



Year 11 - 12 Bridging the Gap

GCSE → A Level

A Level Religious Studies (Ethics)





Course Breakdown

At USF, Philosophy & Ethics students OCR Religious Studies.

100% exam

Paper

Paper	%	Length	Marks
Philosophy of Religion	33	2 hours	120
Religion & Ethics	33	2 hours	120
Christianity	33	2 hours	120

Every exam contains four 40-mark questions, of which students must answer three.



Topics of study

Module one: Philosophy of Religion

Ancient Philosophical Influences

- Plato, including the Forms & the Analogy of the Cave
- Aristotle, including the Four Causes & the Prime Mover

Soul, Mind & Body

- Plato & Aristotle
- Substance Dualism, Descartes & Ryle
- Materialism, Dawkins & Behaviourism

Arguments based on Observation

- Teleological Argument, Aquinas, Paley & the Anthropic Principle
- Cosmological Argument, Aquinas & Leibniz
- Challenges from Hume, Mill and Evolution

Arguments based on Reason

- Ontological Argument, Anselm & Descartes
- Challenges from Gaunilo & Kant

Religious Experience

- Corporate, Mystical & Conversion Experiences
- James, Swinburne & Otto

The Problem of Evil

- The Theodicies of Augustine & Irenaeus
- Modern Theodicies, Hick, Swinburne & Phillips

Module two: Religion & Ethics

Natural Law

- Telos & Aristotle
- Aquinas & the Four Tiers of Law
- Primary & Secondary Precepts

Situation Ethics

- Agape & the Four Working Principles
- Fletcher on Conscience

Kantian Ethics

- Duty & the Three Postulates of Practical Reason
- The Hypothetical & Categorical Imperatives

Utilitarianism

- Utility & the Hedonic Calculus
- Act, Rule & Preference Utilitarianism

Euthanasia

- The Sanctity of Life & Quality of Life
- Voluntary & Non-Voluntary Euthanasia
- The Application of Natural Law & Situation Ethics

Business Ethics

- Whistleblowing & Corporate Social Responsibility
- Globalisation & Neo-Colonialism
- The Application of Kantian Ethics & Utilitarianism



Module three: Developments in Christian Thought

Augustine's Teachings on Human Nature

- Manicheism, Pelagius & Neoplatonism
- God's grace, Original Sin & the Fall
- Dawkins, Humanitarian Principle & Collective Moral Responsibility

Death & the Afterlife

- Heaven, Hell & Purgatory
- The Parable of the Sheep & the Goats
- Election, Predestination & Universalism

Knowledge of God's Existence

- Natural Theology through nature & an innate sense of the Divine
- Revealed Theology through Faith, God's grace & Jesus Christ
- The Barth - Brunner debate

The person of Jesus Christ

- Jesus as a teacher of wisdom
- Jesus as the Son of God
- Jesus as a liberator of the marginalised & poor

Christian Moral Principles

- Theonomous, Heteronomous & Autonomous Christian Ethics
- The roles of Agape, the Church & the Bible

Christian Moral Action: Dietrich Bonhoeffer

- Duty to God & the State
- Church as a community & source of spiritual wisdom
- The cost of Discipleship

Scholarly Articles

[16+ Ethics - RE:ONLINE \(reonline.org.uk\)](http://reonline.org.uk)

[16+ Philosophy - RE:ONLINE \(reonline.org.uk\)](http://reonline.org.uk)

[16+ Christianity - RE:ONLINE \(reonline.org.uk\)](http://reonline.org.uk)

[Peped Educational & Teaching Resources](#)

[A Level Revision \(jakedoesrevision.blogspot.com\)](http://jakedoesrevision.blogspot.com)

YouTube Channels

BBC Radio 4 (A history of ideas) [bbc radio 4 a history of ideas - YouTube](#)

Crash Course [Crash Course - Philosophy - YouTube](#)

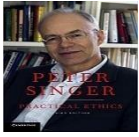
MrMcMillanREvis [MrMcMillanREvis - YouTube](#)

The School of Life [The School of Life - YouTube](#)

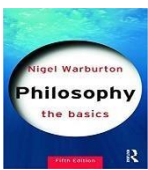
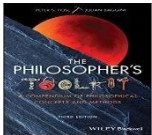
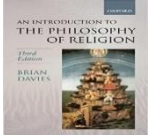
Wireless Philosophy [Wireless Philosophy - YouTube](#)



Recommended Reading



Practical Ethics by Peter Singer

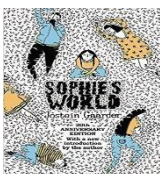


An Introduction to the Philosophy of Religion by Brian Davies

The Philosopher's Toolkit by Julian Baggini and Peter S Fosl

Philosophy: The Basics by Nigel Warburton

Why Is There Something Rather Than Nothing? By Leszek Kolkowski



Sophie's World By Jostein Gaardner



The following tasks are designed to best prepare you for A Level study – enjoy researching the topics covered and working independently on the tasks below.

