
A-LEVEL RELIGIOUS STUDIES

(7062)

Specification

For teaching from September 2016 onwards
For exams in 2018 onwards

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Are you using the latest version of this specification?

- You will always find the most up-to-date version of this specification on our website at
- We will write to you if there are significant changes to the specification.

1 Introduction

1.1 Why choose AQA for A-level Religious Studies

Our courses offer a choice of different religions, ensuring students have a thorough understanding of diverse philosophical and ethical viewpoints.

Students gain critical and evaluative skills sought by higher education and employers – particularly in law, education, social work, politics, medicine, administration and the media.

Religious studies is a thought provoking subject and our contemporary themes will help you inspire engaging classroom discussion.

Highlights include:

- all religions, philosophical and ethical themes have the same learning requirements, helping you integrate your teaching
- we've worked with subject experts, teachers and higher education to create a stimulating and relevant curriculum with a straightforward approach to assessment
- question papers will allow students of all abilities the chance to show what they know
- the AS and A-level are co-teachable – although they are decoupled, the AS content links directly to A-level as it's the first half of the A-level course.

You can find out about all our Religious Studies qualifications at [aqa.org.uk/religious-studies](https://www.aqa.org.uk/religious-studies)

1.2 Support and resources to help you teach

We've worked with experienced teachers to provide you with a range of resources that will help you confidently plan, teach and prepare for exams.

Teaching resources

Visit [aqa.org.uk/7062](https://www.aqa.org.uk/7062) to see all our teaching resources. They include:

- schemes of work
- specimen questions and marked exemplars
- topic guidance
- guidance for assessment
- introduction to resources
- training courses to help you deliver AQA religious studies qualifications
- subject expertise courses for all teachers, from newly qualified teachers who are just getting started to experienced teachers looking for inspiration.

Preparing for exams

Visit [aqa.org.uk/7062](https://www.aqa.org.uk/7062) for everything you need to prepare for our exams, including:

- past papers, mark schemes and examiners' reports
- specimen papers and mark schemes for new courses

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- Exampro: a searchable bank of past AQA exam questions
 - exemplar student answers with examiner commentaries.

Analyse your students' results with Enhanced Results Analysis (ERA)

Find out which questions were the most challenging, how the results compare to previous years and where your students need to improve. ERA, our free online results analysis tool, will help you see where to focus your teaching. Register at aqa.org.uk/era

For information about results, including maintaining standards over time, grade boundaries and our post-results services, visit aqa.org.uk/results

Keep your skills up-to-date with professional development

Wherever you are in your career, there's always something new to learn. As well as subject-specific training, we offer a range of courses to help boost your skills.

- Improve your teaching skills in areas including differentiation, teaching literacy and meeting Ofsted requirements.
- Prepare for a new role with our leadership and management courses.

You can attend a course at venues around the country, in your school or online – whatever suits your needs and availability. Find out more at coursesandevents.aqa.org.uk

Help and support available

Visit our website for information, guidance, support and resources at aqa.org.uk/7062

If you'd like us to share news and information about this qualification, sign up for emails and updates at aqa.org.uk/keepinformed-religious-studies

Alternatively, you can call or email our subject team direct.

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2 Specification at a glance

This qualification is linear. Linear means that students will sit all their exams at the end of the course.

There are two assessed components. Students must take assessments in both Component 1 and Component 2 in the same exam series.

2.1 Subject content

- Component 1: Philosophy of religion and ethics
- Component 2: Study of religion and dialogues
 - [2A Buddhism](#) (page 14)
 - [2B Christianity](#) (page 18)
 - [2C Hinduism](#) (page 22)
 - [2D Islam](#) (page 26)
 - [2E Judaism](#) (page 30)

2.2 Assessments

Component 1: Philosophy of religion and ethics

What's assessed

Section A: Philosophy of religion

- Arguments for the existence of God
- Evil and suffering
- Religious experience
- Religious language
- Miracles
- Self and life after death.

Section B: Ethics and religion

- Ethical theories
- Issues of human life and death
- Issues of animal life and death
- Introduction to meta ethics
- Free will and moral responsibility
- Conscience
- Bentham and Kant.

How it's assessed

- Written exam: 3 hours
- 100 marks
- 50% of A-level

Questions

- Section A: Philosophy of religion – two compulsory two-part questions, each worth 10 marks and 15 marks.
- Section B: Ethics and religion – two compulsory two-part questions, each worth 10 marks and 15 marks.

In both sections, questions may span more than one topic. In each two-part question, the first part tests AO1 and the second part tests AO2.



Component 2: Study of religion and dialogues

What's assessed

Section A: Study of religion – for each faith option (2A–2E) the following topics are covered:

- Sources of wisdom and authority
- God/gods/ultimate reality
- Self, death and the afterlife
- Good conduct and key moral principles
- Expression of religious identity
- Religion, gender and sexuality
- Religion and science
- Religion and secularisation
- Religion and religious pluralism.

Section B: The dialogue between philosophy of religion and religion.

How religion is influenced by, and has an influence on philosophy of religion in relation to the issues studied.

Section C: The dialogue between ethical studies and religion.

How religion is influenced by, and has an influence on ethical studies in relation to the issues studied.

How it's assessed

- Written exam: 3 hours
- 100 marks
- 50% of A-level

Questions

Section A: Study of religion – two compulsory two-part questions, each worth 10 marks and 15 marks relating to the religion chosen. Questions may be set that span more than one topic. In each two-part question, the first part tests AO1 and the second part tests AO2.

Section B: The dialogue between philosophy of religion and religion – one unstructured synoptic question from a choice of two (25 marks).

Section C: The dialogue between ethical studies and religion – one unstructured synoptic question from a choice of two (25 marks).

3 Subject content

3.1 Component 1: Philosophy of religion and ethics

3.1.1 Section A: Philosophy of religion

Students must develop knowledge and understanding of the following:

- the meaning and significance of the specified content
- the influence of these beliefs and teachings on individuals, communities and societies
- the cause and significance of similarities and differences in beliefs and teachings
- the approach of philosophy to the study of religion and belief.

The term 'belief(s)' includes religious beliefs and non-religious beliefs as appropriate.

They should be able to analyse and evaluate issues arising from the topics studied, and the views and arguments of the scholars prescribed for study.

Students should also be able to use specialist language and terminology appropriately.

Questions may be set that span more than one topic.

Arguments for the existence of God

Design

- Presentation: Paley's analogical argument.
- Criticisms: Hume.

Ontological

- Presentation: Anselm's a priori argument.
- Criticisms: Gaunilo and Kant.

Cosmological

- Presentation: Aquinas' Way 3. The argument from contingency and necessity.
- Criticisms: Hume and Russell.

Students should study the basis of each argument in observation or in thought, the strengths and weaknesses of the arguments, their status as 'proofs', their value for religious faith and the relationship between reason and faith.

Evil and suffering

The problem of evil and suffering.

- The concepts of natural and moral evil.
- The logical and evidential problem of evil.
- Responses to the problem of evil and suffering.
- Hick's soul making theodicy.
- The free will defence.

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- Process theodicy as presented by Griffin.
 - The strengths and weaknesses of each response.

Religious experience

The nature of religious experience.

- Visions: corporeal, imaginative and intellectual.
- Numinous experiences: Otto, an apprehension of the wholly other.
- Mystical experiences: William James; non sensuous and non-intellectual union with the divine as presented by William Stace.

Verifying religious experiences

- The challenges of verifying religious experiences.
- The challenges to religious experience from science.
- Religious responses to those challenges.
- Swinburne's principles of credulity and testimony.

The influence of religious experiences and their value for religious faith.

