



Blue Coat Church of England Academy

Year: 12/13

Subject: Religious Studies

Component 1 - Philosophy of Religion and Ethics

Students must develop knowledge and understanding of the following:

The meaning and significance of the specified content

The influence of these beliefs and teachings on individuals, communities and societies

The cause and significance of similarities and differences in beliefs and teachings

The approach of philosophy to the study of religion and belief.

The term 'belief(s)' includes religious beliefs and non-religious beliefs as appropriate.

They should be able to analyse and evaluate issues arising from the topics studied, and the views and arguments of the scholars prescribed for study.

Students should also be able to use specialist language and terminology appropriately.

Questions may be set that span more than one topic.

Arguments for the existence of God

Design

Presentation: Paley's analogical argument.

Criticisms: Hume. Ontological.

Presentation: Anselm's a priori argument.

Criticisms: Gaunilo and Kant.

Cosmological

Presentation: Aquinas' Way 3. The argument from contingency and necessity.

Criticisms: Hume and Russell.

Students should study the basis of each argument in observation or in thought, the strengths and weaknesses of the arguments, their status as 'proofs', their value for religious faith and the relationship between reason and faith.

Evil and suffering

The problem of evil and suffering.
The concepts of natural and moral evil.
The logical and evidential problem of evil.
Responses to the problem of evil and suffering.
Hick's soul making theodicy.
The free will defence.
Process theodicy as presented by Griffin.
The strengths and weaknesses of each response.

Religious experience

The nature of religious experience.
Visions: corporeal, imaginative and intellectual.
Numinous experiences: Otto, an apprehension of the wholly other.
Mystical experiences: William James; non-sensuous and non-intellectual union with the divine as presented by Walter Stace.

Verifying religious experiences

The challenges of verifying religious experiences.
The challenges to religious experience from science.
Religious responses to those challenges.
Swinburne's principles of credulity and testimony.
The influence of religious experiences and their value for religious faith.

Religious language

The issue of whether religious language should be viewed cognitively or non-cognitively.

The challenges of the verification and falsification principles to the meaningfulness of religious language.

Responses to these challenges:

Eschatological verification with reference to Hick

Language as an expression of a Blik with reference to R.M.Hare

Religious language as a language game with reference to Wittgenstein

Other views of the nature of religious language:

Religious language as symbolic with reference to Tillich

Religious language as analogical with reference to Aquinas

The Via Negativa.

The strengths and weaknesses of the differing understandings of religious language.

Miracles

Differing understandings of 'miracle'

Realist and anti-realist views

Violation of natural law or natural event.

Comparison of the key ideas of David Hume and Maurice Wiles on miracles.

The significance of these views for religion.

Self, death and the afterlife

The nature and existence of the soul; Descartes' argument for the existence of the soul.

The body/soul relationship.

The possibility of continuing personal existence after death.

3.1.2 Section B: Ethics and religion

Students must develop knowledge and understanding of the following:

The meaning and significance of the specified content

The influence of these beliefs and teachings on individuals, communities and societies

The cause and significance of similarities and differences in beliefs and teachings

The approach of philosophy to the study of religion and belief.

The term 'belief(s)' includes religious beliefs and non-religious beliefs as appropriate.

They should be able to analyse and evaluate issues arising from the topics studied, and the views and arguments of the scholars prescribed for study.

Students should also be able to use specialist language and terminology appropriately.

Questions may be set that span more than one topic.

Deontological: natural moral law and the principle of double effect with reference to Aquinas; proportionalism.

Teleological: situation ethics with reference to Fletcher.

Character based: virtue ethics with reference to Aristotle.

The differing approaches taken to moral decision making by these ethical theories.

Their application to the issues of theft and lying.

The strengths and weaknesses of these ways of making moral decisions.

Issues of human life and death:

Embryo research; cloning; 'designer' babies

Abortion

Voluntary euthanasia and assisted suicide

Capital punishment.

Issues of non-human life and death:

Use of animals as food; intensive farming

Use of animals in scientific procedures; cloning

blood sports

animals as a source of organs for transplants.

Divine Command Theory – right is what God commands, wrong is what God forbids.

Naturalism: Utilitarianism – right is what causes pleasure, wrong is what causes pain.

