

PHILOSOPHY, ETHICS AND RELIGION

Certificate: A Level Religious Studies

OCR Specification

Welcome to an exciting and thought-provoking course exploring the fundamentals of Philosophy, Ethics and Religion.

This course introduces new concepts; introducing you to thinkers and ideas never experienced before. If you enjoy reflecting on 'big questions', exploring unusual ideas and asking questions about the world, existence, philosophy, religion and ethics, then you will enjoy Philosophy, Ethics and Religion. We will investigate the root of knowledge, exploring key thinkers' ideas throughout history. Philosophy, Ethics and Religion are interdisciplinary fields with direct relevance to fields of Arts, Humanities, Sciences and Social Sciences. The content we cover links to a wide variety of careers as the skills of philosophical and ethical thinking are highly valued within academia and a range of professions. This is an academic subject which is well received by universities because it teaches critical thinking, the ability to construct and analyse arguments, to reflect on morality and view issues with an open mind. It also gives you a rounded and mature outlook on important life topics.

Unit 1 – Philosophy

A fascinating and challenging unit which allows students to study the ancient philosophical influences of Aristotle and Plato; the nature of the soul, mind and body; arguments for the existence or non-existence of God and the challenge for religious belief when considering the problem of evil. Students will develop philosophical styles of thinking and will explore and debate a variety of ideas about the very nature of God and our own existence.

Unit 2 - Ethics

Students will examine the debates surrounding the significant ideas of conscience (including Freud's psychological approach) and apply a variety of theories to consider sexual ethics. Students have the opportunity to study a range of ethical theories including Aquinas' natural law, which leads us to ask far reaching questions such as whether the doctrine of double effect can be used to justify an action, such as killing someone as an act of self-defence. Fletcher's idea of Situation Ethics will also be explored and students are asked to consider whether following 'the most loving action' is ideal for guiding life's ethical dilemmas. The ethical theories covered are then applied to contemporary issues within business ethics and euthanasia.

Unit 3 – Religion: Developments in Christian Thought

Always topical and often controversial, this unit allows students to study the social and historical development in Christianity from a critical and academic perspective. Areas of study include sexuality, gender, secularism and the associations between Karl Marx and Liberation Theology. The unit links closely with both the Philosophy and Ethics topics which allows for synopticity and results in a deeper understanding. Areas studied include death and the afterlife, the person of Jesus Christ and Christian moral action within which students will consider the case study of Bonhoeffer, a Christian priest who abandoned his pacifist stance to play a part in the bomb plot to assassinate Hitler.

Each of the three units are assessed with a 2 hour examination at the end of the second year; students take three, 2 hour examination papers in total which are equally weighted towards their final grade.

GCSE requirements:-

Religious Studies – grade 5 (if taken)

English Literature - grade 5

*In total, at least grade 5 in **two** literate subjects*