Religious language

- The issue of whether religious language should be viewed cognitively or non-cognitively.
- The challenges of the verification and falsification principles to the meaningfulness of religious language.
- Responses to these challenges:
 - eschatological verification with reference to Hick
 - language as an expression of a Blik with reference to R.M.Hare
 - religious language as a language game with reference to Wittgenstein.
- Other views of the nature of religious language:
 - religious language as symbolic with reference to Tillich
 - religious language as analogical with reference to Aquinas
 - the Via Negativa.
- The strengths and weaknesses of the differing understandings of religious language.

Miracles

- Differing understandings of 'miracle'
 - realist and anti-realist views
 - violation of natural law or natural event.
- Comparison of the key ideas of David Hume and Maurice Wiles on miracles.
- The significance of these views for religion.

Self, death and the afterlife

- The nature and existence of the soul; Descartes' argument for the existence of the soul.
- The body/soul relationship.
- The possibility of continuing personal existence after death.

3.1.2 Section B: Ethics and religion

Students must develop knowledge and understanding of the following:

- the meaning and significance of the specified content
- the influence of these beliefs and teachings on individuals, communities and societies
- the cause and significance of similarities and differences in beliefs and teachings
- the approach of philosophy to the study of religion and belief.

The term ‘belief(s)’ includes religious beliefs and non-religious beliefs as appropriate.

They should be able to analyse and evaluate issues arising from the topics studied, and the views and arguments of the scholars prescribed for study.

Students should also be able to use specialist language and terminology appropriately.

Questions may be set that span more than one topic.

Normative ethical theories

- Deontological: natural moral law and the principle of double effect with reference to Aquinas; proportionalism.
- Teleological: situation ethics with reference to Fletcher.
- Character based: virtue ethics with reference to Aristotle.
- The differing approaches taken to moral decision making by these ethical theories.
- Their application to the issues of theft and lying.
- The strengths and weaknesses of these ways of making moral decisions.

The application of natural moral law, situation ethics and virtue ethics to:

- Issues of human life and death:
 - embryo research; cloning; ‘designer’ babies
 - abortion
 - voluntary euthanasia and assisted suicide
 - capital punishment.
- Issues of non-human life and death:
 - use of animals as food; intensive farming
 - use of animals in scientific procedures; cloning
 - blood sports
 - animals as a source of organs for transplants.

Introduction to meta ethics: the meaning of right and wrong

- Divine Command Theory – right is what God commands, wrong is what God forbids.
- Naturalism: Utilitarianism – right is what causes pleasure, wrong is what causes pain.
- Non-naturalism: Intuitionism – moral values are self-evident.
- The strengths and weaknesses of these ideas.

Free will and moral responsibility

- The conditions of moral responsibility: free will; understanding the difference between right and wrong.
- The extent of moral responsibility: libertarianism, hard determinism, compatibilism.
- The relevance of moral responsibility to reward and punishment.

Conscience

- Differing ideas, religious and non-religious, about the nature of conscience.
- The role of conscience in making moral decisions with reference to:
 - telling lies and breaking promises
 - adultery.
- The value of conscience as a moral guide.

Bentham and Kant

- Comparison of the key ideas of Bentham and Kant about moral decision making.
- How far these two ethical theories are consistent with religious moral decision making.

3.2 Component 2: Study of religion and dialogues

Students must study one Component 2 option from the following:

- [2A Buddhism](#) (page 14)
- [2B Christianity](#) (page 18)
- [2C Hinduism](#) (page 22)
- [2D Islam](#) (page 26)
- [2E Judaism](#) (page 30)

3.2.1 2A Buddhism

Students are required to study aspects of the religious beliefs, teachings, values and practices of Buddhism specified below and the different ways these are expressed in the lives of individuals, communities and societies.

They should develop a knowledge and critical understanding of:

- the specified material
- how the texts specified for study are interpreted and applied
- the influence of beliefs and teachings on individuals, communities and societies
- the causes, meanings and significance of similarities and differences in religious thought belief and practice within Buddhism.
- approaches to the study of religion and belief.

They should be able to analyse and evaluate issues arising from the topics studied, and the views and arguments of the scholars prescribed for study.

Questions may be set that span more than one topic.

Students may study any version of the specified texts, but should be aware of issues related to translation where relevant. Quotations will not be used in questions.

Students should be able to use specialist language and terminology appropriately.

Exam questions will show a translation for any non-English terms (except for names of people, texts and schools of thought). However students are expected to recognise and understand the following technical terms: Dukkha, Anicca, Nirvana, karma, ahimsa.

Section A: Buddhism

Sources of wisdom and authority

- The Buddha: the significance the life of Gautama Buddha for Theravada Buddhists with reference to his relevance as a role model and his authority as ‘the enlightened one’; the Mahayana view that the life and teaching of Gautama Buddha was ‘skillful means’, with reference to the parable of the burning house in the Lotus Sutra.
- The meaning and relevance of Buddha’s teaching about Dukkha, including the debate about whether Buddhism is pessimistic.
- The Pali Canon: the nature and authority of the Pali Canon; different views about how far this is an accurate record of Gautama Buddha’s teaching and the relevance for Buddhists of this debate; the use of Pali Canon in worship and daily life.

Ultimate reality

- The key differences between the Theravada and Mahayana concepts of Buddha; the key features of the Trikaya doctrine in Mahayana Buddhism.
- Anicca: the meaning and importance of the concept of Anicca; the development of that idea in the Mahayana doctrine of emptiness.
- Nirvana: Nirvana in this life and after death; Nirvana as indescribable and beyond understanding; attempts in scripture to describe it and their strengths and weaknesses with reference to the 80th dilemma of the Questions of King Milinda.

Self, death and afterlife

- The meaning and purpose of life: better rebirth and Nirvana as goals of life and their relative importance; the ideal of the arhat and bodhisattva in Theravada and Mahayana Buddhism.
- Anatta (no-self): the concept of anatta; the five aggregates and the analogy of the chariot in the Questions of King Milinda, Book II chapter 1.1.
- Samsara: the cycle of birth, death and rebirth; the nature of karma and its role on the wheel of becoming; the realms of becoming and their significance including literal, metaphorical and psychological interpretations; Tibetan Buddhist beliefs about the 14th Dalai Lama as an expression of the Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara.

Good conduct and key moral principles

- Good conduct: the importance of good moral conduct in the Buddhist way of life; the importance of intention; actions as kusala (healthy) or akusala (unhealthy); the extent of human free will and moral responsibility.
- The nature of the five precepts and the distinctive features of the six perfections of the Mahayana Buddhism.
- Ahimsa: the concept of ahimsa and its application to issues concerning the embryo and the unborn child, treatment of animals and war, including the use of weapons of mass destruction; different Buddhist views.

Expressions of religious identity

- The Sangha: the monastic Sangha and its changing roles in Thailand; the traditional lifestyle and role of the Sangha in Thailand including its relationship with the lay community; the Sangha in the 21st century; the main features of the Wat Phra Dhammakaya movement.
- Devotion and its purposes: acts of devotion in Theravada and Mahayana Buddhism; the nature and role of Buddha images and the importance of making and sharing merit; the

different perspectives of Theravada and Mahayana Buddhism about the significance of worship.

- Meditation: the nature and purpose of meditation on the eightfold path; modern usage of Buddhist meditation as a form of therapy and how Buddhists have responded to this.

Buddhism, gender and sexuality

Historical and social factors that have influenced developments in Buddhist thinking about these issues with particular reference to Thailand, including: encounter with western lifestyles and values with the development of tourism after the 1980s; the changing roles of men and women in society outside of religion; the rights given to women by secular Thai governments.

Developments in Buddhist thought including feminist approaches:

- The debate leading to the revival of the Theravada order of nuns in the late 1990s.
- Continuing debates about female ordination and the role of women in Theravada Buddhism with reference to the work of Dhammananda and the Sakyadhita organisation.
- Different Buddhist views about celibacy, marriage and homosexuality and transgender issues.

Buddhism and science

How and why science has influenced Buddhism and how Buddhism has responded, with particular reference to: emphasis on evidence and reason in science; specific scientific discoveries; science as a stimulus to Buddhist ethical thinking.

