



St Mary Redcliffe  
and Temple School

# Religious Studies



# Religious Studies

Exam board: Eduqas

Specification no: 601/8700/1 A Level/ 601/8771/2 AS

**This is a two year linear A level course** - The AS content forms the first half of the A level content and can be assessed at the end of Year 12 to provide an AS Level qualification if the student is dropping the subject and believes they can get a strong grade. Otherwise the two years of content are assessed at the end of Year 13 to give the A level grade.

## AS level

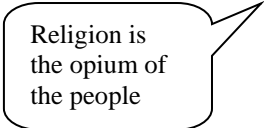
Module	Assessment	%
A Study of Christianity	1 hour 30 mins exam	33.33%
Philosophy of Religion	1 hour 30 mins exam	33.33%
Religion and Ethics	1 hour 30mins exam	33.33%

## A level

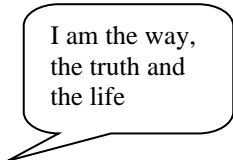
Module	Assessment	%
A Study of Christianity	2 hour exam	33.33%
Philosophy of Religion	2 hour exam	33.33%
Religion and Ethics	2 hour exam	33.33%

## Course Delivery:

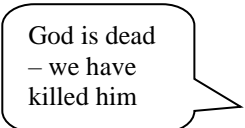
Religious Studies A level involves significant amounts of group work and class discussion within lessons. Students will often be given material from newspapers, books and websites to read and respond to, or their own research to do, and so the ability to read extended pieces of writing is needed. Homework tasks will often include structured written tasks or extended written answers as well as reading, research and the preparation of learning aids. Students will make presentations to the group on topics that they have researched.



Religion is  
the opium of  
the people



I am the way,  
the truth and  
the life



God is dead  
– we have  
killed him

## Course Content:

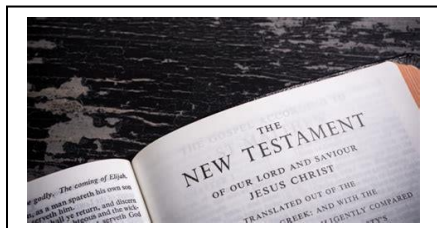
All students will complete a study of Ethics, Philosophy of Religion and A Study of Christianity.

### **Unit 1: A Study of Christianity**

This unit is not just for those who have a Christian faith and are familiar with the New Testament! This aspect of the course utilises lots of disciplines such as historical research, sociological investigation and interpretation of sacred texts.

This unit studies:

- The importance of religious figures- looking at the birth and resurrection of Jesus and different interpretations amongst theologians as to whether Jesus was the messiah or a social revolutionary
- How the Bible is used as a source of wisdom for Christians in day to day life
- The early church and the establishment of Christianity as an organised religious group
- Key concepts and questions: Is God male? Can God suffer?
- Attitudes towards wealth
- Migration and Christianity in the UK
- Religion, Equality and Discrimination
- Relationships between Christianity and modern society
- Diversity in expressions of Christian worship
- Religious Experience
- Religious responses to poverty and injustice

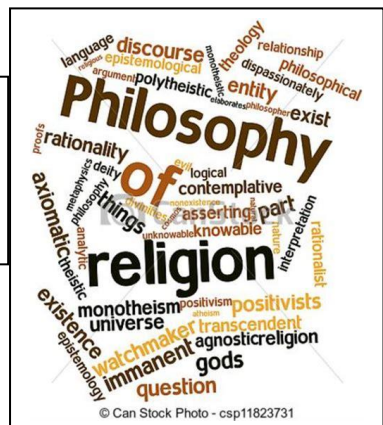
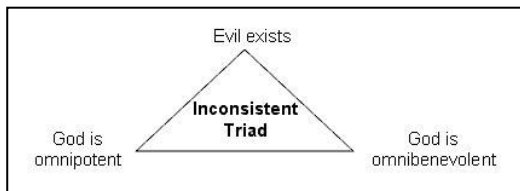


This course presumes no particular beliefs or views of religion and is engaging for students of any faith or none.

## Unit 2: Philosophy of Religion

The Philosophy of Religion unit takes you through many of the biggest questions related to religion. We will be looking at all aspects of the different issues and developing skills of research and evaluation of the different arguments. The unit looks at philosophers from history and from today's world so you get a broad overview of modern and historical perspectives across the different topics.

