

# A Level Religious Studies in Year 12

## Course Content

A-Level RS in Year 12 will focus on the following components.

- Component 1: Philosophy of religion and ethics
- Component 2: Study of religion – Christianity

### **Component 1: Philosophy of religion and ethics**

#### **Arguments for the existence of God**

- **Design Presentation: Paley's analogical argument.**
- **Criticisms: Hume.**
- **Ontological Presentation: Anselm's a priori argument.**
- **Criticisms: Gaunilo and Kant.**
- **Cosmological Presentation: Aquinas' Way 3. The argument from contingency and necessity.**
- **Criticisms: Hume and Russell.**
- **The basis of each argument in observation or in thought, the strengths and weaknesses of the arguments, their status as 'proofs', their value for religious faith and the relationship between reason and faith.**

#### **Evil and suffering**

The problem of evil and suffering.

- The concepts of natural and moral evil.
- The logical and evidential problem of evil.
- Responses to the problem of evil and suffering.
- Hick's soul making theodicy.
- The free will defence.
- Process theodicy as presented by Griffin.
- The strengths and weaknesses of each response.

#### **Religious experience**

- The nature of religious experience.
- Visions: corporeal, imaginative and intellectual.
- Numinous experiences: Otto, an apprehension of the wholly other.
- Mystical experiences: William James; non sensuous and non-intellectual union with the divine as presented by William Stace.

#### **Verifying religious experiences**

- The challenges of verifying religious experiences.
- The challenges to religious experience from science.
- Religious responses to those challenges.
- Swinburne's principles of credulity and testimony.
- The influence of religious experiences and their value for religious faith.

#### **Normative ethical theories**

- **Deontological: natural moral law and the principle of double effect with reference to Aquinas; proportionalism.**
- **Teleological: situation ethics with reference to Fletcher.**
- **Character based: virtue ethics with reference to Aristotle.**

- The differing approaches taken to moral decision making by these ethical theories.
- Their application to the issues of theft and lying.
- The strengths and weaknesses of these ways of making moral decisions.

**The application of natural moral law, situation ethics and virtue ethics to:**

- Issues of human life and death:
  - embryo research; cloning; ‘designer’ babies
  - abortion
  - voluntary euthanasia and assisted suicide
  - capital punishment.
- Issues of non-human life and death:
  - use of animals as food; intensive farming
  - use of animals in scientific procedures; cloning
  - blood sports
  - animals as a source of organs for transplants.

**Component 2: Study of religion – Christianity**

**Sources of wisdom and authority**

- The Bible: different Christian beliefs about the nature and authority of the Bible and their impact on its use as a source of beliefs and teachings, including the Bible as inspired by God but written by human beings.
- The Church: the different perspectives of the Protestant and Catholic traditions on the relative authority of the Bible and the Church.
- The authority of Jesus: different Christian understandings of Jesus’ authority, including Jesus’ authority as God’s authority and Jesus’ authority as only human; implications of these beliefs for Christian responses to Jesus’ teaching and his value as a role model with reference to his teaching on retaliation and love for enemies in the Sermon on the Mount: Matthew 5:38 – 48.

**God**

- Christian Monotheism: one God, omnipotent creator and controller of all things; transcendent and unknowable; the doctrine of the Trinity and its importance; the meaning and significance of the belief that Jesus is the son of God; the significance of John 10:30; 1 Corinthians 8:6.
- God as Personal, God as Father and God as Love: the challenge of understanding anthropomorphic and gender specific language about God: God as Father and King, including Christian feminist perspectives.
- The concept of God in process theology: God as neither omnipotent nor creator.

**Self, death and afterlife**

- The meaning and purpose of life: the following purposes and their relative importance: to glorify God and have a personal relationship with him; to prepare for judgement; to bring about God’s kingdom on earth.
- Resurrection: the concept of soul; resurrection of the flesh as expressed in the writings of Augustine; spiritual resurrection; the significance of 1 Corinthians 15:42 – 44 and 50 – 54.
- Different interpretations of judgement, heaven, hell and purgatory as physical, spiritual or psychological realities; objective immortality in process thought.

**Good conduct and key moral principles**

- **Good conduct:** the importance of good moral conduct in the Christian way of life, including reference to teaching about justification by works, justification by faith and predestination.
- **Sanctity of life:** the concept of sanctity of life; different views about its application to issues concerning the embryo and the unborn child; the just war theory and its application to the use of weapons of mass destruction.
- **Dominion and stewardship:** the belief that Christians have dominion over animals; beliefs about the role of Christians as stewards of animals and the natural environment and how changing understandings of the effects of human activities on the environment have affected that role.

**Expressions of religious identity**

- **Baptism:** the significance of infant baptism in Christianity with particular reference to the Catholic and Baptist traditions; arguments in favour of and against infant baptism.
- **Holy Communion:** differing practices associated with Holy Communion, and differing understandings of Holy Communion and its importance, in the Catholic and Baptist Churches; different Christian understandings of the significance of Jesus' actions at the last supper, Luke 22:17 – 20.
- **The mission of the Church:** developments in Christian ideas of 'mission' from the early 20th century to today.

**Year 12 Internal UCAS Exam Week**

Students will sit two papers:

Component 1: Philosophy of religion and ethics (2 hrs)

Component 2: Study of religion – Christianity (1 hr)

**Specification and Examination Board:**

Religious Studies: 7062

Examination Board: AQA

<http://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/religious-studies/as-and-a-level/religious-studies-7062>