Developments in Buddhist thought:

- How scientific explanation has challenged belief in karma and in miracles and Buddhist responses to that challenge.
- The value of science: the Buddha's attitude to the search for answers to unanswerable questions; the belief that science agrees with some Buddhist teaching with particular reference to quantum physics; the views of Thich Nhat Hanh and the 14th Dalai Lama about the relationship between Buddhism and science.
- Different Buddhist responses to ethical issues raised by science: genetic engineering.

Buddhism and the challenge of secularisation

This topic may be studied with exclusive reference to the British context.

Challenges of secularisation including: the replacement of religion as the source of truth and moral values; relegation of religion to the personal sphere; the rise of militant atheism: the view that religion is irrational.

Developments in Buddhist thought:

- Buddhist responses to materialistic secular values: the value of wealth and possessions.
- The preservation of traditional forms of Buddhism with reference to Amaravati and the Forest Tradition; the emergence of new forms of Buddhism with reference to Triratna and Secular Buddhism; the appeal of some forms of Buddhism as an alternative to other forms of religious expression.
- Emphasis on the contribution of Buddhism to society: including the principles and work of Engaged Buddhism as a liberationist approach in supporting the poor and oppressed.
- Comparison between the significant ideas of Stephen Bachelor and David Brazier about the nature of Buddhism.

Buddhism, migration and religious pluralism

How migration has created multicultural societies which include Buddhism, with particular reference to the development of Buddhism in Britain; diversity within the Buddhist community in Britain; freedom of religion as a human right in European law and religious pluralism as a feature of modern secular states. The influence of this context on Buddhist thought.

Developments in Buddhist thought:

- How far Buddhism should be seen as a collection of different traditions with little in common, with reference to two contrasting forms of Buddhism.
- Edict 12 of Ashoka on attitudes to other faiths; Buddhist attitudes to religious pluralism with reference both to diversity within Buddhism and diversity between religions, including the views of Nichiren Buddhism.
- Buddhist responses to issues of freedom of religious expression in society.

Section B: Dialogues

This section of the specification is focused on the connections between various elements of the course and requires students to develop breadth and depth in their understanding of the connections between the knowledge, understanding and skills set out in the specification. There are two areas for study, firstly the dialogue between Buddhism and philosophy: how developments in belief have, over time, influenced and been influenced by philosophical studies of religion, secondly the dialogue between Buddhism and ethics: how developments in belief have influenced and been influenced by ethical studies.

Students will be required to demonstrate a critical awareness of these connections and to analyse their nature.

The dialogue between Buddhism and philosophy

Beliefs and teachings about:

- ultimate reality
- self, death and afterlife
- sources of wisdom and authority
- religious experience
- the relationship between scientific and religious discourses
- the truth claims of other religions
- miracles.

The following issues, and the impact of the discussion on religious belief past and present, should be considered:

- How far the belief is reasonable – that is based on reason and/or consistent with reason.
- How meaningful the statements of faith are, and for whom.
- How coherent the beliefs are, and how consistent with other beliefs within the belief system.
- The relevance of philosophical enquiry for religious faith, with particular reference to the debate about the nature of faith as 'belief in' or 'belief that'.

Two unstructured questions will be set. Students must answer one.

The dialogue between Buddhism and ethics

- Buddhist responses to the following approaches to moral decision-making in the light of key Buddhist moral principles:
 - deontological, with reference to Kant
 - teleological and consequential, with reference to Bentham
 - character based, with reference to virtue ethics.
- How far Buddhist ethics can be considered to be deontological, teleological, consequential, or character based.
- Buddhist responses to: the issues of human life and death and issues of animal life and death prescribed for study; theft and lying; marriage; homosexuality and transgender issues; genetic engineering.
- Buddhist responses to issues surrounding wealth, tolerance and freedom of religious expression.
- Buddhist understandings of free will and moral responsibility, and the value of conscience in Buddhist moral decision-making.

The impact of other ethical perspectives and ethical studies on Buddhist views about these issues, both past and present. This may include challenges to and support for Buddhist views; compatibility of Buddhist views with those of other ethical perspectives; the relative strengths and weaknesses of Buddhist perspectives and the other ethical perspectives studied on these issues; the implications of criticisms of Buddhist ethical teaching for the religion as a whole and its sources of authority.

Two unstructured questions will be set. Students must answer one.

3.2.2 2B Christianity

Students are required to study those aspects of the religious beliefs, teachings, values and practices of Christianity specified below and the different ways in which these are expressed in the lives of individuals, communities and societies.

They should develop a knowledge and critical understanding of:

- the specified material
- how the texts specified for study are interpreted and applied
- the influence of beliefs and teachings on individuals, communities and societies
- the causes, meanings and significance of similarities and differences in religious thought belief and practice within Christianity
- approaches to the study of religion and belief.

They should be able to analyse and evaluate issues arising from the topics studied, and the views and arguments of the scholars prescribed for study.

Questions may be set that span more than one topic.

Students may study any version of the specified texts, but should be aware of issues related to translation where relevant. Quotations will not be used in questions.

Students should be able to use specialist language and terminology appropriately.

Exam questions will show a translation for any non-English terms (except for names of people, texts and schools of thought).

Section A: Christianity

Sources of wisdom and authority

- The Bible: different Christian beliefs about the nature and authority of the Bible and their impact on its use as a source of beliefs and teachings, including the Bible as inspired by God but written by human beings.
- The Church: the different perspectives of the Protestant and Catholic traditions on the relative authority of the Bible and the Church.
- The authority of Jesus: different Christian understandings of Jesus' authority, including Jesus' authority as God's authority and Jesus' authority as only human; implications of these beliefs for Christian responses to Jesus' teaching and his value as a role model with reference to his teaching on retaliation and love for enemies in the Sermon on the Mount: Matthew 5:38–48.

God

- Christian Monotheism: one God, omnipotent creator and controller of all things; transcendent and unknowable; the doctrine of the Trinity and its importance; the meaning and significance of the belief that Jesus is the son of God; the significance of John 10:30; 1 Corinthians 8:6
- God as Personal, God as Father and God as Love: the challenge of understanding anthropomorphic and gender specific language about God: God as Father and King, including Christian feminist perspectives.
- The concept of God in process theology: God as neither omnipotent nor creator.

Self, death and afterlife

- The meaning and purpose of life: the following purposes and their relative importance: to glorify God and have a personal relationship with him; to prepare for judgement; to bring about God's kingdom on earth.
- Resurrection: the concept of soul; resurrection of the flesh as expressed in the writings of Augustine; spiritual resurrection; the significance of 1 Corinthians 15:42-44 and 50-54.
- Different interpretations of judgement, heaven, hell and purgatory as physical, spiritual or psychological realities; objective immortality in process thought.

Good conduct and key moral principles

- Good conduct: the importance of good moral conduct in the Christian way of life, including reference to teaching about justification by works, justification by faith and predestination.
- Sanctity of life: the concept of sanctity of life; different views about its application to issues concerning the embryo and the unborn child; the just war theory and its application to the use of weapons of mass destruction.
- Dominion and stewardship: the belief that Christians have dominion over animals; beliefs about the role of Christians as stewards of animals and the natural environment and how changing understandings of the effects of human activities on the environment have affected that role.

Expressions of religious identity

- Baptism: the significance of infant baptism in Christianity with particular reference to the Catholic and Baptist traditions; arguments in favour of and against infant baptism.
- Holy Communion: differing practices associated with Holy Communion, and differing understandings of Holy Communion and its importance, in the Catholic and Baptist

Churches; different Christian understandings of the significance of Jesus' actions at the last supper, Luke 22:17–20.

- The mission of the Church: developments in Christian ideas of 'mission' from the early 20th century to today.

