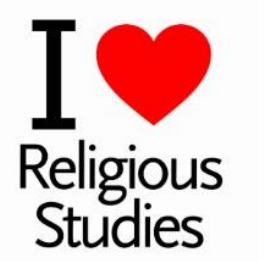




A Level Religious Studies

Summer Bridging Work



Religious Studies is a fantastic subject that helps you build a wide range of skills such as critical thinking, analysis, writing and debating. This Edexcel A Level Religious Studies course comprises 3 different sections:

- ***Philosophy of Religion***
- ***Ethics***
- ***Study of Christianity***

This bridging work will touch on all three papers to give you a brief overview. There is plenty of knowledge that you need at A Level that isn't covered in the GCSE Spec. Hopefully this bridges some of the gaps.

Please complete this work to the best of your ability, as it will not only benefit you but give Mrs. Jones and Mr. Porter an early indication of your performance and potential in this subject. Good first impressions are key! You have 3 main written pieces of work that are due the first lesson in September. There are also optional activities.

1. Philosophy of Religion

In this section, we want to be able to see that you can think and are open to ideas!

We'd like you to **write an answer** / essay response to this question:

"Is God real?"

There are no limits to this question! You can answer it in any way you like. We would advise you spend time researching different philosophers, ideas and that you think about this question from many angles.

Please read this interesting article. Perhaps print it out and highlight points of interest:

<https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2015/02/09/trip-treatment>

ANNALS OF MEDICINE FEBRUARY 9, 2015 ISSUE

THE TRIP TREATMENT

Research into psychedelics, shut down for decades, is now yielding exciting results.

By Michael Pollan
February 2, 2015

On an April Monday in 2010, Patrick Mettes, a fifty-four-year-old television news director being treated for a cancer of the bile ducts, read an article on the front page of the *Times* that would change his death. His diagnosis had come three years earlier, shortly after his wife, Lisa, noticed that the whites of his eyes had turned yellow. By 2010, the cancer had spread to Patrick's lungs and he was buckling under the weight of a debilitating chemotherapy regimen and the growing fear that he might not survive. The



continued: **“Is God real?”**

Some suggested potential topics to discuss in this essay: *Paley’s Design Argument; Aquinas’ Cosmological Argument; The Problem of Evil and Suffering; Miracles; The Bible; The rise of atheism; Religion vs. Science; Personal belief, Religious Experience, Psychology, Biology, Medicine...*

2. Ethics *Please carry out a) and pick one other from b) c) or d) to do * (do more if you wish)

a) Read the **introduction** chapter (p1-10) and write **answers the questions at the end of the chapter below.**

This is an on line ethics text book, ***Ethics for A Level by Mark Dimmock and Andrew Fisher***. Although it is not directly for Edexcel it will be a useful support throughout your course, so add it to your favourites!

<https://www.openbookpublishers.com/reader/639#page/1/mode/2up>

b) Value of Human Life Watch: **The Good Place – Netflix series: The Trolley Problem!** (tram)

Watch: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vfldNV22LQM> &

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IDnO4nDA3kM>



Please write your response to these:

- (i) What is the Trolley problem?
- (ii) What options does Chidi have?
- (iii) What would YOU do if you were in Chidi’s position (above) in the Trolley Problem?
- (iv) Please read p11-28 of the above online book to help you with exploring Utilitarianism. Make brief notes on: *the Hedonic Calculus, Bentham, Mill and P. Singer’s approaches*
- (v) What would a Utilitarian (teleological) approach in this dilemma be?
- (vi) Read Ch2 of the above book: What would Kant’s deontological approach in this dilemma be?
- (vii) Do you think that Chidi is right when he originally said that there is no right answer to the problem?



OR

c) Sexual Ethics:

Please watch this episode of a documentary about:

Attitudes Towards Homosexuality

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IMPI25oraVc>

This is the first episode of Stephen Fry's series 'Out There', where he explores attitudes to homosexuality in different parts of the world.

Write your responses trying to support your answers with reasoning:

1. Do you think there is a 'right' attitude and a 'wrong' attitude towards homosexuality? What is it that makes these attitudes right or wrong?
2. Some people might argue that different cultures have different ideas about morality, and that these different cultural beliefs should be respected even if we don't agree with them. Do you think we should always respect the beliefs and attitudes of cultures different from our own, or should we try to persuade them to adopt our own beliefs instead?
3. What do you think are the aims of this television series? Do you think they are good aims? Do you think this first episode is successful in achieving its aims?
4. What religious reasons do people sometimes give for opposing homosexual relationships? How would you support or oppose these views?

