



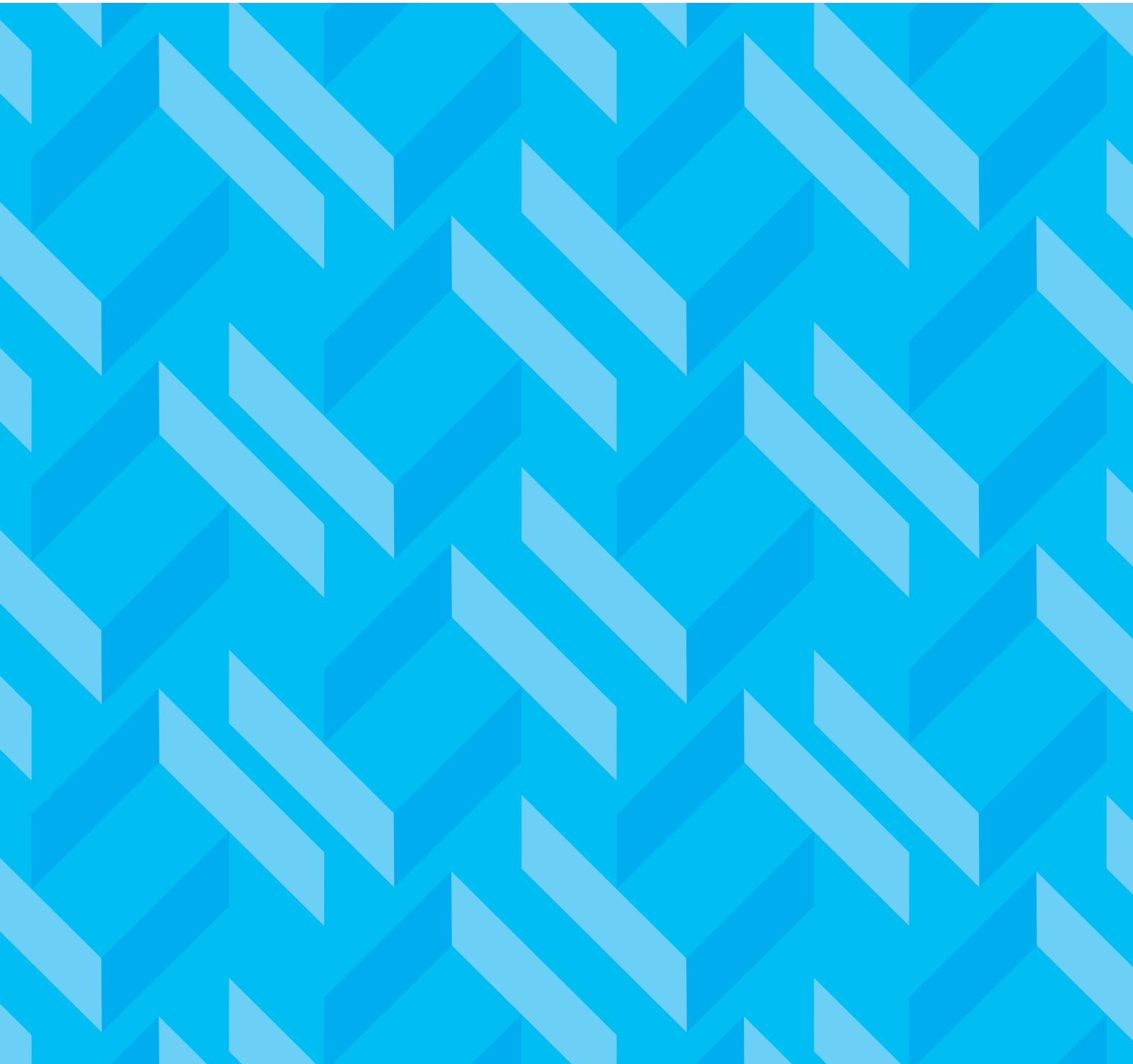
GCE

Examinations from 2009

First AS Award: Summer 2009

First A Level Award: Summer 2010

Religious Studies



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WJEC AS GCE in Religious Studies WJEC A Level GCE in Religious Studies

First AS Award - Summer 2009
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Ofqual has confirmed that from September 2013 students in England will no longer be able to sit AS or A2 examinations in January.

