



Year Group: 13 (A Level)

This is the plan for the taught curriculum during achievement period: 1 (September to February half-term)

Brief summary of the topic/work being covered during this period

During achievement period 1, students are taught the Edexcel Religious Studies: Ethics syllabus.

1. Significant concepts in issues or debates in religion and ethics: environmental issues and equality.
2. A study of three ethical theories: Utilitarianism, Situation Ethics and Natural Moral Law.
3. Application of ethical theories to issues of importance: war and peace, and sexual ethics.
4. Ethical language: meta-ethics and the relationship between religion and morality.
5. Deontology, Virtue Ethics and the works of scholars: A comparison of the work of Immanuel Kant and Aristotle with regard to Deontology and Virtue Ethics respectively.
6. Medical ethics: beginning and end of life issues.

Prior knowledge needed for this unit/topic from previous teaching

Edexcel A Level Religious Studies does not require any prior knowledge. However, the study of Ethics as part of St Mary's Key Stage 4 curriculum will provide a sound foundation for this A Level syllabus.

Rationale for students studying this unit/topic

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The Edexcel Ethics syllabus offers students the opportunity to gain a sound understanding of the central ethical theories which comprise western moral philosophy. This understanding will not only help them to achieve well in this element of the course, but will also provide them with a clear framework for thinking and discussing issues of importance in the world in their adult life. In addition, this syllabus enables students to discuss ethical issues of contemporary importance, such as the implications of modern weaponry for the debate surrounding the morality of war.

Rationale for timing of these topics

Ethics is taught in Year 13 so that students can apply the skills of philosophical reasoning acquired through the study of Philosophy of Religion in Year 12 to the challenging areas of moral philosophy covered in this syllabus. In addition, the in-depth study of Christianity in Year 12 provides a broader context in which to place the various secular and religious ethical theories and views encountered in Year 13.

Key concepts/ideas that are taught to students in this unit/topic, including any anticipated gaps in knowledge and plan to overcome these

Any students who have not covered Catholic Christianity and Ethics at Key Stage 4 will not be disadvantaged. The provision of a booklet with key words, lesson content and example examination questions/answers will prove particularly useful to such students.

Substantive Knowledge

- To explore environmental issues, including concepts of stewardship and conservation, animal welfare and climate change.
- To explore legal changes and social attitudes on the environment, and the value of employing religious perspectives in these debates, with reference to J Lovelock and A Næss.
- To understand ethical and religious concepts of equality, including the issues gender, race and disability.
- To explore legal changes and social attitudes on racism, and the value of employing religious perspectives in these debates, with reference to Martin Luther King and Joni Eareckson Tada.
- To understand Utilitarianism as a relativist ethical theory, including the social, political and cultural context in which it emerged, and different forms of Utilitarianism (with reference to J Bentham and J S Mill).
- To explore the strengths and weaknesses of Utilitarianism, and its compatibility or otherwise with religious approaches.
- To understand Situation Ethics, including the social, political and cultural context in which it emerged, and biblical examples of situationist thinking, as illustrated in the ministry of Jesus. With reference to J A T Robinson and J Fletcher.
- To explore the strengths and weaknesses of Situation Ethics, and its compatibility or otherwise with religious approaches.
- To understand Natural Moral Law as an absolutist ethical theory, including biblical and classical foundations of the approach, and contemporary applications and adaptations, including proportionalism. With reference to Aquinas and B Hoose.
- To explore the strengths and weaknesses of Natural Moral Law and its compatibility or otherwise with religious approaches.

- To apply ethical theories to war and peace, including Christian teaching, the Just War Theory, including reasons for and influences on the development of the theory. With reference to Augustine and Aquinas.
- To understand concepts of different forms of pacifism and their practicality, including Christian teaching.

Disciplinary Knowledge

By the end of each unit, students will be able to think critically and creatively about what they have studied.

To respond by reflecting and considering different views. To make connections between sources and beliefs and the way these find expression in the world.

New key terminology students will be taught during this topic/unit

Tier 3 Vocabulary - Absolutism, legalism, antinomianism, existentialism, relativism, situationalism, utility, hedonism, Act and Rule Utilitarianism, Preference, Negative and Ideal Utilitarianism, agape, Natural Moral Law, telos, primary and secondary precepts, proportionalism, jus ad bellum, jus in bello and jus post bellum, absolute, relative/selective and nuclear pacifism, cognitive and non-cognitive language, realism and anti-realism, ethical naturalism and non-naturalism, naturalistic fallacy, is-ought gap, intuitionism, prescriptivism, emotivism, theonomy, heteronomy, divine command ethics, Quiverfull, biblical parenting, categorical imperative, prima facie duties, virtue, vice, golden mean, eudaemonia, pre-implantation genetic diagnosis (PGD), stem cells and cord blood, fertilisation in vitro, assisted dying, euthanasia, palliative care.

Plan for Assessment

- Students will be assessed regularly in both classwork and homework tasks, with a focus on developing the skills required to answer examination questions effectively.
- Students will also be assessed in examination conditions. All such assessments will follow the format of a final A Level examination paper. In November/ December, students will sit full papers in Christianity and Philosophy of Religion as mock examinations. In January, they will sit an Ethics paper in timed conditions. All assessments will include questions from sample/past examination papers or, where this is not possible for a particular topic, from questions designed by the department to match the phrasing and structure of actual examination questions.
- All assessments will be marked according to a central mark scheme. Students will be provided with written and whole class feedback, and will set individual targets for improvement. Results will be monitored by the HOD/DHOD via a centralised spreadsheet, with retests/ interventions being used as appropriate.