GCSE RELIGIOUS STUDIES

Subject Philosophy, Ethics & Religious Studies (Full Course)

Exam board AQA

Course overview

This course builds on your learning at Key Stage 3 and allows you to explore religious beliefs as well as reflect on fundamental questions, engage with them intellectually and respond to them personally. It will encourage you to develop knowledge, understanding and skills to engage in debate and discussion about life in the modern pluralistic society, including an understanding of non-religious beliefs.

As well as its academic benefits, the course also allows you to enhance your personal, social and cultural development and understanding of different cultures locally, nationally and in the wider world in order to contribute to social and community cohesion. It will also deliver opportunities to enhance your spiritual and moral development. The course will challenge and equip you to lead constructive lives in the modern world.

Course breakdown

This course is made up of 8 units

Section A and B

Beliefs and Teachings from a Christian and Islamic perspective and also Islamic and Christian practices.

In these sections, you have the opportunity to study key concepts within Christianity and Islam in order to develop knowledge and understanding of the basis of Christian and Muslim beliefs and teachings. You will also study how Muslims and Christians put those beliefs and teachings into practice as part of their daily lives. As part of the study, you will recognise and consider the existence and importance of common and divergent views within Christian and Muslim traditions, in the way beliefs and teachings are understood and expressed. You will acquire knowledge and understanding of sources of authority and wisdom that underpin and connect teachings and beliefs, and be able to refer to them in responses. You will explore how Christianity and Islam influence individuals, communities and societies. You will also have the opportunity to develop your ability to explain, analyse and evaluate topics, in order to be able to offer reasoned and supported arguments in discussions about key issues within Christianity and Islam.

Section C

Religious, philosophical and ethical studies

All the topics in section C will be studied from a Christian perspective

Relationships and families

This covers the study of relationships and families, religious teachings about the nature and purpose of families in the 21st century, sex, marriage, cohabitation and divorce. Issues related to the nature and purpose of families; roles of men and women; equality; gender prejudice and discrimination.

Religion and life

This covers the study of science and religion and how they compare and clash with each other on various ideas especially the origins of life and the universe. It also looks at how we value the world including the environment, animal rights and lastly how we value human life looking at the issues of euthanasia and abortion.

Religion, human rights and social justice

This covers the concept of human rights, what they are and why we have them and how religion may view them. It also covers prejudice and discrimination and religious attitudes towards them. Finally, it looks at poverty in a variety of ways and the concept of social justice.

Religion, Crime and Punishment
This covers Christian attitudes and beliefs about law and order, why people commit crime, the impact of crime and the suffering it causes as and how should victims be helped. Why do we punish offenders, the death penalty debate. Beliefs about human nature, repentance and forgiveness.

Assessment

The course is assessed by a 100% exam at the end of the course. There is no coursework. In the exam you are expected to demonstrate your ability to describe, explain and analyse, using knowledge and understanding as well as using evidence and reasoned argument to express and evaluate personal responses, informed insight, and differing viewpoints.

The full course requires you to complete 3hrs 30mins of written papers split into 2 papers

Christian and Islamic beliefs, teachings and practices. 1hr 45mins (50% of the qualification, 96 marks).

Religion, philosophy and ethical studies. 1hr 45mins (50% of the qualification, 96 marks).

Qualities needed for this course
GCSE Religious Studies is an academic qualification and will require you to demonstrate a number of skills. You will be expected to produce written answers, of varying length, in response to ethical issues. You will be asked to take part in discussion and debate activities and will be required to formulate justified arguments from two different religious perspectives. You will need to recall relevant religious teachings and refer to evidence from religion in your responses.

Possible path post 16
The GCSE will be recognised as an academic qualification that illustrates your written capabilities. The qualification can lead to further A-level studies in Philosophy and Ethics, as well as other academic subjects such as History and English.

Who do I contact for more information?
Mr Archer