GCE Religious Studies

Subject/Option Entry Codes			English medium	Welsh medium
	AS "Cash in" entry	2341	01	W1
	A Level "Cash in" entry	3341	01	W1
RS1 and RS2 Discovering Religious Studies*				
RS1/2 CS	Introduction to Religion in Contemporary Society	1341	01	W1
RS1/2 ETH	Introduction to Religion and Ethics	1342	01	W1
RS1/2 PHIL	Introduction to Philosophy of Religion	1343	01	W1
RS1/2 BS	Introduction to Biblical Studies (either Old Testament or New Testament)	1344	01	W1
RS1/2 CHR	Introduction to Christianity	1345	01	W1
RS1/2 ER	Introduction to Eastern Religions (either Buddhism or Hinduism or Sikhism)	1346	01	W1
RS1/2 WR	Introduction to Western Religions (either Islam or Judaism)	1347	01	W1
RS3 Studies in Religion				
RS3 CS	Studies in Religion in Contemporary Society	1348	01	W1
RS3 ETH	Studies in Religion and Ethics	1348	02	W2
RS3 PHIL	Studies in Philosophy of Religion	1348	03	W3
RS3 BS	Studies in Biblical Studies (either Old Testament or New Testament)	1348	04	W4
RS3 CHR	Studies in Christianity	1348	05	W5
RS3 ER	Studies in Eastern Religions (either Buddhism or Hinduism or Sikhism)	1348	06	W6
RS3 WR	Studies in Western Religions (either Islam or Judaism)	1348	07	W7
RS4 Religion and Human Experience				
RS4 HE	Religion and Human Experience	1349	01	W1

***RS1 and RS2 (Discovering Religion) consist of two units to be chosen from the list of seven units (1341-1347) listed above**

Availability of Assessment Units				
Unit	January 2009	June 2009	*January 2010 & each subsequent year	June 2010 & each subsequent year
RS1	✓	✓	✓	✓
RS2	✓	✓	✓	✓
RS3				✓
RS4				✓

* From January 2014 there will be no AS or A2 examinations for students in England.

Qualification Accreditation Numbers

Advanced Subsidiary: 500/2916/2

Advanced: 500/2610/0

SUMMARY OF ASSESSMENT

This specification is divided into a total of 4 units, 2 AS units and 2 A2 units. Weightings noted below are expressed in terms of the full A level qualification.

Within each of Units 1-3 there are the following options, each with an unique entry code:

- Religion in Contemporary Society
- Philosophy of Religion
- Religion and Ethics
- Biblical Studies (Old Testament or New Testament)
- Christianity
- Eastern Religions (Buddhism, Hinduism or Sikhism)
- Western Religions (Islam or Judaism)

For an AS qualification, candidates will take any **two options**:

RS1	25%	1¼	hour	Written Paper	90 marks	(100 UMS)
Discovering Religious Studies (1)						
Selected option 1						
Two structured essay questions out of a choice of four.						
RS2	25%	1¼	hour	Written Paper	90 marks	(100 UMS)
Discovering Religious Studies (2)						
Selected option 2						
Two structured essay questions out of a choice of four.						

The examinations papers for RS1 and RS2 are identical but with different entry codes. To qualify for an AS award candidates must 'cash in' results for two units with different entry codes and different titles.

A LEVEL (the above plus a further 2 units)

RS3	25%	1¾	hour	Written Paper	100 marks	(100 UMS)
Studies in Religion						
One of the options defined above at a higher level.						
Two structured essay questions out of a choice of four.						

Each of the RS3 options presupposes that candidates have studied the corresponding AS unit. However, it is not a requirement that they must have done so.

RS4 (compulsory)	25%	1¾	hour	Written Paper	75 marks	(100 UMS)
Religion and Human Experience						
Three topics pre-released in January of the year of examination.						
Candidates answer one structured question out of a choice of three.						

RELIGIOUS STUDIES

1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Criteria for AS and Advanced Level GCE

This specification has been designed to meet the general criteria for GCE AS and Advanced Level and the subject criteria for AS/A Religious Studies as issued by the regulators [June 2006]. The qualifications will comply with the grading, awarding and certification requirements of the Code of Practice for 'general' qualifications (including GCE).

The AS qualification will be reported on a five-grade scale of A, B, C, D, E. The A level qualification will be reported on a six-grade scale of A*, A, B, C, D, E. The award of A* at A level will provide recognition of the additional demands presented by the A2 units in term of 'stretch and challenge' and 'synoptic' requirements. Candidates who fail to reach the minimum standard for grade E are recorded as U (unclassified), and do not receive a certificate. The level of demand of the AS examination is that expected of candidates half way through a full A level course.

The AS assessment units will have equal weighting with the second half of the qualification (A2) when these are aggregated to produce the A level award. AS consists of two assessment units, referred to in this specification as Unit 1 and Unit 2. A2 also consists of two units and these are referred to as Unit 3 and Unit 4.

Assessment units may be retaken prior to certification for the AS or A level qualifications, in which case the better result will be used for the qualification award. Individual assessment unit results, prior to certification for a qualification, have a shelf-life limited only by the shelf-life of the specification.

The specification and assessment materials are available in English and Welsh.

1.2 Prior learning

There is no specific requirement for prior learning, although many candidates will have already gained a basic knowledge and understanding through their study of Religious Studies at GCSE level. This specification may be followed by any candidate, irrespective of gender, ethnic, religious or cultural background. This specification is not age-specific and, as such, provides opportunities for candidates to extend their life-long learning.

1.3 Progression

The four part structure of this specification (two units for AS, and an additional two for the full A level) allows for both staged and end-of-course assessment and thus allows candidates to defer decisions about progression from AS to the full A level qualification.

