

A-level Religious Studies, Philosophy & Ethics

Board and Specification: OCR Philosophy of Religion, Religion and Ethics,
Developments in Religious Thought.

Head of Department: Mrs G Coley (g.coley@cwlc.email)

Subject specific entry requirements:

- Grade 5 in GCSE Religious Studies if studied.
- GCSE English Literature and/or Language grade 5 or above.

Course details:

A-level Religion, Philosophy and Ethics is a highly academic discipline and demands hard work, both physically and mentally. Self-motivation is essential, as wider reading will be the key to success.

You do not necessarily need a religious faith for the course or to have studied the subject at GCSE; you do however need to be willing to ask a variety of religious, ethical and philosophical questions.

It is a subject that seriously challenges the way you think and can therefore transform the person you are. It dares you to face the big questions in life for example:

Is there a God?

Can supernatural events
really happen?

Is murder ever acceptable?

How do you know right
from wrong?

Is your conscience always
correct?

What is authority?

Is there life after death?

Is free will an illusion?

Should the Church decide
what is morally right?

The skills developed will prepare students for higher education or the world of work.

Modules titles and code

The A-level in Religious Studies comprises of 3 components:

- Philosophy of religion
- Religion and ethics
- Developments in religious thought

Philosophy of religion Learners will study:

- ancient philosophical influences
- the nature of the soul, mind and body
- the arguments about the existence or non- existence of God
- the nature and impact of religious experience
- the challenge for religious belief of the problem of evil

- ideas about the nature of God
- issues in religious language

Religion and ethics Learners will study:

- normative ethical theories
- the application of ethical theory to two contemporary issues of importance

- ethical language and thought
- debates surrounding the significant idea of conscience
- sexual ethics and the influence on ethical thought of developments in religious beliefs.

Developments in religious thought Learners will study:

- religious beliefs, values and teachings, their interconnections and how they vary historically and in the contemporary world
- sources of religious wisdom and authority
- practices which shape and express religious identity, and how these vary within a tradition
- significant social and historical developments in theology and religious thought
- key themes related to the relationship between religion and society

This module will be taught from the Christian perspective.

Each module will equate to a 2-hour written paper worth 120 marks each. Each module will be worth 33.3% of the final A-level grade.

What kinds of work will you do in class and at home?

- Students will debate and discuss controversial issues that arise.
- Essays and class discussion will be set/held on a regular basis.
- You will have the opportunity to discuss the burning moral issues of the day.
- Students will be given the opportunity to judge popular opinions in the light of various theories.
- Students will read some of the writings of the greatest minds that have ever influenced mankind.

You will be given the chance to challenge the view of distinguished writers and others throughout the course.

What other A-levels does your subject connect well with?

Religious Studies A-level is highly respected as a subject because it develops the skill of rational and independent thought and critical thinking skills. It makes an ideal partner to most higher education courses, in particular A-levels in Politics, History, English, Film Studies, Classical Studies, Sociology and Psychology.

What types of university course will be helped by this A-level?

The Russell Group of top universities has made it clear that Religious Studies A level provides 'suitable preparation for University generally'. University courses in theology, religious studies or philosophy all encompass many fields taught at A Level, including philosophy, ethics, Old Testament/New Testament studies, world religions, and church history. In addition to this, the critical thinking skills acquired during A-level Religious Studies provide an excellent foundation for entry into social work, politics, education, sciences, journalism and business/managerial course.