



Wath Sixth Form Subject Preparation Pack

RELIGIOUS STUDIES

World-class learning

World-class learning every lesson, every day

The highest expectations

Everyone can be successful; always expect the highest standards

No excuses

Create solutions not excuses; make positive thinking a habit

Growth mindset

Believe you can improve; work hard and value feedback

Never give up

Resilience is essential; be relentless in the pursuit of excellence

Everyone is valued

Diversity is celebrated; see the best in everyone

Integrity

Be trustworthy and honest; deliver on promises and walk the talk

A Level Religious Studies Transition Pack

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What is Religious Studies?

Religious Studies is an engaging qualification that introduces students to key religious beliefs and a wide range of ethical and philosophical issues. It also develops their skills in independent thinking, empathy and understanding of differing beliefs. Religious Studies is all about finding out what people believe and why. Our aim is develop young adults with the qualifications and skill-sets to navigate an ever-changing world.

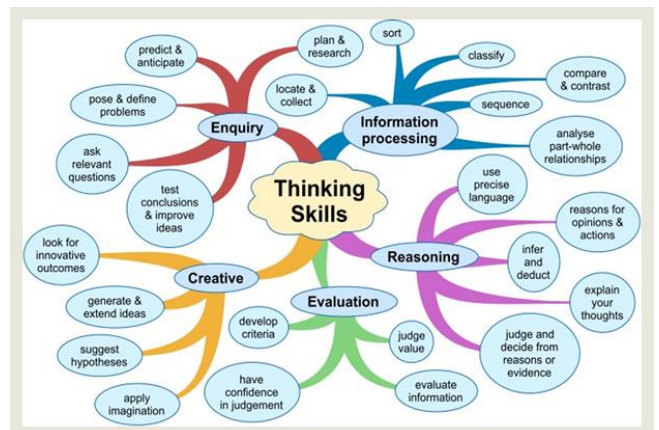
Why should I study Religious Studies?

Religious Studies is a subject that is highly valued by universities and future employers because of the higher level thinking abilities developed through the course. It involves an increased understanding of people and their beliefs in a world with such a variety of views. Analytical and philosophical thinking underlies all rational discourse and enquiry. This course give students the opportunities to:

- Understand the importance of examining knowledge and beliefs critically.
- Recognise, analyse and evaluate their own and others' beliefs and knowledge in a variety of contexts.
- Evaluate reasoning of different kinds.
- Make connections and synthesise information and arguments.
- Generate independent arguments and express them clearly.
- Ask and examine questions from a broad standpoint.
- Ethical and cultural awareness – highly sought after in the modern workplace
- Emotional intelligence
- Problem-solving and teamwork

RS promotes "key adaptable and marketable workplace skills, [which] are all highly valued by regional, national and international employers." *Durham University*

Religious Studies is one of the best forms of training for decision makers. In writing essays one takes information from a wide range of sources, weighs it up and then develops and defends a point of view. The ability to recognise your own and other people's presuppositions is an invaluable tool. In handling information, assimilating, evaluating, and presenting it, Religious Studies has the intuitive approach of the arts, but requires the same rigorous, critical and analytical skills as studying scientific subjects. The subject requires an enquiring mind. It trains you to think logically and to articulate ideas with precision noting any contradictions in the scholarly arguments.



What careers could Religious Studies lead to?

Religious Studies provides an excellent grounding in any career that requires analytical and communication skills, such as: the legal profession, the medical profession, the civil service, marketing and publishing. It will be of benefit to any careers that requires high level decision making and is highly considered by universities and employers.

You could take this course with other advanced level courses as a general preparation for a higher education course or as a foundation for studying Theology or Religious Studies at Higher Education. Religious Studies is a good foundation for entering employment as it helps you develop the skills, understanding and knowledge that many employers across lots of industries are looking for, especially in sectors where people are the main focus. Due to the nature of the subject – understanding people – it is impossible to put together a definitive list of careers that Religious Studies would benefit.

For A-Level choices, Religious Studies will complement many other subjects, including English, History, Psychology, Languages, Classics as well as Sciences and Maths. The subject matter is truly cross-curricular, spanning a whole range of disciplines.

