

Progression – Philosophy, Religion and Ethics

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1. Thinking of studying A Level Philosophy, Religion and Ethics at Worcester Sixth Form College?

We teach the **Eduqas** specification.

Here is a brief summary of the topics we cover over the two-year course. If you want to find out more about each of these topics, you can find the full specification on the Eduqas website: https://www.eduqas.co.uk/ed/qualifications/religious-studies-as-a-level/#tab_overview

- **Ethical thought** – different approaches to understanding how to make moral decisions
- **Aquinas' Natural Law Theory** – application of this deontological approach to abortion and euthanasia
- **Situation Ethics** – application of this teleological approach to polyamorous and homosexual relationships
- **Utilitarianism** – application of this teleological approach to animal experimentation and nuclear deterrence
- **Arguments for the existence of God** – examination of the classical arguments for the existence of God.
- **The problem of evil** – challenges to the existence of God.
- **Religious experience** – are religious experiences valid?
- **Psychological view of religion** – is religion a product of the mind? Examination of Freud and Jung.
- **Core beliefs of Islam** – a history of Islam and key beliefs
- **Western perceptions of Islam** – Islam in the media, views of men and women. What is it like to be a British Muslim
- **Islamic identity** – study of the key festivals and different Islamic denominations

2. Tasks to complete before September

In order to prepare for the course, you need to complete the tasks on p4-9.

Before you begin, find a folder to store this Booklet and all the notes that you make on the tasks. **You need to bring in this folder at the start of the course.** Make sure that your notes are neat and well-organised!



BRING YOUR WORK TO YOUR FIRST LESSON

Task One: Ethics

In preparation for September, research who Jeremy Bentham was in order to answer the following questions:

What is Utilitarianism?

What does it aim at achieving?

How did Bentham work out the right thing to do? (7 points)

Why did Bentham get accused of turning people into pigs?

Where is Bentham now?

Utilitarianism crash course philosophy#36 - gives a basic online introduction to Utilitarianism



Task Two: Vocabulary

In your A level Philosophy, Ethics and Religion course you will use new terminology. These words will soon become part of your everyday vocabulary and the examiner will be able to credit this knowledge. In order to get to grips with this terminology it is worth making your own glossary. You could make flashcards to test your knowledge of the new terms. The exam board has provided a glossary of all key terms and this can be found at

<https://resources.wjec.co.uk/Pages/ResourceSingle.aspx?rlid=2602>

As a starter activity define the following terms:

Ethics	Applied ethics	Conscience
Absolute morality	Euthanasia	Nuclear
deterrence		
Relative morality	Agape	Virtue
Deontological ethics	Polyamorous relationship	Telos

Task Three: Using exam board materials

A useful resource for your A level study is provided by the examination board. Eduqas Religious Studies <https://www.eduqas.co.uk/qualifications/religious-studies/as-a-level/> .

Spend some time exploring this website. You will find information about the course, exam papers, mark schemes and exam reports. There is also a teacher share space which has valuable resources on all units of study. Practice is a key part of success at A level, so make sure you are familiar with the types of question that can be asked.

Task Four: Preparing to study Islam

Use the following clip to give you an understanding of how Islam began:
<https://www.khanacademy.org/humanities/world-history/medieval-times/origins-of-islam/v/life-of-muhammad-and-beginnings-of-islam-part-1>

Watch the following documentary to give you a sense of what it is like to be a British Muslim:

<https://www.channel4.com/programmes/extremely-british-muslims>

Task Five: Developing an argument

1. Create a fact file of the philosophers Plato, Aristotle and Aquinas. Include pictures, key facts and a brief outline of their philosophical ideas.
2. Choose a story from the news that includes one of the following themes:
 - Abortion
 - Euthanasia
 - Capital punishment
 - Humans' treatment of animals

Write a response to the story, considering several different points of view. To help with this, you could consider the points of view of:

- An atheist (someone who fervently believes there is no God)
- An agnostic (someone unsure about religion and faith in God)
- A dying man
- A child

2. Tasks to complete before September

Ted Talks

You may have come across TED Talks at school. There are some good ones on philosophical topics.

Go to the TED Talks homepage (<https://www.ted.com/talks>) and then select *philosophy* from the drop down 'topics' box.

Pick **THREE** talks that look interesting or use the 'search talks' box to find TED Talks on a topic linked to the A Level philosophy specification.

After watching each talk, summarise it in 50-100 words.

Here are some examples that you might like:

https://www.ted.com/talks/kwame_anthony_appiah_is_religion_good_or_bad_this_is_a_trick_question

https://www.ted.com/talks/brad_troeger_what_is_love

https://www.ted.com/talks/peter_singer_the_why_and_how_of_effective_altruism

https://www.ted.com/talks/jim_holt_why_does_the_universe_exist

https://www.ted.com/talks/jane_mcgonigal_the_game_that_can_give_you_10_extra_years_of_life

https://www.ted.com/talks/seth_shostak_et_is_probably_out_there_get_ready

The TED Talks logo is displayed on a black rectangular background. The word "TED" is in red and "Talks" is in white. The logo is centered at the bottom of the page.

TEDTalks

3. Optional Tasks

i. Watch some Philosophy, Religion and Ethics -themed documentaries/films

Films/ TV:

Watch *The Matrix* (film) or *Inception* (film). Note down your thoughts on the themes of truth, perception and reality.

Watch *Lost* (TV series). What moral and ethical points does this raise?

Watch *The Adjustment Bureau* (film). Do you think your life is pre-destined (set out for you) or can you control your own fate?

Watch *The Good Place* (TV series) Is there a right or wrong way to live?

Audio Resources:

Listen to 'The Moral Maze' on BBC Radio 4. (Available programmes vary over time)

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b006qk11>

Note down the key points of argument. Create a flow chart of the main points of discussion.

Listen to this episode of 'In Our Time'. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b01mwx64>

Based on these arguments, is it possible to argue that God necessarily exists?

Listen to this podcast from 'Philosophy Now'.

[https://philosophynow.org/podcasts/Free Will and the Brain](https://philosophynow.org/podcasts/Free_Will_and_the_Brain) To what extent can we exercise free will? List ten examples of choices you have made in the last seven days. For each one, consider what factors influenced your choice (habit, parents, media, friends, consideration of consequences, etc).

Thought Experiments:

<http://www.philosophyexperiments.com/fatman/>

<http://moralmachine.mit.edu/>

<https://io9.gizmodo.com/9-philosophical-thought-experiments-that-will-keep-you-1340952809>

3. Optional Tasks (Continued)

Essay Questions

A. Write your own response to the following question:

“How should we decide the right thing to do?”

In your answer you should:

- Include a range of different opinions
- Conduct your own research to find possible answers from different fields of thinking (philosophy, psychology, sociology, religion, etc.)
- Justify your answer with a range of reasons
- Include examples to illustrate your point
- Reach a justified conclusion
- Include a bibliography to demonstrate your own research

B. Write a response to the following question:

“Should people believe in God?”

In your answer you should:

- Demonstrate understanding of several different viewpoints
- Show evidence of having discussed the question with at least three other people, and analyse their comments, including similarities and differences
- Give clear reasons for each perspective
- Give examples to justify your answer
- Reach a clear and justified conclusion
- Include a bibliography, if required