

Transition Booklet A Level Religious Studies (Christianity, Philosophy, Ethics)

Mandatory Tasks

Task	Page No.	Completed
Philosophy Pre-course reading		
Philosophy Tasks 1 and 2		
Philosophy Baseline Assessment		
Ethics Pre-course reading		
Ethics Tasks 1 and 2		
Ethics Baseline Assessment		
Key Scholars Research Task		

The completed work should be emailed to rlewis@christtheking.notts.sch.uk

Optional Tasks pages

Task	What did you read, see or do?
Book recommendations	
Movie recommendations	
Online recommendations	

Introduction

Welcome to Christ the King Sixth Form!

You are about to embark on a busy and important two years of sixth form study.

Sixth form life is very different. You are going to feel much more independent, empowered and responsible for your own learning.

The expectation is that this journey is down to you.

You need to commit and relish in the challenge of sixth form life; ambition, belief and commitment are essential for your success.

This booklet contains a range of transition activities designed for you to complete over the late spring into summer in preparation for starting the course in September.

By completing the tasks, you will be better prepared for the start of your course.

Your commitment starts now!

During A-level Religious studies we study three main components: Christianity and Ethics which will be taught by Mrs Lewis and Philosophy which will be taught by Miss Stapleton.

If you have any questions about the different components, please contact the relevant teacher via email.

At the start of the course you will need:

- 3 x lever arch 'archive folders' (for Christianity, Philosophy and Ethics) with dividers named with the units covered
- 1 x ring binder 'working folder' with a sufficient amount of lined paper inside it for note taking (This is the folder you will carry with you to and from school. It will contain the notes from the unit currently being studied)
- At least two working ball point or biro pens
- Coloured highlighters at least 6
- General personal stationary as preferred suggested items to include pencils, ruler etc.

Course Outline

Below is a general overview of the topics studied at A level. We study the Eduqas specification. More information, resources and a detailed specification can be found at:

https://www.eduqas.co.uk/qualifications/religious-studies-as-a-level/#tab_overview

Christianity

Theme 1 – Religious figures and sacred texts	Theme 2 – Religious concepts and Religious life	Theme 3 – Social Developments in Religious Thought	Theme 4 - Religious practices that shape religious identity
Jesus' birth	The Nature of God	Attitudes to wealth	Baptism
Jesus' resurrection	The Trinity	Migration and Christianity in the UK	Eucharist
The Bible as a source of wisdom and authority	Atonement	Feminist Theology	Festivals
The early church	Faith and Works	Challenges from secularisation	Unification
Two views of Jesus	The community of believers	Challenges from science	Religious Experience
	Key moral principles	Challenges from pluralism and diversity within religion	Poverty and Injustice – Liberation Theology

Philosophy

Theme 1 – Arguments for the Existence of God	Theme 2 – Challenges to religious belief	Theme 3 – Religious Experience	Theme 4 – Religious Language
Inductive arguments – cosmological and teleological	The problem of evil and suffering	The nature of religious experiences	Inherent problems with religious language
Challenges to inductive arguments	Religious responses to the problem of evil – Augustinian and Irenaean type theodicies	Mystical experiences – William James and Rudolf Otto	Religious language as cognitive but meaningless
Deductive arguments – ontological	Sigmund Freud	Challenges to the objectivity and authenticity of religious experiences	Religious language as non- cognitive and analogical
Challenges to deductive arguments	Carl Jung	Influence of religious experience on religious practice and faith	Religious language as non- cognitive and mythical
	New Atheism	Miracle	Religious language as non- cognitive and symbolic
			Language games

