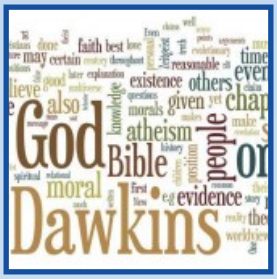
Religious Studies (Eduqas A Level)

Getting Ready for Religious Studies



The RS course is varied and interesting, there are 3 papers at the end of your 2 years, and teaching is divided into 3 strands to cover these. There are various different skills that are used across all three. We will be giving you some suggested ideas for what you could do to help prepare for study, both generally and at least one more specific to each paper. All of these are optional, and you can choose those that appeal most to you. We will be studying Eduqas RS A level.

Read

Reading almost anything good will help you. Fiction often has ethical, religious or philosophical themes. Non-fiction can show you how to (or not to!) structure your own writing. These are a few suggestions but are not exhaustive at all. Several of the more "classic" ones are available free online.

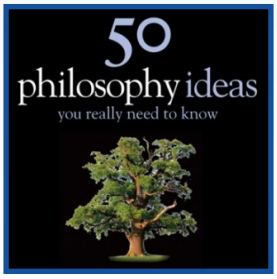
- The Good Man Jesus and the Scoundrel Christ –Philip Pullman
- To Kill a Mockingbird – Harper Lee
- Brave New World – Aldous Huxley
- Mansfield Park – Jane Austen
- Middlemarch/Adam Bede – George Eliot
- The pig that wants to be eaten – Julian Baggini
- 50 Philosophy Ideas you really need to know - Ben Dupre
- Think – Simon Blackburn
- The Blind Watchmaker, and/or The God Delusion – Richard Dawkins

Watch

There are also lots of shows which include reference to these themes. Here are some of the RPE team's favourites:

- The Good Place (Netflix)
- The Story of God with Morgan Freeman (Netflix)
- Pilgrimage (BBC)
- Sacred Wonders (BBC)
- Divine Women (BBC) - no longer on iplayer but clips here https://www.bbc.co.uk/teach/class-clips-video/religious-studies-ks3-gcse-divine-women/z73vwty

Online



https://www1.chester.ac.uk/departments/theology-and-religious-studies

TRS Chester Religious Studies are holding a series of webinars on Tuesday lunchtimes in May, June and July on a variety of topics. Dip in!

Another interesting site is : https://oxplore.org/ where you can take part in votes on different topics and see what others think about them.

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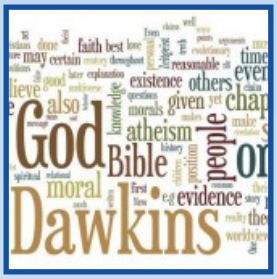


Paper one – Religion (Christianity)

It would be very helpful for you to have a basic overview of Christian beliefs and Practices. (Some of this overlaps with GCSE if you studied it)

The Bible Project https://bibleproject.com/explore/ has a series of very helpful overview videos. The Old Testament and New Testament overviews would be really helpful to watch, as is the "How to read the Bible" series starting with "What is the Bible?"

BBC has a collection of resources connected to some of the ideas we look at here: https://www.bbc.co.uk/teach/gcse-national-5-religious-studies/zhptrj6, these are quite general and cover mostly topics in the Religion paper with some in Philosophy or Ethics too.

Paper two – Philosophy of Religion

A big part of what we do in Philosophy is analyze and debate different arguments for the existence of God, and whether we think these are good or bad arguments and why.

Watch this debate between William Lane Craig and Christopher Hitchens.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e8MzPmkNsgU

The video is called: DEBATE: Atheist vs Christian (Christopher Hitchens vs William Lane Craig)

If you watch from 12 minutes you will see William Lane Craig and Christopher Hitchens being introduced. William Lane Craig is a Christian and Christopher Hitchens was a New Atheist.

Structure of the talk

The lecture is quite long and so you may wish to watch this in stages. They talk for 20 minutes each and then have a right of reply each.

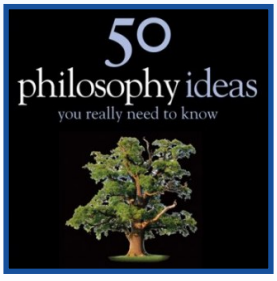
William Lane Craig starts at 13 minutes

Christopher Hitchens starts at 33minutes and 30 seconds

Williams Lane Craig replies to Christopher Hitchens from 54 minutes and 15 seconds

Christopher Hitchens replies to William Lane Craig from 1hr and 7 minutes

From one hour 20 minutes there is a cross examination that you may wish to watch.



Once you've had a look at that video, have a look at a brilliant youtube series called 'Crash Course Philosophy'. Here, some of the arguments we look at are presented and discussed. You don't have to watch them all, but the 'What is Philosophy'? one would be helpful to give you a sense of what do:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1A_CAkYt3GY&list=PLq5rFUzhsrBXuE0wxECMeTYSV-_52fGt5

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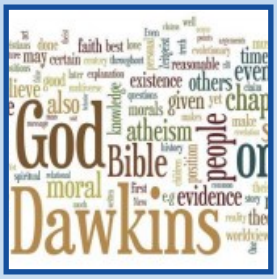
Paper three – Ethical Studies



In the first year we will be considering different ethical theories and how they approach issues. We will be looking at :

- Divine Command Theory
- Natural Law, applied to euthanasia and abortion
- Situation Ethics, applied to homosexuality and polyamory
- Utilitarianism, applied to animal experimentation for medical research and the use of nuclear weapons as a deterrence.

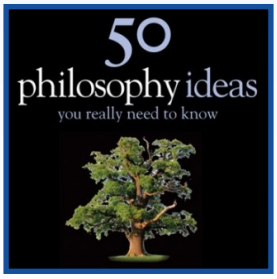
This activity encourages you to think about one of these issues as well as thinking critically about the views presented on each side.

WATCH: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IMPl25oraVc This is the first episode of Stephen Fry's series 'Out There', where he explores attitudes to homosexuality in different parts of the world.

Questions to think about and/or write about – try to support your answers with reasoning:

- Do you think there is a 'right' attitude and a 'wrong' attitude towards homosexuality? What is it that makes these attitudes right or wrong?
- Some people might argue that different cultures have different ideas about morality, and that these different cultural beliefs should be respected even if we don't agree with them. Do you think we should always respect the beliefs and attitudes of cultures different from our own, or should we try to persuade them to adopt our own beliefs instead?
- What do you think are the aims of this television series? Do you think they are good aims? Do you think this first episode is successful in achieving its aims?
- What religious reasons do people sometimes give for opposing homosexual relationships? How would you support or oppose these views?

To explore more general and VERY topical issues have a look at : http://blog.practicalethics.ox.ac.uk/



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