



A-LEVEL – YEAR 13 – THEOLOGY – CURRICULUM OVERVIEW

Autumn Term		Spring Term		Summer Term	
Autumn 1	Autumn 2	Spring 1	Spring 2	Summer 1	
Key Themes	Key Themes	Key Themes	Key Themes	Key Themes	
<p><u>Ethics- Religious concepts of predestination with reference to the teachings of: St Augustine and John Calvin.</u></p> <p>Concepts of determinism: Hard determinism: philosophical, scientific, psychological. Soft determinism: Thomas Hobbes (internal and external causes), A.J. Ayer (caused acts v forced acts). The implications of predestination / determinism. Religious concepts of free will, with reference to the teachings of: Pelagius and Arminius. Concepts of libertarianism. The implications of libertarianism and free will.</p> <p><u>D. Religious concepts of free will, with reference to the teachings of: Pelagius:</u></p> <p>The role of original sin, humanity maturing in God's image and accepting the responsibility of free will, free will as used to follow</p>	<p><u>D. John Finnis' development of Natural Law:</u> Development of the seven basic human goods (life, knowledge, friendship, play, aesthetic experience, practical reasonableness and religion); distinction between theoretical / practical reason; Nine Requirements of Practical Reason (view life as a whole, no arbitrary preference amongst values (goods), basic goods apply equally to all, do not become obsessed with a particular project, use effort to improve, plan your actions to do the most good, never harm a basic good, foster common good in the community and act in your own conscience and authority); the common good and the need for authority.</p> <p><u>E. Bernard Hoose's overview of the Proportionalist debate:</u> As a hybrid of Natural Law, a deontological / teleological ethic; a Proportionalist</p>	<p><u>D. Religious language as non-cognitive and symbolic:</u> Functions of symbols (John Randall); God as that which concerns us ultimately (Paul Tillich). Challenges including whether a symbol is adequate or gives the right insights. A consideration of how these two views (Randall/Tillich) can be used to help understand religious teachings.</p> <p><u>E. Religious language as non-cognitive and mythical:</u> Complex form of mythical language that communicates values and insights into purpose of existence. Supportive evidence – different forms of myths to convey meaning: creation myths; myths of good against evil; heroic myths. Myths help to overcome fears of the unknown; myths effective way of transmitting religious, social and ethical values. Challenges: problem of competing myths; meanings of myths change</p>	<p><u>D. Meta-ethical approaches - Naturalism:</u> Objective moral laws exist independently of human beings, moral terms can be understood by analysing the natural world; ethical statements are cognitivist and can be verified or falsified; verified moral statements are objective truths and universal. F.H. Bradley - ethical sentences express propositions; objective features of the world make propositions true or false; meta-ethical statements can be seen in scientific terms. Challenges: Hume's Law (the is-ought problem); Moore's Naturalistic Fallacy (moral language is indefinable); the Open Question Argument (moral facts cannot be reduced to natural properties).</p> <p><u>E. Meta-ethical approaches - Intuitionism:</u> Objective moral laws exist independently of human beings; moral truths can be</p>	<p><u>D. The relationship between religion and society:</u> respect and recognition and the ways that religious traditions view other religions and non-religious worldviews and their truth claims. Historical developments in religious thought – challenges from secularisation: The conflicting religious and non-religious views on Christianity in the UK (the value of Christian faith schools; whether the UK can be called a 'Christian country'); beliefs conflicting with laws of the country; perceived challenges to Christianity (decline of role and status of Christianity; reduced impact in public life; restricted religious liberty).</p> <p><u>E. The relationship between religion and society:</u> respect and recognition and the ways that religious traditions view other religions and non-religious worldviews and their truth</p>	