Ethics

Theme 1 – Ethical Thought	Theme 2 – Deontological Ethics	Theme 3 – Teleological Ethics	Theme 4 – Determinism and Freewill
Divine Command Theory	Aquinas' Natural Law	Situation Ethics	Religious Freewill – Pelagius and Arminius
Virtue Ethics	Application of Natural Law – Abortion and Voluntary Euthanasia	Application of Situation Ethics – Homosexuality and Polyamory	Libertarianism – Philosophical, Scientific and Psychological
Ethical egoism	Modern Updates to Natural Law – John Finnis and Hoose's Proportionalism	Bentham's Act Utilitarianism & Mill's Rule Utilitarianism	Religious Predestination – Augustine and John Calvin
Meta Ethics – Ethical Naturalism, Intuitionism and Emotivism	Application to Capital Punishment and Immigration	Application of Utilitarianism – Animal experimentation and Nuclear Weapons	Hard Determinism – Philosophical, Scientific and Psychological

As you can see there is a LOT of content. The course is challenging and will require you to have to really THINK and come to conclusions on a variety of philosophical, ethical and religious issues. Whilst this is certainly a challenging A Level is incredibly rewarding and one that students thoroughly enjoy.

In this A Level you will develop the following skills:

- Analysis and evaluation of a range of ideas.
- Flexibility in your thought process.
- Interpretation of evidence.
- Questioning, reasoning and judging.
- Creating and evaluating different arguments on an issue.

<u>Philosophy</u>

An Introduction to the Study of Philosophy

'Philosophy' comes from the Ancient Greek 'Philosophia' which literally means 'love of wisdom'.

Philosophy is 'thinking about thinking'. Philosophers consider fundamental questions. They do not merely ponder over ultimate questions and offer different theories as answers; but they examine whether the question is the right one as well as its implications. Philosophy of religion is a branch of philosophy concerned with questions regarding religion, including the nature and existence of God, the examination of religious experience, analysis of religious vocabulary and texts, and the relationship of religion and science. It allows us to look objectively at religious beliefs without a presumption of the existence of a deity.

Philosophy of Religion asks and tries to answer questions such as:

- Is there more to reality than meets the eye?
- Is there a God? What do we mean by God?
- What are the arguments for and against God's existence?
- How can we justify God in the face of suffering and evil?
- Is religion all in the mind?
- How do we know a religious experience is valid?
- How can we talk about God?

Task 1 – Philosophy – Existence of God

Look at these different arguments for the existence of God. In the box next to the summaries outline your response to the view – how convincing is the argument? Does it leave anything unanswered? Does it raise any further questions? Is there evidence to support it?

The teleological argument	
suggests that due to the	
intricacy we can observe	
in our universe (such as	
our unique fingerprints,	
patterns in nature, the	
fine balance of the	
atmosphere to allow for	
human survival) that	
there must have been a	
designer for the universe	
and that designer is God.	
The cosmological	
argument suggests that	
God exists as there must	
have been something	
outside the universe and	
unaffected by its laws	
(such as time and gravity) that started off	
the processes that	
resulted in the creation of	
our universe. That things	
can't go back infinitely –	
there must be a	
beginning	
The ontological argument	
suggests that God must	
exist by his definition. If	
God is that than which	
nothing greater can be	
thought of then he must	
exist, otherwise he would	
not be the greatest thing	
every thought of.	

Task 2 – Learning new vocabulary and phrases. Write the correct keyword alongside its definition. The keywords can be found underneath the table. You may need to use the web to help you.

 -
Beings which, if they exist, cannot not exist; beings which are not
dependent on any other for their existence.
On the basis of experience; used of an argument, such as the
cosmological argument, which is based on experience or empirical
evidence
Beings that depend upon something else for their existence. They have
the property that they need not be, or could have been different.
A set of statements which is such that one of them (the conclusion) is
supported or implied by the others (the premises).
Related to beauty
Argument constructed on possibly true premises reaching a logically
possible and persuasive conclusion.
The view that the dominant foundation of knowledge is experience.
Without or prior to experience; used of an argument, such as the
ontological argument, which is based on acquired knowledge
independent of or prior to experience.
A chain of causes or sequence of reasoning that can never come to an
end.
A teleological argument that claims that nature has been planned in
advance for the needs of human beings.
Something that adds to our concept of the subject.
An argument in which, if the premises are true, then the conclusion must
be true.

A priori	Anthropic principle	Contingent beings
argument	Predicate	Deductive arguments
aesthetic	Necessary beings	Infinite regression
Inductive argument	A posteriori	empiricism

Task 3 – Philosophy Baseline Assessment.