Christianity, gender and sexuality

Historical and social factors that have influenced developments in Christian thinking about these issues including: the development of Biblical criticism, especially in the 19th century, and the resulting freedom to challenge traditional readings of passages such as 1 Tim 2:8-15; the changing roles of men and women in society outside of religion; the rights given to women by secular governments.

Developments in Christian thought, including feminist approaches:

- Debates about female ordination in the Church of England up to and after 1994, the continuing debate today.
- A comparison of the significant ideas of Daphne Hampson and Rosemary Radford Ruether about the patriarchal nature of Christianity including Hampson's view that Christianity is irredeemably sexist and Ruether's ideas about the androgynous Christ and her view that the female nature is more Christlike than the male.
- Different Christian views about celibacy, marriage, homosexuality and transgender issues.

Christianity and science

How and why science has influenced Christianity and how Christianity has responded, with particular reference to: emphasis on evidence and reason in science; specific scientific discoveries; science as a stimulus to Christian ethical thinking.

Developments in Christian thought:

- How scientific explanation has challenged Christian belief with reference to the 'God of the gaps'; 19th century Christian responses to Darwin's theory of evolution and contemporary responses to the Big Bang theory, including reference to creationist views.
- The belief that science is compatible with Christianity with reference to the views John Polkinghorne.
- Different Christian responses to issues raised by science: genetic engineering.

Christianity and the challenge of secularisation

This topic may be studied with exclusive reference to the British context.

The challenge of secularisation including the replacement of religion as the source of truth and moral values; relegation of religion to the personal sphere; the rise of militant atheism: the view that religion is irrational.

Developments in Christian thought:

- Responses to materialistic secular values: the value of wealth and possessions.
- McGrath's defence of Christianity in 'The Dawkins delusion'.
- Emergence of new forms of expression, such as Fresh Expressions and the House Church movement.
- Emphasis on the social relevance of Christianity including liberationist approaches as supporting the poor and defending the oppressed.

Christianity, migration and religious pluralism

How migration has created multicultural societies which include Christianity, with particular reference to the diversity of faiths in Britain today; freedom of religion as a human right in European law and religious pluralism as a feature of modern secular states. The influence of this context on Christian thought.

Developments in Christian thought:

- Christian attitudes to other faiths: Exclusivism with reference to John 14:6; Inclusivism with reference to the concept of ‘anonymous Christians’; how Christian denominations view each other.
- Pluralism with reference to John Hick; its implications for interfaith and interdenominational relations.
- Christian responses to issues of freedom of religious expression in society.

Section B: Dialogues

This section of the specification is focused on the connections between various elements of the course and requires students to develop breadth and depth in their understanding of the connections between the knowledge, understanding and skills set out in the specification. There are two areas for study, firstly the dialogue between Christianity and philosophy: how developments in belief have, over time, influenced and been influenced by philosophical studies of religion, secondly the dialogue between Christianity and ethics: how developments in belief have influenced and been influenced by ethical studies.

Students will be required to demonstrate a critical awareness of these connections and to analyse their nature.

The dialogue between Christianity and philosophy

Beliefs and teachings about:

- God
- self, death and the afterlife
- sources of wisdom and authority
- religious experience
- the relationship between scientific and religious discourses
- the truth claims of other religions
- miracles.

The following issues, and the impact of the discussion on religious belief past and present, should be considered:

- How far the belief is reasonable – that is based on reason and/or consistent with reason.
- How meaningful the statements of faith are, and for whom.
- How coherent the beliefs are, and how consistent they are with other beliefs in the belief system.
- The relevance of philosophical enquiry for religious faith, with particular reference to the debate about the nature of faith as ‘belief in’ or ‘belief that’.

Two unstructured questions will be set. Students must answer one.

The dialogue between Christianity and ethics

- Christian responses to the following approaches to moral decision-making in the light of key Christian moral principles:
 - deontological, with reference to Kant.
 - teleological and consequential, with reference to Bentham.
 - character based, with reference to virtue ethics.
- How far Christian ethics can be considered to be deontological, teleological, consequential, or character based.
- Christian responses to: the issues of human life and death and issues of animal life and death prescribed for study; theft and lying; marriage; homosexuality and transgender issues; genetic engineering.
- Christian responses to issues surrounding wealth, tolerance and freedom of religious expression.
- Christian understandings of free will and moral responsibility, and the value of conscience in Christian moral decision-making.

The impact of other ethical perspectives and ethical studies on Christian views about these issues, both past and present. This may include challenges to and support for Christian views; compatibility of Christian views with those of other ethical perspectives; the relative strengths and weaknesses of Christian perspectives and other ethical perspectives studied on these issues; the implications of criticisms of Christian ethical teaching for the religion as a whole and its sources of authority.

Two unstructured questions will be set. Students must answer one.

3.2.3 2C Hinduism

Students are required to study those aspects of the religious beliefs, teachings, values and practices of Hinduism specified below and the different ways in which these are expressed in the lives of individuals, communities and societies.

They should develop a knowledge and critical understanding of:

- the specified material
- how the texts specified for study are interpreted and applied
- the influence of beliefs and teachings on individuals, communities and societies
- the causes, meanings and significance of similarities and differences in religious thought belief and practice within Hinduism
- approaches to the study of religion and belief.

They should be able to analyse and evaluate issues arising from the topics studied, and the views and arguments of the scholars prescribed for study.

Questions may be set that span more than one topic.

Students may study any version of the specified texts, but should be aware of issues related to translation where relevant. Quotations will not be used in questions.

Students should be able to use specialist language and terminology appropriately.

Exam questions will show a translation for any non-English terms (except for names of people, texts and schools of thought). However students are expected to recognise and understand the following technical terms: Trimurti, avatar, karma, ahimsa, darshan.

Section A: Hinduism

Sources of wisdom and authority

- The Vedas: concept of shruti (that which is heard); the nature and authority of the Vedas, their use in worship and their importance; the distinctive nature of the Upanishads and their importance for Hindu thought; the significance of the teaching in the Purusha Sukta of the Rig Veda about the origin of the caste system.
- The smṛti texts: the status of the smṛti (remembered) texts; the importance of the following: the Ramayana; the Bhagavad Gita and the Manusmṛti.
- Gurus: the role and authority of gurus in the modern world with reference to Swami Sivananda.

Ultimate reality

- Differing ideas about God and gods in the Rig Veda, and their importance for Hinduism today.
- The Trimurti: the nature and roles of the three elements of the Trimurti and their relationship with Brahman; the concept of avatar with particular reference to Krishna and Rama; the importance of the Trimurti and avatars in Hinduism.
- Nirguna and Saguna Brahman: Nirguna Brahman as nothingness, without qualities, beyond description and understanding; Saguna Brahman with qualities and as a personal God; the importance of both concepts for Hindus, Kena Upanishad 1:3–8.

Self, death and afterlife

- The meaning and purpose of life: the four aims of life; and their relative importance; different understandings of the nature of moksha.
- Atman: the concept of atman and its relationship with the body and with Brahman, with reference to the views of Advaita Vedanta (non-dualism) and Samkhya (dualism) the parable of the chariot: Katha Upanishad 3.
- Samsara: the concept of samsara; beliefs about reincarnation and the causes of reincarnation with reference to the different types of karma; the realms of reincarnation and the interconnectedness of all life.

Good conduct and key moral principles

- Good conduct: the importance of good moral conduct in Hinduism with reference to karma and karma yoga (selfless effort).
- Dharma: the concepts of Sanatana dharma (universal dharma), Varnashrama dharma (dharma for class and stage of life) and the relationship between them; the importance of each for the Hindu way of life.
- Ahimsa: the virtue of ahimsa, its application to issues concerning the embryo and the unborn child, treatment of animals and war including the use of weapons of mass destruction; different Hindu views on these issues including Gandhi's views on non-violence.

