



Learning Aims and Curriculum Intent:

Content – An exploration of key arguments in the philosophy of religion. It involves the use of philosophical reasoning and concepts applied to fundamental questions about the nature of God and religion. This will give students the ability to criticise the most influential arguments in the philosophy of religion. We consider arguments for and against the existence of God, as well as the nature of religious experience, the meaning of religious language, the possibility of life after death, and the relation between science and religious belief.

Skills – This unit involves interpretation of philosophical texts, analysing arguments by breaking them down into premises and conclusions to assess their soundness. Students will be able to identify various fallacies in reasoning and determine the validity of an argument. Through reading articles and other philosophical texts, they will hone their ability to comprehend complex philosophical writing and to identify the key steps and assumptions of an argument. They will learn to formulate coherent arguments based on logical chains of reasoning. They will express their reasoning with clarity and precision, both in academic writing and when engaging in verbal discussions. Through engaging with challenges and debating issues as a class, they will learn to carefully listen and respond to the views and arguments of others.

| Term | Content, Key Questions and Knowledge | Skills | Assessment |
|------------|--|--|---|
| Michaelmas | <p><i>Arguments for the existence of God</i></p> <p>Teleological Argument – Must the universe have a designer?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How can we explain the complexity and order of natural systems? Do objects in nature such as the human eye have purposes? How can we explain why the laws of nature are consistent? Was the world made <i>for</i> humans? Does the theory of evolution undermine the need for God as the creator of humans? <p>Cosmological Argument – Must the universe have a cause?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Did the universe have a beginning? Could it be that it has always existed? What caused the universe to begin? Can there be genuinely random events? <p>Ontological Argument – Must a perfect being exist?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is God perfect by definition? Can you prove God exists by definition alone? Could God be dependent on anything? | <p>Critical examination and interpretation of philosophical texts</p> <p>Breaking down arguments into their premises and conclusion to determine their soundness.</p> <p>Expression of ideas and arguments through oral communication, including seminar-style discussions.</p> <p>Writing in a philosophical style, employing logical reasoning, clarity of expression, and critical thinking.</p> <p>Demonstrate understanding by investigating different reasons, concepts and ideas. Condensing and distilling large amounts of complex information.</p> | <p>Retrieval quizzes to build knowledge acquisition and understanding.</p> <p>Regular exam practice of a range of exam questions, including shorter questions focusing on close detailed analysis of key concepts, and longer evaluative essays drawing together points to form reasoned judgements</p> |



Curriculum Map

Year 12

Religious Studies

(Philosophy of Religion)

| | | | |
|----------------|--|---|--|
| Lent | <p>Religious Experience</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the nature of religious experience? • Can you gain knowledge through religious experiences? • Do religious experiences provide evidence for the existence of God? • Can we give an adequate psychological or physiological explanation of religious experiences? • How can it be true that Christians really do see Mary and Hindus really do see Vishnu if these religions are mutually exclusive and contradictory? <p>The Problem of Evil and Suffering</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the existence of evil and suffering disprove a perfectly loving and all-powerful God? • Why would God allow evil and suffering to exist? • Is there a successful theodicy? • Is free will more valuable than eradicating suffering? Can it account for all suffering? • Are humans born with original sin? • Does suffering help us to grow morally and spiritually? Is it worth it? • Are good actions still valuable if you know that you will be rewarded or punished for your choices? <p>Religious Language</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is religious language meaningful? • Can we describe God with human language without anthropomorphism? • Is God loving in the same way a human is loving? • Are religious claims like “God is love” literal? • Must a statement be verifiable to be meaningful? Is it possible to verify the claim that God exists? | <p>On paper and in verbal discussion, formulate an argument based on logical chains of reasoning forming coherent judgements and responding to challenges.</p> <p>Carefully listen and respond to the views and arguments of others, including an evaluation of scholarly contributions and those of key figures.</p> <p>Make pertinent links between a wide range of current and historical theological, ethical and philosophical issues, drawing on the skill of identifying flaws in arguments.</p> | |
| Trinity | <p>The Soul and Life After Death</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can the soul survive the death of the body? • What is the relationship between our minds and our bodies? • Is it possible to have a non-physical substance? <p>Science and Religion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does the scientific method differ from religion? • Can it ever be rational to believe a miracle has occurred? • Are evolution and the Big Bang Theory compatible with God? | | |

| | |
|--|--|
| <p>What does consolidation look like in this subject?</p> | <p>Retrieval of key concepts and terminology through regular spaced practice.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Reviewing course content: Go through your class notes, textbooks, and any other study materials provided by your teacher. Make sure you have a clear understanding of the main ideas, theories, and arguments discussed in the course. Engage with wider reading and online consolidation resources targeted at A Level revision if you don't understand something. 2. Summarizing key concepts: Create concise summaries or mind maps of the main topics and concepts covered in each unit. This can help you identify connections between different ideas and reinforce your understanding of the subject. 3. Practicing past exam questions: Familiarize yourself with the format and style of the exam by practicing past papers. This will help you become more comfortable with the types of questions you may encounter and improve your exam technique. 4. Engaging in discussions: Participate in group discussions or find a study partner to engage in conversations about the topics you've learned. Sharing and explaining your ideas to others can enhance your understanding and clarify any areas of confusion. 5. Seeking clarification: If there are any concepts or topics that you find particularly challenging, don't hesitate to seek clarification from your teacher or classmates. They can provide additional explanations or resources to help you grasp difficult concepts. 6. Making connections: Religious Studies often involves exploring the relationships between different ideas and themes. Look for connections between New Testament topics, ethical theories, philosophical arguments, and social issues. This will help you develop a more comprehensive and nuanced understanding of the subject. 7. Revising regularly: Dedicate regular study sessions to revise and consolidate your knowledge. Set aside specific time slots to review your notes, summaries, and practice questions. Spacing out your revision over a longer period is generally more effective than cramming all at once. |
|--|--|



Curriculum Map

Year 12

Religious Studies

(Philosophy of Religion)

| | | |
|--|---|--|
| Examples of Homework | Analysis of a piece of philosophical writing or an excerpt from a debate Worksheets of comprehension questions Exam-style essay questions evaluating the strengths and weaknesses of philosophical arguments – for example, “Assess the strengths of the cosmological argument for the existence of God (12 marks)”. Quizzes/preparation for quizzes | |
| Key terminology | Deductive, Inductive, A priori, A posteriori, Analytic, Synthetic, Fallacy, Reductio ad absurdum, Infinite regress, Empiricism, Rationalism, Aseity, Contingency, Necessity, Numinous, Mysticism, Theodicy, Deism, Possible world | |
| Super-curricular enrichment and scholarly extension | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read: Hume: A Very Short Introduction (A.J. Ayer), The Miracle of Theism (Mackie), An Introduction to the Philosophy of Religion (Brian Davies) • Watch: Arguments for God, God and Morality lecture • Listen: The Panpsycast (EG The Ontological Argument episode), The Ontological Argument, David Hume • Visit: https://royalinstitutephilosophy.org/ | |
| Useful websites | | |
| Who can I contact? | Head of Department | Ms Mackie RM@forest.org.uk |
| | Teachers | Mrs Bellieu, Miss Green |