



# Religious Studies

## Why study Religious Studies?

Religious Studies is like thinking, only louder. You won't be told what to think. Instead we introduce you to the ideas of philosophers and ask: does this make sense? Religious Studies will help you to become sharper and more articulate in your ability to reason. It will encourage you to analyse and spot flaws in reasoning and construct a better argument. It will help you become more confident in your ability to debate and exchange ideas. Above all, you will reflect in a mature fashion on fundamental questions about meaning – "Who am I? Where am I going? What is right and wrong?"

## Course Outline

*Philosophy of Religion:* This involves the study of philosophical issues and questions raised by religion and belief. This includes a study of the arguments for and against the existence of God and challenges to religious belief such as the problems of evil and suffering and psychological explanations for belief. We also consider the nature of God. What does it mean to describe God as all knowing? Does such a description have implications for human freewill? We shall explore questions about whether religious language has any real meaning and whether religious experience has any validity. Are there any signs that there is a God who interacts with the world and how might it happen? Can we survive after death? Do we have souls and, if we have, are they separate from our bodies?

*Religion and Ethics:* This aspect of the course focuses on human conduct and character. It explores questions about how we should make moral judgements. We shall study different ethical theories and their application in the world. We consider Natural Law, Kantian Ethics and Utilitarianism and apply the principles of each theory to a range of personal, societal and global issues. The three areas of applied ethics which we shall focus on are: euthanasia, sexual ethics and business ethics. We also consider the works of key ethical thinkers and significant ideas in religious and moral thought such as conscience – What does someone mean when they say they 'acted upon their conscience'?

*Developments in Christian Thought:* In this component, students have the opportunity to undertake a systematic study of key concepts within the development of Christian thought. This includes the influential ideas of Augustine on human nature and his teaching of Original Sin and the reinterpretation of God by feminist theologians in light of the changing views on gender and gender roles in society. We shall consider the diversity of Christian moral reasoning and focus in particular on the teaching and example of Dietrich Bonhoeffer and his ideas of civil disobedience. Also, we shall explore the challenges to Christian thought posed by the rise of secularism and secularisation. We shall consider

## Head of Learning

Mrs J Hartley

## Departmental Staff

Miss Z Sefton

## Exam Board

OCR A Level Religious Studies

## Where are they now?

Recent students of Religious Studies at CRGS have gone on to study:

- Criminology & Sociology (Northumbria)
- English Language (Lancaster)
- English Literature (Newcastle)
- Full-time employment with boohoo.com
- History (Leeds Beckett)
- Law (UCLAN, Leeds, York)
- Marketing (Strathclyde)
- Medicine (Liverpool)
- Nursing (Liverpool)
- Legal Apprenticeship (DWF)
- Philosophy, Psychology & Scientific Thought (Leeds)
- Politics and International Studies (Warwick)
- Psychology in Education (York)
- Religion, Philosophy and Ethics (Nottingham)
- Social Anthropology (Edinburgh)
- Social Care, Justice and Recovery (Leeds Beckett)



questions like: Does Christianity still have a role to play in society? And is God simply the result of wishful thinking?

## Assessment

There are two assessment objectives:

- (i) Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of philosophical, ethical and religious thought (40%)
- (ii) Analyse and evaluate aspects of, and approaches to religion and belief (60%)

And three examinations:

- Philosophy of Religion (Written Paper; 2 hours; 33.3% of A Level)
- Religion and Ethics (Written Paper; 2 hours; 33.3 % of A Level)
- Developments in Religious Thought (Written Paper; 2 hours; 33.3% of A Level)

## Frequently Asked Questions

*Q. Is any previous knowledge required to study this subject?*

There is no requirement to have studied Religious Studies before and you do not need a religious commitment to study this subject, but you do need a lively, enquiring and critical mind. You will be directed to think clearly and rigorously to help you make up your own mind. Students are required to meet the General Entry Requirement of a minimum of 4 GCSEs at grade 6 with at least GCSE grade 4 in English Language and Maths.

*Q. What opportunities are there for Extended Learning?*

Students are encouraged to access the excellent range of books in the library or on-line articles and engage in wider reading around the subject. We have some links with university departments and on occasions invite in guest speakers. The department also organises an annual Ethics, Philosophy & Religion Conference for all Year 12 students. In February of this year, the department organised, in conjunction with the Modern languages department, a thought-provoking trip to Berlin, which included a visit to Sachsenhausen concentration camp. Past RS students have also participated in trips to China (2018) and the USA (2019) in collaboration with other departments in the Sixth Form.

*Q. What facilities are there?*

Theories and arguments are introduced by the teacher through a variety of means, including the reading of primary and/or secondary texts, DVD material and YouTube. This is followed by a critical analysis of the ideas through group activities and discussion in class. Students will be expected to read articles and material from their textbooks and other sources.

## Exam Board Specification

OCR A Level Religious Studies H573 [www.ocr.org.uk](http://www.ocr.org.uk)

**CRGS Sixth Form  
Admissions**

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