This specification provides a suitable foundation for the study of Religious Studies or a related area through a range of higher education courses (e.g. a degree course in this or a related discipline); progression to the next level of vocational qualifications (e.g. through its contribution to the development of candidates' study skills and understanding of ethical and social issues); or direct entry into employment. In addition, the specification provides a coherent, satisfying and worthwhile course of study for candidates who do not progress to further study in this subject.

1.4 Rationale

Religious Studies is a subject that by its nature requires candidates to consider individual, moral, ethical, social, cultural and contemporary issues. The specification provides a framework for exploration of such issues and all units contain specific content through which individual courses may address these issues. The Religion and Ethics options, and the Religion in Contemporary Society options, are particularly focused on the moral, ethical and social aspects. Other options (e.g. all those on world religions) also provide opportunities to:

- study relationships between religion and culture;
- consider moral values and attitudes of individuals, faith communities or contemporary society;
- develop skill in reasoning on matters concerning values, attitudes and actions;
- develop the ability to make responsible judgements on significant moral teaching and issues.

1.5 The Wider Curriculum

The various options provide ample scope for studies that might contribute to candidates' spiritual development. All options directly address subject matter that is concerned with:

- the quest for meaning in life, truth and ultimate values;
- awareness of aspects of human life other than the physical and material;
- human experiences of transcendence, awe, wonder and mystery;
- the exploration of religious beliefs;

and provide a stimulus for candidates to:

- explore their own beliefs, creative abilities, insights, self-identity, and self-worth
- recognise and value the world and others.

Options on Religion and Ethics and on Religion in Contemporary Society address ethical issues concerning care of the environment.

The specification is consistent with the requirements of the National Framework for Religious Education.

1.6 Prohibited combinations and overlap

Every specification is assigned a national classification code indicating the subject area to which it belongs. Centres should be aware that candidates who enter for more than one GCE qualification with the same classification code will only have one grade (the highest) counted for the purpose of the School and College Performance Tables. The classification code for this specification is 4610.

This specification does not overlap significantly with any other, although there will be elements of overlap, for example, with Sociology and with Philosophy. There are no prohibited combinations.

1.7 Equality and Fair Assessment

AS/A levels often require assessment of a broad range of competences. This is because they are general qualifications and, as such, prepare candidates for a wide range of occupations and higher level courses.

The revised AS/A level qualification and subject criteria were reviewed to identify whether any of the competences required by the subject presented a potential barrier to any disabled candidates. If this was the case, the situation was reviewed again to ensure that such competences were included only where essential to the subject. The findings of this process were discussed with disability groups and with disabled people.

Reasonable adjustments are made for disabled candidates in order to enable them to access the assessments. For this reason, very few candidates will have a complete barrier to any part of the assessment. Information on reasonable adjustments is found in the Joint Council for Qualifications document *Regulations and Guidance Relating to Candidates who are eligible for Adjustments in Examinations*. This document is available on the JCQ website (www.jcq.org.uk).

Candidates who are still unable to access a significant part of the assessment, even after exploring all possibilities through reasonable adjustments, may still be able to receive an award. They would be given a grade on the parts of the assessment they have taken and there would be an indication on their certificate that not all of the competences have been addressed. This will be kept under review and may be amended in future.

2

AIMS

Religion and religions (past and present) represent diverse forms of values, beliefs and practices as responses to questions of ultimate meaning and purpose. Religious Studies therefore encompasses a wide range of disciplines and can consist of different approaches to their study.

This specification encourages students to:

- develop their interest in and enthusiasm for a rigorous study of religion and relate it to the wider world
- treat the subject as an academic discipline by developing knowledge, understanding and skills appropriate to a specialist study of religion
- adopt an enquiring, critical and reflective approach to the study of religion
- reflect on and develop their own values, opinions and attitudes in the light of their learning.

It requires candidate to acquire knowledge and understanding of:

- the key concepts (for example religious beliefs, teachings, doctrines, principles, ideas and theories), including how these are expressed in texts, writings and/or other forms and practices
- major issues and questions (for example issues of commonality and diversity, the role of dialogue, methods of study, relevance to contemporary society)
- the contribution of significant people, traditions or movements
- religious language and terminology
- the relationship between the area(s) of study and other aspects of human experience.

and, through the chosen area(s) of study, develop the following skills:

- to reflect on, select and deploy specified knowledge
- to identify, investigate and analyse questions and issues arising from the course of study
- to interpret and evaluate religious concepts, issues, ideas, the relevance of arguments and the views of scholars
- to use appropriate language and terminology in context.

3

ASSESSMENT OBJECTIVES

Candidates must meet the following assessment objectives in the context of the content detailed in Section 4 of the specification:

All candidates must be required to meet the following assessment objectives. At A level, candidates are required to demonstrate their knowledge, understanding and skills in greater depth and over a wider range of content than at AS level.

Knowledge, understanding and skills are closely linked.

AO1 Select and demonstrate clearly relevant knowledge and understanding through the use of evidence, examples and correct language and terminology appropriate to the course of study. In addition, for synoptic assessment, A level candidates should demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the connections between different elements of their course of study.