Expressions of religious identity

- Yoga: the different paths of Yoga, their suitability for different types of character and the links between them.
- Bhakti Yoga: the nature and importance of bhakti yoga; darshan at shrines, temples and on pilgrimage with particular reference to the Ganges; the key aspects of puja.
- The changing role of ashrams: ashrams (spiritual retreat centres) in Hinduism; their role prior to the 20th century and the variety of types of ashram today, with particular reference to the Sivananda Yoga Vedanta Dhanwantari Ashram in Kerala, and Skanda Vale Ashram UK.

Hinduism, gender and sexuality

Historical and social factors that have influenced developments in Hindu thinking about these issues with particular reference to India, including: encounter with western values and lifestyles as part of the British Empire; the changing roles of men and women in society outside of religion, the rights given to women by secular governments.

Developments in Hindu thought including feminist approaches:

- Debates about the role and status of women in Hinduism with particular reference to the contribution of Ram Mohan Roy.
- The work of the Manushi organisation in modern India.
- Different Hindu views about celibacy, marriage and divorce, homosexuality and transgender issues.

Hinduism and science

How and why science has influenced Hinduism and how Hinduism has responded, with particular reference to: science's emphasis on evidence and reason; specific scientific discoveries; science as a stimulus to Hindu ethical thinking.

Developments in Hindu thought:

- How science has challenged Hinduism and Hindu responses to Darwin's theory of evolution and the Big Bang theory, including the views of ISKCON.
- The belief that science is compatible with Hinduism with reference to the views of Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan about the scientific basis of Hinduism, and the belief that scientific discoveries were revealed in the Vedas.
- Different Hindu responses to ethical issues raised by science: genetic engineering.

Hinduism and the challenge of secularisation

In India: the 19th century context and the encounter with western values; comparison of the significant ideas of Ram Mohan Roy and Dayananda Saraswati about the nature of Hinduism.

Practical Vedanta: the reinterpretation of Advaita Vedanta in the work of Vivekananda and its present expression in the work of the Ramakrishna Mission, a liberationist Hindu approach, supporting the poor and defending the oppressed.

In Britain: the challenge of secularisation including the replacement of religion as the source of truth and moral values; relegation of religion to the personal sphere; how Hinduism has responded to this challenge including: the preservation of existing sects such as Brahma Samaj UK; the emergence of new forms of Hinduism including ISKCON.

Hinduism, migration and religious pluralism

How migration has created multicultural societies which include Hinduism, with particular reference to the development of Hinduism in Britain; diversity within the Hindu community in Britain; freedom of religion as a human right in European law and religious pluralism as a feature of modern secular states; the influence of this context on Hindu thought.

Developments in Hindu thought as a response to this context including:

- Vedanta as religion: the view that all faiths, and all traditions within Hinduism, are partial expressions of Vedanta and Hindu responses to that view.
- The importance of India for Hindus living elsewhere, and the possibility of sacred sites developing outside India.
- Hindu responses to issues of freedom of religious expression in society, including Hindutva.

The 21st century Indian secular context with particular reference to issues arising from freedom of religion, and the application of personal law to non-Hindu communities; different Hindu responses to this, including the response of the Sangh Parivar: its concept of Hindutva and definition of Hindu.

Section B: Dialogues

This section of the specification is focused on the connections between various elements of the course and requires students to develop breadth and depth in their understanding of the connections between the knowledge, understanding and skills set out in the specification. There are two areas for study, firstly the dialogue between Hinduism and philosophy: how developments in belief have, over time, influenced and been influenced by philosophical studies of religion, secondly the dialogue between Hinduism and ethics: how developments in belief have influenced and been influenced by ethical studies.

Students will be required to demonstrate a critical awareness of these connections and to analyse their nature.

The dialogue between Hinduism and philosophy

Beliefs and teachings about:

- ultimate reality
- self, death and afterlife
- sources of wisdom and authority
- religious experience
- the relationship between scientific and religious discourses
- the truth claims of other religions
- miracles.

The following issues, and the impact of the discussion on religious belief past and present, should be considered:

- How far the belief is reasonable – that is based on reason and/or consistent with reason
- How meaningful the statements of faith are, and for whom.
- How coherent the beliefs are, and how consistent with other beliefs within the belief system.
- The relevance of philosophical enquiry for religious faith, with particular reference to the debate about the nature of faith as ‘belief in’ or ‘belief that’.

Two unstructured questions will be set. Students must answer one.

The dialogue between Hinduism and ethics

- Hindu responses to the following approaches to moral decision-making in the light of key Hindu moral principles:
 - deontological, with reference to Kant.
 - teleological and consequential, with reference to Bentham.
 - character based, with reference to virtue ethics.
- How far Hindu ethics can be considered to be deontological, teleological, consequential, or character based.
- Hindu response to: the issues of human life and death and issues of animal life and death prescribed for study; theft and lying; marriage; homosexuality and transgender issues; genetic engineering.

- Hindu responses to issues surrounding wealth, tolerance and freedom of religious expression.
- Hindu understandings of free will and moral responsibility, and the value of conscience in Hindu moral decision-making.

The impact of other ethical perspectives and ethical studies on Hindu views about these issues, both past and present. This may include challenges to and support for Hindu views; compatibility of Hindu views with those of other ethical perspectives; the relative strengths and weaknesses of Hindu perspectives and the other ethical perspectives studied on these issues; the implications of criticisms of Hindu ethical teaching for the religion as a whole and its sources of authority.

Two unstructured questions will be set. Students must answer one.

3.2.4 2D Islam

Students are required to study those aspects of the religious beliefs, teachings, values and practices of Islam specified below and the different ways in which these are expressed in the lives of individuals, communities and societies.

They should develop a knowledge and critical understanding of:

- the specified material
- how the texts specified for study are interpreted and applied
- the influence of beliefs and teachings on individuals, communities and societies
- the causes, meanings and significance of similarities and differences in religious thought belief and practice within Islam
- approaches to the study of religion and belief.

They should be able to analyse and evaluate issues arising from the topics studied, and the views and arguments of the scholars prescribed for study.

Questions may be set that span more than one topic.

Students may study any version of the specified texts, but should be aware of issues related to translation where relevant. Quotations will not be used in questions.

Students should be able to use specialist language and terminology appropriately.

Exam questions will show a translation for any non-English terms (except for names of people, texts and schools of thought). However students are expected to recognise and understand the following technical terms: Tawhid, Barzakh, Al-Qadr, Jihad.

Section A: Islam

Sources of wisdom and authority

- The Qur'an: its nature and authority; Muslim beliefs about the revelation and compilation of the Qur'an; the importance of the Arabic text and how this is reflected in the treatment and use of the Qur'an in worship and in everyday life; translation as interpretation and the importance of trustworthy interpretation of the Qur'an.
- The Prophet: the status of Muhammad as Khatam an-Nabiyyin (seal of the Prophets) and his significance for Muslims today; different views about the nature and value of hadiths as sources of knowledge of the sayings and actions of Muhammad.
- Imams: the authority of the Imams in Shi'a Islam.

God

- Tawhid: the Oneness of God; God as transcendent and indescribable, the omnipotent creator and controller of all things; teaching about God in the Throne verse: 2:255.
- Personal aspects of God: The significance of ‘The Merciful’ and ‘The Compassionate’ as Names of God; different Muslim views about how anthropomorphic descriptions of God in the Qur’an should be interpreted. Ashari, Hanbali and Mutazili views, with particular reference to the hand of God and the face of God.
- Aspects of the Sufi concept of God: God as incomparable and unknowable in Himself ; Creation as emanation and God as immanent; the soul as one with God; Sufi understandings of the teaching about God in the verse of Light: 24:35.

Self, death and afterlife

- Muslim views about the purpose of life as being to worship God and a moral test; the concept of worship and consideration of the view that, for Muslims, this life is only important as a preparation for the life to come.
- Al-Qadr: different understandings of the relationship between divine control, human freedom and responsibility. Mutazili and Ashari perspectives and the Shi’a concept of Bada.
- Akhirah (afterlife): the concept of soul; beliefs about Barzakh, judgement heaven and hell including different understandings of resurrection and of the descriptions of heaven and hell in the Qur’an including 47:15.

