

RELIGIOUS STUDIES : PHILOSOPHY, ETHICS AND DEVELOPMENT OF RELIGIOUS THOUGHT

OCR SPECIFICATION : H573

There are three components to the new specification : *Philosophy of Religion* (01), *Religion and Ethics* (02) and *Developments in Religious Thought* (03 – 07). Whilst Components 01 and 02 are mandatory, the third will constitute the in-depth study of a religious tradition chosen from the five available options; Christianity (03), Islam (04), Judaism (05), Buddhism (06) or Hinduism (07).

In *Philosophy of Religion* learners will study philosophical issues and questions raised by religion and belief. These include arguments regarding the existence or non-existence of God, the nature and influence of religious experience and the problems of evil and suffering. They will also explore philosophical language and thought through significant concepts and the works of key thinkers, illustrated in issues or debates in the philosophy of religion.

The study of *Religion and Ethics* is characterised both by a study of ethical language and thought through significant concepts and the works of key thinkers, illustrated in issues or debates in religion and ethics, and also by the application of ethical theory to issues of importance. Learners will study normative ethical theories and key ethical concepts, as well as developments in the way these ideas are applied to significant issues in religion and belief.

Developments in Religious Thought provides an opportunity for the systematic study of one religious tradition. This will include exploration of religious beliefs, values and teachings, sources of wisdom and authority and practices that shape and express religious identity. Also central are the ways in which religious traditions have evolved and developed over time, and religious responses to challenges and significant contemporary social issues.

Content and Assessment of the Course :

This course has a strong classical content, and makes a significant contribution to further studies at higher education at some of our top university departments in Religious Studies, Theology, and Philosophy.

Unit 1	Philosophy of Religion	2 hour examination	33.3%
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Learners will study :

- ancient philosophical influences
- arguments about the existence or non-existence of God
- the nature and impact of religious experience
- the challenge for religious belief of the problem of evil
- the nature of the soul, mind and body
- the possibility of life after death
- ideas about the nature of God
- issues in religious language.

Unit 2	Religious Ethics	2 hour examination	33.3%
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Learners will study :

- normative ethical theories
- the application of ethical theory to two contemporary issues of importance
- ethical language and thought:
- debates surrounding the significant ideas of conscience and free will
- the influence on ethical thought of developments in religious beliefs and the philosophy of religion.

Unit 3	Developments in Religious Thought	2 hour examination	33.3%
Learners will study : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • religious beliefs, values and teachings, their interconnections and how they vary historically and in the contemporary world • sources of religious wisdom and authority • practices which shape and express religious identity, and how these vary within a tradition • significant social and historical developments in theology and religious thought • key themes related to the relationship between religion and society. 			
Entrance Requirements :			
No prior knowledge of the subject is required. The specifications build on, but do not depend on, the knowledge, understanding and skills specified for GCSE Religious Studies. It is recommended that candidates have attained communication and literacy skills at a level equivalent to GCSE Grade B in English. Indeed, students who have no previous (GCSE) qualifications have recently succeeded in obtaining grade A.			

Additional Information :

OCR's A Level in Religious Studies has been developed in consultation with teachers and stakeholders from a variety of institutions. The content has been designed to provide a coherent and thought-provoking programme of study for both teachers and learners, whilst also acting as a rigorous course of study which prepares learners for progression to Higher Education.

This qualification is designed to nurture the development of critical and reflective thinking with the aim of developing a greater understanding and appreciation of religious beliefs and teachings, as well as the disciplines of ethics and philosophy of religion. Emphasis is placed on critical analysis and the construction of balanced, informed arguments within the context of a religious, philosophical and ethical awareness.

OCR's A Level Religious Studies course aims to thoroughly engage learners and develop an interest in Religious Studies which extends beyond the classroom and can be applied to the world around them.

Entrance Requirements :

No prior knowledge of the subject is required. The specifications build on, but do not depend on, the knowledge, understanding and skills specified for GCSE Religious Studies. It is recommended that candidates have attained communication and literacy skills at a level equivalent to GCSE Grade 6 in English. Indeed, students who have no previous (GCSE) qualifications have recently succeeded in obtaining grade A.