Non-naturalism: Intuitionism – moral values are self-evident.

The strengths and weaknesses of these ideas.

The conditions of moral responsibility: free will; understanding the difference between right and wrong.

The extent of moral responsibility: libertarianism, hard determinism, compatibilism.

The relevance of moral responsibility to reward and punishment.

Differing ideas, religious and non-religious, about the nature of conscience.

The role of conscience in making moral decisions with reference to:

telling lies and breaking promises

adultery.

The value of conscience as a moral guide.

Comparison of the key ideas of Bentham and Kant about moral decision making.

How far these two ethical theories are consistent with religious moral decision making.

Component 2 - Study of Religion and Dialogues – Christianity

Students are required to study those aspects of the religious beliefs, teachings, values and practices of Christianity specified below and the different ways in which these are expressed in the lives of individuals, communities and societies.

They should develop a knowledge and critical understanding of:

The specified material

How the texts specified for study are interpreted and applied

The influence of beliefs and teachings on individuals, communities and societies

The causes, meanings and significance of similarities and differences in religious

Thought belief and practice within Christianity

Approaches to the study of religion and belief.

They should be able to analyse and evaluate issues arising from the topics studied, and the views and arguments of the scholars prescribed for study.

Questions may be set that span more than one topic.

Students may study any version of the specified texts, but should be aware of issues related to translation where relevant. Quotations will not be used in questions.

Students should be able to use specialist language and terminology appropriately.

Exam questions will show a translation for any non-English terms (except for names of people, texts and schools of thought).

The Bible: different Christian beliefs about the nature and authority of the Bible and their impact on its use as a source of beliefs and teachings, including the Bible as inspired by God but written by humans beings.

The Church: the different perspectives of the Protestant and Catholic traditions on the relative authority of the Bible and the Church.

The authority of Jesus: different Christian understandings of Jesus' authority, including Jesus' authority as God's authority and Jesus' authority as only human; implications of these beliefs for Christian responses to Jesus' teaching and his value as a role model with reference to his teaching on retaliation and love for enemies in the Sermon on the Mount: Matthew 5:38–48.

Christian Monotheism: one God, omnipotent creator and controller of all things; transcendent and unknowable; the doctrine of the Trinity and its importance; the meaning and significance of the belief that Jesus is the son of God; the significance of John 10:30; 1 Corinthians 8:6

God as Personal, God as Father and God as Love: the challenge of understanding anthropomorphic and gender specific language about God: God as Father and King, including Christian feminist perspectives.

The concept of God in process theology: God as neither omnipotent nor creator.

The meaning and purpose of life: the following purposes and their relative importance: to glorify God and have a personal relationship with him; to prepare for judgement; to bring about God's kingdom on earth.

Resurrection: the concept of soul; resurrection of the flesh as expressed in the writings of Augustine; spiritual resurrection; the significance of 1 Corinthians 15:42-44 and 50-54.

Different interpretations of judgement, heaven, hell and purgatory as physical, spiritual or psychological realities; objective immortality in process thought.

Good conduct: the importance of good moral conduct in the Christian way of life, including reference to teaching about justification by works, justification by faith and predestination.

Sanctity of life: the concept of sanctity of life; different views about its application to issues concerning the embryo and the unborn child; the just war theory and its application to the use of weapons of mass destruction.

Dominion and stewardship: the belief that Christians have dominion over animals; beliefs about the role of Christians as stewards of animals and the natural environment and how changing understandings of the effects of human activities on the environment have affected that role.

Baptism: the significance of infant baptism in Christianity with particular reference to the Catholic and Baptist traditions; arguments in favour of and against infant baptism.

Holy Communion: differing practices associated with Holy Communion, and differing understandings of Holy Communion and its importance, in the Catholic and Baptist Churches; different Christian understandings of the significance of Jesus' actions at the last supper, Luke 22:17-20.

The mission of the Church: developments in Christian ideas of 'mission' from the early 20th century to today.

Historical and social factors that have influenced developments in Christian thinking about these issues including: the development of Biblical criticism, especially in the 19th century, and the resulting freedom to challenge traditional readings of passages such as 1 Tim 2:8-15; the changing roles of men and women in society outside of religion; the rights given to women by secular governments.