TASK 1 *Make Your Own Religion*

“Imagine you live in a society that has no concept of God or religion. On a night out with your friends you come up with a radical new idea... perhaps the Universe is not just here randomly... perhaps all of space and time was created by some kind of intelligent being. After thinking about what you should call such a being (Zog? Moog?), you settle on the name God. It has a nice ring to it.”

There is widespread interest in your “God” idea. A panel of leading philosophers writes to you with a query – they have come up with a list of 15 words and phrases that they think might (or might not) better help them to understand your idea.

Order the words / phrases below in a ranking of 1-15, where 1 is the best and/or most important description of God and 15 is the worst/least important description.

Word/phrase describing God	Ranking (1-15)
Architect of the universe	
Caring	
Creator	
Forgiving	
Knowable	
Cannot change	
Loving	
Merciful	
All-Powerful	
Present Everywhere	
All-Knowing	



Perfect	
Supreme power	
Exists outside the Universe	
Unknowable	

What other characteristics would you give to this God?

TASK 2

Aristotle: 4 Causes

One of the ultimate questions that Philosophers try to answer is “**Why do we exist?**” The Greek Philosopher Aristotle said that there are 4 different types of causes or explanations for why an object exists. They are...

- ✓ **Material Cause**- What something is made of
- ✓ **Formal Cause**- What gives something its form or structure. ✓ **Efficient Cause**- The agent or cause of the thing existing ✓ **Final Cause**- The ultimate reason why the thing exists.

Example 1

Statue of David

Material Cause: Marble

Formal Cause: Shape of a statue

Efficient Cause: Sculptor/mason

Cause: To be admired and looked at.

Example 2

Painting of Mona Lisa

Material Cause: Paint

Formal Cause: Appearance of Mona Lisa

Efficient Cause: Painter (Leonardo da Vinci) **Final**

Cause: To showcase her beauty.

What would be the 4 Causes for the following objects?

Cause	Ferrari	The Bible	Chocolate Cake	Tennis Racquet
Material Cause				
Formal Cause				
Efficient Cause				



Final Cause				
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Can you come up with your own examples?

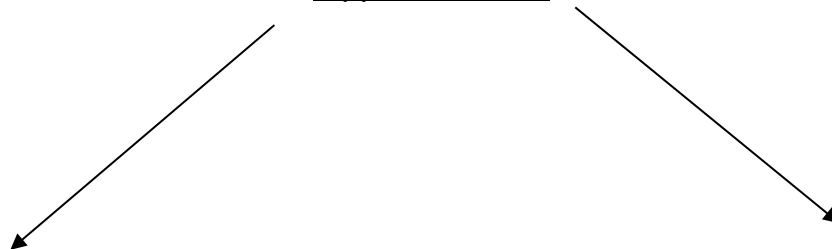
Cause				Me
Material Cause				
Formal Cause				
Efficient Cause				
Final Cause				

TASK 3

The Problem of Evil

- 1) What comes to mind when you think of evil?
- 2) What problem do you think evil causes for Christians?
- 3) There are 2 types of evil.

Types of evil



Natural Evil

Moral Evil



Events caused by nature that cause suffering to humans when they experience them (e.g., earthquake).

Evil caused by the freely chosen actions of humans (e.g., murder).

4) What type of evil are the following examples?

Drought and famine		A doctor being infected by Ebola	
A paranoid schizophrenic robbing a pharmacy		A space rocket exploding	
Being injured by a boomerang		Cannibalism	
Dying from starvation during a hunger strike.		Eating a poisonous mushroom	
Getting sunburnt		Avalanche caused by yodelling	

TASK 4

Valid and Sound Arguments

An argument is **valid** if its conclusion follows logically from its premises.

P1: All boys smell.

P2: Bob is a boy.

C: Bob smells.

An argument is **invalid** if the conclusion does not follow logically from its premises.

P1: Some birds fly.

P2: Emu is a bird C:

Emu can fly.

An argument is **sound** if the argument is valid, and the premises are true.

P1: All greyhounds are dogs.

P2: Boris is a greyhound.

C: Boris is a dog.

An argument is **unsound** if the argument is valid, but the premises are not true.

P1: All frogs are mammals.
P2: Kermit is a frog.
C: Kermit is a mammal.

Read through the following arguments. Are they valid or invalid?