Assessments across the course will generally take the form of essays that come in two parts.

In the first part you will be assessed on your knowledge and understanding of religion and belief. In the second part you will be assessed on your ability to analyse and evaluate aspects of religion and belief.

You will have one hour to answer both parts of each essay question.

For your baseline assessment I want you to answer the following questions spending no more than 25 minutes on part a and no more than 35 minutes on part b.

a) Explain why some people believe that God exists. (20 marks)

b) "God does not exist" Evaluate this view. (30 marks)

Ethics

An Introduction to the Study of Ethics

What is ethics?

At its simplest, ethics is a system of moral principles. They affect how people make decisions and lead their lives. Ethics is concerned with what is good for individuals and society and is also described as moral philosophy. The term is derived from the Greek word ethos which can mean custom, habit, character or disposition.

Ethics covers the following dilemmas:

- how to live a good life
- our rights and responsibilities
- the language of right and wrong
- moral decisions what is good and bad?

Our concepts of ethics have been derived from religions, philosophies and cultures. They infuse debates on topics like abortion, human rights and professional conduct.

Approaches to ethics

Philosophers nowadays tend to divide ethical theories into three areas: metaethics, normative ethics and applied ethics.

- Meta-ethics deals with the nature of moral judgement. It looks at the origins and meaning of ethical principles.
- Normative ethics is concerned with the content of moral judgements and the criteria for what is right or wrong.
- Applied ethics looks at controversial topics like war, animal rights and capital punishment

Normative Ethics

Normative ethics is the branch of ethics which looks specifically at how we decide whether something is right or wrong, good or bad. Normative ethics is easily divided into two ways of deciding.

- **Teleological Decision Making** Sometimes we follow rules and principles and we consider something wrong if it breaks this rule or principle. E.g. I will never tell a lie; I will always keep my promises; I will never tell another person's secret; Killing someone is always wrong.
- **Deontological Decision Making** At other times we decide what the right or wrong thing to do is by looking at the possible outcomes or the individual situations. E.g. Is it wrong not to do my homework; Is it right for someone to take a human life in self-

defence; Should someone have an abortion because the pregnancy gets in the way of a holiday?

One of the big questions in moral philosophy is whether or not there are unchanging moral rules that apply in all cultures and at all times.

Some people think there are such universal rules that apply to everyone. This sort of thinking is called **moral absolutism**. Moral absolutism argues that there are some moral rules that are always true, that these rules can be discovered and that these rules apply to everyone.

Immoral acts - acts that break these moral rules - are wrong in themselves, regardless of the circumstances or the consequences of those acts. Absolutism takes a universal view of humanity - there is one set of rules for everyone - which enables the drafting of universal rules - such as the Declaration of Human Rights. Religious views of ethics tend to be absolutist.

Why people disagree with moral absolutism:

- Many people feel that the consequences of an act or the circumstances surrounding it are relevant to whether that act is good or bad
- Absolutism doesn't fit with respect for diversity and tradition

Moral relativists say that if you look at different cultures or different periods in history you'll find that they have different moral rules. Therefore it makes sense to say that "good" refers to the things that a particular group of people approve of. Moral relativists think that that's just fine, and dispute the idea that there are some objective and discoverable 'super-rules' that all cultures ought to obey. They believe that relativism respects the diversity of human societies and responds to the different circumstances surrounding human acts.

Why people disagree with moral relativism:

- Many people feel that moral rules have more to them than the general agreement of a group of people that morality is more than a super-charged form of etiquette
- Many people think we can be good without conforming to all the rules of society
- Moral relativism has a problem with arguing against the majority view: if most people in a society agree with particular rules, that's the end of the matter. Many of the improvements in the world have come about because people opposed the prevailing ethical view - moral relativists are forced to regard such people as behaving "badly"
- Any choice of social grouping as the foundation of ethics is bound to be arbitrary
- Moral relativism doesn't provide any way to deal with moral differences between societies

Task 1 – Ethical Dilemmas

Look at these different dilemmas. Work out what you would do in each situation, why you would do it and whether or not you have acted in a teleological way or deontological way.

