

Religious Studies

Religious Studies is available to students of any religious persuasion or none. The subject at A level aims to introduce the academic study of religious belief and to develop critical awareness of some of the theological, philosophical and ethical perspectives within the western intellectual tradition. Students will gain knowledge and understanding of diverse material and points of view. They will learn to evaluate religious issues and to present orderly and lucid arguments. Students are not required to have studied religious studies at GCSE.

The A level (OCR) consists of three modules of equal value: *Philosophy of Religion* (H573/01), *Religion and Ethics* (H573/02) and *Developments in Religious Thought* (H573/03). All three units are assessed by a written examination.

Philosophy of Religion (H573/01)

In this unit we study and analyse ancient philosophical influences (Plato and Aristotle), the nature of the soul, mind and body (Monism, Dualism and Materialism), arguments about the existence or non-existence of God (teleological, cosmological and ontological), the nature and impact of religious experience, the challenge for religious belief of the problem of evil, ideas about the nature of God, and issues in religious language.

Religion and Ethics (H573/02)

This module looks at and evaluates normative ethical theories (from Fletcher, Kant, Bentham, Mill and Aquinas) before applying them to two ethical issues (euthanasia and business). The nature and role of the conscience is studied, as is sexual ethics; these are then both evaluated in the context of the development of religious belief. Finally the unit branches into the meta, looking at ethical language and analysing its meaningfulness (or not).

Developments in Religious Thought (H573/03)

In this final unit students will evaluate and analyse Christian beliefs, values and teachings, their interconnections and how they vary historically and in the contemporary world. Sources of religious wisdom and authority, as well as the practices which shape and express religious identity (and how these vary within a tradition), will be considered in light of significant social and historical developments in theology and religious thought. The key themes of this module will relate to the relationship between religion and society.

Mrs RACHEL CARNAY
head of religion, philosophy and ethics