AO2 Critically evaluate and justify a point of view through the use of evidence and reasoned argument. In addition, for synoptic assessment, A level candidates should relate elements of their course of study to their broader context and to aspects of human experience.

The most able candidates will also apply and communicate effectively their knowledge and understanding using the skills of critical analysis, evaluation creativity and synthesis.

Weightings

Assessment objective weightings are shown below as % of the full A level, with AS weightings in brackets.

Unit	%	AO1%	AO2%
RS1	25 (50)	17 (34)	8 (16)
RS2	25 (50)	17 (34)	8 (16)
RS3	25	15	10
RS4	25	15	10
Total	100	64	36

4

SPECIFICATION CONTENT

AS

RELIGIOUS STUDIES

RS1 - Discovering Religious Studies and

RS2 - Discovering Religious Studies

Candidates will be required to study TWO of the following options, each of which has a unique entry code for RS1 and a different entry code for RS2:

- RS1/2 CS** Introduction to Religion in Contemporary Society
- RS1/2 ETH** Introduction to Religion and Ethics
- RS1/2 PHIL** Introduction to Philosophy of Religion
- RS1/2 BS** Introduction to Biblical Studies (**either** Old Testament **or** New Testament)
- RS1/2 CHR** Introduction to Christianity
- RS1/2 ER** Introduction to Eastern Religions (**either** Buddhism **or** Hinduism **or** Sikhism)
- RS1/2 WR** Introduction to Western Religions (**either** Islam **or** Judaism)

In the options that have alternative sections (Biblical Studies, Eastern Religions and Western Religions) candidates may answer from **one** section only. Candidates who answer from more than one section will be given marks only for the section they have answered best. Candidates are not precluded from answering from a different section if they are resitting a paper.

To qualify for an AS award candidates must 'cash in' results for **two units with different entry codes and different option titles**: they cannot qualify by using results for two sections of one option or by sitting the same option twice.

RS1/2 CS: Introduction to Religion in Contemporary Society (AS)

This option should be studied in the light of the overall aims and objectives for Religious Studies and the Subject Criteria for Religious Studies. It aims to give candidates a broad introduction to religious perspectives on some key aspects of contemporary society that are significant in human experience.

All of the following topics should be studied. To study less than the full Specification content may disadvantage a candidate's synoptic grasp of the material. Candidates may use information and ideas from one topic to answer questions on another where relevant and appropriate.

An awareness of the contribution of modern scholarship to understanding of these topics is expected.

Four structured essay questions will be set, of which candidates will be required to answer two. All questions will carry equal marks.

Subject Content

Topics	Issues
<p>1. Medical and Environmental Issues</p> <p>This topic should be studied from the perspective of at least one major world religion. An awareness of relevant teachings found in sacred writings and of statements made by contemporary religious leaders is expected. <i>It should be noted that candidates are only expected to be familiar with the main aspects of a topic and that only an outline of key points, not an in-depth study of every aspect, is required. However, candidates will be expected to be aware of basic arguments for and against the various topics.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Euthanasia – present legal position; voluntary/non-voluntary; active/passive; the hospice movement; concepts of sanctity of life and quality of life; religious principles (e.g. compassion, respect and responsibility for the elderly, life a gift from God, ahimsa) Animal rights – animals as food; use of animals for medical and non-medical experimentation; hunting; culling; animals as pets and entertainment; concepts of speciesism and stewardship 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Whether it is wrong helping humans, who want to end their life, to die To what extent euthanasia/animal rights is compatible with religious principles Whether there are any moral differences between killing animals for food, for pleasure or for medical research

<p>2. Religion and TV: How religious themes are portrayed through television</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A study of central religious themes as portrayed in two soap operas • An examination of religious belief and practice within episodes of <i>The Simpsons</i> • The teaching of religious values within religion-specific broadcasting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are religious concepts portrayed effectively on popular television? • How successful is television in teaching a wide audience about the central concepts of religious faith? • How far is television a replacement for traditional religion? • Evaluate the popularity of television as a medium for educating society about principles traditionally taught in places of worship
<p>3. Religion and Community</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secularisation: Differing definitions of religion; participation in organised religion; religious influence in society; growth of rational and scientific thought; growth of religious pluralism; moral compromises and materialism of religious institutions; emergence of mass media. Candidates are expected to be aware of some evidence and basic arguments which challenge the concept of secularisation (such as the growth of spirituality in society and increasing popularity of RS as an examination subject in schools) • One religious response: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EITHER Fundamentalism <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ causes – perceived threats to religious belief in the form of textual criticisms of sacred writings; secular authority; scientific explanations of phenomena ▪ main characteristics – inerrancy of sacred writings; conformity with traditional orthodox teachings; intolerance of religious diversity; moral absolutes, desire for certainty • OR New Religious Movements (NRMs) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ causes – disillusionment with established religions; sense of disadvantage/deprivation; social change; emergence of charismatic leadership ▪ main characteristics – rejection of society's values; authoritarian in belief and behaviour; demands total commitment; regard themselves as only true religion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To what extent religion is an influence in contemporary society • Whether religious beliefs, not religious practices, are flourishing in contemporary Britain • Whether the future of religion in Britain lies with fundamentalism <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The relative strengths and weaknesses of fundamentalism • The relative influence of different individual causes to the rise of NRMs • Whether the future of religion in Britain lies with NRMs

