

Religious Studies (RS) at Norbury High

Overview

The RS Department at Norbury High aims to provide students with an extensive, profound and meaningful understanding of faith and culture. It allows students to explore the major philosophical and ethical questions of life, from creation to afterlife, which will give them a sense of identity and community, equipping them to live in a complex, polarised, multi-religious and multi-secular society.

Religious education is crucial in the world today for it breaks down barriers and stereotypes, bringing people together in the fight for social justice and global peace. The RS Department encourages its students to discover the views of others through developing their comprehension, evaluation and discussion skills, with aims of understanding influence, diversity and key ideas to outline students' similarities and have respect for their differences.

Our practitioners teach each religious view from a 'neutral stance', however this does not translate to teaching from a 'non-religious' worldview. We ensure that each religion is covered in a profound way so that pupils are provided with a depth of knowledge that can be utilised in later study.

Key Stage 5

Students study the OCR Religious Studies A Level, which incorporates three exams, featuring a choice of 4 essay questions each, of which students choose 3. Sat in summer of Year 13

Year 12

Unit 1: Philosophy of Religion

Ancient Philosophical influences

Plato (Understanding of reality, The Forms, The Analogy of the cave)

Aristotle (Understanding of reality, The four causes, The Prime Mover)

Soul, Mind and Body

Philosophical language in the thinking of Plato and Aristotle

Metaphysics of consciousness, including:

- Substance dualism
- Materialism

Arguments based on observation

The Teleological argument

The cosmological argument

Challenges to arguments from observation

Arguments based on reason

The ontological argument

The nature and influence of religious experience including:

The nature of religious experience

- Mystical experience
- Conversion experience

Different ways individual religious experience can be understood

The Problem of Evil

Different presentations

Theodicies that propose justification or reason for divine action or inaction in the face of evil

Unit 2: Religion and Ethics

Aquinas' natural law, including:

The Telos

The four tiers of law

The precepts

Fletcher's situation ethics, including:

Agape

The Four working principles

The six propositions

Conscience

Kantian Ethics

The Ethics of duty

The Hypothetical imperative

The categorical imperative

Utilitarianism

Utility

The Hedonic Calculus

Act utilitarianism

Rule utilitarianism

Euthanasia

Sanctity and Quality of life

Voluntary and non-voluntary euthanasia

Business ethics

Key ideas including

- Corporate social responsibility
- Whistle-blowing
- Good ethics is good business
- Globalization

The application of Kantian ethics and utilitarianism to business ethics

Unit 3: Developments in Christian Thought

Augustine on human nature

Human relationships pre- and post- Fall

Original sin and its effects on the will and human societies

God's grace

Death and the Afterlife

Heaven, hell and purgatory

Election

Knowledge of God's existence

Natural knowledge of God's existence:

- As an innate human sense of the divine
- As seen in the order of creation

Revealed knowledge of God's existence

- Through faith and God's grace
- Revealed knowledge of God in Jesus Christ

The person of Jesus Christ

Jesus Christ's authority as:

- Son of God
- Teacher of wisdom
- Liberator

Christian moral principles

The diversity of Christian moral reasoning and practices and sources of ethics including:

- The bible as the only authority for Christian ethical practices
- The bible, church and reason as sources
- Love (agape) as the only Christian ethical principle

Christian moral action

The teaching and example of Dietrich Bonhoeffer on

- Duty to God and duty to the state
- Church as community and source of spiritual discipline
- The cost of discipleship

Year 13

Unit 1: Philosophy of Religion

Nature or Attributes of God

Developments in the understanding of:

- Omnipotence
- Omniscience
- Omnibenevolence
- Eternity
- Free Will

Religious language: Negative, analogical or symbolic

The apophatic way – via negative

The cataphatic way – via positive

Symbols

Religious language: 20th Century perspectives and philosophical comparisons

Logical positivism

Wittgenstein's views on language games and forms of life

Discussion about the factual quality of religious language in the falsification symposium

Unit 2: Religion and Ethics

Meta-ethical theories

Naturalism

Intuitionism

Emotivism

Conscience

Aquinas 'theological approach

Freud's psychological approach

Sexual ethics

Consideration of the following areas of sexual ethics:

- Premarital sex and extramarital sex
- Homosexuality

The influence of developments in religious belief and practice on debates about the morality, legality and tolerability of these areas of sexual ethics

Application of the following theories to these areas of sexual ethics:

- Natural law
- Situation ethics
- Kantian ethics
- Utilitarianism

Unit 3: Development in Christian Thought

Religious pluralism and theology

The teaching contemporary Christian theologians of religion on:

- Exclusivism
- Inclusivism
- Pluralism

Religious pluralism and society

The development of contemporary multi-faith societies

Christian responses to, including:

- Responses of Christian communities to inter-faith dialogue
- The scriptural reasoning movement

Gender and Society

The effects of changing views of gender and gender roles on Christian thought and practice, including:

- Christian teaching on the roles of men and women in the family and society
- Christian responses to contemporary secular views about the roles of men and women in the family and society

Gender and theology

The reinterpretation of God by feminist theologians, including the teaching of Rosemary Radford Ruether and Mary Daly on gender and its implications for the Christian idea of God

The Challenge of Secularism

The rise of secularism and secularization, and the views that:

- God is an illusion and the result of wish fulfilment
- Christianity should play no part in public life

Liberation theology and Marx

The relationship of liberation theology and Marx, including:

- Marx's teaching on alienation and exploitation
- Liberation theology's use of Marx to analyse social sin

- Liberation theology's teaching on the 'preferential option of the poor'