

A Level Religious Studies: Philosophy of Religion, Religious Ethics and Development of Christian Thought

What is Philosophical Thinking? Philosophy literally means 'love of wisdom'. Its method is a critical approach to any area of study and it requires students to describe and analyse the views of others and then justify their own beliefs. Ethics is moral philosophy where ethical theories are used to answer the question "How should we live?". Central to both philosophy and ethics is an understanding of Christian thought. This is a multi-discipline subject. At its core is a keen critical eye that allows students to sharpen their understanding of the world that we live in from a philosophical and ethical viewpoint. However, the subject itself can be paired with any other subject studied. A Level RS is well respected for its ability to create independent critical thinkers that can solve problems in any academic discipline. This is a demanding course and requires a lot of reading and note taking.

Students will develop: Study skills, confidence in presenting ideas, critical thinking, essay writing, the ability to argue effectively, a stronger sense of what they believe is right or wrong and the greater ability to verbalise. There is a keen emphasis on spotting logical fallacies and flaws in argumentation, which allows students to develop their critical faculties through development of reasoned arguments.

Course Requirements: GCSE RE is not required. Success in the examinations is in no way dependent upon any religious faith or lack thereof. Minimum of a grade 5 at GCSE English Language is required and a grade 6 in any humanity subject.

OCR A Level Religious Studies Course

The course is split into 3 distinct but overlapping areas of study. You can find the full OCR specification by following this [link](#).

Philosophy of Religion:

<u>Year 1</u>	<u>Year 2</u>
Ancient philosophical influences (Plato and Aristotle) + The mind and body problem.	Ideas about the nature of God
Arguments about the existence or non-existence of God	Issues in religious language (Traditional)
Nature and impact of religious experience	Issues in religious language (20 th Century)
The challenge for religious belief and the problem of evil	

Religion and Ethics:

<u>Year 1</u>	<u>Year 2</u>
Normative ethical theories (Utilitarianism, Situation Ethics, Natural Law and Kantian)	The application of ethical theory to contemporary issues of importance (Sexual Ethics)
The application of ethical theory to contemporary issues of importance (Euthanasia and Business Ethics)	Debates surrounding the significant ideas conscience
	Understanding of the term Good and how it is used.

Developments in religious thought (Christianity):

Year 1

Year 2

Religious beliefs, values and teachings, their interconnections and how they vary historically and in the contemporary world	Significant social and historical developments in theology and religious thought
Sources of religious wisdom and authority	Key themes related to the relationship between religion and society.
Practices which shape and express religious identity, and how these vary within a tradition	

Assessment Details:

There is no coursework – the assessment comes from 100% exam.

Candidates are required to answer three open-essay style questions for each area of the course at the end of the one year or two years study period.

Year 1: Three one hour 15 minute exams are sat in total each worth 60 marks or 33 1/3% of the AS level grade.

Year 2: Three two-hour exams are sat in total each worth 120 marks or 33 1/3% of the A level grade.

What can I do to prepare for AS Religious Studies?

Start by reading the specification at this [link](#). There are a number of useful pieces of reading suggested on the ***Suggested scholarly views, academic approaches and sources of wisdom and authority*** sections at the end of each unit. You will not be able to access all of them (due to cost implications – you are not expected to buy any of the books on the suggested reading list) but a number of them are freely available. There is no expectation that you have read them all. Have a look and see what you think.

Don't worry if you don't understand anything you read. You're new to this. Write it down and ask when the term begins.

Read around the topics you will be studying – use the internet, newspapers and books to find out about the main philosophical and ethical issues and how they relate to current affairs. Good introductory books include: ***Introduction to Philosophy and Ethics*** by Mel Thompson; ***Sophie's World*** by Jostein Gaardner and ***The Pig that Wants to be Eaten*** by Julian Baggini. [SEP](#) is an excellent resource but is very heavy for beginners so use this if you find a particular area of interest for you that you would like to explore in more detail.