<p>4. Religion and the Individual</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Freud's view of religious belief as an illusion—wish-fulfilment; escape from finality of death; God-figure to replace inadequate father (the oedipus complex); concepts of projection and regression – and as a neurosis – similarities between neurotic behaviour and ritual; religion engendering fear/guilt/ repression; concepts of negation and sublimation • Jung's view that religious belief is a product of the 'collective unconscious' – concepts of individuation and archetypes; meeting human needs of psychic health and stability, of mystery and symbolism; prophetic meaning of dreams/visions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whether religious belief is an illusion/neurosis • Whether religious belief is a product of the 'collective unconscious' • To what extent the views of either Freud or Jung constitute an adequate explanation for individual religious belief • Evaluation of the validity/value of psychological explanations for religious belief
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RS1/2 ETH: Introduction to Religion and Ethics (AS)

This option should be studied in the light of the overall aims and objectives for Religious Studies and the Subject Criteria for Religious Studies. It provides the opportunity for study of different approaches to the identification and resolution of moral issues of importance in human experience.

All of the following topics should be studied. To study less than the full Specification content may disadvantage a candidate's synoptic grasp of the material. Candidates may use information and ideas from one topic to answer questions on another where relevant and appropriate.

An awareness of the contribution of modern scholarship to understanding of these topics is expected.

Four structured essay questions will be set, of which candidates will be required to answer two. All questions will carry equal marks.

Subject Content

Topics	Issues
<p>1. Aquinas' Natural Law</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Natural law as an absolutist/deontological moral theory. Aquinas' four levels of law — eternal, divine, natural and human Aquinas' idea that the highest good is the rational understanding and following of God's final purpose The five primary precepts which are developed in the secondary precepts, created in order to establish a right relationship with God The three revealed virtues (faith, hope and charity), and four cardinal virtues (prudence, justice, fortitude, temperance); interior/exterior acts and real/apparent goods. <p>Candidates will be expected to give examples of the application of Natural Law, which may be drawn from the issues listed in Section 4 or from other issues they have studied.</p> <p>Candidates should consider the degree to which Natural Law is compatible with the traditional ethical teaching of one major world religion.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengths and weaknesses of Natural Law Does Natural Law provide an adequate basis for moral decision-making? Could Natural Law's absolutist approach promote injustice and/or morally wrong behaviour? To what extent can Natural Law as an absolutist and deontological theory work in today's society? How far is Natural Law compatible with a religious approach to moral decision making?

<p>2. Situation Ethics: Joseph Fletcher</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Situation Ethics as a relativistic and consequentialist/teleological theory. • The reasons why Fletcher rejected antinomianism and legalism. • The concept of ‘agape’ love; Fletcher’s four working principles and the six fundamental principles • The biblical evidence used to support the relativistic approach taken by Situation Ethics—the teachings of Jesus and St Paul. <p>Candidates will be expected to give examples of the application of Situation Ethics, which may be drawn from the issues listed in Section 4 or from other issues they have studied. Candidates should consider the degree to which Situation Ethics is compatible with the traditional ethical teaching of one major world religion.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengths and weaknesses of Situation Ethics • Does ‘agape’ provide an adequate basis for moral decision-making? • Could the principles of Situation Ethics promote injustice and/or morally wrong behaviour? • To what extent can Situation Ethics as a relativistic and teleological theory work in today’s society? • How far is Situation Ethics compatible with a religious approach to moral decision making?
<p>3. Utilitarianism : Bentham and Mill</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bentham’s Act Utilitarianism <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utilitarianism as a relativistic and consequentialist/teleological theory. • The principle of utility—the greatest happiness for the greatest number—based on the quantity of pleasure/happiness (maximise pleasure and minimise pain) and the seven criteria of the hedonic calculus (intensity, duration, certainty, remoteness, richness, purity and extent) • Mill’s Rule Utilitarianism <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Higher and lower pleasures, based on the quality of pleasure/happiness and not the quantity. • Rule Utilitarianism: based on the fact that an act is right if it meets a set of rules, which as a consequence of being followed maximise pleasure/happiness. • The different forms of Rule Utilitarianism: weak and strong. <p>Candidates will be expected to give examples of the application of Utilitarianism, which may be drawn from the issues listed in Section 4 or from other issues they have studied. Candidates should consider the degree to which both Act and Rule Utilitarianism are compatible with the traditional ethical teaching of one major world religion.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengths and weaknesses of Utilitarianism • Does ‘happiness’ provide an adequate basis for moral decision making? • Could Utilitarianism’s use of the principle of utility/the hedonic calculus promote injustice and/ or morally wrong behaviour? • To what extent can Utilitarianism as a relativistic and teleological theory work in today’s society? • How far is Utilitarianism compatible with a religious approach to moral decision making?