Good conduct and key moral principles

- Good conduct: the importance of good moral conduct in Islam including reference to the duty of obedience to God and the Prophet and to the greater jihad; the role of personal freedom and judgement in the Shari’ah law, with reference to the five-fold classification of actions.
- Sanctity of life: the concept of the sanctity of life and its application to issues concerning the embryo and the unborn child; lesser jihad as a duty of the Ummah and how it applied to warfare at the time of the Prophet; debates about its application today, including to the use of weapons of mass destruction and terrorism.
- Stewardship: the role of the Ummah as Khalifah (stewards) and their responsibilities towards the environment and to animal life; how changing understandings of the impact of human activities on the world change Muslim understandings of their responsibilities.

Expressions of religious identity

- The concept of Muslim: the similarities and differences between Shi’a and Sunni views about what it means to be a Muslim.
- The Pillars of Islam: the concept of pillar and purpose of the five pillars of Islam; Salah: differences in Sunni and Shi’a practices; the importance of the outward actions of prayer and the underlying intentions and state of mind; the importance of daily and Jummah prayers; Hajj: developments in the practice of Hajj in the 20th century and the significance and importance of Hajj today.
- The mosque: the changing role of the mosque in the community, with particular reference to the history and developing work of the London Central Mosque.

Islam, gender and sexuality

Historical and social factors that have influenced developments in Muslim thinking about these issues including: encounter with western values and lifestyles as part of the British Empire and through later immigration into Britain; the changing roles of men and women in society outside of religion; the rights given to women by secular governments.

Developments in Muslim thought, including feminist approaches:

- The veil seen as a barrier to achievement in Qasim Amin's work in 1899 and other Muslim views on this issue.
- Debates about the role and status of women in Islam with particular reference to the interpretation of 4:34 and the views of Amina Wadud.
- Contemporary Muslim views about celibacy, marriage, homosexuality and transgender issues.

Islam and science

How and why science has influenced Islam and how Islam has responded, with particular reference to: science's emphasis on evidence and reason; specific scientific discoveries; science as a stimulus to Muslim ethical thinking.

Developments in Muslim thought:

- How science has challenged Muslim belief and different Muslim responses to Darwin's theory of evolution and the Big Bang theory.
- The importance of science in early Muslim thought: science as a duty required by the Qur'an. The belief that the Qur'an revealed what science later confirmed with reference to the work of Maurice Bucaille.
- Different Muslim responses to ethical issues raised by science: genetic engineering.

Islam and the challenge of secularisation

This topic may be studied with exclusive reference to the British context.

Challenges of secularisation including: the replacement of religion as the source of truth and moral values; relegation of religion to the personal sphere; the rise of militant atheism: the view that religion is irrational.

Developments in Muslim thought:

- Responses to materialistic secular values: the value of wealth and possessions and the debate about capital punishment; comparison of the significant ideas of Tariq Ramadan and Sheikh Ahmad Ash-Sharabasi concerning capital punishment.
- Emphasis on the preservation of Muslim identity with reference to dress and diet, prayer places of worship, and the self-reliance of the Muslim community; different attitudes to democracy and to involvement in the democratic process.
- Emphasis on the social relevance of Islam, liberationist approaches supporting the poor and defending the oppressed.

Islam, migration and religious pluralism

How migration has created multicultural societies which include Islam, with particular reference to migration by Muslims into the United Kingdom from the 1950s onwards; the diversity within the Muslim community in Britain; freedom of religion as a human right in European law and religious pluralism as a feature of modern secular states; the influence of this context on Muslim thought.

Developments in Muslim thought:

- Emphasis on exclusivism; its basis in the Qur'an, 3:85; attitudes within Islam to minority Muslim groups.
- Inclusivism and its basis in the Qur'an with reference to both Abrahamic and non-Abrahamic faiths; the debate about whether good deeds without faith in God or Islam are rewarded by God.
- Muslim responses to issues of freedom of religious expression in society.

Section B: Dialogues

This section of the specification is focused on the connections between various elements of the course and requires students to develop breadth and depth in their understanding of the connections between the knowledge, understanding and skills set out in the specification. There are two areas for study, firstly the dialogue between Islam and philosophy: how developments in belief have, over time, influenced and been influenced by philosophical studies of religion, secondly the dialogue between Islam and ethics: how developments in belief have influenced and been influenced by ethical studies.

Students will be required to demonstrate a critical awareness of these connections and to analyse their nature.

The dialogue between Islam and philosophy

Beliefs and teachings about:

- God
- self, death and afterlife
- sources of wisdom and authority
- religious experience
- the relationship between scientific and religious discourses
- the truth claims of other religions
- miracles.

The following issues, and the impact of the discussion on religious belief past and present, should be considered:

- How far the belief is reasonable – that is based on reason and/or consistent with reason.
- How meaningful the statements of faith are, and for whom.
- How coherent the beliefs are, and how consistent with other beliefs within the belief system.
- The relevance of philosophical enquiry for religious faith, with particular reference to the debate about the nature of faith as ‘belief in’ or ‘belief that’.

Two unstructured questions will be set. Students must answer one.

The dialogue between Islam and ethics

- Muslim responses to the following approaches to moral decision making in the light of key Muslim moral principles:
 - deontological, with reference to Kant
 - teleological and consequential, with reference to Bentham
 - character based, with reference to virtue ethics.
- How far Muslim ethics can be considered to be deontological, teleological, consequential, or character based.
- Muslim response to: the issues of human life and death and issues of animal life and death prescribed for study; theft and lying; marriage; homosexuality and transgender issues; genetic engineering including.
- Muslim responses to issues surrounding wealth, tolerance and freedom of religious expression.
- Muslim understandings of free will and moral responsibility, and the value of conscience in Muslim moral decision-making.

The impact of other ethical perspectives and ethical studies on Muslim views about these issues, both past and present. This may include challenges to and support for Muslim views; compatibility of Muslim views with those of other ethical perspectives; the relative strengths and weaknesses of

Muslim perspectives and the other ethical perspectives studied on these issues; the implications of criticisms of Muslim ethical teaching for the religion as a whole and its sources of authority.

Two unstructured questions will be set. Students must answer one.

3.2.5 2E Judaism

Students are required to study those aspects of the religious beliefs, teachings, values and practices of Judaism specified below and the different ways in which these are expressed in the lives of individuals, communities and societies.

They should develop a knowledge and critical understanding of:

- the specified material
- how the texts specified for study are interpreted and applied
- the influence of beliefs and teachings on individuals, communities and societies
- the causes, meanings and significance of similarities and differences in religious thought belief and practice within Judaism
- approaches to the study of religion and belief.

They should be able to analyse and evaluate issues arising from the topics studied, and the views and arguments of the scholars prescribed for study.

Questions may be set that span more than one topic.

Students may study any version of the specified texts, but should be aware of issues related to translation where relevant. Quotations will not be used in questions.

Students should be able to use specialist language and terminology appropriately.

Exam questions will show a translation for any non-English terms (except for names of people, texts and schools of thought). However students are expected to recognise and understand the following technical terms: 'Eternal Thou', She'ol, pikuach nephesh, agunot, minyan.

Section A: Judaism

Sources of wisdom and authority

- The Tenakh: different Jewish beliefs about the nature and authority of the Tenakh, including: as the absolute Word of God, complete and unchangeable and as inspired by God but written by human beings; the influence of these beliefs on the way in which the Tenakh is used as a source of authority in worship and in everyday life.
- The Babylonian Talmud: different Jewish beliefs about its nature, authority and importance.
- Rabbis: their role and authority in contemporary Judaism, including reference to the Beth Din.