Year 1 - OCR AS Level Religious Studies at DJCS

	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May
<p>Philosophy of Religion: One exam paper on Philosophy of Religion (H173-01) – 1hr 15 minutes long. AO1 – 50% AO2 – 50% AO1 – Knowledge and understanding AO2 – Critical analysis Answer two essay questions from a choice of three. 33.3% of total AS level</p>	<p>Unit 1 Philosophical Language and Thought</p>	<p>Unit 1 Philosophical Language and Thought</p> <p style="text-align: center;">HALF TERM</p>	<p>Unit 1 Philosophical Language and Thought</p> <p>Unit 2 The Existence of God</p>	<p>Unit 2 The Existence of God</p> <p style="text-align: center;">END OF TERM</p>	<p>Mock Exams</p> <p>Unit 2 The Existence of God</p>	<p>Unit 2 The Existence of God</p> <p>Unit 3 God and the World</p> <p>Early Feb INT or EXT exam? HALF TERM</p>	<p>Unit 3 God and the World</p>	<p>Unit 3 God and the World</p> <p style="text-align: center;">END OF TERM</p>	<p>Unit 3 God and the World</p> <p>Internal or External Exam Sat</p>
<p>Religious Ethics: One exam paper on Religious Ethics (H173-02) – 1hr 15 minutes long. AO1 – 50% AO2 – 50% AO1 – Knowledge and understanding AO2 – Critical analysis Answer two essay questions from a choice of three. 33.3% of total AS level</p>	<p>Introducing Ethics</p> <p>Unit 2 Utilitarianism</p>	<p>Unit 2 Utilitarianism</p> <p>Unit 2 Kantian Ethics</p> <p style="text-align: center;">HALF TERM</p>	<p>Unit 2 Kantian Ethics</p> <p>Unit 1 Situation Ethics</p>	<p>Unit 1 Situation Ethics</p> <p style="text-align: center;">END OF TERM</p>	<p>Mock Exams</p> <p>Unit 1 Natural Law</p>	<p>Unit 1 Natural Law</p> <p>Unit 3 Euthanasia</p> <p>Early Feb INT or EXT exam? HALF TERM</p>	<p>Unit 3 Euthanasia</p> <p>Unit 3 Business Ethics</p>	<p>Unit 3 Business Ethics</p> <p style="text-align: center;">END OF TERM</p>	<p>Unit 3 Business Ethics</p> <p>Revision</p> <p>Internal or External Exam Sat</p>
<p>Development of Christian Thought: One exam paper on Development of Christian Thought (H173-03) – 1hr 15 minutes long. AO1 – 50% AO2 – 50% AO1 – Knowledge and understanding AO2 – Critical analysis Answer two essay questions from a choice of three. 33.3% of total AS level</p>	<p>Unit 1 Insight: Augustine</p>	<p>Unit 1 Insight: Augustine</p> <p>Unit 1 Insight: Death and the Afterlife</p> <p style="text-align: center;">HALF TERM</p>	<p>Unit 1 Insight: Death and the Afterlife</p> <p>Unit 2: Foundations Knowledge of God</p>	<p>Unit 2: Foundations Knowledge of God</p> <p>Unit 2: Foundations Jesus</p> <p style="text-align: center;">END OF TERM</p>	<p>Mock Exams</p> <p>Unit 2: Foundations Jesus</p>	<p>Unit 3: Living Moral Principles</p> <p>Unit 3: Living Moral Principles</p> <p>Early Feb INT or EXT exam? HALF TERM</p>	<p>Unit 3: Living Moral Principles</p> <p>Unit 3: Living Moral Action</p>	<p>Unit 3: Living Moral Action</p> <p style="text-align: center;">END OF TERM</p>	<p>Revision</p> <p>Internal or External Exam Sat</p>

Year 2 - OCR A Level Religious Studies at DJCS (continues studies from Year 1)

	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May
<p>Philosophy of Religion:</p> <p>One exam paper on Philosophy of Religion (H573-01) – 2 hours long.</p> <p>AO1 – 40% AO2 – 60% [AO1 – Knowledge and understanding AO2 – Critical analysis]</p> <p>Answer three essay questions from a choice of four.</p> <p>33.3% of total AS level</p>	<p>Unit 4 Nature of God</p>	<p>Unit 4 Nature of God</p> <p style="text-align: center; color: red;">HALF TERM</p>	<p>Mock Exams</p> <p>Unit 5 Religious Language (Traditional)</p>	<p>Unit 5 Religious Language (Traditional)</p> <p style="text-align: center; color: red;">END OF TERM</p>	<p>Unit 6 Religious Language (20th Century)</p>	<p>Mock Exams</p> <p>Unit 6 Religious Language (20th Century)</p> <p style="text-align: center; color: red;">HALF TERM</p>	<p>Revision</p>	<p>Revision</p> <p style="text-align: center; color: red;">END OF TERM</p>	<p>Revision</p> <p style="text-align: center; color: green;">External Exam (June)</p>
<p>Religious Ethics:</p> <p>One exam paper on Religious Ethics (H573-02) – 2 hours long.</p> <p>AO1 – 40% AO2 – 60% [AO1 – Knowledge and understanding AO2 – Critical analysis]</p> <p>Answer three essay questions from a choice of four.</p> <p>33.3% of total AS level</p>	<p>Unit 4 Meta-Ethics</p>	<p>Unit 4 Meta-Ethics</p> <p style="text-align: center; color: red;">HALF TERM</p>	<p>Mock Exams</p> <p>Unit 5 Conscience</p>	<p>Unit 5 Conscience</p> <p style="text-align: center; color: red;">END OF TERM</p>	<p>Unit 6 Applied Ethics Sexual Ethics</p>	<p>Mock Exams</p> <p>Unit 6 Applied Ethics Sexual Ethics</p> <p style="text-align: center; color: red;">HALF TERM</p>	<p>Revision</p>	<p>Revision</p> <p style="text-align: center; color: red;">END OF TERM</p>	<p>Revision</p> <p style="text-align: center; color: green;">External Exam (June)</p>
<p>Development of Christian Thought:</p> <p>One exam paper on Development of Christian Thought (H573-03) – 2 hours long.</p> <p>AO1 – 40% AO2 – 60% [AO1 – Knowledge and understanding AO2 – Critical analysis]</p> <p>Answer three essay questions from a choice of four.</p> <p>33.3% of total AS level</p>	<p>Unit 4 Gender and Society</p>	<p>Unit 4 Gender and Theology</p> <p style="text-align: center; color: red;">HALF TERM</p>	<p>Mock Exams</p> <p>Unit 5 Challenges: Secularism</p>	<p>Unit 5 Challenges: Liberation Theology and Marx</p> <p style="text-align: center; color: red;">END OF TERM</p>	<p>Unit 6 Development Pluralism Theology</p>	<p>Mock Exams</p> <p>Unit 6 Development Pluralism Society</p> <p style="text-align: center; color: red;">HALF TERM</p>	<p>Revision</p>	<p>Revision</p> <p style="text-align: center; color: red;">END OF TERM</p>	<p>Revision</p> <p style="text-align: center; color: green;">External Exam (June)</p>