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<p>God's laws, the role of grace in salvation. Arminius: Denial of the Calvinist view of predestination, the effect of original sin on free will, God's 'prevenient' grace (the Holy Spirit) in allowing humans to exercise free will, the Elect and the possibility of rejecting God's grace, the election of believers being conditional on faith.</p> <p>E. Concepts of libertarianism: Philosophical (Jean Paul Sartre: man is not free not to be free, waiter illustration), scientific (Angela Sirigu's research evidence that the brain allows for free will), psychological (Carl Rogers: humanist approach, self-actualisation).</p> <p>F. The implications of libertarianism and free will: The implications of libertarianism on moral responsibility: the worth of human ideas of rightness, wrongness and moral value, the value in blaming moral agents for immoral acts, the usefulness of normative ethics. The implications of free will on religious belief: the link between God and</p>	<p>maxim ('it is never right to go against a principle unless there is a proportionate reason which would justify it'); distinction between an evil moral act (an immoral act) and pre-moral/ontic evil; distinction between a good act (an act that follows the moral rule) and a right act (an act that is not necessarily a good act, but creates the lesser of two evils); proportionality based on agape.</p> <p>F. Finnis' Natural Law and Proportionality: application of the theory: The application of Finnis' Natural Law and Proportionality to both of the issues listed below: 1. immigration 2. capital punishment</p> <p>Issues for analysis and evaluation will be drawn from any aspect of the content above, such as: • Whether Finnis' Natural Law is acceptable in contemporary society. • The extent to which Proportionality promotes immoral behaviour. • Whether Finnis and/or Proportionality provide a</p>	<p>over time as they reflect the values of society as societal constructs; demythologisation of myths results in varying interpretations, myths often incompatible with scientific understanding of the world.</p> <p>F. Religious language as a language game: Meaningful to people who participate in same language game (Ludwig Wittgenstein). Supportive evidence – non-cognitive form of language provides meaning to participants within language game; consider use of language not meaning; language games fit with coherence theory of truth; religious language as expressions of belief. Challenges, including rejection of any true propositions in religion that can be empirically verified; does not allow for meaningful conversations between different groups of language users; does not provide adequate meaning for the word 'God'.</p> <p>Issues for analysis and evaluation will be drawn from any aspect of the</p>	<p>discovered by using our minds in an intuitive way; intuitive ability is innate and the same for all moral agents; intuition needs a mature mind so not infallible; allows for objective moral values. H.A. Prichard, 'ought to do' has no definition; recognise what we 'ought to do' by intuition; two ways of thinking (general and moral). Challenges: no proof of moral intuition exists; intuitive 'truths' can differ widely; no obvious way to resolve conflicting intuitions.</p> <p>F. Meta-ethical approaches – Emotivism: Theory that believes objective moral laws do not exist; a non-cognitivist theory; moral terms express personal emotional attitudes and not propositions; ethical terms are just expressions of personal approval (hurrah) or disapproval (boo); explains why people disagree about morality. A.J. Ayer - ethical statements are neither verifiable nor analytic; made to express joy or pain (emotion); expressed to be persuasive;</p>	<p>claims. Historical developments in religious thought – challenges from science: Richard Dawkins' and Alister McGrath's contrasting views on the relationship between religion and science, and the nature of proof; the limits of science; the 'God of the gaps' argument.</p> <p>F. Historical developments in religious thought – challenges from pluralism and diversity within a tradition: Difference between religious pluralism and tolerance of religious diversity; the exclusivist and inclusivist views expressed in the Christian Bible (Deut 6:5; Joshua 23:16; John 14:6; Acts 4:12); the contribution of John Hick and Karl Rahner to Christian inclusivism (and the difference between their positions); the differences between Christian universalism and pluralistic universalism.</p> <p>Issues for analysis and evaluation will be drawn from any aspect of the content above, such as: • The effectiveness of the</p>	
