

RELIGIOUS STUDIES

A LEVEL

Course Coordinator: Mrs McDonald

Awarding Body: OCR

The Course

The Religious Studies A level is comprised of Religious Studies, Philosophy and Ethics. Philosophy means 'the love of wisdom' and this course is your chance to engage with some of the greatest thinkers the western world has produced and some of the biggest issues they have tackled. Plato, Aristotle, Aquinas, Hume, Kant, Mill, Russell, Marx, Dawkins - you will consider their views and those of others, as applied to key questions such as 'Does God exist?'; 'How should we behave?'; 'Are we truly free?'; 'Are rules absolute or relative?'; 'What happens when we die?', 'Is religion based upon truth or neurosis brought on by perceived suffering?' We will contrast western thinking with an eastern approach, considering the key ideas of Buddhism – an approach that has become increasingly popular in a western world concerned with the effect of capitalist materialism. From different perspectives, we will consider whether secularism undermines religion completely? Has organised religion conspired to subjugate the masses? Women? Or is it a source of liberation? Ultimately, the value of philosophy is that its work underpins much of what we think, do and assume in our daily lives, and when you realise its role you will never see things quite the same way again! Students will learn to construct arguments in a coherent manner and demonstrate an understanding and awareness of different views on the issues raised. Students will also enhance their ability to learn independently and as part of a team, as well as their reading and problem solving skills.

Course Content

- Classic Greek & Judaeo/Christian understandings of the origins of the universe
- Philosophical arguments for and against God's existence
- Ideas of rationalism, empiricism, knowledge and belief
- Ethical Approaches - Absolutism & Relativism
- Theories of Ethics - Kantian Ethics, Natural Law, Utilitarianism, Situation Ethics, Christian Ethics.
- Applied Ethics - War & pacifism, Medical Ethics, Sexual Ethics, Business & Environmental Ethics.
- Philosophy of Language - Religious Language & Meta Ethics
- The Nature of God & Problems Arising
- Ideas of Monism, Dualism & Life after Death
- Ideas of Free Will & Determinism
- The nature and origins of conscience
- The rise of secularism, feminism and their impact on religious thinking and belief
- Key Buddhist teachings on the four noble truths, Samsara, the 3 marks of conscience

Exam (3 x 2 Hours)

Paper 1—Ph of Religion (33.3%)

Paper 2—Religion and Ethics (33.3%)

Paper 3—Developments in religious thoughts (33.3%)

Possible Destinations

- Social Policy, International Relations, Nursing & Medical, Teacher Training and many more.
- Careers such as: Teaching, Nursing, Human Resources, Police service,