P1: Every dog has a tail P2: Molly has a tail C: Molly is a dog.		P1: All girls don't like sprouts. P2: Mary is a girl. C: Mary doesn't like sprouts.	
P1: Some elephants swim. P2: Nellie is an elephant. C: Nellie swims.		P1: All caterpillars become butterflies P2: Betty is a butterfly. C: Betty was a caterpillar.	
P1: All mums are parents. P2: Bobby is a parent. C: Bobby is a mum.		P1: Zebras can't dance P2: Zoe can't dance C: Zoe is a zebra.	

Read through the following arguments. Are they sound or unsound?

P1: If I do no work then I will pass maths exam P2: I will do no work. C: Therefore I will pass my maths exam.		P1: All twins are identical. P2: Lucy and Louise are twins. C: Lucy and Louise are identical.	
P1: All tadpoles become frogs. P2: Kermit is a frog. C: Kermit was a tadpole.		P1: All humans are mammals. P2: Wendy is a human. C: Wendy is a mammal.	
P1: All dads are embarrassing. P2: David is a dad C: David is embarrassing.		P1: Pluto is a planet. P2: Every planet orbits the Sun C: Pluto orbits the Sun.	

Can you create your own examples?

P1: P2: C:		P1: P2: C:	
P1: P2: C:		P1: P2: C:	

TASK 5

Ethics – Moral Dilemmas

Read through the scenarios and complete the worksheet on the next page.

Scenario 1

Your 15-year-old friend is 4 weeks pregnant and the father has just moved away. He has no intention of being involved in the child's life. Her Mum and Dad are against her keeping the baby however her Nan believes abortion is wrong and has offered to support her through this tough time.

She will be sitting her GCSEs in 7 months' time and hopes to go on to college to study public services with the hopes of becoming a police officer. Initial scans show they baby may have a disability, but this cannot be confirmed until 20 weeks.

Scenario 2

Your next-door neighbour has been hit by a car and is on a life support machine. He has no family and you have been left a large amount of his possessions in his will, so you must make the decision whether he continues to be kept alive by the machine, with very little chance of recovery. Otherwise, you can turn off the machine knowing he could die.

Although uncommon, people have been known to survive this head trauma; however, there is a possibility of permanent brain damage. If there was any chance of survival without life support, it would happen within the next 24 hours, so you need to decide soon. If he continues to be kept alive by life support, he could be in a vegetative state for years. Doctors do not know whether he can hear people. He never gave an opinion on his attitude to life support machines.

Scenario 3

Mr and Mrs Jones have both been deaf from birth and would like to have a deaf baby. They are taking the medical profession to court in the hope that they can implant the deaf embryo into Mrs Jones. Although this is possible, it is currently illegal in the UK.

It would also involve the destruction of any unused embryos however the Jones' believe their child would have a better quality of life and that deafness brings diversity and difference to society. Both Mr and Mrs Jones carry the gene for Multiple sclerosis and by going down the route of genetic engineering they can guarantee the baby is not born with the disease.

Scenario 4

A neighbouring country has been attacked and you have signed a treaty to say you would join forces with them to drive out the enemy. The enemy may have nuclear weapons, but you don't. However, you are concerned that a genocide might take place. All negotiations have failed but your combined army would only be half the size of the aggressors. You have a commercial interest in protecting the oil in your neighbouring country and but public opinion is against joining the war.

The government of the neighbouring country is for you joining alliances, but your Pope is against you joining the war. You are worried that the aggressors may attack your country in the future, whether you join the war or not.

1	What advice would you give your friend?
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	What would you do in her situation? Why?
2	What would you do? Why
	Why might you have second thoughts?
3	Should this process of genetic engineering be legalised? Why?
	Does making it legal make it right? Why?

4	Should we join the neighbouring country and go to war? Why?
	Is this a just war? Why?

If your answers were based on treating others as you would like to be treated yourself, you are applying **KANTIAN ETHICS**. Immanuel Kant believed that we should not make decisions just based on feelings or a feeling of duty, but we should use facts about the world to decide what the right thing to do is. Using this theory your conclusion would be the same whether your circumstances change or not. It is a **DEONTOLOGICAL APPROACH** which means it does not consider the consequences of an action.

Kant's theory is good because.

- It has a clear criterion; your answer will always be the same.
- It has a clear criterion to assess what is moral.
- It treats everyone fairly and justly.

However, weaknesses of this theory include.

- It does not tell you what to do situations.
- His theory only works if everyone has the same view on what is moral.
- Our motives might not be pure.

If your answer was based on the happiness of greatest number of people involved in the scenario you are applying **UTILITARIANISM**. This is a teleological approach which means it considers the consequences of our actions. To measure whether an action is good or not, Jeremy Bentham provided the hedonic calculus which have 7 elements to it.

These include:

- How long the pleasure lasts
- How certain the pleasure is?
- How achievable the pleasure is?
- How secure the pleasure is?

Bentham said happiness = pleasure minus pain.

Strengths of this theory include:

- There is no set moral absolute.
- Considers others.