“To be able to employ the disciplines of theology and philosophy effectively will not only make you a scholar of religion, but equip you to embark on a **wide range of careers.**” *Oxford University*

- ✓ The Russell Group has made it clear that RS A level provides good preparation for university, whilst Oxford and Cambridge University include Religious Studies in the top level list of ‘suitable Arts A levels.’
- ✓ The Russell Group *Informed Choices* booklet cites RS A Level as particularly useful for students wishing to study: English, History, History of Art, Law, Politics, and Philosophy degrees.

Careers

Students with an RS A-level have pursued careers as diverse as law, the Civil Service, education, the media, publishing, banking and accountancy. RS is also a great option for those thinking of applying for medicine, as it promotes ethical awareness and empathy.

Our leavers

In recent years, our students have gone on to study the following subjects:

- ✓ Law (King’s College London)
- ✓ Philosophy (University of Lincoln)
- ✓ Politics and philosophy
- ✓ English and Philosophy (Leeds)
- ✓ Performing Arts
- ✓ Theology and Religion (Edinburgh, Exeter)
- ✓ Accountancy Apprenticeship

Having listed these, it’s important to remember that there is no ‘typical’ RS student, and our students have gone on to study a wide range of subjects at university.

In 2011, for example, 20% of all students admitted to Oxford University to study Maths had an RS A Level.



What will I study?

Students follow the Eduqas A level Religious Studies. Y12 and Y13 pupils are taught separately as mixed ability groups. The specification offers an academic approach to the study of religion and is accessible to students of any religious persuasion or none. It is designed to develop interest in, and enthusiasm for a study of religion and its relation to the wider world. It also encourages students to adopt an enquiring, critical and reflective approach to the study of religion whilst also reflecting on their own values, opinions and attitudes.

The course is structured into three components.

Component 1:

A Study of Religion: Option B: Islam

There will be four themes within each option:

- **Religious figures and sacred texts** – P.I.A; Qur'an; Shari'a; Jihad
- **Religious concepts and religious life** – Allah; Prophets; Angels & LAD; Prayer; Zakah; Ethical action
- **Significant social and historical developments in religious thought** – Role of science; Pluralism; Family life; Islamophobia
- **Religious practices and religious identity** – Mosque; Sunni/Shi'a split; Ramadan; Sufism

How will I be assessed?

**(2 hour written examination.
33.3% of A level)**

Answer two questions

You pick one from Section A and one from Section B

Each question is worth 50 marks

Part a - AO1 – Knowledge and understanding (20)

Part b - AO2 - Analysis & Evaluation (30)

Questions can be taken from any area of the specification.

Component 2:

Philosophy of Religion

There will be four themes within this component:

- **Arguments for the existence of God** – First cause & Big Bang; Design & evolution; Ontological & proof
- **Challenges to religious belief** – Problem of Evil, Psychology; New Atheism
- **Religious experience & Miracles**
- **Religious language** – Verification and Falsification; Analogy, myth, symbol, Language Games

How will I be assessed?

**(2 hour written examination.
33.3% of A level)**

Answer two questions

You pick one from Section A and one from Section B

Each question is worth 50 marks

Part a - AO1 – Knowledge and understanding (20)

Part b - AO2 - Analysis & Evaluation (30)

Questions can be taken from any area of the specification.

Component 3:

Religion and Ethics

There will be four themes within this component:

- **Ethical thought** – DCT; Virtue Ethics; Egoism; Naturalism; Intuitionism, Emotivism
- **Deontological ethics** – abortion & euthanasia; Immigration & Capital Punishment
- **Teleological ethics** – Homosexuality & Polyamorous relationships; Animal experimentation & Capital punishment
- **Determinism; free will**

How will I be assessed?

**(2 hour written examination.
33.3% of A level)**

Answer two questions

You pick one from Section A and one from Section B

Each question is worth 50 marks

Part a - AO1 – Knowledge and understanding (20)