<p>4. Applied Ethics</p> <p>The ethical teaching of one major world religion on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sexual orientation • Sex outside marriage, including sex between unmarried partners, gay and lesbian sex, and adultery • Marriage, including the purposes of marriage, sex within marriage, gay and lesbian marriage and civil partnerships <p>Candidates should consider the religious principles involved in response to the issues identified and should understand how such ethics are based on religious authority (sacred texts, leaders, tradition, conscience and reason).</p> <p>They should also understand how religious concepts (such as God as creator, the sanctity of marriage, agape love, responsibility to God and sin) affect moral principles and be aware of the emergence of absolutist rules, general principles and priorities of doctrine over reasons/feelings/circumstances.</p> <p>Where appropriate, candidates should be aware of diversity of ethical attitude and behaviour within the religion studied.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In today's increasingly secular society, how relevant and/or adequate are the religious responses to these issues? • To what extent can a relativistic approach to these issues be considered more relevant in today's society? • Is the current move away from religious responses to these issues beneficial or harmful to individuals and society? • To what extent might traditional religious attitudes towards these issues be considered discriminatory and unfair? <p>Where appropriate, candidates may also draw upon one or more of the ethical theories in the other sections of this Option when making their evaluations.</p>
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RS1/2 PHIL: Introduction to Philosophy of Religion (AS)

This option should be studied in the light of the overall aims and objectives for Religious Studies and the Subject Criteria for Religious Studies. It provides the opportunity for study of fundamental philosophical themes, including issues raised by human experiences of evil and suffering. Candidates may answer questions exclusively from the Judaeo-Christian tradition, but credit will be given for relevant perspectives on appropriate material from other religious traditions.

All of the following topics should be studied. To study less than the full Specification content may disadvantage a candidate's synoptic grasp of the material. Candidates may use information and ideas from one topic to answer questions on another where relevant and appropriate.

An awareness of the contribution of modern scholarship to understanding these topics is expected.

Four structured questions will be set, of which candidates will be required to answer two. All questions will carry equal marks.

Subject Content

Topics	Issues
<p>1. The existence of God (i) – Cosmological Arguments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The cosmological argument based on 'first cause', motion and contingency including reference to Aquinas • The kalam version with reference to both Craig and Miller • Additional cosmological arguments, including Leibniz' principle of sufficient reason • Arguments against the cosmological argument, including those of Hume, Russell and Kenny 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whether the strengths of the cosmological arguments outweigh their weaknesses • Whether the arguments fail to establish the probability of God's existence • Whether the arguments are unconvincing • Whether the cosmological arguments demonstrate that the existence of God is more probable than the non-existence of God.
<p>2. The existence of God (ii) – Teleological Arguments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The teleological argument based on evidence of order, design and purpose as originated by Plato, Aristotle and Aquinas • Developments of the argument, including Paley (watchmaker analogy) and the anthropic and aesthetic principles • Arguments against the teleological, including reference to Hume, Kant and the challenges presented by natural selection and the problem of evil 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How strong is the teleological argument in proving the existence of God? • How persuasive is the teleological argument? • Whether the challenge of the counter arguments make the teleological argument ineffective • Does the evidence from science support or discredit the teleological argument?

<p>3. Evil and Suffering</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The challenge of evil and suffering to belief in the existence and nature of God based on the 'inconsistent triad' and concept of God as Creator • The nature of evil (natural/physical; moral), including appropriate exemplification • Particular problems caused by animal, innocent and immense suffering • The Augustinian and Irenaean theodicies, including both classical and modern presentations and unresolved issues of animal suffering, suffering of the innocent and extent of suffering 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whether there is an adequate religious answer to the problem of evil. • Whether animal, innocent, and immense suffering are strong proofs against the existence of the God of Classical Theism • How successful is each of the stated theodicies in responding to the problem of evil? • Whether either of the theodicies is more convincing than the other in offering a solution to the problem of evil • Whether both of the theodicies fail to explain the existence of suffering in a world supposedly created and controlled by God
<p>4. An introduction to Religious Experience: Mysticism</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The nature of mystical experience • Types of mystical experience, including reference to William James • Mysticism in practice: a study of one religious mystic chosen by the candidate, e.g. St Teresa of Avila; Meister Eckhart; Isaac Luria; Rumi; Shankara • Problems of objectivity and authenticity: the challenges to mysticism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the challenges for mysticism in an empirical world? • How can the experiences of mysticism affect religious belief and practice? • Should the challenge of difficulties relating to authenticity be allowed to devalue a mystical experience? • How can mysticism support religious belief? • Does mysticism have any value in the modern world?

RS1/2 BS: Introduction to Biblical Studies (AS)

Candidates must choose EITHER Section A OR Section B

SECTION A: Introduction to the Old Testament (AS)***Use of a Bible in A Level Examinations***

The use of a Bible is NOT permitted in this examination

This option should be studied in the light of the overall aims and objectives for Religious Studies and the Subject Criteria for Religious Studies. It aims to give candidates a broad introduction to Old Testament literature and encourage awareness of some key events, beliefs and significant human experiences that are reflected in it.

