Religion, Philosophy and Ethics

WILL I SUIT THE COURSE?

If you have an interest in Religion, Philosophy and Ethics – that is, you like to think for yourself and you appreciate opportunities to truly broaden your thinking with PHILOSOPHY, THEOLOGY and HISTORY, then this A-Level will suit you. In turn, you will suit the course if you have an open-minded and critical approach to some of the fundamental questions about human existence, especially those affecting us in the 21st century. Of course, you must be prepared to organise your own study time too.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Ethics - "Sex before marriage is wrong." "It is morally acceptable for a few to suffer for the many." "Only nuclear weapons have kept peace since WWII."
This unit explores ethical theories about moral decision-making and how to apply it to some of the following highly contemporary issues: sex and sexuality, war & peace, the environment, medical ethics. It also explores whether or not ethical truth exists, our motives for engaging in ethical debate and the extent to which morality depends upon religion.

Philosophy - "I can prove God exists." "What kind of a God allows evil people to be free?" "It's a miracle"– or is it? "Are modern science and religion at all compatible?" Critically explore ideas about whether or not God exists, why there is evil in the world, the relationship between religion and science, possibilities regarding life after death, the nature of religious language and the impact of significant scholars today.

New Testament - "The Word became flesh" – why such mysterious language? "How much can historians really know about Jesus of Nazareth?" "Why is the Fourth Gospel so different to the other three?" Open up this intriguing collection of the earliest Christian documents and investigate the beliefs that inspired its authors using the tools of contemporary biblical criticism. Study theories about why Jesus was killed, about who may have written the gospels, why and for whom and the implications for belief today, among other questions.

SKILLS DEVELOPED

Open up this intriguing collection of the earliest Christian documents and investigate the beliefs that inspired its authors using the tools of contemporary biblical criticism. Study theories about why Jesus was killed, about who may have written the gospels, why and for whom and the implications for belief today, among other questions.

- Comprehend philosophical, ethical and historical-literary theory
- Write structured essays
- Use technical vocabulary, scholarship, evidence and examples to demonstrate understanding
- Critically evaluate arguments / theories and develop their own arguments
- Explain the implications of arguments / theories
- Make connections between discrete areas of study

The key to success in Religious Studies A-level is to make use of every lesson and to balance this with independent study using the rich variety of departmental, library and online resources provided.

HEAD OF DEPARTMENT

John James

EXAM BOARD

EDEXCEL

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PROGRAMME OF STUDY

Paper 1
Ethics

Exam paper
2 hours

One third of A Level

Paper 2
Philisophy

Exam paper
2 hours

One third of A Level

Paper 3
New Testament

Exam paper
2 hours

One third of A Level

EXAMINATION RESULTS

Over the last four years, the majority of students have consistently achieved A*–B grades, with over 86% of students achieving A* to C just last year. In 2026, Year 13 students went on to study related courses at prestigious universities such as Cambridge, Oxford, King's, Warwick and Durham. In 2025 students in Year 13 went on to study related courses at prestigious universities including Oxford, Edinburgh and Leeds.

ENRICHMENT ACTIVITIES



The three study units will be taught through discussion, research tasks, visiting speakers and with reference to a wide range of scholarship. The R.E. department and school library are well-resourced for the teaching of G.C.E. A-level, with many newly published books, journals specifically for sixth-formers and extensive online materials. Students will be given thorough training in the valuable skills of essay writing, revision and exam technique. They attend revision conferences and lectures in central London and help run the annual joint-schools Religious Studies conference, organised and hosted by The Grey Coat Hospital, in which leading academic and public figures debate significant issues. Short but highly beneficial (and fun) revision immersion days are run by the department just before the Easter holiday, consolidating students' achievements and focusing their final exam preparation.

FUTURE CAREERS

Since the course requires students to study religion rather than to practise it, students qualified in Religious Studies rarely go into a 'religious' line of work. However, many pursue the subject to degree level. Religious Studies is a valuable and respected qualification because, as well as specialist knowledge, it develops a wide range of skills:

- Independent study
- Report writing
- Appreciating a range of views
- Critical thinking
- Varied research methods
- Information handling

Working with and especially managing other people requires an appreciation of their values, beliefs and opinions. Religion, Philosophy and Ethics students are trained to understand the roots of key ethical, religious and philosophical beliefs, so that they can form persuasive arguments and cogent and insightful critiques. A wide range of skills and the ability to intelligently consider alternative ideas are prized at university and in many professions. Russell Group universities consider that the academic skills involved in Religious Studies A-level open the way to a broad a range of university courses. Religious Studies university graduates have used their qualification to enter careers in (amongst many others) psychology, journalism, law, teaching, finance, the army, politics, caring professions and the arts, as well as religious ministry.