OR



d) Environmental ethics

(i) Make a summary review of the documentary (no more than 2 sides).

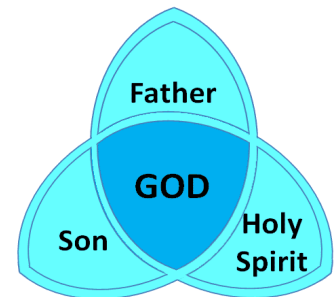
Please watch this

It is a documentary that dares to say what no one else will this Earth Day — that we are losing the battle to stop climate change on planet earth because we are following leaders who have taken us down the wrong road — selling out the green.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=2057&v=Zk11vI-7czE&feature=emb_logo

(ii) Also summarise some your own current environmental research findings and ideas e.g. Greta Thunberg's impact on environmental issues.

3. Study of Christianity



This section contains a lot of information and assumes your knowledge of Christianity is good!

Therefore, we'd like you to make notes on a few key areas:

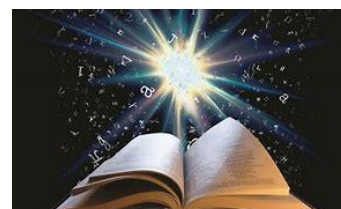
- a) A history of Christianity - Diarmaid MacCulloch's TV series on the history of Christianity:
<https://www.dailymotion.com/video/x38nlpm>
Please watch it, **make notes** and do some further research if you need to.
- b) The Bible – watch this YouTube video on the composition of the Bible and **make notes** –
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p_TWU5zCXfc
- c) Jesus – watch 'The Messiah' on Netflix! We'd be keen to hear your thoughts when you join us in September 2020.

3. OPTIONAL: Combined Paper Topics Activity:

Watch this documentary, 'Barra Boy': <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nhGX1YCsvAM>

Answer the questions below please:

1. What makes evidence convincing or unconvincing?
2. Do you think the story provides convincing evidence for reincarnation? (Philosophy of Religion paper)
Why, or why not?
3. What do you think counts as 'convincing evidence' for life after death (e.g. scripture, near death experiences, nothing)?
4. Read the accounts in the gospels of the resurrection of Jesus. You could use biblegateway.com if you don't have a Bible at home. (Christianity paper)



Matthew 28:1 – 10

Mark 16: 1 – 8

Luke 24: 1 – 10

John 20: 1 – 18

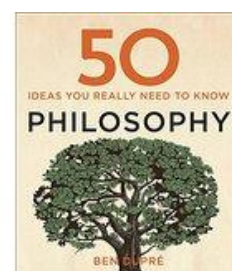
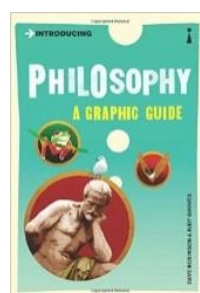
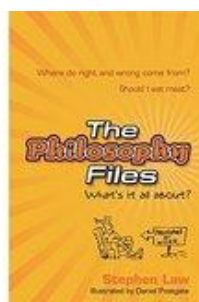
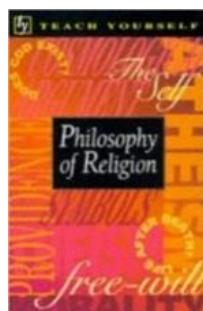
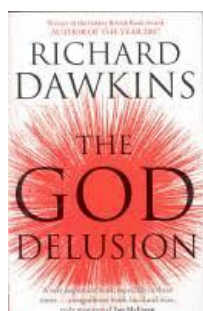
5. Do you find these stories convincing? Why, or why not?

6. a) Do you think the stories / accounts contradict each other, or are they just told from different points of view?

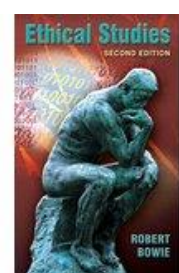
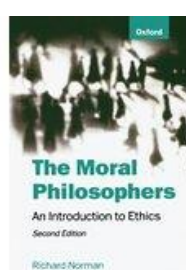
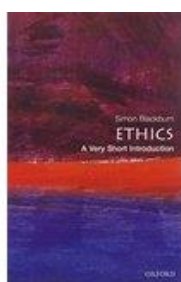
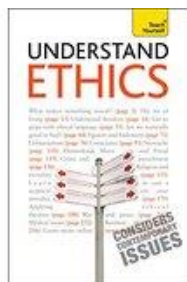
b) What might account for the differences and the similarities between the stories / accounts?

