



### Learning Aims and Curriculum Intent:

**Content** – Students study the metaphysics of God part of paper of the AQA A Level philosophy. This paper is focused on the nature of God, the arguments for God’s existence and religious language. Philosophical language which students learnt in year 12 is built upon, with students being introduced to terms such as necessity, possibility, contingency, impossibility, and ground. The content of this course ought to be considered a general metaphysics course with God acting as the case study, rather than a course particularly about God. This when introducing topics students ought to be introduced to underpinning relevant concepts, for about the nature of consistency and coherence, in the nature of God unit as well as key theories in the philosophy of time. In the arguments for the existence of God, students should be introduced to quantification, prediction, causation, grounding and in religious language foundational concepts in the philosophy of language such as verification and falsification.

**Skills** – There are a range of skills which are explicitly taught as part of this unit. Students learn to analysis an argument and identify the form and type of argument, for example whether the argument is inductive or deductive. They will then be able to identify whether the argument is valid and/or sound. From this they will be able to assess the quality of the argument. Students will learn to read academic through closely by reading academic philosophy papers and they will practice interpreting summarizing and explaining the key ideas of the paper, students exhibiting mastery of these skills will be able to synthesis ideas from various papers into new ideas. Students will learn the skills of presentation, debate, and precise articulation of thoughts into both spoken and written forms. By the end of this year students should have mastered approaching exam style questions and be confident in formalising arguments into premises and a conclusion and be able to precisely articulate, which premise of an argument is problematic. This year students should be able to peer assess and assess their own work.

Term	Content, Key Questions and Knowledge	Skills	Assessment
Michaelmas	<p><b>Arguments relating to the existence of God</b></p> <p>For the arguments below, students should pay particular attention to nuances in the logical form of the arguments (deductive, inductive etc), the strengths of the conclusions (God does exist, God must exist etc) and the nature of God assumed or defended by the argument.</p> <p><b>Ontological arguments</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>St Anselm's ontological argument.</li> <li>Descartes' ontological argument.</li> <li>Norman Malcolm's ontological argument.</li> </ul> <p>Issues that may arise for the arguments above, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gaunilo's 'perfect island' objection</li> <li>Empiricist objections to <i>a priori</i> arguments for existence</li> <li>Kant's objection based on existence not being a predicate.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Formalising arguments in to premises and conclusion.</li> <li>Analysis of argument form.</li> <li>Textual Analysis</li> <li>Oracy and presentation</li> <li>Group presentation skills</li> <li>Philosophical writing</li> <li>Independent Research and critical thinking.</li> <li>The application of reason and argument.</li> <li>Seminar discussion</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ontological argument key terms quiz</li> <li>Ontological argument 12-mark question</li> <li>Ontological argument 25-mark question</li> <li>Design argument quiz</li> <li>Design argument 12-mark question</li> <li>Design argument 25-mark question</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Teleological/design arguments</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The design argument from analogy (as presented by Hume).</li> <li>William Paley’s design argument: argument from spatial order/purpose.</li> <li>Richard Swinburne’s design argument: argument from temporal order/regularity.</li> </ul> <p>Issues that may arise for the arguments above, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hume's objections to the design argument from analogy</li> <li>the problem of spatial disorder (as posed by Hume and Paley)</li> <li>the design argument fails as it is an argument from a unique case (Hume)</li> <li>whether God is the best or only explanation.</li> </ul>		