- Arguments for the existence of God – design, cosmological and ontological arguments and analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of each argument.
- Characteristics and influence of Religious Experience - Can religious experience be used to provide proof of the existence of God?
- The problem of evil and responses to it.
- The meaning of religious language.
- Scholars' views of religion including Dawkins, Freud and Marx. Looking at psychological, sociological and scientific responses to religious belief and the influence of new atheism in today's world.
- Beliefs about miracles
- The relationship between religion and science



### **Unit 3: Religion and Ethics**

The Religion and Ethics module takes an in depth look at morality and moral behaviour. We will look at famous thinkers who have sought to consider how people should act and why they should act that way. We will also look at a wide range of modern ethical questions and consider how different religious groups respond to many of the complicated ethical questions of our time from euthanasia to climate change to just war. This unit allows for plenty of debate and grounds your learning in practical discussions on issues affecting our world today.

- Utilitarianism (Bentham, Mill): Is happiness all that people desire?
- Deontology (Kant): Is ethics a matter of our duty to absolute principles?
- Natural Law (Aquinas): Can we relate morality to what is natural or unnatural?
- Virtue Ethics (Aristotle): Is morality more about who we are than what we do?
- Questions about ethical language and its meaning
- Issues of equality, environment, war and peace, sexual ethics, medical ethics, immigration, capital punishment and different responses to these.
- Freewill vs determinism- are we really free to make our moral decisions?



## **Entry requirements:**

If the subject is taken at GCSE it should be passed at 5 or above and at least one English/Humanities/Social Science subject should be passed with a 6.

## **Skills & personal qualities required / developed by course:**

Students will need the ability to listen to and understand a range of viewpoints on an issue, to demonstrate empathy for different people's beliefs and experiences, and to rationally analyse issues. No personal faith or religious belief is presumed and no marks are given for what the candidate actually thinks but rather for the arguments which can be presented in support of any view they choose to take. Students will increasingly develop confidence in making presentations and in debating rationally with those who take different views to their own. They will leave the course with a broader awareness of many of the most significant challenges facing our society and with a sensitive awareness of the meaning of faith in a multi-religious society.

## **Resources:**

The RE department is well resourced with text-books and video material and has contacts in many religious groups and organisations from which guest speakers are invited. Students attend regional or national conferences when available.

## **Recommended reading / websites:**

Raeper / Smith : The Beginners Guide to Ideas (Lion, 1991)

Vardy / Grosch : The Puzzle of Ethics (Fount, 1999)

M.Thompson : Religion and Science (Hodder, 1999)

<http://philtar.ucsm.ac.uk/>

<http://www.rsweb.org.uk>

## **Frequently Asked Questions**

**Will it be easier to do the course if I am a person who has a religious faith?**

No, the course presumes no particular beliefs or views of religion and is engaging for students of any faith or none. Those with strong religious views will need to be able to consider different perspectives to views they may hold themselves and those without a faith are not disadvantaged as personal beliefs and prior knowledge is not assumed. The Study of Christianity aspect of the course looks closely at the specific Biblical texts with a variety of perspectives looked at, including those who would choose to disagree with the message of the text. In Philosophy of Religion, we cover arguments and

perspectives both for and against the existence of God and look at religious and non-religious explanations of accounts of religious experience.

### **How are the exams structured?**

No coursework forms part of the RS A Level. Each of the three final exams is marked out of 100 and features a variety of questions designed to test breadth and depth of understanding of the course. Each paper requires you to answer two questions that are formed of two detailed parts. The first part is worth 20 marks and is based on knowledge and understanding of the topic. The second part of the question is an essay style response to a statement, in similar fashion to the long answer question featured on many of the GCSE courses. This second part is worth 30 marks. There is some optionality in the exam paper- you are asked to pick one question from a choice of two for your first answer and one question from a choice of three for your second question. Throughout the course we give lots of opportunity and guidance as to how to effectively structure and answer the questions to gain the maximum marks possible.

The specification for the course can be found here:

<https://www.eduqas.co.uk/umbraco/surface/blobstorage/download?nodeId=13804>

### **There sounds like a lot of content, how will I cope and cover everything?**

The course *is* very detailed and all three aspects of the course can provide some complicated key terms and concepts to understand but there are also elements which overlap and inform other aspects of the course. To provide practical support, all students are given in-depth supporting course materials to help them make the most of their independent study time alongside the lesson content. The course teachers will also make it their job to support and answer any questions!

### **Is A Level RE going to be useful to me in a future career or when applying to university?**

Yes- the RE course provides a number of key transferrable skills such as empathy, research and evaluation, collaboration and considering diversity of expression of religious and non- religious beliefs. Many of the key issues looked at across the units are relevant to the world today and may be directly relevant to some future career choices eg medical ethics for future doctors, issues of justices for future lawyers and social workers.

For Further Information: Contact Mr P Noyce, Head of RE  
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