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<p>evil, the implications for God's omnipotence and omnibenevolence, the use of prayer and the existence of miracles.</p> <p>Issues for analysis and evaluation will be drawn from any aspect of the content above, such as: • How convincing are religious views on free will. • The extent to which an individual has free choice. • The extent to which philosophical, scientific and/or psychological views on libertarianism inevitably lead people to accept libertarianism. • The extent to which free moral agents should follow a normative ethic. • The degree to which free will makes the use of prayer irrelevant. • The degree to which beliefs about free will can be reconciled with beliefs about predestination.</p>	<p>basis for moral decision making for believers and/or non-believers. • The strengths and weaknesses of Finnis' Natural Law and/or Proportionalism. • The effectiveness of Finnis' Natural Law and/or Proportionalism in dealing with ethical issues. • The extent to which Finnis' Natural Law is a better ethic than Proportionalism or vice versa</p> <p><u>A. The nature of religious experience</u> with particular reference to: Visions – sensory; intellectual; dreams. Conversion – individual/communal; sudden/gradual. Mysticism – transcendent; ecstatic and unitive. Prayer – types and stages of prayer according to Teresa of Avila.</p> <p><u>B. Mystical experience: William James' four characteristics of mystical experience:</u> ineffable, noetic, transient and passive. Rudolf Otto – the concept of the numinous; mysterium tremendum; the human predisposition for religious experience.</p>	<p>content above, such as: • The effectiveness of the terms non-cognitive, analogical and mythical as solutions to the problems of religious language. • The relevance of religious language issues in the 21st century. • The extent to which language games provide a suitable way of resolving the problems of religious language. • Whether symbolic language can be agreed as having adequate meaning as a form of language. • How far the works of Randall and Tillich provide a suitable counter-challenge to Logical Positivism. • Whether the strengths of language games outweigh the weaknesses</p> <p><u>D. The influence of religious experience on religious practice and faith:</u> Value for religious community including: affirmation of belief system; promotion of faith value system; strengthening cohesion of religious community. Value for individual including faith restoring; strengthening faith in face of opposition; renewal of commitment to</p>	<p>emotivism is not subjectivism. Challenges: no basic moral principles can be established; ethical debate becomes a pointless activity; there is no universal agreement that some actions are wrong.</p> <p>Issues for analysis and evaluation will be drawn from any aspect of the content above, such as: • Whether ethical and non-ethical statements are the same. • The extent to which ethical statements are not objective. • Whether moral terms are intuitive. • The extent to which moral terms are just expressions of our emotions. • Whether one of Naturalism, Intuitionism or Emotivism is superior to the other theories. • The extent to which the different meta-ethical theories encourage moral debate.</p> <p><u>D. The Bible as a source of wisdom and authority:</u> How the Christian biblical canon was established. Diverse views on the Bible as the word of God: different understandings of inspiration (the objective view of inspiration; the</p>	<p>Christian response to the challenge of secularism. • The extent to which the UK can be called a Christian country. • The extent to which a scientist must be an atheist. • Whether science has reduced the role of God in Christianity. • The extent to which it is possible to be both a committed Christian and a religious pluralist.</p> <p><u>D. Religious identity through unification: The development of the Ecumenical Movement since 1910</u> (World Missionary Conference); the World Council of Churches, its rationale, its mission and its work in three main areas: Unity, Mission, and Ecumenical Relations; Public Witness and Diakonia; and Ecumenical Formation. How developments in beliefs and practices have, over time, influenced and been influenced by developments in philosophical, ethical studies of religion.</p> <p><u>E. Religious identity through religious experience:</u> The development of the Charismatic Movement</p>	
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	<p>C. Challenges to the objectivity and authenticity of religious experience: With reference to Caroline Franks Davis (description-related; subject-related and object-related challenges). Claims of religious experience rejected on grounds of misunderstanding; claims delusional - possibly related to substance misuse, fantastical claims contrary to everyday experiences. Challenges: individual experiences valid even if non-verifiable; claims could be genuine - integrity of individual; one-off experiences can still be valid even if never repeated.