	<p><b>Cosmological arguments</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Kalām argument (an argument from temporal causation).</li> <li>• Aquinas' 1st Way (argument from motion), 2nd Way (argument from atemporal causation) and 3rd way (an argument from contingency).</li> <li>• Descartes' argument based on his continuing existence (an argument from causation).</li> <li>• Leibniz's argument from the principle of sufficient reason (an argument from contingency).</li> </ul> <p>Issues that may arise for the arguments above, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the possibility of an infinite series</li> <li>• Hume's objection to the 'causal principle'</li> <li>• the argument commits the fallacy of composition (Russell)</li> <li>• the impossibility of a necessary being (Hume and Russell).</li> </ul>		
	<p><b>The Problem of Evil</b></p> <p>Whether God's attributes can be reconciled with the existence of evil.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The nature of moral evil and natural evil.</li> <li>• The logical and evidential forms of the problem of evil.</li> </ul> <p>Responses to these issues and issues arising from these responses, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the Free Will Defence (including Alvin Plantinga)</li> <li>• soul-making (including John Hick).</li> </ul>		
	<p><b><u>Extension Material:</u></b></p> <p>For this part of the course students should be encouraged view each argument for the existence of God through the lens of the underpinning metaphysical concepts. <b>Ontological argument:</b> Existence and predication. <b>Design argument:</b> grounding and explanation. <b>Cosmological argument:</b> Causation, grounding, fundamentality, infinite regress.</p>		
<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);"><b>Lent</b></p>	<p><b>The concept and nature of 'God'</b></p> <p>God's attributes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• God as omniscient, omnipotent, supremely good (omnibenevolent), and the meaning(s) of these divine attributes</li> <li>• competing views on such a being's relationship to time, including God being timeless (eternal) and God being within time (everlasting).</li> <li>• arguments for the incoherence of the concept of God including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ the paradox of the stone</li> <li>○ the Euthyphro dilemma</li> <li>○ the compatibility, or otherwise, of the existence of an omniscient God and free human beings.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><b><u>Extension Material:</u></b> For this part of the course students can investigate the concept of impossibility and incoherence. God can be used as a case study for these concepts. There is also scope for students to be introduced to the concepts of reference and identity.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Formalising arguments in to premises and conclusion.</li> <li>• Analysis of argument form.</li> <li>• Textual Analysis</li> <li>• Oracy and presentation</li> <li>• Group presentation skills</li> <li>• Philosophical writing</li> <li>• Independent Research and critical thinking.</li> <li>• The application of reason and argument.</li> <li>• Seminar Discussion</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Concept and Nature of God quiz</li> <li>• 12-mark questions on paradox of the stone, Euthyphro dilemma (ensuring to focus on both omnipotence and omnibenevolence)</li> <li>• 12-mark question Omniscience and free will.</li> <li>• Incoherence of God 25-mark question</li> </ul>

<b>Trinity</b>	<p><b>Religious language</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The distinction between cognitivism and non-cognitivism about religious language.</li> <li>The empiricist/logical positivist challenges to the status of metaphysical (here, religious) language: the verification principle and verification/falsification (Ayer). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hick's response to Ayer (eschatological verification) and issues arising from that response.</li> </ul> </li> <li>Further responses: the 'University Debate' <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Anthony Flew on falsification (Wisdom's 'Gardener')</li> <li>Basil Mitchell's response to Flew (the Partisan)</li> <li>Hare's response to Flew (bliks and the lunatic)</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>and issues arising from those responses.</p> <p>Extension material: Given the time constraints of the course it is unlikely there is much scope for extension in this unit. However, it would be beneficial for students to able to apply a Wittgensteinian approach to religious language.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Formalising arguments in to premises and conclusion.</li> <li>Analysis of argument form.</li> <li>Textual Analysis</li> <li>Philosophical writing</li> <li>Independent Research and critical thinking.</li> <li>The application of reason and argument.</li> <li>Seminar Discussion</li> <li>Philosophical Logic</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Religious language quiz</li> <li>Analysis of 'the university debate' translating the arguments into five-mark questions.</li> <li>Verification 12-mark question</li> <li>Religious language 25-mark question.</li> </ul>

<b>What does consolidation look like in this subject?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Practice questions, a grid of practice question is provided on the class team.</li> <li>Reading through the textbook and using it as a study guide. The textbook is a valuable resource and worth spending time reading through. It contains short comprehension activities can be used to guide note taking.</li> </ul>	
<b>Examples of Homework</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Worksheets of comprehension questions.</li> <li>Reading of set-texts</li> <li>Practice exam questions</li> <li>Quizzes</li> <li>Preparation for seminar discussion</li> <li>Preparation for presentations.</li> </ul>	
<b>Key terminology</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A priori / A posteriori</li> <li>Synthetic / Analytic</li> <li>Cogent / Valid</li> <li>Deductive / Inductive / Abductive</li> <li>Sound</li> <li>Truth</li> <li>Belief</li> <li>Proof</li> <li>Justification</li> <li>Causation</li> <li>Grounding</li> <li>Necessity / Contingency</li> <li>Fundamentality</li> <li>Impossibility</li> </ul>	
<b>Super-curricular enrichment and scholarly extension</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Read:</b> Aquinas: Edward Feser, Hume: A Very Short Introduction A.J.Ayer, Metaphysics: A Very Short Introduction: Stephen Mumford</li> <li><b>Watch:</b> <a href="#">General Philosophy Lectures Peter Millican: Free will and God and Morality</a></li> <li><b>Listen:</b> <a href="#">The Ontological Argument, David Hume</a></li> <li><b>Visit:</b> <a href="https://royalinstitutephilosophy.org/">https://royalinstitutephilosophy.org/</a></li> </ul>	
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