



OXFORD
HIGH SCHOOL
GDST

A Level Religion, Philosophy & Ethics

Sixth Form study options



Religion, Philosophy & Ethics (RPE)

Edexcel Religious Studies - 9RS0

Philosophy, ethics and theology are amongst the oldest of all academic subjects. In days gone by it was the only subject that could be studied at university. Law was then introduced, religious people developed science and, eventually, in the nineteenth century many of our modern subjects began to be taught for degrees. Yet, as we move well into the 21st century the skills developed in philosophy, ethics and theology are still those that employers and universities look for. Skills of analysis, textual criticism, empathy and an ability to clearly express one's own opinion in order to persuade others of your point of view – these are the things that will give a young person an advantage as they enter the adult world. On top of all this, our students will be exploring life, the fundamental and ultimate questions. Also: it's fun!

Philosophy, Ethics and Theology

A Level RPE covers the three key elements of the subject, allowing ideas to develop across all disciplines. This enables students to deconstruct and analyse a number of complex ideas and theories whilst also building a synoptic understanding of the entire course.

Philosophy

Philosophy is the *love of knowledge* or the *love of talking*. If you are interested in the world around you and like discussion then this is a subject you should be considering. We study one of the pure philosophies in depth: *the philosophy of religion*. It complements theology perfectly. The content involves the three major arguments for the existence of God, problems of evil and suffering, an exploration of religious experience, life after death, critiques of religion and philosophical language.

Ethics

Is war ever good? Do foetuses have rights? Should men be equal to women? However, more crucially, we have to ask what good actually means, or even if concepts such as good even exist! This study of meta-ethics underpins a wider consideration of normative deontology, utilitarianism, virtue ethics and more, all while applying these ethical theories to a number of contemporary ethical debates. Over the course students will study ethical questions surrounding war; sex and marriage; environmental issues; medical ethics at the beginning and end of life; gender and race and more.

New Testament Theology

Unique to this A Level is the opportunity to explore an in-depth study of text. Students who want to go into law, journalism, business or anything where success involves expressing your point of view from a position of strength will benefit from the opportunity to follow a proper academic study of text. We will explore prophecy, the first century Roman/Hellenistic world, philosophical writings like the Prologue in John, the synoptic question and the missing Q, the controversial questions raised in discovering the authorship of John, the crucifixion, scientific and historical responses and possible answers to the question, "why did Jesus have to die?"

The papers

There will be three examination papers, each being two hours long and representing a third of the overall assessment. These will be sat at the end of Year 13.

Teaching

According to national statistics, like many other subjects on offer in our Sixth Form, this subject is amongst the more difficult subjects in which to obtain an A grade. In other words, it is amongst the many recognised academic subjects our students can choose to study.

