

Religious Education A Level FAQs



Why should I choose Religious Studies?

Religion is central to world history, society and human life. Religious Studies A level lets you study the various philosophies and beliefs that underlie popular religions and helps you understand the perspectives and motivations of believers.

- If you want a course which will complement other Humanities subjects.
- If you are considering studying Philosophy or Religious Studies at University.
- If you have not done GCSE Religious Studies but enjoy thinking for yourself and feel attracted by the challenges of the course.
- The specification offers an academic approach to the study of religion and is accessible to candidates of any religious persuasion or none.
- Adopt an enquiring, critical and reflective approach to the study of religion.
- Reflect on and develop your own values, opinions and attitudes in the light of your learning.
- If you have done GCSE Religious Studies and wish to explore beyond the phenomena of religious practice to probe deeper into ideas about the spiritual realm.

What do I require to study Religious Studies A Level?

A Level Religious Studies is an academically rigorous subject, good GCSE's are important. An ability in English will be helpful. Students will be highly motivated, dedicated and willing to be challenged.

What skills will it add to my CV?

Universities like students who can reason and think in a mature and balanced way, as does the world of work. Religious Studies builds these skills of analysis and debate, critical thinking and mature reflection. These skills will be honed by challenging our thinking at every level. The content that will produce such thoughtful and employable students just happens to be fascinating too.

Some other skills you should have picked up include:

- good oral and written communication
- ability to put together a logical argument
- critical thinking
- gathering, investigating and assessing material
- condensing or expanding facts, ideas and arguments
- an interest in culture
- a questioning attitude towards ideologies, politics, religious views
- a wider understanding of society

What can I go on to study with an A level in religious education?

If students wish to go on to study the subject at university, there is a huge range of courses available, including Philosophy, Ethics, Theology, Biblical Studies, World Religions and Anthropology. Other related degrees favouring RS A Level include History, Law, Politics, Psychology, PPE, Medicine (Ethics route) and Education.

How is the A Level different to my GCSE?

The A Level builds upon skills and knowledge from the GCSE but there is no requirement to have studied RS at GCSE. Themes and concepts will be similar, although new ideas, beliefs and theories will be explored.

What can I expect from lessons / teachers?

Religious Studies at A Level is a highly literate subject and you will be asked to undertake extended writing. In lesson this will be supported by thorough discussion of philosophical ideas, ethical concepts and religious perspectives. You will be expected to undertake wider reading of a range of different philosophical points of view. Homework will be set regularly and will be a variety of research based, writing based and alternative tasks.

What will I study?

Component 1 – Buddhism – 33% 2 hour paper (100 marks)

- Life of the Buddha and key Buddhist teachings
- Beliefs, values and teachings, the nature and existence of life and the human condition, beliefs about the self, beliefs about how to escape suffering
- Sources of wisdom and authority
- Practices that shape and express religious identity
- Developments in theology or religious thought, diversity within traditions, migration, the changing roles of men and women, feminist approaches
- Significant ideas presented in works of key scholars
- Themes related to the relationship between religion and society

Component 2 – Philosophy of Religion – 33% 2 hour paper (100 marks)

- Philosophical issues and questions raised by religion and belief including at least three contrasting arguments about the existence or non-existence of God
- The nature and influence of religious experience
- Challenges to religious belief such as the problems of evil and suffering
- Philosophical language and thought through significant concepts and the works of key thinkers
- How views of religious language have changed over time;
- How the philosophy of religion has, over time, influenced and been influenced by developments in religious beliefs and practices

Component 3 – Religion and Ethics – 2 hour paper (100 marks)

- Ethical language and thought through significant concepts and the works of key thinkers
- Three normative ethical theories such as deontological, teleological or character based ethics
- The application of ethical theory to two personal, societal or global issues of importance
- How ethical language in the modern era has changed over time; including a study of meta-ethical theories and significant ideas in religious and moral thought such as free will, conscience or authority
- A comparison of the significant ideas presented in the works of at least two key scholars

What resources will I be using?

- You will be using a range of different resources. The specification for the course can be found here: <https://www.eduqas.co.uk/media/i4tjifbc/eduqas-a-level-religious-studies-spec-from-2016-e-011020.pdf>
- The textbooks we will be using are the Eduqas official textbooks. They can be found here: https://www.eduqas.co.uk/qualifications/religious-studies-as-a-level/?sub_nav_level=books#tab_resources
- You will also have access to Eduqas revision guides.

Who do I contact if I have more questions?

Please contact Mrs Partridge (Head of Department) at: ipartridge@plymstockschool.org.uk