

Religious Studies

Edexcel A-level Religious Studies (9RS0)

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Introduction

Religious studies (RS) is an interdisciplinary subject that skills students in abstract reasoning, critical thinking, linguistics, source criticism, and the appreciation of world cultures and religions. It is a very popular option among our students, and the course complements most other choices. The Department focuses on instilling clarity of thought, coherence of argument, and academic rigour in students, in order to ensure exam success in RS as well as gain transferable skills for other disciplines.

Subject Requirements

RS offers students a stepping stone to A-level, but it is not a prerequisite to studying the subject. Robust English language skills are a significant advantage, as all examination questions require extended written answers.

Course Outline

Course content is assessed in three papers at the end of the course and there is no coursework element.

Philosophy of Religion:

- Philosophical issues
- The nature and influence of religious experience
- The problem of evil and suffering
- Language
- Philosophers
- Influences and developments

Religion and Ethics:

- Significant concepts of issues and debates
- Utilitarianism, situation ethics, and natural moral law
- War and peace and sexual ethics
- Ethical language
- Ethical theory
- Medical ethics

New Testament Studies:

- The context of the New Testament
- Texts and interpretation of the New Testament
- Interpreting the text and the purpose and authorship of the fourth Gospel
- Ways of interpreting scripture
- Texts and interpretation
- Scientific and historical challenges in faith and history

Higher Education and Careers

All universities value the ability to think clearly and express ideas coherently, and these are skills that are central in RS A-level. The course supports students interested in many different courses, including Journalism and Law, and the University of Oxford reports that twenty per cent of successful applicants to read Philosophy, Politics and Economics (PPE) hold an A-level in RS. Students who move on to Theology and related degrees subsequently embark on careers as diverse as accountancy, financial services, teaching, and theatre, highlighting the broad range of employment opportunities RS A-level can eventually lead to.

What should I study alongside RS?

RS can be successfully combined with a wide variety of other subjects.

