

Religious Studies:

Philosophy, Ethics and Christian Thought

CRGS
SIXTH FORM



Head of Learning

Mrs J Hartley

Departmental Staff

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Exam Board

OCR A Level Religious Studies

Why study Religious Studies?

Religious Studies is like thinking, only louder. You won't be told what to think. Instead, we introduce you to the ideas of philosophers and ask: does this make sense? Religious Studies will help you to become sharper and more articulate in your ability to reason. It will encourage you to analyse and spot flaws in reasoning and construct a convincing argument. It will help you become more confident in your ability to debate and exchange ideas. Above all, you will reflect on fundamental questions about meaning – "Who am I? What is truth? What is right and wrong?" Part of the joy in studying RS is that you will find these questions usually promote more questions than we can answer.

Course Outline

Philosophy of Religion: This involves the study of philosophical issues and questions raised by religion and belief. This includes a study of the arguments for and against the existence of God and challenges to religious belief such as the problems of evil and psychological explanations for belief. We also consider the nature of God. For example, what does it mean to describe God as all knowing? Does such a description have implications for human freewill? We shall also explore questions about whether religious language has any real meaning and whether religious experience has any validity. Are there any signs that there is a God who interacts with the world and how might it happen? Can we survive after death? Do we have souls and, if we have, are they separate from our bodies? We will engage with the responses of Philosophers throughout the ages and evaluate their success.

Religion and Ethics: This aspect of the course focuses on human conduct and character. It explores questions about how we should make moral judgements. We shall study different ethical theories and their application in the world including Natural Law and Utilitarianism. We apply the principles of each theory to a range of personal, societal and global issues. The three areas of applied ethics which we shall focus on are: euthanasia, sexual ethics and business ethics. We also consider the works of key ethical thinkers and significant ideas in religious and moral thought such as conscience – What does someone mean when they say they 'acted upon their conscience'? We also explore the meaning of the word *good* and how this affects moral decision making.

Developments in Christian Thought: In this component, students have the opportunity to undertake a systematic study of key concepts within the development of Christian thought. This includes the influential ideas of Augustine on human nature and his teaching of original sin and the

Where are they now?

Recent students of Religious Studies at CRGS have gone on to:

- Criminology & Sociology (*Northumbria*)
- English Language (*Lancaster*)
- English Literature (*Newcastle*)
- Full-time employment with *boohoo.com*
- History (*Leeds Beckett*)
- Law (*UCLAN, Leeds, York*)
- Marketing (*Strathclyde*)
- Medicine (*Liverpool*)
- Nursing (*Liverpool*)
- Legal Apprenticeship (*DWF*)
- Philosophy, Psychology & Scientific Thought (*Leeds*)
- Politics and International Studies (*Warwick*)
- Psychology in Education (*York*)
- Religion, Philosophy and Ethics (*Nottingham*)
- Social Anthropology (*Edinburgh*)
- Social Care, Justice and Recovery (*Leeds Beckett*)

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reinterpretation of God by feminist theologians in light of the changing societal views on gender. We shall consider the diversity of Christian moral reasoning, for example by studying Dietrich Bonhoeffer and his ideas of civil disobedience. Also, we shall explore the challenges to Christian thought posed by poverty, secularism and religious pluralism. We shall consider questions like: Does Christianity still have a role to play in society? Is God simply the result of wishful thinking? Is the Church oppressive? We will also explore questions about death and the afterlife and evaluate the tools we have available to us to know anything about the divine.

Assessment

There are two assessment objectives:

- (i) Demonstrate knowledge and understanding: 40%.
- (ii) Analyse and evaluate: 60%.

And three examinations:

- Philosophy of Religion (Written Paper; 2 hours; 33.3% of A Level)
- Religion and Ethics (Written Paper; 2 hours; 33.3 % of A Level)
- Developments in Religious Thought (Written Paper; 2 hours; 33.3% of A Level)

Frequently Asked Questions

Q. Is any previous knowledge required to study this subject?

There is no requirement to have studied Religious Studies before and you do not need a religious commitment to study this subject. You do need a lively, enquiring and critical mind. You will be directed to think clearly and rigorously to help you make up your own mind. Students are required to meet the General Entry Requirement of a minimum of 4 GCSEs at grade 6 with at least GCSE grade 4 in English Language and Maths.

Q. What opportunities are there for Extended Learning?

Students are encouraged to access the excellent range of books in the library or on-line articles and engage in wider reading around the subject. We have some links with university departments and on occasions invite in guest speakers. The department also organises an annual Ethics, Philosophy & Religion Conference for all Year 12 students in which the entire year group spend the day exploring topical issues such as the use of AI, philosophy in prison and medical ethics with guest speakers.

Q. What facilities are there?

Theories and arguments are introduced by the teacher through a variety of means, including the reading of primary and/or secondary texts, DVD material and YouTube. This is followed by a critical analysis of the ideas through group activities and discussion in class. Students will be expected to read articles and material from their textbooks and other sources.

Exam Board Specification

OCR A Level Religious Studies H573 www.ocr.org.uk

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