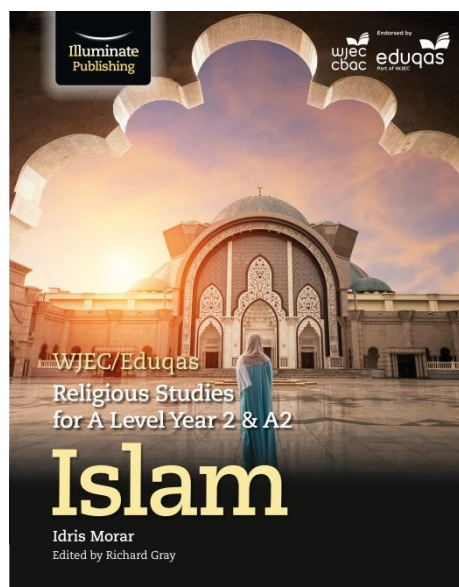
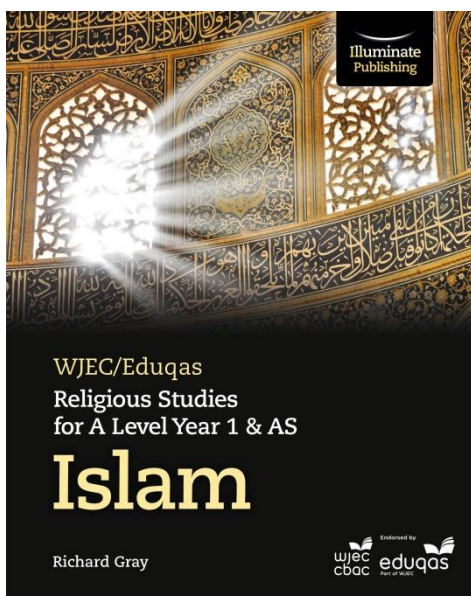
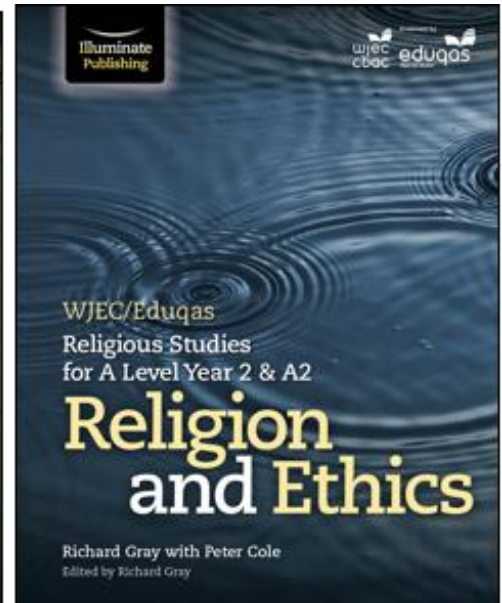
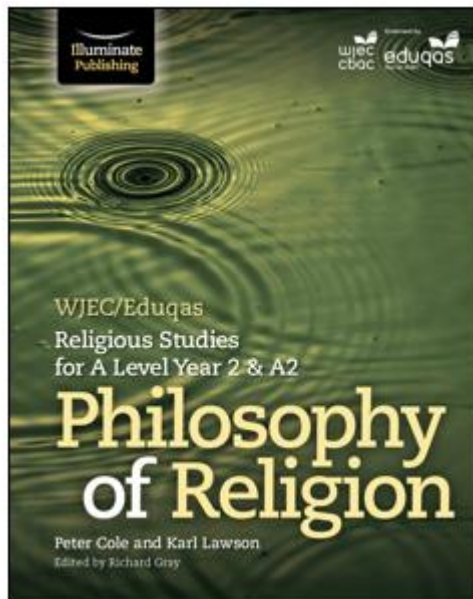
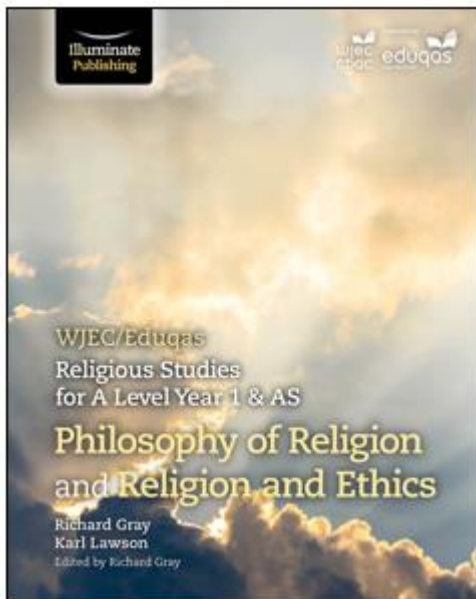
Part b - AO2 - Analysis & Evaluation (30)

Questions can be taken from any area of the specification.

Recommended resources

Eduqas has published a range of textbooks for students to use whilst studying this course. You may wish to purchase your own but we have copies in school to use within lessons.

