

## What is the course about?

Religious Studies at A Level seeks to challenge students' preconceptions and ways of thinking. From the outset, in Epistemology – the philosophy of knowledge, questions such as “how do I know what is true?” or “can we be certain of existence?” are explored by considering our responses to the great thinkers such as Descartes. In moral philosophy, we seek to understand what makes actions or people good or virtuous – ideas that underpin our sociological, psychological and political understanding. Building on some ideas from Religious Studies GCSE, in Year 13 we consider the existence and nature of the God of Abraham in the metaphysics of God by asking whether religious belief could be valid or meaningful. Lastly, in the metaphysics of the mind we consider what is known as the ‘hard problem’ – what is consciousness?

### Course content

#### Year 1: Epistemology

- What is knowledge?
- Perception as a source of knowledge:
- Reason as a source of knowledge
- The limits of knowledge

#### Year 1: Moral philosophy

- Utilitarianism
- Kantian deontological ethics
- Aristotelian virtue ethics
- Applied ethics: Stealing, simulated killing, eating animals, telling lies
- Meta-ethics

#### Year 2: Metaphysics of God

- The concept and nature of God
- Arguments relating to the existence of God
- Problem of evil
- Religious language

#### Year 2: Metaphysics of mind

- What do we mean by ‘mind’?
- Dualist theories
- Physicalist theories
- Functionalism

### Assessment

Two terminal examinations

## Career pathways

Analytical and critical thinking are the key skills required, and students will need to engage with challenging texts and develop academic writing. This provides an excellent platform for higher education. It is particularly relevant for university courses in philosophy, mathematics, theology, psychology, humanities, sociology, international relations, politics, and will also be of interest to scientists, as it relates to in medical ethics.

## Entry criteria

Minimum of five grade 4 to 9s at GCSE, including Maths, and a grade 6 in English Language or Literature or a humanities subject.