



ST CHRISTOPHER'S SIXTH FORM

RELIGIOUS STUDIES

(THEOLOGY, ETHICS & PHILOSOPHY)

BRIDGING UNIT

Religious Studies (Theology, Ethics and Philosophy)

A Level Religious Studies, following the new specification of the Eduqas examination board, comprises of three distinct, but complementary components, each worth 33% of the final mark:

A study of Christianity

This unit will be taught by Miss Buckley (expert specialist RE teacher) and Mr. Cuff Head of Sixth Form and Deputy Head teacher, and consists of the following four themes:

- **Theme 1:** Religious figures and sacred texts
- **Theme 2:** Religious concepts and religious life
- **Theme 3:** Significant social and historical developments in religious thought
- **Theme 4:** Religious practices that shape religious identity

All four themes are delivered within the context of the Christian religion. Any wider reading, or TV viewing about the Christian Faith will therefore be extremely useful here. Additionally, it would be beneficial to go to a church on Sunday mornings, and pay close attention to what is said and done.

Philosophy of Religion

We are delighted that this part of the course will be delivered by our Deputy Headteacher and Head of Sixth Form, Mr Cuff. The Philosophy of Religion component attempts to explore some of life's biggest questions and starts with the key and perennial question: Is there a God? If there is a God, what is God like?

In an attempt to answer these questions the course examines the philosophical arguments for God's existence through four main areas:

1. Cosmological arguments
2. Teleological arguments
3. Religious Experiences
4. Evil and suffering



These are four fascinating areas and students who have opted for Religious Studies will want to read widely around these subjects. A good starting point would be to research the Teleological and Cosmological arguments, and specifically the contributions of thinkers such as William Paley and Thomas Aquinas. The book, 'The Puzzle of God' by Peter Vardy is a very clear reading guide and will be good to use throughout the course. It can be bought through Amazon for about £6 (inc. packing and postage) and is well worth adding to your book collection!

If you are interested in the complexity of creation, and only have time to read one book, then you could do a lot worse than Bill Bryson's brilliant 'A short History of nearly everything.' Above all, start to live 'with your head on swivel' and notice the world around you, all of it - good and bad! Philosophical issues are great to debate in class so before you arrive, think, read, pray and talk to others about why people suffer, where we came from, where we are going, and what part God has to play in it all. Keep a tender heart, a willing spirit and an open mind. Be prepared to be challenged and to grow as a human being!

Religion and Ethics

'Religion and Ethics' is also taught by Mr. Cuff, and is focused on four specific areas:

1. Ethical Thought
2. Deontological Ethics
3. Teleological Ethics
4. Determinism and Free Will

Within the components students will explore the different approaches to the identification and resolution of moral issues of importance in human experience. This will enable students to look at different approaches to moral behaviour within humanity which is very relevant in today's society. A wide range of ethical theories will be studied and applied to various ethical issues such as: euthanasia, war, medical research, relationships and capital punishment.

Students may prepare for this topic by reading any of the theories mentioned above. A starting point may be becoming familiar with the concepts of scholars such as: Aristotle, Thomas Aquinas, John Finnis, Joseph Fletcher, J.S Mill and Jeremy Bentham. A slightly more light-hearted approach would be for students to engage in any TV programmes relating to the above mentioned ethical issues. These may include 'Panorama', 'The Big Question' or '4Thought' or any other thought provoking program. It would also be very beneficial to look out for ethical issues in the news or to collect newspaper articles on any of the issues.

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A good website to explore can be found at Dr. William Lane Craig's website:

<https://www.reasonablefaith.org/>

You might not agree with all he says...how strong do you think his arguments are?

Have a great summer, enjoy the reading and we look forward to discussing all these exciting topics with you in September.


For further information on any aspect of this course, please do not hesitate to contact Mr Pountain at:

c.pountain@st-christophers.org



**“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord,
“plans to prosper you and not to harm you,
plans to give you hope and a future.”**

Jeremiah 29:11

 **01254 380527**

 **sixthform@st-christophers.org**

 **www.st-christophers.org/sixth-form**

