

Philosophy, Religion and Ethics (PRE)



Examination Board: AQA



■ What is the course about?

There are three main strands of study in this subject: philosophy of religion, religious ethics, and a social and historical study of religion.

■ For the Year 12 course you will study:

Year 1 – Philosophy of Religion

- The Design Argument • The Causation/Cosmological Argument • Ontological Argument • Religious Experience • Problem of Evil and Suffering.

Year 1 – Ethics

- Embryo Research: Designer Babies • Abortion and Euthanasia • Animal Ethics/Cloning/Medical • Blood Sports • Virtue Ethics • Natural Law • Situation Ethics • Theft and Lying • Capital Punishment.

Year 1 – Religion

- God, Bible, Church and Jesus • Self, Death and Afterlife • Expressions of Religious Identity: Music and Art • Good Moral Conduct, Sanctity of Life and the Environment.

■ For the Year 13 course you will study:

Year 2 – Philosophy of Religion

- Self, Death and the Afterlife • Reincarnation and Rebirth • Religious Language • Language Games • Miracles.

Year 2 – Ethics

- Free Will and Responsibility • Conscience • Meta Ethics • Utilitarianism • Divine Command Theory • Intuitionism.

Year 2 – Religion

- Christianity, Gender and Sexuality: Women, Celibacy, Marriage, Homosexuality and Transgenderism • Christianity and Science • Christianity and the Challenges of the Modern World • Christianity, Migration and Religious Pluralism.

■ How is the course assessed?

Your year 12 studies in this subject will be internally assessed by an end-of-year exam. The A Level at the end of Year 13 will be externally assessed by two exam papers.

■ What skills will I need and develop in this course?

- Develops understanding and appreciation of religious thought and its contribution through an enquiring, critical and reflective approach to the study of religion. Provides a focus on scholarship.

- Helps develop a holistic understanding of religion with insightful evaluations of ultimate questions about the purposes and commitments of human life, especially as expressed in philosophy, ethics and religion.

- Develops transferable skills for progression to higher education – students will use ideas and research to present a wide range of well-informed and reasonable arguments.

■ Subject combination advice

Philosophy of religion and religious ethics combines well with most other courses. As an arts-based subject, it suits students who take subjects such as English and history. However, it also requires logical processing and complements the study of subjects such as mathematics. The course content covers many scientific topics, such as medical ethics and bioethics; it involves a philosophical analysis of the nature of scientific knowledge and an analysis of the relationship between scientific and religious world views. As such it is relevant to any science student interested in the wider implications of the scientific disciplines they study.

■ What can the course lead to in terms of higher education and future careers?

The significant critical thinking aspect to the course is a good preparation for university courses such as law and PPE (philosophy, politics and economics). This subject develops skills of vision, creativity and analysis, which employers look for in those seeking any management or leadership role. The applied ethical topics prepare students well for applications to courses and careers connected with medicine, politics, the environment and social care.

■ What are the formal entry requirements?

A minimum GCSE Grade 6 in theology. No previous knowledge is required, although some parts of the theology GCSE course (studied in Years 10 and 11) give a flavour of some philosophical and ethical issues covered in the A Level course. It is an essay-based subject where further reading is required and strongly encouraged.

■ What activities enrich this subject?

Students attend A Level conferences and workshops. There are also a huge range of books in the library along with many podcasts to download including *The Moral Maze*, *The Philosophers Arms* and *In Our Time*.