Optional Activities: Choose one or two books to make a summary of. Include your own view about the contents. (At least 500 words on each one). All the books below will help with your RS A Level course. Some of the copies below are available reasonably second hand, the cost supplied is from amazon and may vary, others are available in the school library.

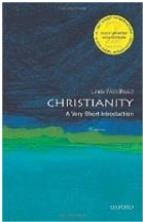
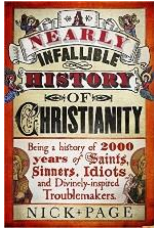
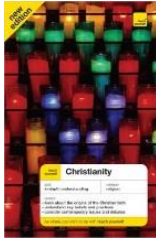
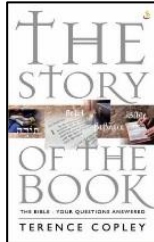
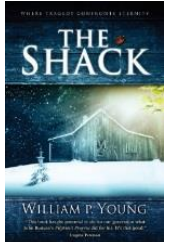
Books on Philosophy	Author	Cost
The God Delusion	Richard Dawkins	£2.14
Teach Yourself Philosophy of Religion	Mel Thompson	£2.69
The Philosophy Files	Stephen Law	£1.88
Philosophy A Graphic Guide	Dave Johnson and Judy Groves	£2.54
50 Philosophy Ideas	Ben Dupre	£5.14



Books on Ethics	Author	Cost
Teach Yourself Ethics	Mel Thompson	£6.82
A very short introduction to Ethics or Being Good....	Simon Blackburn	£2.81
The Moral Philosophers: An Introduction to Ethics	Richard Norman	£4.08
Puzzle of Ethics	Peter Vardy	£2.28
Ethical Studies	Robert Bowie	£2.81



Books on Development in Christianity	Author	Cost
Christianity – A Very Short Introduction	Linda Woodhead	£2.81
History of Christianity	Nick Page	£7.51
Teach Yourself Christianity	John Young	£2.81
The Story of the Book	Terence Copley	£2.79
The Shack	William Young	£1.87

Other RS Media Top Tips:

Podcasts: Also remember the BBC has some great **podcasts** available: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p01f0vzr>



- BBC - podcasts & programmes - Ethical theories - https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/topics/Ethical_theories?fbclid=IwAR1bowymJUmq1stCD343tPB8f4vaoS8S7CO9Si4E0b8CM2yXzL6iuqyBuSU
- University of Oxford podcasts - Practical ethics - <https://podcasts.ox.ac.uk/.../oxforduehiro-centre-practical->

TED TALKS:

Dan Gilbert – why we make bad decisions

Richard Dawkins – militant atheism

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie – We should all be feminists

Damon Horowitz – Philosophy in prison

https://www.ted.com/talks/kwame_anthony_appiah_is_religion_good_or_bad_this_is_a_trick_question/transcript#t-22290 Ted Talk by Kwame Anthony Appiah - Is religion good or bad? (This is a trick question)

https://www.ted.com/talks/damon_horowitz/transcript Ted Talk by Damon Horowitz – We Need a Moral Operating System

https://www.ted.com/talks/tom_honey_on_god_and_the_tsunami/transcript Ted Talk by Tom Honey – Why Would God Create A Tsunami?

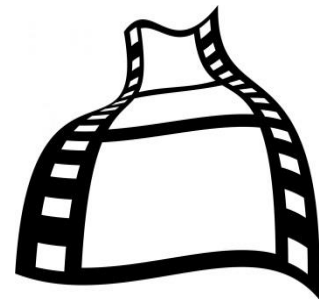
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e8MzPmkNsgU> Debate: Atheist vs Christian (Christopher Hitchens vs William Lane Craig)

To Watch:

All kinds of films and series have philosophical and religious ideas in them, so follow your own interests!

You could try and use them as a stimulus for thinking and writing, rather than just sitting in front of them:

- ✓ **The Good Place**
- ✓ **The Matrix**
- ✓ **The Book of Life**
- ✓ **A.I. Artificial Intelligence**
- ✓ **Twelve Angry Men**
- ✓ **Dogma** (be careful – a lot of swearing)
- ✓ **The Story of God** with Morgan Freeman (National Geographic – Netflix)
- ✓ **Richard Dawkins ‘The Root of all Evil’** Part 1: <https://vimeo.com/27692770#at=1>
Part 2: <https://vimeo.com/5928733>



Enjoy Exploring!

Mrs V Jones & Mr A Porter

