

**A Level Religious Studies**

**Lecturer**
Matthew Smith smithma@btc.ac.uk

**Activity 1** - Arguments for the existence of God

In our studies of the Philosophy of Religion, we will be examining three of the most common arguments for the existence of God. Whilst pre-existing knowledge of these arguments is not an essential requirement for the course, knowledge of some appropriate subject vocabulary is beneficial. Complete the table below, outlining definitions of technical terms:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Technical terms** | **Definition** |
| A posteriori |  |
| A priori |  |
| Analogy |  |
| Anthropomorphism |  |
| Deduction |  |
| Empirical |  |
| Fallacy |  |
| Fideism |  |
| Induction |  |
| Premise |  |

To help in completing this task, you may wish to refer to the following link: <http://www.philosophypages.com/dy/>

**Activity 2** - The problem of evil and suffering

The problem of evil and suffering is regarded as the single greatest challenge to faith in God. If God does exist, why would he allow evil to exist? Furthermore, why would he allow us to experience pain and suffering?

We will investigate this subject in great depth but, for now, find definitions of the following concepts:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Moral Evil** |  |
| **Natural Evil** |  |

Now complete the following table outlining three examples of both Natural and Moral Evil:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Moral Evil** | **Natural Evil** |
| 1 |  |  |
| 2 |  |  |
| 3 |  |  |

To help complete these tasks, you may wish to watch this video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9AzNEG1GB-k>

**Frequently asked questions**

**How is the subject assessed?**
A Level Religious Studies is assessed via **two** three-hour exams. Throughout the course we will thoroughly prepare you for the exams with skills development, exemplar answers and practice questions.

**What extra-curricular opportunities are there?**We aim to stretch and challenge students, developing their wider knowledge and understanding of the role and influence of religion in modern society. There will be opportunities to participate in educational visits to a variety of locations. In the past, this has included a visit to the Theology and Religion Department at Exeter University, as well as Exeter Islamic Centre. Furthermore, our students have also benefitted from talks by acknowledged experts in the field of religion and ethics, such as Professor A.C. Grayling.

**What other subjects complement A Level Religious Studies?**A Level Religious Studies is a versatile subject the compliments study of many other subjects. We directly study aspects of Sociology, Psychology, and Languages so an interest in these subjects (including English) is very useful. Religious Studies also supports the study of religion in Early Modern

History, as well as providing a strong ethical framework for those who may wish to work in the medical field in the future.

**What career pathways does studying Religious Studies lead to?**Theology and Religious Studies graduates are renowned as possessing a wide range of qualities which are highly valued by employers. These include the ability to read and synthesise complex information, as well as the qualities of empathy and reason. The assumption that all Religious Studies students go on to work as members of the clergy is an outdated stereotype. Instead, they find employment in a broad variety of professions such as teaching, law, finance, publishing, journalism, social work, and youth work.

**Recommended Listening**

* ‘In Our Time’ at <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p01gvqlg>
*Discussion of religious movements and the theories and individuals behind them*
* ‘The Moral Maze’ at <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b006qk11/episodes/player>
*Live debate about contemporary moral issues*
* ‘Thought for the Day’ at <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p00szxv6/episodes/downloads> *Reflections from a faith perspective on issues and people in the news*

**Recommended Reading**

* Introduction to the Philosophy of Religion *Brian Davies*
* The Puzzle of God *Peter Vardy*
* The Puzzle of Ethics *Peter Vardy and Paul Grosch*

**Recommended Viewing**

* ‘Crash Course Philosophy’ at <https://thecrashcourse.com/courses/philosophy>
* ‘Philosophy Tube’ at <https://www.youtube.com/c/thephilosophytube/playlists>
* ‘The School of Life’ at <https://www.youtube.com/c/theschooloflifetv/playlists>