All of the following topics should be studied. To study less than the full Specification content may disadvantage a candidate's synoptic grasp of the material. Candidates may use information and ideas from one topic to answer questions on another where relevant and appropriate.

An awareness of the contribution of modern scholarship to understanding these topics is expected.

Four structured essay questions will be set, of which candidates will be required to answer two. All questions will carry equal marks.

Subject Content

Topics	Issues
<p>1. The Literature of the Old Testament Characteristics and purposes of the following types of literature:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apocalyptic: with reference to Isaiah 24:21-23; Amos 5:18-24; Ezekiel 38:18-23; Daniel 7 • Myth and legend: with reference to Genesis 1:1-2:4; Genesis 3:1-13, 22-24; Genesis 11:1-9 • Prophecy: with reference to Isaiah 6; Jeremiah 31:23-40; Isaiah 45:1-13. <p>Candidates should be able to use these passages to illustrate the characteristics and purpose of the types of literature they represent and to draw upon them in their discussions of the issues they raise. Appropriate use of additional material will also be credited.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there any point in trying to distinguish different types of literature in the OT? • The debate on the historical and theological interpretations and value of the Genesis stories • Whether Old Testament apocalyptic, myths, prophecy and their associated symbols and metaphors have meaning and value today • Is prophecy a foretelling of future events?

<p>2. Key Events</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Exodus: Exodus 7-15; its date; course; effects on Hebrew religion • The Exile: 2 Kings 24-25; its causes; course; effects on Hebrew religion <p>Candidates should be familiar with the circumstances that led to the Exodus/Exile, the problems faced during the Exodus/Exile, and the effects of the Exodus/Exile on Hebrew religion.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disagreement on the date of the Exodus. • Is the Exodus fact or fiction? • The Exile's contradictory vision of an elect nation with a world-consciousness • Was the Exile a blessing?
<p>3. Covenant</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • with Noah (Genesis 9:1-17) • with Abraham (Genesis 15) • with Moses (Exodus 24:1-11) • with David (2 Samuel 7:1-17) <p>Candidates should be aware of the form and sign of each covenant; whether it is conditional or unconditional; and the similarities and differences between covenant in the Old Testament and ancient Near Eastern treaties.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is covenant a convincing model for the human relationship with God? • Are the four covenants equally valid? • Were the unconditional covenants invalidated by the Exile? • Are the covenants based on Hittite models?
<p>4. Monarchy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Origin (1 Samuel 8-12) • The reigns of Saul, David and Solomon • Their failures and successes <p>Candidates should be aware of the pro-monarchy and anti-monarchy traditions, and of the roles, failures and successes of each of the three kings.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the pro-monarchy/anti-monarchy tradition the biased work of different writers? • Was the king a religious or a military leader? • Comparable strengths and weaknesses of the three reigns • Is David a worthy model for an Israelite king?

SECTION B: Introduction to the New Testament (AS)

Use of a Bible in A Level Examinations

The use of a Bible is NOT permitted in this examination

This option should be studied in the light of the overall aims and objectives for Religious Studies and the Subject Criteria for Religious Studies. It aims to give candidates a broad introduction to New Testament literature and encourage awareness of some key events, beliefs and significant human experiences that are reflected in it.

All of the following topics should be studied. To study less than the full Specification content may disadvantage a candidate's synoptic grasp of the material. Candidates may use information and ideas from one topic to answer questions on another where relevant and appropriate.

An awareness of the contribution of modern scholarship to understanding these topics is expected.

Four structured essay questions will be set, of which candidates will be required to answer two. All questions will carry equal marks.

Subject Content

Topics	Issues
<p>1. Incarnation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Birth Narratives in Matthew 1:18 - 2:23 and Luke 1:5 - 2:52 • John 1:1-18 <p>Candidates should be familiar with the key themes, features and purposes of these passages, with similarities and differences between them, with the doctrine of the Incarnation, and with the historical background and meaning of the concept of Logos.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attempts to harmonise the accounts • Why the differences in the narratives? Historical accuracy, especially in Luke? • Are the supernatural elements myths? • Is John's theological interpretation more compelling than the narratives in Matthew and Luke?
<p>2. Parables</p> <p>Types, characteristics and purposes of parables and their interpretation. Candidates should have a broad view of Jesus' parables, and should also study in detail:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the Prodigal Son (Luke 15:11-32) • the Great Banquet (Matthew 22:1-10, Luke 14:16-24) • the Sower (Mark 4:1-20) • the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:30-37) <p>Candidates should be aware of the contribution made by Form Criticism to the study of the parables</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jesus' intention in using parables; the meaning of Mark 4:10-13 • In what way do the parables reflect who Jesus was (human/divine)? • Are the parables the work of the early Christian community? • To what extent are the parables ethical teaching?

