

A-Level Religious Studies

The course breakdown:

- 9 hours a fortnight
- 6 hours with Miss Stirling
 - Paper 1: Philosophy of Religion.
 - Paper 3: Developments in Christian Thought (DCT)
- 3 hours with Miss Dowell
 - Paper 2: Religion and Ethics

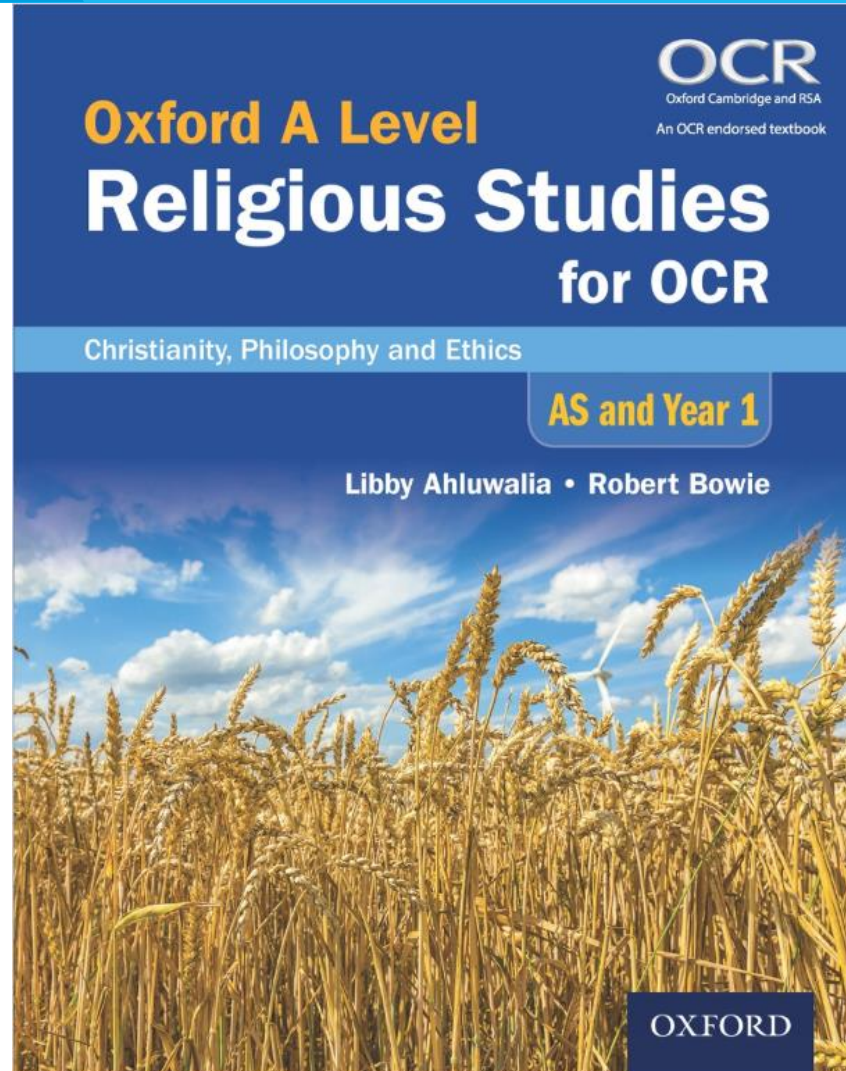
The exam:

- This will take place in summer 2026!
- You will have 3 exams (Philosophy, Ethics and DCT)
- Each exam is 2 hours long
- For each exam you will answer 3 questions out of a choice of 4.
- Each question is marked out of 40.

Kit list:

- You will need 3 lever-arch folders.
- Name them: Philosophy, Ethics and DCT.
- You will need dividers for each topic.
- Bring in your summer transition work on day 1.
- Textbook for Year 1.
- Revision guides.

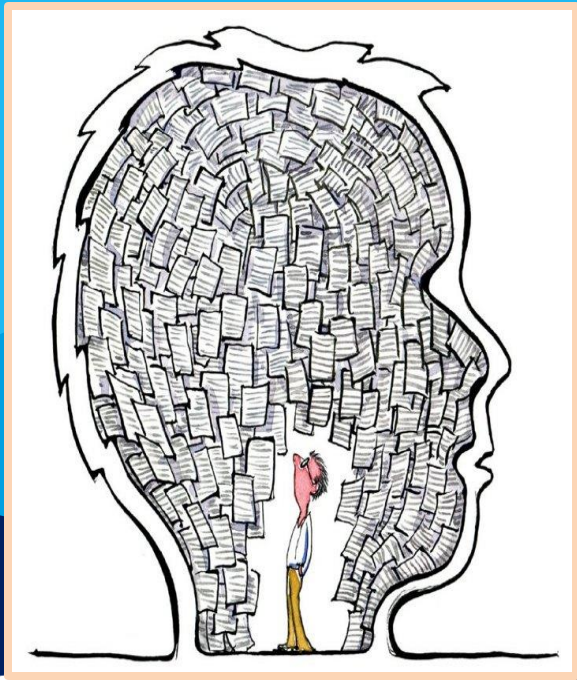
Year 1 textbook:



Useful pointers:

- Date and title every piece of work you complete. Trust me...
- Date any hand-outs you are given.
- Complete additional reading.
- You can borrow the textbooks and revision guides at any time but they are kept in school only.

Introduction to Ethics



Discuss:

A moral world is one in which as many people as possible are as happy as they can be. Do you agree?



What is utilitarianism?

- The name 'utilitarianism' comes from the word 'utility', which means 'usefulness'.
- Utilitarians concern themselves with working out how 'useful' an action is based upon assessing its action's, proposing that we should do the thing that produces the most 'useful' end.
- **How do we assess the usefulness of an actions consequences? Does this appear to be the best way to make moral decisions?**

Do you think humans are purely motivated by pain and pleasure?



Jeremy Bentham – 1748-1832

Bentham's theory of Utilitarianism can be divided into three parts:

1. His view on what motivates human beings and what goodness and badness were all about.
2. The **utility principle** (Latin – *utilis* - 'Useful'), which is his moral rule.
3. The **Hedonic Calculus** – System for measuring how good or bad a consequence is.

The greatest good for the greatest number? Is this practical? What problems might it pose?



It is the greatest good to the greatest number of people which is the measure of right and wrong.

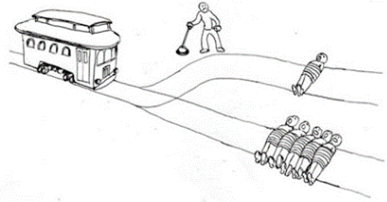
(Jeremy Bentham)

izquotes.com

The Principle of Utility

- Utility is what moral behaviour should be looking to maximise. The balance between happiness and sadness caused is what should affect our decisions, not any idealised view of moral commandments.
- When talking about the principle of utility it is not enough to think about the individual, the community must be considered and the sum of the interest of all the people in the community

The Trolley Problem



What might Bentham say was the right thing to do?

- A trolley on tracks races down a slope, out of control, towards a family of five who are trapped on the tracks.
- You are away from the tracks by lever, and can switch the tracks to another side where only one person is on the tracks – a worker.
- Do you?
 - Do nothing and the trolley kills the family of five
 - Pull the lever and divert the trolley onto the other tracks killing the worker

'The main motivation to make an ethical decision is to make a decision which benefits the largest number of people'.

Do you agree? How could you apply real life examples to this.