On the Wilderness trail in the pioneering days in America many people lost their lives to the Indians. On one occasion a woman had a crying baby which threatened to give her party's hiding position away. Should she strangle the baby?	
Your best friend has told you a secret that could prevent an innocent person going to prison. Do you tell the police?	

You are a high court judge. In front of you is an innocent man but the jury have just found him guilty of murder. If you overturn the jury's verdict many people in the country will riot in protest. Do you send the innocent man to prison?
--

Task 2 – Learning new vocabulary and phrases. Write the correct keyword alongside its definition. The keywords can be found underneath the table. You may need to use the web to help you.

a form of ethics concerned with the meaning of ethical terms, the nature of moral statements and the foundations of moral principles.
a philosophy which holds that human beings are free, have free will and that any concept of determinism is necessarily false.
this term comes from the Greek word ethikos, which in its root form
(ethos) means custom or habit. it refers to a branch of moral
 philosophy that aims to determine the meaning of right and wrong exploration and discussion of whether or not general principles and
 rules exist which can determine ethical attitudes and behaviour.
the application of ethical theories to practical situations and moral dilemmas.
the belief that there are universal ethical standards that apply to every situation.
the concept of truth independent from individual subjectivity. A proposition is considered to have objective truth when its truth conditions are met without bias caused by a sentient subject.
a theory that suggests actions are good or bad according to a clear set of rules. Its name comes from the Greek word <i>deon</i> , meaning duty. Actions that obey these rules are ethical, while actions that do not, are not.
Teleological ethics, (teleological from Greek <i>telos</i> , "end"; <i>logos</i> , "science"), theory of morality that derives duty or moral obligation from what is good or desirable as an end to be achieved.
a lack of objective reality. It is related to ideas of consciousness, agency, personhood, reality, and truth

the view that there are no universal moral norms, but that an action should be judged right or wrong depending on the social, cultural and individual circumstances in each situation
the belief that suggests all events are predestined. Hard determinism - The belief that all actions are ultimately pre-determined and that there is no such thing as a 'free' choice.

Ethics	Meta Ethics	Applied Ethics	
Normative Ethics	Deontological	Objective	
Absolutism	Teleological	Determinism	
Relativism	Subjective	Libertarianism	

Research the following key scholars. Create the table below and complete it for the following scholars. The starred scholars are compulsory and the rest are optional.

Scholar	When were they alive? (i.e dates)	Where were they born/live their life?	How did they communicate their ideas? (i.e books they wrote)	Why were they inspired to develop their theory? (i.e social context in which they lived/people they were inspired by etc)	What were their key ideas/contributions to Philosophy, Ethics and/or Christianity?
Aristotle					

- Aristotle*
- St. Thomas Aquinas*
- St Augustine*
- John Calvin*
- Joseph Fletcher*
- Jeremy Bentham*
- John Stuart Mill*
- AJ Ayer*
- William Paley*
- St Teresa of Avila*
- William James*
- Rudolf Otto*
- Caroline Franks-Davis*
- David Hume*
- Richard Dawkins*
- Sally McFague*
- Rudolf Bultmann*
- Robert Adams
- Max Stirner

- F.H. Bradley
- H.A. Pritchard
- John Finnis
- Bernard Hoose
- John Locke
- Ivan Pavlov
- Thomas Hobbes
- Pelagius
- Jacobus Arminius
- Jean-Paul Satre
- Carl Rogers
- John Hick
- Gustavo Gutierrez
- Leonardo Boff
- Rene Descartes
- Immanuel Kant

Task 3 – Ethics Baseline Assessment.

Assessments across the course will generally take the form of essays that come in two parts.

In the first part you will be assessed on your knowledge and understanding of religion and belief. In the second part you will be assessed on your ability to analyse and evaluate aspects of religion and belief.

You will have one hour to answer both parts of each essay question.

