



**A LEVEL
RELIGIOUS
STUDIES**

EDEXCEL A LEVEL RELIGIOUS STUDIES

Three components:

1. Philosophy of Religion
2. Religion and ethics
3. New Testament studies

3x 2 hour exams at the end of year 13

Philosophy of Religion

Arguments for/against the existence of God

- The cosmological argument
- The teleological argument
- The ontological argument
- The problem of evil and suffering
 - Religious experiences
- Religious language: Can we talk meaningfully about God?
- Philosophical perspectives on life after death
 - Scholarly critiques of religious beliefs
 - Religion and science debates

Why is there something rather than nothing?

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Thomas Aquinas thought the fact that the cosmos existed was proof that God exists.

He explores this in the 'Summa Theologica'

If we aim to provide a sufficient reason, as to why there is something rather than nothing, then the scientific principle of 'Ockham's razor would suggest that the simplest explanation is the best.

This means that God, as he simplest answer would be accepted as the sufficient reason.

**Bertrand Russell would argue that the universe is simply 'A
brute fact'**

Religion and ethics

Ethical theories

- *Utilitarianism*
- *Situation ethics*
- *Natural moral law*
- *Kantian deontology*
- *Aristotle's virtue ethics*

Applied ethics

- *Environmental ethics*
 - *Equality*
 - *War and peace*
 - *Sexual ethics*
 - *Medical ethics*
- *The relationship between Religion and morality*
- *Ethical language - what do we mean by 'good'*

You are in control of the NHS budget in England and Wales. You must decide what to do with the remaining £100,000 in your budget. You must decide between the funding of 1,000 hip replacements of those over the age of 70, or the heart transplants of 10 children under the age of 10.

What would you do?

You and your four young children are part of a twenty-five strong group attempting to cross the border out of Afghanistan. Just as you reach the border crossing, you see a convoy of Taliban members driving up the road.

Everyone hides in an old shed...

To everyone's horror, your 6 month old baby begins to cry loudly. If the baby continues to cry, everyone will be discovered and shot dead for trying to abandon the country... you must now decide whether to break the neck of your baby to save everyone... or continue to let it cry, sending everyone to an early grave.

What would you do?

Does morality originate with God?

***Neitzsche would disagree and say that Religion/God is opposed to morality.
He would say that Religion creates a slave morality which oppresses people
and doesn't allow them to develop.***

New Testament studies

- ***-Social, historical and cultural context of the New Testament***
- ***A study of John's Gospel- the significance of the Gospel emphasising the divinity of Jesus***
 - ***The authorship of the gospels***
 - ***The synoptic problem***
 - ***How we interpret scripture***
 - ***Why did Jesus have to die?***
- ***The resurrection and scientific and historical challenges to the resurrection***
 - ***Ethical teaching in the New Testament***

***Does scientific and historical evidence challenge the resurrection?
Was the resurrection a myth?***

Why A-level RS?

- The Russell Group of top universities has made it clear that RS A level provides 'suitable preparation for University generally'
- Both Oxford and Cambridge University include Religious Studies in the top level list of 'generally suitable Arts A levels'
- Applicants with Religious Studies A level were more likely to gain admission to study History at Oxford University in 2012 than those with A levels in many 'facilitating' subjects
- 20% of students admitted to Oxford University to study mathematics in 2011 had an RS A level (more than those with Economics, Physics and Business Studies A levels)
- Research from the Centre for Evaluation and Monitoring at Durham University on the comparative difficulty of different subjects at A level showed that RS was 'in the middle difficulty range, similar to Geography and more demanding than English'.

What courses do students go on and study after A-Level RS?

Because RS is not a facilitating subject students go onto study a wide range of courses

These are some of the courses students went onto study in recent years

- Law
- Business
- Politics
- Architecture
- Medicine
- Philosophy
- Journalism

Results

	A*-B	A*-C	A*-E
2022	78%	100%	100%
2019	50%	100%	100%
2018	71%	100%	100%