God

- Monotheism: God as one, eternal, omniscient and omnipotent creator and controller of all things; beliefs about God expressed in Maimonides' Thirteen Principles of the Faith.
- God as personal: the personal God of the Bible, and debates about how the anthropomorphic and gender based language about God should be interpreted, with particular reference to God as King and Father and Genesis 3:8.
- Martin Buber: key ideas about God in Martin Buber's theology: God as the 'Eternal Thou'; God known in and through personal human relationships.

Self, death and afterlife

- The meaning and purpose of life: different purposes of life and their relative importance: obedience; to bring the Messiah and to repair the world; different Jewish understandings of the Messianic Age.
- Life after death: In the Tenakh: including I Samuel 28:11–20 and the concept of She'ol; nature of the soul; resurrection of the flesh in the Thirteen Principles of the Faith and modern attitudes to this belief; immortality of the soul in later Jewish thinking including the expression of these beliefs in the Pittsburgh Platform; the link between belief in the afterlife and belief in the justice of God.
- Reincarnation in some kabbalistic thinking.

Good conduct and key moral principles

- Good moral conduct: the importance of good moral conduct in Judaism with reference to obedience to God and the mitzvot; and the extent of human freedom and moral responsibility; the place of individual reasoning and decision-making including the principle of pikuach nephesh.
- The sanctity of life: the concept of the sanctity of life and its application to issues concerning the embryo and the unborn child and war; issues including the use of weapons of mass destruction; different Jewish views on these issues.
- Stewardship: the concept of stewardship and Jewish attitudes to animals and the environment, and how changing understandings of the effects of human activities on the environment have affected that role.

Expressions of religious identity

- The concept of 'Jew', and different understandings of what it means to be a Jew, including: the importance of being born a Jewish mother; attitudes to circumcision and to bar/bat mitzvah.
- Expressions of Jewish identity in daily life: different attitudes to dress, keeping a kosher home and keeping Shabbat; expressions of Jewish identity in worship including the diversity of practice within synagogue worship, Yom Kippur and Pesach.
- The changing role of the synagogue in society with reference to its developments during the Exile in Babylon and its role today.

Judaism, gender and sexuality

Historical and social factors that have influenced developments in Jewish thinking about these issues including: the changing roles of men and women in society outside of religion; different understandings of the Torah and Halakah; the rights given to women by secular governments.

Developments in Jewish thought, including feminist approaches:

- Debates about the ordination of women as rabbis from c1970 to the present.
- The work of the Jewish Orthodox Feminist Alliance, including its views on the issues of agunot and minyan.
- Different Jewish views about celibacy, marriage, homosexuality and transgender issues, including the views of Rachel Adler.

Judaism and science

How and why science has influenced Judaism and how Judaism has responded, with particular reference to: science's emphasis on evidence and reason; specific scientific discoveries; science as a stimulus to Jewish ethical thinking.

Developments in Jewish thought:

- The importance of science: Maimonides: how contemplation of nature reveals the glory of God.
- How science can challenge religious beliefs; different Jewish responses to Darwin's theory of evolution and the Big Bang theory of the origin of the universe, including the views of Gerald Schroeder.
- Different Jewish responses to ethical issues raised by science: genetic engineering.

Judaism and the challenge of secularisation

The challenge of secularisation including: the replacement of religion as the source of truth and moral values; relegation of religion to the personal sphere; the rise of militant atheism: the view that religion is irrational and a threat to social stability.

Developments in Jewish thought:

- Ghettoism: the preservation of Jewish identity with reference to Nehemiah 10:28–31 alternative responses of assimilation and integration.
- Responses to materialistic secular values: the value of wealth and possessions.
- Different responses to the state of Israel including Political Zionism and Religious Zionism.
- Emphasis on the social relevance of Judaism: liberationist approaches as supporting the poor and defending the oppressed with reference to the Jewish Social Action Forum (JSAF).

Judaism, migration and religious pluralism

How migration has created multicultural societies which include Judaism, with particular reference to the development of Judaism in Britain; diversity within the Jewish community in Britain; freedom of religion as a human right in European law and religious pluralism as a feature of modern secular states. The influence of this context on Jewish thought.

Developments in Jewish thought:

- The concept of Pluralistic Judaism, its implications for relationships between the different traditions of Judaism and between Judaism and other faiths.
- Jewish understandings of their role as the chosen people and its implications for their relationship with other faiths.
- Jewish responses to issues of freedom of religious expression in society.

A comparison of the significant ideas in the post holocaust theology of Ignatz Maybaum and Richard Rubenstein: Maybaum – churban, remnant and suffering servant; Rubenstein: the 'death' of God and of the Covenant.

Section B: Dialogues

This section of the specification is focused on the connections between various elements of the course and requires students to develop breadth and depth in their understanding of the connections between the knowledge, understanding and skills set out in the specification. There are two areas for study, firstly the dialogue between Judaism and philosophy: how developments in belief have, over time, influenced and been influenced by philosophical studies of religion, secondly the dialogue between Judaism and ethics: how developments in belief have influenced and been influenced by ethical studies.

Students will be required to demonstrate a critical awareness of these connections and to analyse their nature.

The dialogue between Judaism and philosophy

Beliefs and teachings about:

- God
- self, death and afterlife
- sources of wisdom and authority
- religious experience
- the relationship between scientific and religious discourses
- the truth claims of other religions
- miracles.

The following issues, and the impact of the discussion on religious belief past and present, should be considered:

- How far the belief is reasonable – that is based on reason and/or consistent with reason.
- How meaningful the statements of faith are, and for whom.
- How coherent the beliefs are, and how consistent with other beliefs within the belief system.
- The relevance of philosophical enquiry for religious faith, with particular reference to the debate about the nature of faith as ‘belief in’ or ‘belief that’.

Two unstructured questions will be set. Students must answer one.

The dialogue between Judaism and ethics

- Jewish responses to the following approaches to moral decision-making in the light of key Jewish moral principles:
 - deontological, with reference to Kant.
 - teleological and consequential, with reference to Bentham.
 - character based, with reference to virtue ethics.
- How far Jewish ethics can be considered to be deontological, teleological, consequential, or character based.
- Jewish response to: the issues of human life and death and issues of animal life and death prescribed for study; theft and lying; marriage; homosexuality and transgender issues; genetic engineering.
- Jewish responses to issues surrounding wealth, tolerance and freedom of religious expression.
- Jewish understandings of free will and moral responsibility, and the value of conscience in Jewish moral decision-making.

The impact of other ethical perspectives and ethical studies on Jewish views about these issues, both past and present. This may include challenges to and support for Jewish views; compatibility of Jewish views with those of other ethical perspectives; the relative strengths and weaknesses of Jewish perspectives and the other ethical perspectives studied on these issues; the implications of criticisms of Jewish ethical teaching for the religion as a whole and its sources of authority.

Two unstructured questions will be set. Students must answer one.

4 Scheme of assessment

Find past papers and mark schemes, and specimen papers for new courses, on our website at aqa.org.uk/pastpapers

This specification is designed to be taken over two years.

This is a linear qualification. In order to achieve the award, students must complete all assessments at the end of the course and in the same series.

A-level exams and certification for this specification are available for the first time in May/June 2018 and then every May/June for the life of the specification.

All materials are available in English only.

Our A-level exams in Religious Studies include questions that allow students to demonstrate their ability to:

- reflect on, select and apply specified knowledge
- construct well informed and reasoned arguments substantiated by relevant evidence
- understand, interpret and evaluate critically religious concepts, texts and other sources
- present responses to questions which are clear and coherent
- use specialist language and terminology appropriately
- identify, investigate and critically analyse questions, arguments, ideas and issues arising from the chosen approaches
- engage in debate in a way that recognises the right of others to hold a different view
- critically analyse and evaluate the views and arguments of scholars/academics
- account for the influence of social, religious and historical factors on developments in the study of religions and beliefs
- analyse the nature of connections between the various elements of their course of study
- develop breadth and depth in their understanding of the connections between the knowledge, understanding and skills set out in the specification as a whole.

