



## A-Level Religious Studies

### INTENT

The intent of our A-Level Religious Studies curriculum is to:

- Equip students with a profound understanding of philosophical, ethical, and theological concepts from a variety of perspectives, including Christianity.
- Promote critical thinking, analytical skills, and the ability to engage with complex texts and debates.
- Foster respect and understanding of different viewpoints while developing independent judgement.
- Enable students to form their own reasoned arguments in response to philosophical, ethical, and religious issues.
- Prepare students for further academic study and a wide range of careers by developing transferable skills such as evaluative writing, logical reasoning, and ethical awareness.

We follow the **Edexcel 2016 specification**, focusing on the following components:

1. **Philosophy of Religion**
2. **Religion and Ethics**
3. **New Testament Studies**

### IMPLEMENTATION

The curriculum is taught over two years, with a clear sequence that builds foundational knowledge in Year 12 and deepens complexity in Year 13. Delivery is structured around:

- **Component 1: Philosophy of Religion** – Exploring classical and contemporary arguments for and against the existence of God, religious language, and the problem of evil.
- **Component 2: Religion and Ethics** – Covering ethical theories, application of ethics to contemporary issues, and meta-ethics.
- **Component 3: New Testament Studies** – Focusing on the historical context of the New Testament, key themes, and scholarly interpretations.

### Teaching strategies include:

- Socratic questioning and debates to foster critical thinking.
- Close textual analysis of primary sources, especially biblical and philosophical texts.

- Structured essay-writing practice aligned with Edexcel assessment objectives (AO1: Knowledge and understanding; AO2: Critical analysis and evaluation).
- Regular low-stakes quizzes and summative assessments to monitor progress.
- Interleaving of topics to support long-term retention and synthesis of ideas.

## **LEARNING OUTCOMES**

### **By the end of Year 12, students will be able to:**

- Articulate and explain key philosophical arguments for and against the existence of God (Design, Cosmological, Ontological).
- Evaluate challenges to religious belief, including the problem of evil and suffering.
- Understand and explain key ethical theories such as Natural Law, Situation Ethics, Utilitarianism, and Kantian Ethics.
- Apply ethical theories to issues such as abortion, euthanasia, and capital punishment.
- Demonstrate foundational understanding of the historical and cultural context of the New Testament.
- Engage with synoptic Gospel material and the person of Jesus.
- Structure a coherent essay using evidence and philosophical/religious terminology.
- Begin to engage with AO2-style evaluation, developing reasoned arguments.

### **By the end of Year 13, students will be able to:**

- Critically assess and evaluate more advanced philosophical issues such as religious language (Via Negativa, Symbolism, Language Games), and the concept of life after death.
- Engage deeply with ethical meta-theories (Naturalism, Intuitionism, Emotivism) and Free Will/Determinism debates.
- Examine developments in New Testament studies, including redaction criticism and modern scholarly perspectives on miracles, resurrection, and the identity of Jesus.
- Integrate knowledge across all three components to answer synoptic questions with insight and clarity.
- Demonstrate mastery in constructing well-supported arguments with balance, nuance, and theological/philosophical depth.

- Meet or exceed the expectations of Edexcel's **Assessment Objectives** (AO1 and AO2) with fluency.
- Be fully prepared for academic progression, especially in Theology, Philosophy, Law, Politics, or related fields.

## IMPACT

The impact of our curriculum is measured through:

- **Formative and summative assessments** using Edexcel mark schemes.
- **Progress tracking** across AO1 and AO2 criteria, including feedback cycles/
- **Student outcomes**, including mock and final examination performance.
- **Student voice**, showing engagement, intellectual curiosity, and personal development.

Our students leave A-Level Religious Studies as thoughtful, articulate, and reflective individuals who are well-equipped for both academic study and responsible citizenship in a pluralistic world.