

Why study AS/A2 Level Religious Studies?

Did you enjoy RE? Did you do well?

Have you an enquiring mind?

Do you like to challenge established beliefs about life?

Do you often think in terms of "Why" and "What if?"

In essence, Religious Studies AS/A level is concerned with thinking about the "big" questions in life, such as:

- Who am I? (What is the nature of humanity?)
 - Where am I? (What is the meaning and nature of the world around me?)
 - How should I live? (Is there a right and a wrong?)
 - What happens when I die? (Is there proof of an afterlife?)
- Religious beliefs from one world religion.

During your lessons you will explore these issues through the study of the Philosophy of Religion and Ethics at AS and A Level. The aims of this academic course are to encourage interest in an intelligent understanding of the big ethical & philosophical questions and to train you to think knowledgeably and logically about them - combining your own personal ideas and opinions with the academic perspectives of the issues.

What will this involve?

AS Level Unit 1 Introduction to the Study of Religion:

This new component offers a modern, vibrant approach to the study of Judaism. There will be four themes within the unit: religious figures and sacred texts, religious concepts, religious life and religious practices; including Jewish Festivals, Trip to Synagogue - Manchester or Liverpool.

AS Level Unit 2 Introduction to the Study of Religion:

This approaches religious issues from a logical and rational perspective and examines some of the greatest thinkers and ideas that have influenced the modern world. In first year AS, you will focus on a variety of central questions relating to religious experience and belief.

Is it possible to prove or disprove the existence of God by logical reasoning? You will focus on the Cosmological and Teleological arguments here.

Does the existence of evil and suffering in the world (including mass suffering, animal suffering and innocent suffering) suggest that God does not exist? Does God refuse to prevent suffering? Or is God powerless to prevent suffering and evil? We will look at this topic through contemporary issues of evil and suffering in the world today along with a variety of responses from thinkers through the ages.

What is religious mysticism? Do mystics really obtain insight into other realms & become closer to God?

AS Level Unit 2 Ethics:

In this part of the course, you will study a wide range of issues concerning the broad notions of right and wrong (morality). At AS level you will study a combination of ethical theory and applied ethics.

Ethical theory involves thinking about how we decide what is right and wrong. So, for example, some ethical systems are clearly based on religious authority, whilst others are attempts to base ethical decisions on rational principles (eg 'The greatest good for the greatest number') or argue that there is a 'Natural Law' that is common to all people. Can natural law be applied to abortion and voluntary euthanasia?

In the course areas of applied ethics you will study contemporary issues such as the role of marriage in society today, love including sex between unmarried partners.

What will this involve?

A2 Religious Studies

This course builds upon the skills and information covered at AS and explores further concepts such as free will, determinism, the meaning of language, religious and scientific debates about the origins of the universe and human life, miracles, revelation and the debate between faith and reason.

As one of the fastest growing A level subject areas of the past ten years, Religious Studies is regarded highly by universities across the UK. It also provides opportunities for students to develop the essential key skills of communication, problem solving and working with others that are sought after by employers. Our consistently outstanding results place us **as one of the most successful Religious Studies A level departments in Wales.**

Where do I go from here?

A level Religious Studies is a respected qualification for any higher education degree. Recently, courses that involve Law, Medicine and Journalism have actively encouraged students to have A level RS as one of their subjects. It gives a broad bases of skills that complement the traditional subjects taken by students who wish to aspire to these higher education courses.

Students who have taken these courses in the last 10 years have gone on to study a wide variety of disciplines including Medicine, Law, English, Psychology, Fashion and Sports, as well as courses related to Religion, Theology and Philosophy.