4.1 Aims

Courses based on this specification should encourage students to:

- develop their interest in a rigorous study of religion and belief and relate it to the wider world
- develop knowledge and understanding appropriate to a specialist study of religion
- develop an understanding and appreciation of religious thought and its contribution to individuals, communities and societies
- adopt an enquiring, critical and reflective approach to the study of religion
- reflect on and develop their own values, opinions and attitudes in light of their study.

4.2 Assessment objectives

Assessment objectives (AOs) are set by Ofqual and are the same across all A-level Religious Studies specifications and all exam boards.

The exams will measure how students have achieved the following assessment objectives.

- AO1: Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of religion and belief, including:
 - religious, philosophical and/or ethical thought and teaching
 - influence of beliefs, teachings and practices on individuals, communities and societies
 - cause and significance of similarities and differences in belief, teaching and practice
 - approaches to the study of religion and belief.
- AO2: Analyse and evaluate aspects of, and approaches to, religion and belief, including their significance, influence and study.

4.2.1 Assessment objective weightings for A-level Religious Studies

Assessment objectives (AOs)	Component weightings (approx %)		Overall weighting (approx %)
	Paper 1	Paper 2	
AO1	20	20	40
AO2	30	30	60
Overall weighting of components	50	50	100

4.3 Assessment weightings

The marks awarded on the papers will be scaled to meet the weighting of the components. Students' final marks will be calculated by adding together the scaled marks for each component. Grade boundaries will be set using this total scaled mark. The scaling and total scaled marks are shown in the table below.

Component	Maximum raw mark	Scaling factor	Maximum scaled mark
Component 1: Philosophy of religion and ethics	100	1	100
Component 2: Study of religion and dialogues	100	1	100
Total scaled mark:			200

4.4 Assessment structure

4.4.1 Component 1: Philosophy of religion and ethics

In Component 1, students will be assessed on their knowledge, understanding and ability to analyse and evaluate philosophy of religion (Section A) and ethics and religion (Section B).

The exam tests students' ability in relation to both AO1 and AO2. The paper is divided into two sections:

Section A: tests philosophy of religion and consists of two compulsory two-part questions; in each two-part question the first part tests AO1 (10 marks) and the second part tests AO2 (15 marks).

Section B: tests ethics and religion and consists of two compulsory two-part questions; in each two-part question the first part tests AO1 (10 marks) and the second part tests AO2 (15 marks).

4.4.2 Component 2: Study of religion and dialogues

In Component 2 students will be assessed on their knowledge, understanding and ability to analyse and evaluate a single religion (Section A) and issues related to the dialogue between philosophy of religion and their chosen religion (Section B) and issues related to the dialogue between ethical studies and their chosen religion (Section C).

The following options are available:

2A Buddhism

2B Christianity

2C Hinduism

2D Islam

2E Judaism

The exam tests students' ability in relation to both AO1 and AO2. The paper is divided into three Sections:

- **Section A** covers the study of religion and consists of two compulsory two-part questions; in each two-part question the first part tests AO1 (10 marks) and the second part tests AO2 (15 marks).
- **Section B** covers the dialogue between religion and philosophy of religion; it is tested by one synoptic question from a choice of two testing AO1 and AO2 (worth 25 marks).
- **Section C** tests the dialogue between religion and ethical studies; it is tested by one synoptic question from a choice of two testing AO1 and AO2 (worth 25 marks).

5 General administration

You can find information about all aspects of administration, as well as all the forms you need, at aqa.org.uk/examsadmin

5.1 Entries and codes

You only need to make one entry for each qualification – this will cover all the question papers, non-exam assessment and certification.

Every specification is given a national discount (classification) code by the Department for Education (DfE), which indicates its subject area.

If a student takes two specifications with the same discount code, further and higher education providers are likely to take the view that they have only achieved one of the two qualifications. Please check this before your students start their course.

Qualification title	Option	AQA entry code	DfE discount code
AQA Advanced Level GCE in Religious Studies	Option A: Buddhism	7062A	TBC
	Option B: Christianity	7062B	TBC
	Option C: Hinduism	7062C	TBC
	Option D: Islam	7062D	TBC
	Option E: Judaism	7062E	TBC

This specification complies with:

- Ofqual *General conditions of recognition* that apply to all regulated qualifications
- Ofqual GCE qualification level conditions that apply to all GCEs
- Ofqual GCE subject level conditions that apply to all GCEs in this subject
- all other relevant regulatory documents.

The Ofqual qualification accreditation number (QAN) is 601/8830/3.

5.2 Overlaps with other qualifications

There is overlapping content in the AS and A-level Religious Studies specifications. This helps you teach the AS and A-level together.

5.3 Awarding grades and reporting results

The A-level qualification will be graded on a six-point scale: A*, A, B, C, D and E.

Students who fail to reach the minimum standard for grade E will be recorded as U (unclassified) and will not receive a qualification certificate.

5.4 Re-sits and shelf life

Students can re-sit the qualification as many times as they wish, within the shelf life of the qualification.

5.5 Previous learning and prerequisites

There are no previous learning requirements. Any requirements for entry to a course based on this specification are at the discretion of schools and colleges.

However, we recommend that students should have the skills and knowledge associated with a GCSE Religious Studies course or equivalent.

5.6 Access to assessment: diversity and inclusion

General qualifications are designed to prepare students for a wide range of occupations and further study. Therefore our qualifications must assess a wide range of competences.

The subject criteria have been assessed to see if any of the skills or knowledge required present any possible difficulty to any students, whatever their ethnic background, religion, sex, age, disability or sexuality. If any difficulties were encountered, the criteria were reviewed again to make sure that tests of specific competences were only included if they were important to the subject.

As members of the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) we participate in the production of the JCQ document *Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments: General and Vocational qualifications*. We follow these guidelines when assessing the needs of individual students who may require an access arrangement or reasonable adjustment. This document is published on the JCQ website at jcq.org.uk

5.6.1 Students with disabilities and special needs

We can make arrangements for disabled students and students with special needs to help them access the assessments, as long as the competences being tested are not changed. Access arrangements must be agreed **before** the assessment. For example, a Braille paper would be a reasonable adjustment for a Braille reader but not for a student who does not read Braille.

We are required by the Equality Act 2010 to make reasonable adjustments to remove or lessen any disadvantage that affects a disabled student.

If you have students who need access arrangements or reasonable adjustments, you can apply using the Access arrangements online service at aqa.org.uk/eaqa

5.6.2 Special consideration

We can give special consideration to students who have been disadvantaged at the time of the assessment through no fault of their own – for example a temporary illness, injury or serious problem such as the death of a relative. We can only do this **after** the assessment.

Your exams officer should apply online for special consideration at aqa.org.uk/eaqa

For more information and advice about access arrangements, reasonable adjustments and special consideration please see aqa.org.uk/access or email accessarrangementsqueries@aqa.org.uk

5.7 Working with AQA for the first time

If your school or college has not previously offered any AQA specification, you need to register as an AQA centre to offer our specifications to your students. Find out how at [aqa.org.uk/becomeacentre](https://www.aqa.org.uk/becomeacentre)

5.8 Private candidates

This specification is available to private candidates.

A private candidate is someone who enters for exams through an AQA-approved school or college but is not enrolled as a student there.

A private candidate may be self-taught, home-schooled or have private tuition, either with a tutor or through a distance learning organisation. You must be based in the UK.

If you have any queries as a private candidate, you can:

- speak to the exams officer at the school or college where you intend to take your exams
- visit our website at [aqa.org.uk/privatecandidates](https://www.aqa.org.uk/privatecandidates)
- email: privatecandidates@aqa.org.uk

Get help and support

Visit our website for information, guidance, support and resources at

You can talk directly to the Religious Studies subject team:

E: religiousstudies@aqa.org.uk

T: 0161 957 3881