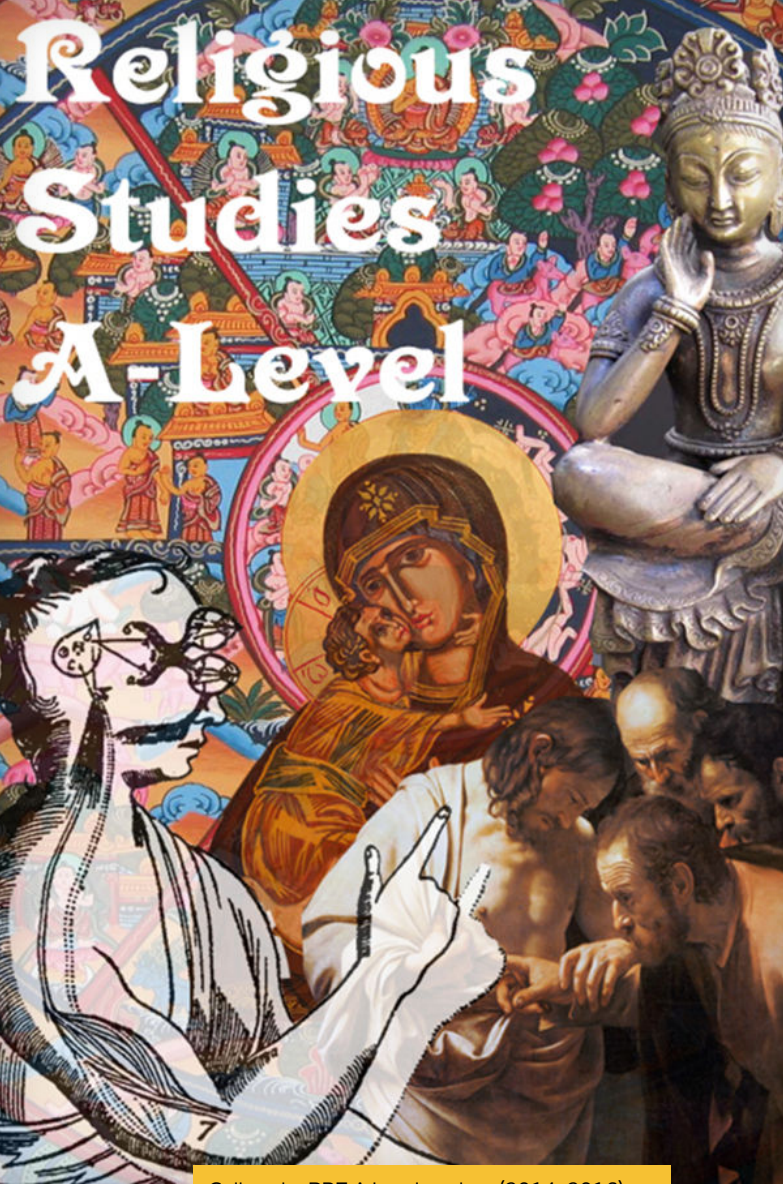
In RPE, we learn a combination of discussion, examination and evaluation of key texts and research. We look in depth at the context of these teachings and ideas; at the lives and works of the scholars who of devised them, and those who opposed them. These analytical skills form the key elements to flourishing in the subject, and are transferable skills that lead to a myriad opportunities in post A Level study.

The Department is led by Dr Willis. He completed his doctorate in Theology at Exeter University in 2014, and has experience as Head of Sixth Form and Head of RS.

Mrs Townend is an Oxford graduate, who completed her PGCE at Cambridge University.

Critical and academic

RPE is a rigorous and thought-provoking subject. The subject teaches you how to critique material and form well-developed and reasoned arguments in both verbal and written form.



Collage by RPE A Level student (2014-2016)

Highly relevant

“Religion is playing an increasingly important role in state politics, international relations, and social actions. The fostering of religious understanding has immense implications for individual, national and international well-being. By developing your knowledge of religions you will take valuable skills into whatever career you choose”.
(University of Cambridge)

Future careers

There is a wide variety of careers that graduates of Theology and Philosophy students go on to enjoy. The University of Cambridge notes that 40% of graduates go on to Education or Welfare Professional positions, while 38% continue into further study with MA's and DPhils. 15% also go on to a variety of business and public life roles. The University of Oxford states that recent graduates have gone on to careers such as Barrister, Marketing Executives, authors, and academics, as well as having prominent roles in Political Think Tanks.

Below are examples of where former students, of this Department, are today:

Senior Lawyer at Foreign and Commonwealth Office

Head of Social Housing Policy at Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government

Actor, roles include, Mutual Friends, Waking The Dead, Wallander and The Huntsman: Winter's War

Anaesthetist

Associate Director, Tenco Blue Ribbon (reputation consultant, worked with Instagram, Facebook, RBS, RNLI)

Archaeologist

Senior Consultant, Policy and Evaluation Unit at Ipsos MORI

Account Director at Just So London

Head of Apprenticeship Strategy at Department for Education

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