

# Religious Studies A Level (Philosophy and Ethics)

Examination Board: OCR

## Who should take this course?

- Anyone planning a career that involves the ability to evaluate ideas and understand complex issues.
- Anyone who enjoys questioning and debating issues of which there are no definitive answers.
- Anyone who wishes to have a better understanding of communities and society.
- Anyone who has ever thought about why people make the decisions and judgements that they do, particularly on matters of 'right' and 'wrong'.
- Anyone who has ever asked themselves difficult questions, such as: *What makes me 'Me'? Why am I here? Is there a God? Is there life after death? What makes this right and that wrong? Why did they do that?*

## What is the course about?

- The Philosophy of Religion part of the course begins with Greek and Judaeo-Christian influences on the philosophy of religion, moves on through the classic arguments for the existence of God and challenges to religious belief, and culminates in issues such as the mind/body distinction, revelation and religious language.
- The Religious Ethics part of the course begins with an introduction to ethical theory, moves on to consider specific ethical theories and their practical applications and culminates with consideration of free will and determinism, conscience, religious ethics and practical ethics.

## How is it assessed?

- There will be three 40 mark single-part essay questions from a free choice of four.

## Where will it take me?

- Religious Studies **A-Level** is well respected by colleges and universities.
- Students could go on to study Psychology, Sociology, Politics, History, Geography, Medicine, English, Theology, and many other subjects.

# Religious Studies A Level (continued)

## Course Details

### Philosophy of Religion (H573/01)

Topics include:

- Ancient philosophical influences (Plato – Reality, Forms, Cave / Aristotle – Reality, Causation, Prime Mover).
- The nature of the soul, mind and body (Plato, Aristotle, Descartes)
- Arguments about the existence or non-existence of God (Teleological, Cosmological, Ontological).
- The nature and impact of religious experience.
- The challenge for religious belief of the problem of evil.
- Ideas about the nature of God (omnipotence, omniscience, (omni) benevolence, eternity, free will).
- Issues in religious language

### Religious Ethics (H573/02)

Topics include:

- Normative ethical theories
- The application of ethical theory to two contemporary issues of importance.
- Ethical language and thought
- Debates surrounding the significant idea of conscience.
- Sexual ethics and the influence on ethical thought of developments in religious beliefs.
- Virtue Ethics.

### Developments in religious thought (Christianity Option) (H573/03)

- Religious beliefs, value 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.
- Significant social and historical developments in theology and religious thought.
- Key themes related to the relationship between religion and society.