</p> <p>Issues for analysis and evaluation will be drawn from any aspect of the content above, such as: • The impact of religious experiences upon religious belief and practice. • Whether different types of religious experience can be accepted as equally valid in communicating religious teachings and beliefs. • The adequacy of James' four characteristics in defining mystical experience. • The</p>	<p>religious ideals and doctrines.</p> <p><u>E. Miracles the definitions of:</u> St Thomas Aquinas (miracles different from the usual order), David Hume (transgression of a law of nature), R.F. Holland (contingency miracle), Richard Swinburne (religious significance). Consideration of reasons why religious believers accept that miracles occur: evidence from sacred writings; affirmation of faith traditions; personal experience.</p> <p><u>F. A comparative study of two key scholars from within and outside the Christian tradition and their contrasting views on the possibility of miracles:</u> David Hume – his scepticism of miracles including challenges relating to testimony based belief; credibility of witnesses; susceptibility of belief; contradictory nature of faith claims. Richard Swinburne – his defence of miracles, including definitions of natural laws and contradictions of Hume's</p>	<p>subjective view of inspiration; John Calvin's doctrine of accommodation).</p> <p><u>E. The early church (in Acts of the Apostles):</u> Its message and format: the kerygmata as presented by C. H. Dodd, with reference to Acts 2:14-39; 3:12-26. The challenges to the kerygmata (with reference to the historical value of the speeches in Acts and the work of Rudolf Bultmann). The adapting of the Christian message to suit the audience.</p> <p><u>F. Two views of Jesus: A comparison of the work of two key scholars,</u> including their views of Jesus with reference to their different methods of studying Jesus: John Dominic Crossan and N. T. Wright. Crossan: Jesus the social revolutionary; using apocryphal gospels; seeing Jesus as a product of his time; what the words of Jesus would have meant in Jesus' time. Wright: Jesus the true Messiah; critical realism; texts as 'the articulation of worldviews'; seeks to find the best</p>	<p>post-1960; main beliefs; implications for Christian practice in the experience of believers and Christian communities; philosophical challenges to charismatic experience (verification and natural explanation).</p> <p><u>F. Religious identity through responses to poverty and injustice:</u> The basis (political, ethical and religious) of South American liberation theology with reference to Gustavo Gutierrez and Leonardo Boff; Roman Catholic Church responses to South American liberation theology.</p> <p>Issues for analysis and evaluation will be drawn from any aspect of the content above, such as: • Whether the work of the World Council of Churches can be viewed as a success or a failure. • The extent to which the non-membership of the Roman Catholic Church affects the aims of the World Council of Churches. • The strengths and weaknesses of the Charismatic Movement. • Whether a natural</p>	
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	<p>adequacy of Otto's definition of 'numinous'. • The extent to which the challenges to religious experience are valid. • The persuasiveness of Franks Davis' different challenges</p> <p><u>A. Inherent problems of religious language:</u> Limitations of language for traditional conceptions of God such as infinite and timeless; challenge to sacred texts and religious pronouncements as unintelligible; challenge that religious language is not a common shared base and experience; the differences between cognitive and non-cognitive language.</p> <p><u>B. Religious language as cognitive (traditional religious view), but meaningless (Logical Positivists' view):</u> Logical Positivism - Verification (A. J. Ayer) – religious ethical language as meaningless; there can be no way in which we could verify the truth or falsehood of the propositions (e.g. God is good, murder is wrong); falsification nothing can</p>	<p>arguments regarding contradictory nature of faith claims and credibility of witnesses. Issues for analysis and evaluation will be drawn from any aspect of the content above, such as: • The impact of religious experiences upon religious belief and practice. • Whether religious communities are entirely dependent on religious experiences. • The adequacy of different definitions of miracles. • How far different definitions of miracles can be considered as contradictory. • The effectiveness of the challenges to belief in miracles. • The extent to which Swinburne's responses to Hume can be accepted as valid</p>	<p>explanation for the traditions found in the Gospels. Issues for analysis and evaluation will be drawn from any aspect of the content above, such as: • The extent to which