knowledge of God; whether or not belief in God’s existence is sufficient to put one’s trust in him.	Versatility as students explore religious beliefs that may differ to that of their own. Ambition as students start to complete 40 mark essays in timed conditions.	Timed 40 mark essay with the use of a plan.
	DCT – Augustine’s Teaching on Human Nature	The unit explores Augustine’s teachings on Human relationships pre- and post-Fall, Original Sin and its effects on the will and human societies and God’s grace. Students will then explore evaluation such as whether or not Augustine’s teaching on a historical Fall and Original Sin is wrong; whether or not Augustine is right that sin means that humans can never be morally good; whether or not Augustine’s view of human nature is pessimistic or optimistic and whether or not there is a distinctive human nature.		Timed 40 mark essay with the use of a plan.
	Ethics – Situation Ethics	This looks into Fletcher’s situation ethics, including agape, the six propositions, the four working principles and conscience. Students will then look at the evaluation of whether or not situation ethics provides a helpful method of moral decision-making; whether or not an ethical judgement about something being good, bad, right or wrong can be based on the extent to which, in any given situation, agape is best served; whether Fletcher’s understanding of agape is really religious or whether it means nothing more than wanting the best for the person		Timed 40 mark essay with the use of a plan.

		involved in a given situation; whether or not the rejection of absolute rules by situation ethics makes moral decision-making entirely individualistic and subjective.			
3	Philosophy – The Problem of Evil	<p>This explores the problem of evil and suffering including its logical (the inconsistency between divine attributes and the presence of evil) and evidential (the evidence of so much terrible evil in the world) aspects; Augustine’s use of original perfection and the Fall; and Hick’s reworking of the Irenaean theodicy which gives some purpose to natural evil in enabling human beings to reach divine likeness.</p> <p>Students then explore evaluation of whether or not Augustine’s view of the origins of moral and natural evils is enough to spare God from blame for evils in the world; whether or not the need to create a ‘vale of soul-making’ can justify the existence or extent of evils; which of the logical or evidential aspects of the problem of evil pose the greater challenge to belief; whether or not it is possible to successfully defend monotheism in the face of evil.</p>	Versatility as students explore different responses to the problem of evil. Integrity and empathy as students explore some of the complex and sensitive debates of euthanasia.	Timed 40 mark essay with no notes, but preparation for the question.	The exploration of medical ethics and the implications this has on medical careers.
	Philosophy – Religious Experience	<p>This explores the nature and influence of religious experience, including mystical and conversion experience. And different ways in which individual religious experiences can be understood.</p> <p>Students will then explore the evaluation of whether personal testimony or witness is enough to support the validity of religious experiences; whether or not corporate religious experiences might be considered more reliable or valid than individual experiences; and whether or not religious experience provides a basis for belief in God or a greater power.</p>		Timed 40 mark essay no notes.	
	Ethics - Euthanasia	<p>This looks at euthanasia through the issues of sanctity of life, quality of life, voluntary euthanasia and non-voluntary euthanasia.</p> <p>Students will then evaluate through the application of Natural Law and Situation Ethics, and explore the issues of whether or not the religious concept of sanctity of life has any meaning in</p>		Timed 40 mark essay with no notes, but students know in advance the question.	

		<p>twenty first century medical ethics; whether or not a person should or can have complete autonomy over their own life and decisions made about it; whether or not there is a moral difference between medical intervention to end a patient's life and medical non-intervention to end a patient's life.</p>		
4	DCT – Christian Moral Action	<p>This unit explores the teaching and example of Dietrich Bonhoeffer on duty to God and duty to the State, Church as community and source of spiritual discipline and the cost of discipleship.</p> <p>Students will then evaluate through whether or not Christians should practise civil disobedience; whether or not it is possible always to know God's will; whether or not Bonhoeffer puts too much emphasis on suffering and whether or not Bonhoeffer's theology has relevance today.</p>	<p>Integrity as students study the issues of morality within Christianity through action and principles.</p> <p>Versatility as students look at Utilitarianism through the lens of different scholars.</p>	<p>Timed 40 mark essay with no notes.</p>
	DCT – Christian Moral Principles	<p>This unit looks at the diversity of Christian moral reasoning and practices and sources of ethics, including the Bible as the only authority for Christian ethical practice; the Bible, Church and reason as the sources of Christian ethical practices; and love (agape) as the only Christian ethical principle which governs Christian practices.</p> <p>Students will then develop evaluation of whether or not Christian ethics are distinctive; whether or not Christian ethics are personal or communal; whether or not the principle of love is sufficient to live a good life; whether or not the Bible is a comprehensive moral guide.</p>		<p>Timed 40 mark essay no notes.</p>
	Ethics – Utilitarianism	<p>This explores areas of utilitarianism such as the principle of utility, the hedonic calculus, act utilitarianism and rule utilitarianism.</p> <p>Students then explore evaluation of whether or not utilitarianism provides a helpful method of moral decision-making; whether or not an ethical judgement about something being good, bad, right or wrong can be based on the extent to which, in any given situation, utility is best served; whether or not it is possible to measure good or pleasure and then reach a moral decision.</p>		<p>Timed 40 mark essay with no notes.</p>
5	Philosophy - Arguments based on Observation	<p>This explores the cosmological argument, the teleological argument and challenges to the arguments from observation.</p>	<p>Versatility as students study the different arguments for God's</p>	<p>Timed 40 mark essay with no notes</p>

		Students will then explore evaluation such as whether a posteriori or a priori is the more persuasive style of argument; whether or not teleological arguments can be defended against the challenge of 'chance'; whether cosmological arguments simply jump to the conclusion of a transcendent creator, without sufficient explanation; and whether or not there are logical fallacies in these arguments that cannot be overcome.	existence and understand the approaches of multiple different scholars. Ambition as students explore some of the tricky concepts of Kantian ethics.		
	Philosophy - Arguments based on Reason	This unit covers the Ontological argument through the scholars of Anselm, Gaunilo's criticisms and Kant's criticisms. Students then explore evaluation points of whether a posteriori or a priori is the more persuasive style of argument; whether or not existence can be treated as a predicate; whether or not the ontological argument justifies belief; whether or not there are logical fallacies in this argument that cannot be overcome.		Timed 40 mark essay with no notes	
	Ethics – Kantian Ethics	This explores areas of Kantian ethics including duty, the hypothetical imperative, the categorical imperative and its three formulations and the three postulates. It then explores the evaluation of whether or not Kantian ethics provides a helpful method of moral decision-making whether or not an ethical judgement about something being good, bad, right or wrong can be based on the extent to which duty is best served; whether or not Kantian ethics is too abstract to be applicable to practical moral decision-making; whether or not Kantian ethics is so reliant on reason that it unduly rejects the importance of other factors, such as sympathy, empathy and love in moral decision-making.		Timed 40 mark essay with no notes.	
6	DCT – Death and the Afterlife	This unit explores Christian teachings on heaven, hell, purgatory and election. Students will then explore the evaluation points of whether or not God's judgement takes place immediately after death or at the end of time; whether or not hell and heaven are eternal; whether or not heaven is the transformation and perfection of the whole of creation; whether or not purgatory is a state through which everyone goes.	Versatility as students explore religious beliefs that may differ from their own. Integrity as students explore some of the ethical issues within business and case studies from today's society.	Timed essay with no notes.	Exploration of ethical business practices and if good ethics necessarily results in good business.
	DCT – The Person of Jesus Christ	This unit explores Jesus Christ's authority as the Son of God, a teacher of wisdom and a liberator.		Timed essay with no notes.	