Developments in Christian thought, including feminist approaches:

Debates about female ordination in the Church of England up to and after 1994, the continuing debate today.

A comparison of the significant ideas of Daphne Hampson and Rosemary Radford Ruether about the patriarchal nature of Christianity including Hampson's view that

Christianity is irredeemably sexist and Ruether's ideas about the androgynous Christ and her view that the female nature is more Christlike than the male.

Different Christian views about celibacy, marriage, homosexuality and transgender issues.

How and why science has influenced Christianity and how Christianity has responded, with particular reference to: emphasis on evidence and reason in science; specific scientific discoveries; science as a stimulus to Christian ethical thinking.

Developments in Christian thought:

How scientific explanation has challenged Christian belief with reference to the 'God of the gaps'; 19th century Christian responses to Darwin's theory of evolution and contemporary responses to the Big Bang theory, including reference to creationist views.

The belief that science is compatible with Christianity with reference to the views John Polkinghorne.

Different Christian responses to issues raised by science: genetic engineering.

This topic may be studied with exclusive reference to the British context.

The challenge of secularisation including the replacement of religion as the source of truth and moral values; relegation of religion to the personal sphere; the rise of militant atheism: the view that religion is irrational.

Developments in Christian thought:

Responses to materialistic secular values: the value of wealth and possessions.

McGrath's defence of Christianity in 'The Dawkins delusion'.

Emergence of new forms of expression, such as Fresh Expressions and the House Church movement.

Emphasis on the social relevance of Christianity including liberationist approaches as supporting the poor and defending the oppressed.

How migration has created multicultural societies which include Christianity, with particular reference to the diversity of faiths in Britain today; freedom of religion as a human right in European law and religious pluralism as a feature of modern secular states. The influence of this context on Christian thought.

Developments in Christian thought:

Christian attitudes to other faiths: Exclusivism with reference to John 14:6; Inclusivism with reference to the concept of 'anonymous Christians'; how Christian denominations view each other.

Pluralism with reference to John Hick; its implications for interfaith and interdenominational relations.

Christian responses to issues of freedom of religious expression in society.

This section of the specification is focused on the connections between various elements of the course and requires students to develop breadth and depth in their understanding of the connections between the knowledge, understanding and skills set out in the specification. There are two areas for study, firstly the dialogue between Christianity and philosophy: how developments in belief have, over time, influenced and been influenced by philosophical studies of religion, secondly the dialogue between Christianity and ethics: how developments in belief have influenced and been influenced by ethical studies.

Students will be required to demonstrate a critical awareness of these connections and to analyse their nature.

Beliefs and teachings about:

God

Self, death and the afterlife

Sources of wisdom and authority

Religious experience

The relationship between scientific and religious discourses

The truth claims of other religions

Miracles.

The following issues, and the impact of the discussion on religious belief past and present, should be considered:

How far the belief is reasonable – that is based on reason and/or consistent with reason.

How meaningful the statements of faith are, and for whom.

How coherent the beliefs are, and how consistent they are with other beliefs in the belief system.

The relevance of philosophical enquiry for religious faith, with particular reference to the debate about the nature of faith as 'belief in' or 'belief that'.

Two unstructured questions will be set. Students must answer one.

Christian responses to the following approaches to moral decision-making in the light of key Christian moral principles:

Deontological, with reference to Kant.

Teleological and consequential, with reference to Bentham.

Character based, with reference to virtue ethics.

How far Christian ethics can be considered to be deontological, teleological, consequential, or character based.

Christian responses to: the issues of human life and death and issues of animal life and death prescribed for study; theft and lying; marriage; homosexuality and transgender issues; genetic engineering.

Christian responses to issues surrounding wealth, tolerance and freedom of religious expression.

Christian understandings of free will and moral responsibility, and the value of conscience in Christian moral decision-making.

The impact of other ethical perspectives and ethical studies on Christian views about these issues, both past and present. This may include challenges to and support for Christian views; compatibility of Christian views with those of other ethical perspectives; the relative strengths and weaknesses of Christian perspectives and other ethical perspectives studied on these issues; the implications of criticisms of Christian ethical teaching for the religion as a whole and its sources of authority.

Two unstructured questions will be set. Students must answer one.