However, weaknesses of this theory are:

- There is the potential to justify any act.
- How do you define pleasures?

If your answer was based on achieving your own perfect happiness, then you are applying **NATURAL MORAL LAW**. Natural Moral Law holds that humans have a set of natural inclinations, which if followed, lead us to achieve perfection.

Aristotle held that an action was morally right if it led you to achieve **EUDAIMONIA**, a contented state of being happy, healthy and prosperous. Similarly, Thomas Aquinas held that because we are made in the image of God, we must use our ability to reason to achieve perfect happiness. Natural Moral Law is **DEONTOLOGICAL**: it focuses on the morality of our actions, not the consequences and **ABSOLUTIST**: the idea that our actions are right or wrong regardless of the context.

Strengths of Natural Moral law include.

- Moral decision-making involves reason, imagination, emotion and passion.
- Everything that makes us happy (i.e., health and friendship) is morally good.

However, weaknesses of this theory are:

- It assumes that there is a common unchanging human nature.
- Human nature is too corrupt to be trusted (i.e., slavery).

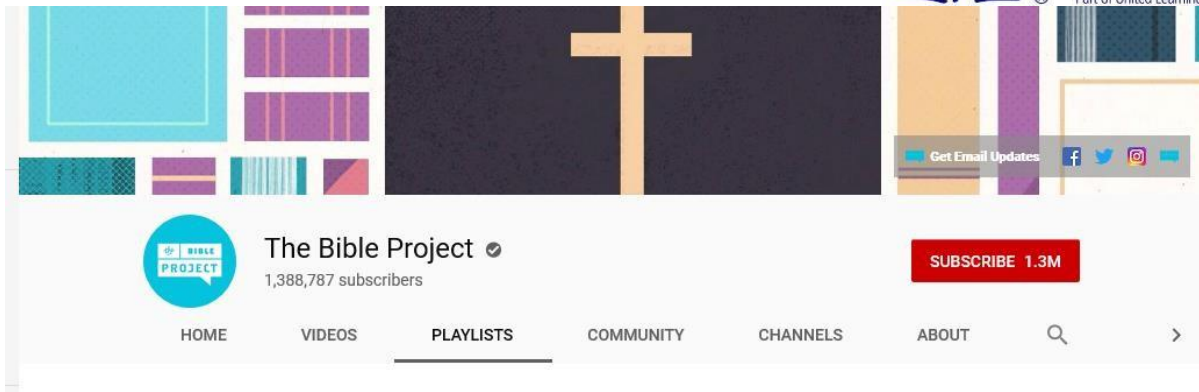
If your answers were based on the Bible or church tradition you are applying a **CHRISTIAN ETHIC** approach. This is not an easy approach to summarise as there are many different thoughts within Christianity.

In many ways Christian ethics does not look at right and wrong actions but the sort of person we are called to become, and this is based on the Bible and Christian teachings. This approach to thinking considers the belief that God created all life and has called us to live in freedom, but our sin and ignorance have led us to misuse this freedom.

[TASK 6](#)

Our studied religion is Christianity, and a good background knowledge of the Bible is important. The Bible Project Series on YouTube will help you with this.

<https://www.youtube.com/user/jointhebibleproject/playlists>



I would recommend the Biblical Themes playlist which is about 1 hour 30 minutes long if you watch every video.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XzWpa0gcPyo&list=PLH0Szn1yYNec-HZjVHooeb4BSDSeHhEoh>



Using these videos and your own additional research you need to find out about the following Biblical stories, events or characters. For each topic below you need to fill in a Cornell Notes template and a Thinking Hard template.

Having watched the videos you are going to complete a Cornell Notes activity. There are instructions on how to take Cornell Notes on the video below.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ErSjc1PEGKE>

The video is called:

How to take Cornell Notes properly



1. The Story of the Fall What happens?



How does this story link with Christian ideas about Jesus?

2. The story of Exile

Where, when and why were the Israelites exiled to?

What does the prophet Jeremiah teach about exile in Babylon?

What is the link with Jesus?

3. The Suffering Servant passages of Isaiah. Who

was Isaiah?

What is the background to Isaiah's writings?

What does Isaiah write about the suffering servant?

What is the link with Jesus?

4. The Prophets

What do prophets do? Who are they?

What do they teach about the covenant?

What is the Day of the Lord? What is the link with Jesus?

5. The Messiah

What does the Old Testament teach about the Messiah?

Why do Christians believe that Jesus was the Messiah?

What Jewish expectations of the Messiah does Jesus not fulfil?

6. Jesus

What are the main events in Jesus' life?

What does Jesus teach in the Sermon on the Mount?

What does Jesus mean when he calls himself the Son of Man?

What is the day of the Lord?



Name

Date

Topic

Subject

Main Ideas

Notes

Summary



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