They are split into Year 1 & Year 2. Below are some of the examples of the books we use.



Additional resources

Throughout the course we will also refer to topics in the news, tv programmes and films and social media which all focus on aspects of the course we deliver.

Meet the team

Mrs Redfern



Time and Role at Wath Academy –

2 years

Head of Department Religious Studies

Where and what I studied at University/ PGCE –

Lancaster University – BA (Hons) Religious Studies

Sheffield Hallam University – PGCE Religious Studies

Why I wanted to become a teacher? –

A love for my subject but also to inspire students from all walks of life, imparting lessons that will help shape the next generation.

Why I love teaching? –

It's a joy and privilege to inspire and motivate students to explore different values and attitudes, considering moral and ethical issues to help them reflect on their own approach to making moral decisions.

Mrs Eyre



Time and Role at Wath Academy –

13 years

Teacher in Religious Studies and Social Science Faculty & Academic Year Leader

Where and what I studied at University/ PGCE –

University of Leeds – BA (Hons) Theology and Religious Studies

Sheffield Hallam University – PGCE Religious Studies

Why I wanted to become a teacher?

Love for my subject and working with young people. Always wanted to be a teacher.

Why I love teaching?

Every day is different and getting to educate young people and prepare them for exams and eventually leaving school for the next steps.

Summer Tasks

Aim: The aim of these tasks is to develop your understanding of key religious content and key terms to ease the transition into the study of subject at A Level standard. By completing the tasks below, you will consolidate or develop knowledge of important content which will inevitably aid your understanding of the course over the next term.

Philosophy of Religion

[Stephen Fry on God | The Meaning Of Life | RTÉ One - YouTube](#)



Stephen Fry on God | The Meaning Of Life | RTÉ One

The Meaning of Life with Gay Byrne, Sunday 1st February, 10.30pm See more at: <http://www.rte.ie/player> Watch more from The Meaning of Life here <http://www.rte.ie/tv/meaningoflife/player.html>

www.youtube.com

Watch the clip: Stephen Fry on God

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-suvkwNYSQo>

Explain arguments against existence of God and suggest possible responses to create a balanced argument

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue or grey ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are approximately 20 lines visible. The paper has a slight shadow on the right side, suggesting it's part of a bound notebook.

Religion & Ethics

Animal research and Utilitarianism



The utilitarian principle aims for the ‘greatest happiness for the greatest number.’ On the one hand, it clearly projects the happiness of many human lives than animals if we consider lives already saved and potential human disaster by not controlling epidemics. On the other hand, in the use of animal experimentation for medical research, it would appear that if facts are correct and there are many uncertainties and discrepancies then the greatest happiness for humans is not guaranteed in relation to suffering of animals.

Concerning the principle of utility that ‘promotes pleasure and avoids pain.’ There is pleasure in that it benefits humans that may potentially suffer, but it brings suffering for animals – which outweighs the other? Is it a matter of the numbers involved? For Bentham, it may be that the quantity matters most, for Mill it is about the quality of the pleasure, which means, reluctantly, a utilitarian would have to support some forms of animal experimentation for medical research.

Bentham himself is considered a pioneer of animal rights. Bentham did not argue that humans and nonhumans had equal moral significance, but argued that the latter's interests should be taken into account. Bentham changed the views of many people towards animals; rather than regarding them as inferior to human beings because of their inability to reason, Bentham applied ethical Utilitarianism to animals as his famous quotation affirms, 'The question is not, can they reason? Nor can they talk? But can they suffer?'. Bentham may well have disagreed with animal experimentation for medical research; as Julia Driver notes, 'What struck many as lacking in Bentham's value theory was a special place for the rational capacities that mark a difference between persons and animals.'

Bentham's hedonic calculus suggests that the whole of the calculus should be used in dealing with both human beings and animals. The only satisfactory way of dealing with this is to consider the principle of 'extent' and look long term to when the suffering of animals in the present leads to less suffering for both animals and humans in the future overall.

Mill, however, is quite clear that animal pleasures and pains do not equate to their human counterparts in terms of value. Animals do not appreciate the higher pleasures and cannot, therefore operate as utilitarian beings. This does not mean they do not need protecting and treating well. As Julia Driver comments 'This distinction between higher and lower pleasures allows Mill to hold that while animals do have moral standing in virtue of their sentience – that is, in virtue of their capacity to feel pleasure and pain, and thus to have both positive and negative experiences – their moral standing is not the same as that of persons who have higher moral standing in virtue of their capacity to experience higher pleasures.'

