



Year Group: 12 (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 content from the Edexcel Christianity and Philosophy of Religion syllabus concurrently.

#### **Philosophy of Religion**

1. Philosophical issues and questions: Design, Cosmological and Ontological arguments for the existence of God.
2. The nature and influence of religious experience, including the argument from religious experience for the existence of God.
3. The problem of evil and suffering, and theodicies and solutions to the problem.
4. Religious Language: analogy and symbol; verification and falsification debates; language games.
5. Works of Scholars: context to critiques of religious belief, and a comparison between a critic of religion, Bertrand Russell, and a religious believer, Frederick Copleston.

#### **Christianity**

1. Religious beliefs, values and teachings: the nature of God as personal and as Creator, the Trinity, the nature of the Church, and key moral principles.
2. Sources of Wisdom and Authority: The Bible, and the nature and role of Jesus.
3. Practices that shape and express religious identity: the diversity of practice in the Eucharist and the diversity of practice in creative expressions of religious identity.
4. Social and historical developments: science, secularisation, and new movements in theology.

### **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 both Catholic Christianity and Philosophy 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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There are several reasons for studying Philosophy of Religion. Firstly, students find the topics covered stimulating and so engage well with the subject content. Secondly, students are required to develop sophisticated reasoning skills which will serve them well in future studies, both in Theology/ Philosophy and in other subjects many go on to study at degree level. Finally, the content both revisits' topics covered at GCSE and introduces new areas of study, thereby giving students the opportunity to both consolidate and develop their knowledge and understanding of the Philosophy of Religion. Similarly, Christianity is studied because it both strengthens and builds on existing content from the study of Catholic Christianity at GCSE level. In addition, the study of Christianity at A Level supports the Catholic ethos of St Mary's Catholic School.

#### **Rationale for timing of these topics**

The students begin Year 12 with topics they have studied at GCSE level, before progressing to completely new material. This supports students as they both absorb new knowledge and develop the skills required to answer examination questions effectively at this early stage of their A Level studies.

### **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 Philosophy of Religion at Key Stage 4 will be 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 understand inductive reasoning and a *posteriori* types of arguments.
- To explore Design Arguments for the existence of God, with reference W Paley.
- To appreciate the strengths and weaknesses of Design Arguments, with reference D Hume.
- To understand Cosmological Arguments for the existence of God, with reference to the ideas of Aquinas.
- To appreciate the strengths and weaknesses of Cosmological Arguments, with reference to of D Hume and I Kant.
- To explore deductive reasoning and a *priori* types of arguments.
- To understand the Ontological Argument for the existence of God, with reference to Anselm.
- To appreciate the strengths and weaknesses of the Ontological Arguments, with reference B Russell.
- To understand the context of religious experience across religious traditions, with reference to W James.
- To know key types of religious experience, with reference to R Otto.
- To explore the relationship between religious experience and propositional/ non-propositional revelation.
- To understand alternative explanations for religious experience.

- To understand the influence of religious experience as an argument for the existence of God.
- To explore the principles of testimony and credulity, reference to R Swinburne and J Hick.
- To appreciate the strengths and weaknesses of religious experience as an argument for the existence of God, with reference to M Persinger and R Dawkins.
- To explore the nature of the problem of evil and suffering across a range of religious traditions, with reference to D Hume and J Mackie.
- To understand theodicies and solutions to the problem of suffering, with reference to Augustine ('soul deciding') and Irenaeus/Hick ('soul making') and Process Theodicy.
- To explore the use of religious language, including the via negativa, analogy and symbol, with reference to Aquinas and P Tillich.
- To understand logical positivism, and the debates surrounding verification and falsification, with reference to A J Ayer, RM Hare and B Mitchell.
- To explore the concept of language games, with reference to L Wittgenstein and D Phillips.
- To understand critiques of religious belief, with reference to R Dawkins and M Westphal.
- To compare a critic of religion, Bertrand Russell, and a religious believer, Frederick Copleston.
- To explore the nature of God as personal and as Creator, with reference to M Buber and Augustine.
- To explore the doctrine of the Trinity, with reference to K Barth and K Rahner.
- To understand the nature of the Church, With reference to Cyprian of Carthage and M Luther.
- To explore key moral principles, including the concept of love as the principal Christian value and the basis of all other values and qualities.
- To understand the Bible as a source of wisdom and authority, including strengths and weaknesses of various models of interpretation of the text.
- To explore the nature and role of Jesus as a source of wisdom and authority, with reference to Arius and Athanasius, M Luther and J Calvin, and Moltmann and T Weinandy.
- To explore the diversity of practice in the Eucharist, including the importance of sacraments in some denominations and the experience of believers when taking part in the Eucharist.
- To appreciate the diversity of practice in creative expressions of religious identity, including depictions of in Christian art (the Nativity and Crucifixion), music, and the role of prayer in public and private devotion.
- To understand the challenge to Christian belief of modern science, including the responses to the challenges and the impact of these debates on Christian thought. With reference to Galileo and Darwin.
- To explore secularisation, including the rise of New Religious Movements and disillusionment with some aspects of traditional religion compared to hard line atheism. With reference to C Hitchens and R Dawkins.
- To understand new movements in theology, including Liberation, Feminist and Black Theology, and the global development of Evangelicalism. With reference to G Gutiérrez, S McFague and J H Cone.

### **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**

#### **Philosophy of religion**

**Tier 3 Vocabulary** - induction, synthetic, a posteriori, deduction, analytic, a priori, predicate, analogy, design qua purpose and regularity, teleological, cause in fieri, cause in esse, contingent and necessary existence, principle of sufficient reason, monism, ineffable, noetic, transient, passive, meditation, conversion, mysticism, numinous, objectivist, subjectivist, physiological and naturalistic, testimony, credulity, moral and non-moral evil, inconsistent triad, logical and evidential problem of evil, soul deciding, privation of good, soul making, process theodicy, epistemic distance, eschatological justification, via negativa, univocal language, anthropomorphism, equivocal language, attribution, proportional similarities and dissimilarities, symbol, logical positivism, verification, falsification, bliks, realist and antirealist, cognitive and non-cognitive, eschatological verification, language games, picture theory, fideism, postmodern, strong and weak atheism, agnosticism, properly basic belief, theistic probability.

#### **Christianity**

**Tier 3 Vocabulary** - Immutability, ex nihilo, emanation, construction and artistic expression, perichoresis, Appropriation, essential and economic, Trinity, unity, holiness, catholicity, apostolicity, heresy, per redemptionem, per vivificationem et sanctificationem, agape, revealed theology, natural theology, Arian, Chalcedonian, justification by faith, Jesus as revelation of God, Mediator, Prophet, Priest and King, impassibility, grace, transubstantiation, transignification, Real Presence, memorial, hymody, exclusive psalmody, nativus, Theotokos, Renaissance, cosmology, secularisation, New Religious Movements, Liberation, Feminist and Black Theology, Pentecostal and Charismatic Christianity.

### **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. Students will be assessed at the end of unit 1 in both Philosophy and Christianity. They will then be assessed at the end of unit 3; this assessment will cover units 1,2 and 3. This cumulative approach to assessment is designed to provide students with opportunities to repeatedly review subject material. 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 phasing 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.