For your baseline assessment I want you to answer the following questions spending no more than 25 minutes on part a and no more than 35 minutes on part b.

c) Explain how we decide what is right and wrong	(20 marks)
d) "There is no objective right and wrong". Evaluate this view.	(30 marks)

Optional work

Recommended reading list:

Brief Introductory Reading:

- Blackburn, S. Think, OUP 2001
- Craig, E. Philosophy: A Very Short Introduction, OUP 2002
- Law, S. The Philosophy Files, Orion 2002; The Outer Limits, Orion 2003;
- The Philosophy Gym, Hodder Headline 2003
- Nagel, T. What Does It All Mean?, OUP 1987 (reprinted 2004) Warburton, N.
- Philosophy: The Basics (5th ed.), Routledge 2012 Philosophy:

Philosophy

- Gaarder, J. Sophie's World , London : Phoenix House 1995
- Davies, B. An Introduction to the Philosophy of Religion, OUP 1993
- Annas, J. An Introduction to Plato's Republic (particularly Chapters 9-10), OUP 1998

Ethics:

- Vardy, P. The Puzzle of Ethics, SCM Press 1999
- Norman, R. The Moral Philosophers, OUP 1998

Religious Thought:

• McGrath, A. Christianity: An Introduction, Blackwell Publishing 2015

Video Resources and Tasks:

Watch the videos below, choosing one to focus on for your task. Write a list of discussion points/questions it raises. Choose (at least) one of your questions and draft at least three possible answers that might be given.

- https://www.ted.com/talks/kwame_anthony_appiah_is_religion_good_or_bad_this_is _a_trick_question/transcript#t-22290 Ted Talk by Kwame Anthony Appiah -- Is Religion Good or Bad?
- https://www.ted.com/talks/damon_horowitz/transcript Ted Talk by Damon Horowitz
 We Need a Moral Operating System
- https://www.ted.com/talks/tom_honey_on_god_and_the_tsunami/transcript Ted Talk by Tom Honey – Why Would God Create A Tsunami?
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e8MzPmkNsgU Debate: Atheist vs Christian (Christopher Hitchens vs William Lane Craig)

Films/ TV:

- Watch Lost (TV series). What moral and ethical points does this raise?
- Watch Sliding Doors (film). Do you think your life is pre-destined (set out for you) or can you control your own fate?

Audio Resources:

- Listen to 'The Moral Maze' on BBC Radio 4. (Available programmes vary over time) https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b006qk11 Note down the key points of argument. Create a flow chart of the main points of discussion.
- Listen to this episode of 'In Our Time'. http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b01mwx64 Based on these arguments, is it possible to argue that God necessarily exists?
- Listen to this episode of 'Thinking Allowed'. https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b099ypqf How should we help people who are dying?
- Listen to this podcast from 'Philosophy Now'. https://philosophynow.org/podcasts/Free_Will_and_the_Brain To what extent can we exercise free will? List ten examples of choices you have made in the last seven days. For each one, consider what factors influenced your choice (habit, parents, media, friends, consideration of consequences, etc



ONCE A THEOLOGIAN, ALWAYS A THEOLOGIAN!



Below are **suggestions** (not compulsory) of things to read, watch, listen etc.

	<image/> <image/> <image/> <image/> <image/> <image/> <image/>
<u></u>	https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p05xxvq3 https://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episodes/m0007fhl/sacred-wonders https://www.netflix.com/gb/title/80113701?source=35 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BhmIeSxXcxE https://www.disneyplus.com/en-gb/movies/secrets-of-christs-tomb-explorer- special/3SV6xehcJK23 https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLFF9E7ADD88FBA144 https://gloria.tv/post/spziyMnnkVRj1kUkcVNikHqsH
	https://thepanpsycast.com/home https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b075ft6f https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p01gvqlg/episodes/downloads# https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p02t7jgk https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b006qk11 https://philosophybites.com/ https://partiallyexaminedlife.com/category/podcast-episodes/?order=ASC https://thephilosophyguy.fireside.fm/ https://thephilosophy247.org/ https://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/philosopherszone/ https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p01gnn05

