

OCR A Level Religious Studies

Why study Religious Studies at The Sixth Form at Ridgewood?

- The results achieved by the department over the past three academic years are rated consistently as an Alps 3 ('Excellent'). In 2018 and 2020, all students achieved their target grades. In 2020 100% of grades were at least a C, and at least 50% of grades were A*-B.
- You will receive excellent teacher support from a dedicated team of specialists who are experienced A level teachers and have strong subject knowledge.
- A level Religious Studies also develops skills that will prepare you for university study and the world of work such as evaluation and debating skills as well as critical thinking and communication.
- Studying Religious Studies gives you the opportunity to discuss and debate interesting and topical world issues.

What topics will I study in this subject?

Topic	What this means
Paper 1: Philosophy of Religion	In Philosophy of Religion you will study philosophical issues and questions raised by religion and belief. These include arguments regarding the existence or non-existence of God, the nature and influence of religious experience, and the problems of evil and suffering. You will also explore philosophical language and thought, through significant concepts and the works of key thinkers, illustrated in issues or debates in the philosophy of religion.
Paper 2: Religion and Ethics	Religion and Ethics is characterised by the study of ethical language and thought, with exploration of key concepts and the works of influential thinkers. Ethical theory will also be applied to issues of importance; namely euthanasia, business ethics, and sexual ethics.
Paper 3: Developments in Christian Thought	In this component, learners have the opportunity to undertake a systematic study of key concepts within the development of Christian thought. Learners will explore religious beliefs, values and teachings, their interconnections, how they have developed historically and how they are presently discussed.

What skills will I need in this subject?

Skill	What this skill involves in this subject
Evaluation of key ideas and the views of scholars	In Religious Studies, your lessons and independent work will involve evaluation. This means you will learn about the views of a wide range of scholars and will have to critically analyse their approaches and associated issues, reaching valid and justified conclusions. You will be required to write at length evaluating and explaining issues within Christianity, Ethics and Philosophy.
Retention and explanation of key knowledge	Due to the huge amount of content to learn, it is important that you are prepared to complete regular retrieval practice both in lessons and as part of your independent studies. You need to be able to elaborate on all key concepts in detail.
Extended evaluative essay writing	All of your work will be assessed as extended, evaluative 40 mark essays. In these essays you will be required to critically evaluate key topic areas, creating a clear line of argument which leads to a justified conclusion. You must be adept at selecting relevant key content, scholarly approaches and appropriate examples to apply to your line of argument and be able to critically evaluate the points you raise.

What will my lessons involve?

- Diagnostic retrieval quizzes
- Teacher led discussions of new information
- Analysis of Biblical text and scholarly writing
- Essay planning both independently and as a class
- Practice of applying new learning to extended essay questions e.g. formulating example paragraphs of essays
- Evaluation and debate of key issues and scholarly approaches

What will my independent study involve?

- You should be completing at least five hours of independent study per week on top of any specific home learning set by your teacher. The top grades require a level of independent research and knowledge beyond the specification.
- Wider reading from key scholars or Biblical texts – a minimum of one piece of wider reading per topic
- Retrieval practice e.g. Brain Dumps, self-quizzing
- Planning practice questions
- Writing exam style questions in timed conditions
- Conducting your own research into different scholarly approaches and philosophical ideas.

How will I be assessed?

Percentage exam assessment: 100%	Percentage coursework assessment: 0%
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Assessment	Details of assessment
Paper 1: Philosophy of Religion	One exam, 2 hours, worth 33.3% of overall mark. You will choose to answer three essays out of four. Each essay is worth 40 marks – 120 marks in total. The four topics can be from any of the Year 1 and Year 2 topics. Exam taken in the summer of Year 13.
Paper 2: Religion and Ethics	One exam, 2 hours, worth 33.3% of overall mark. You will choose to answer three essays out of four. Each essay is worth 40 marks – 120 marks in total. The four topics can be from any of the Year 1 and Year 2 topics. Exam taken in the summer of Year 13.
Paper 3: Developments in Christian Thought	One exam, 2 hours, worth 33.3% of overall mark. You will choose to answer three essays out of four. Each essay is worth 40 marks – 120 marks in total. The four topics can be from any of the Year 1 and Year 2 topics. Exam taken in the Summer of Year 13.

How do I know this is the right course for me?

- You enjoy wider reading and research outside of the classroom as the step up from GCSE in terms of independence is vast
- You have excellent critical and evaluative skills
- You have an interest in philosophical and ultimate questions relating to Christianity, Ethics and Philosophy
- You should enjoy debating philosophical and ethical issues
- You should feel confident with extended writing and reading