RELIGIOUS STUDIES : PHILOSOPHY, ETHICS AND DEVELOPMENT OF RELIGIOUS THOUGHT

OCR SPECIFICATION: H573

There are three components to the 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 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 by applying ethical theory to issues of importance. Learners will study normative ethical theories, key ethical concepts, and developments in how these ideas are applied to significant issues in religion and belief.

Developments in Religious Thought provide an opportunity to systematically study one religious tradition. This will include exploring religious beliefs, values and teachings, sources of wisdom and authority and practices that shape and express religious identity. Also central is how 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 strong classical content and contributes significantly to further higher education studies at some of our top university departments in Religious Studies, Theology, and Philosophy.

Unit 1	**Philosophy of Religion**	**2-hour examination**	**33.3%**

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%**

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 :

- 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 :

You must have done RE at GCSE. The specifications build 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 7 in English and 7 at RE GCSE.

Additional Information :

OCR's A Level in Religious Studies has been developed in consultation with teachers and stakeholders from various 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 to develop 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 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.