In response to animal experimentation for medical research, Strong Rule Utilitarianism would most probably advocate a reasonable argument in support based mainly upon the principles of Mill's view.

Weak Rule Utilitarianism however may be more flexible, as Mill also argued that 'reasons for legal intervention in favour of children, apply not less strongly to... the lower animals'. And that intervention should be based on 'the intrinsic merits of the case.' Rather than upon 'incidental consequences... to the interests of human beings'. Therefore, a weak rule utilitarian would not consider the variants but work with the underlying principles as advocated by the distinction between higher and lower pleasures. Elsewhere Mill is clear that animal pleasures and pains do not equate to their human counterparts in terms of value. Therefore, there would be no absolute response to the issue which is problematic, not for the utilitarian, but for making a policy regarding animal experimentation for medical research.



Questions:

- 1. What are some of the pros of animal research?**

- 2. What are some of the cons of animal research?**

- 3. What would a utilitarian say about animal research?**

- 4. What is your view on animal research?**

Religion – Islam

To support the study of Islam you need to have a working background of the topic areas below. Research each topic area and produce a written report. Save your reports and bring them to your first lesson in September.

There is a wealth of resources can be found in the digital resources folder on the Eduqas A Level Religious Studies website.

<https://www.eduqas.co.uk/qualifications/religious-studies/as-a-level/>



1. Topic: Historical background.

You need to know: The Messenger – The meanings of the Life of Muhammad

<https://www.biography.com/people/muhammad>

2. Topic: Sunni and Shi'a Muslims.

Question: What are the main differences in belief and practice of Sunnis and Shi'as, and do you think both Sunni and Shi'a can be Muslims.

3. Topic: key beliefs

What are the 6 articles of faith and why are they significant in Islam?

4. Topic: Key beliefs

What are the five pillars of Islam, why are they significant in Islam?

5. Topic: Key practices

Explore the purpose and significance of a mosque



6. Topic: Key practices

Investigate how Islamic festivals such as Eid ul fitr, Eid ul Adha and Ashura are celebrated and why they are celebrated. .

7. Topic: The attitude to women has diverse opinions within a faith.

The first Muslim was Muhammad's first wife, Khadijah. She was his boss and fifteen years his senior! We must try and produce a balanced view of everything we learn. With Islam that is probably even more the case in the current climate. In Oxford, the Muslim cleric, Taj Hargey, might be described as 'radical' by some (and perhaps even by himself). However, he really is not the stereotypical radical. It is a shame that the word radical, in connection with Islam, has come to mean extremist.

Look at the images and text below to see some of the 'radical' changes being proposed by the MECO British Muslim group.

OXFORD MUSLIMS LAUNCH ANTI-VEIL CAMPAIGN



BRITISH MUSLIMS LAUNCH NATIONAL CAMPAIGN TO PROHIBIT ALL PUBLIC FACE-MASKING IN UK (INCLUDING BURQA/NIQAB)



Meco Holds Anti-ISIS Rally Teaching is the core of what we do.



Research and write a report on how Islam MECO fosters an open-mindedness, tolerance and social cohesion for British Muslims by encouraging their effective integration into the UK mainstream. You must use specific examples to support your ideas. Use the following link to help: (<http://www.meco.org.uk>)

"If you enjoy deep thinking and questioning things that most people take for granted about the world, then you will probably love RS."

"RS is never boring. The skills I've learned from studying RS go beyond learning how to construct a solid argument. I've learned to be more tolerant of views that are different from mine. I've learned to never stop asking questions and be confident in sharing my views. These are invaluable skills for life."

Testaments from Religious Studies Students

"I chose RS for several reasons, the obvious being the brilliant teachers and great results. I then really enjoyed RS because it continuously challenged my thinking."

"RS helped me to develop reasoning skills and helped me to become a lot more open minded. I also found that it helped me to develop the ability to soundly argue my points, in a creative and logical way. I now have a comprehensive understanding of various philosophical and theological arguments, thanks to my amazing teachers who always went above and beyond what was expected and were always there to help.

Only after leaving school, and having philosophical discussions with other students and adults, have I fully realised the excellence and depth of what we studied and thought about. I definitely have the tools to win most arguments and feel confident in heated academic debate."