the Bible can be regarded as the inspired word of God. • Whether the Christian biblical canonical orders are inspired, as opposed to just the texts they contain. • The extent to which the kerygmata (within the areas of Acts studied) are of any value for Christians today. • Whether the speeches in Acts have any historical value. • The validity of using critical realism to understand Jesus. • The validity of using apocryphal gospels to understand Jesus</p> <p><u>A. Social developments in religious thought – attitudes towards wealth:</u> <u>The dangers of wealth</u> (with reference to Mark 10:17-25; Matthew 6:25-34; Luke 12:33-34, 1 Timothy 6:10); apparent contradiction between biblical teaching on stewardship and the ascetic ideal; the prosperity gospel</p>	<p>explanation for charismatic experiences conflicts with the religious value of the experience. • Whether the political and ethical foundations of liberation theology are more important than any religious foundations. • The extent to which liberation theology offered a cultural challenge to the Roman Catholic Church</p>	
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	<p>counter the belief (Antony Flew). Criticisms of verification: the verification principle cannot itself be verified; neither can historical events; universal scientific statements; the concept of eschatological verification goes against this. Criticisms of falsification: Richard Hare – blik (the way that a person views the world gives meaning to them even if others do not share the same view); Basil Mitchell – partisan and the stranger (certain things can be meaningful even when they cannot be falsified); Swinburne – toys in the cupboard (concept meaningful even though falsifying the statement is not possible).</p> <p><u>C. Religious language as non-cognitive and analogical: Proportion and attribution</u> (St Thomas Aquinas) and qualifier and disclosure (Ian Ramsey). Challenges including how far analogies can give meaningful insights into religious language. A consideration of how these two views</p>		<p>of the Word-Faith movement.</p> <p><u>B. Social developments in religious thought –</u> migration and Christianity in the UK: The challenges of Christian migration to the UK, with reference to assimilation, provision of worship, style of worship and issues of culture. The reverse mission movement to the UK.</p> <p><u>C. The relationship between religion and society:</u> religion, equality and discrimination. Social developments in religious thought – feminist theology and the changing role of men and women: The contribution of Mary Daly and Rosemary Radford Ruether to feminist theology. The changing role of men and women with reference to the issue of the ordination of women priests and bishops; the impact on the lives of believers and communities within Christianity today. Issues for analysis and evaluation will be drawn from any aspect of the content above, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The extent to which		
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	<p>(Aquinas/Ramsey) can be used to help understand religious teachings.</p> <p>Issues for analysis and evaluation will be drawn from any aspect of the content above, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The solutions presented by religious philosophers for the inherent problems of using religious language. • The exclusive context of religious belief for an understanding of religious language. • The persuasiveness of arguments asserting either the meaningfulness or meaninglessness of religious language. • How far Logical Positivism should be accepted as providing a valid criterion for meaning in the use of language. • To what extent do the challenges to Logical Positivism provide convincing arguments to nonreligious believers. • Whether non-cognitive interpretations are valid responses to the challenges to the meaning of religious language. 		<p>wealth is a sign of God's blessing.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whether the ascetic ideal is compatible with Christianity. • The extent to which the UK is a modern mission field. • The relative ease of assimilation of Christian migrants into Christian churches in the UK. • Whether men and women are equal in Christianity. • The extent to which feminist theology impacts modern Christian practice 		
Assessment / Composite Tasks	Assessment / Composite Tasks	Assessment / Composite Tasks	Assessment / Composite Tasks	Assessment / Composite Tasks	



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AO1 Essay AO2 Essay	AO1 Essay AO2 Essay Mock	AO1 Essay AO2 Essay	AO1 Essay AO2 Essay Mock	AO1 Essay AO2 Essay	
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