<p>3. Miracles</p> <p>Types, characteristics, key features and purposes of miracles, including healings, raisings, exorcisms and nature miracles. Candidates should have a broad view of the miracles recorded in the Synoptic Gospels, and should study in detail:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the healing of the Centurion's Servant (Matthew 8:5-13; Luke 7:1-10) • resuscitating the Widow's Son at Nain (Luke 7:11-15) • the Gadarene Demoniacs (Matthew 8:28-34) and the Gerasene Demoniac (Mark 5:1-20) • Feeding the Five Thousand (Mark 6:30-44, Luke 9:10-17) <p>Candidates should be aware of the contribution made by Redaction Criticism to the study of the miracles</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How important are the miracles in Jesus' ministry? • Do they prove that Jesus is the Messiah? • The case for and against their historical authenticity. • Why the striking similarities in the gospel accounts?
<p>4. Crucifixion and Resurrection Matthew 27:32-28:20; Luke 23:26-24:49; John 19:17-21:25 1 Corinthians 15</p> <p>Candidates will be expected to be familiar with the key themes, features and purposes of these passages, with the similarities and differences between them, with the historical background and the theological importance for New Testament writers.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whether the accounts of the crucifixion and resurrection are credible; whether they are historical or mythological; whether differences in accounts can be satisfactorily explained • Which is more significant to the gospel writers and modern readers: the crucifixion or the resurrection? • Issues regarding the resurrection body. • Resurrection of believers/general resurrection. • Is it essential that Christians believe in the resurrection?

RS1/2 CHR: Introduction to Christianity (AS)

This option should be studied in the light of the overall aims and objectives for Religious Studies and the Subject Criteria for Religious Studies. It aims to introduce the essential ideas of Christianity, to encourage awareness of some key events, and to demonstrate how denominational beliefs affect practices.

The following topics should be studied. An awareness of the contribution of modern scholarship to understanding of these topics is expected.

All of the following topics should be studied. To study less than the full Specification content may disadvantage a candidate's synoptic grasp of the material. Candidates may use information and ideas from one topic to answer questions on another where relevant and appropriate.

Four structured essay questions will be set, of which candidates will be required to answer two. All questions will carry equal marks.

Subject Content

Topics	Issues
<p>1. Key beliefs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • God and the human condition • God incarnate • The Holy Spirit/ the Trinity <p>Candidates will be expected to be broadly familiar with Christian teaching on</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the Fall • the Incarnation • the Atonement • the Resurrection • the Holy Spirit • the Trinity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is Christian understanding of the human condition basically optimistic or basically pessimistic? • How consistent/credible is the paradox of God's love/wrath, kindness/severity, mercy/judgement. • How far the language of sin, incarnation, salvation, sacrifice etc. is meaningful and relevant today. • Is Christianity monotheistic? The Trinitarian formula in relation to the unity of God and people's experience of God.

<p>2. Roots of Christian Diversity: The Protestant Reformation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Main causes and effects • Questions of authority, particularly the status of the scriptures ('sola scriptura', etc) • Understandings of the sacramental nature of baptism and the eucharist: arguments about infant/believer's baptism; transubstantiation/consubstantiation, virtualism, memorialism. <p>Reference should be made to the contributions of Luther, Calvin and the Anabaptists.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Were the causes of the Reformation more political than theological? • Arguments for and against papal/biblical authority • Critical evaluation of debates about the sacraments. • How successful were the Reformers? Evaluation of the lasting influence of each.
<p>3. Worship and Sacraments in Contemporary Christianity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The forms and meanings of the eucharist in the Orthodox, Catholic and Protestant traditions • Liturgical/non-liturgical worship. Non-eucharistic and charismatic worship, including private forms of devotion • Contemporary trends in worship: influences from the Liturgical Movement, Iona, Spring Harvest; fresh expressions of Church. <p>Candidates will be expected to be broadly familiar with the Biblical and historical foundations of all the above.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there a basic significance of the eucharist that all Christians would accept? • Is liturgical worship biblical? • Strengths and weaknesses of different forms of worship • Evaluation of new trends in worship – genuine new expressions of spirituality? – the secularisation of worship? – a form of entertainment?
<p>4. Celebration</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The significance of the Incarnation as reflected in celebrations of Christmas • The significance of Atonement as reflected in the celebrations of Good Friday • The significance of Resurrection as reflected in the celebrations of Easter • How Christian customs reflect the Biblical accounts • The theological links between Christmas, Good Friday and Easter • Views of Protestant traditions that reject the observance of these festivals. <p>Candidates should be able to relate the forms of celebration to the beliefs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The relative importance and value of each festival. • The influence of non-Christian or secular elements, original and modern: do they outweigh the theological elements? • To what extent are these celebrations meaningful to non-Christians?

RS1/2 ER: Introduction to Eastern Religions (AS)

Candidates must choose EITHER Section A OR Section B OR Section C

SECTION A: Introduction to Buddhism

This option should be studied in the light of the overall aims and objectives for Religious Studies and the Subject Criteria for Religious Studies. It aims to give candidates a broad introduction to Buddhism and encourage awareness of some key events, beliefs and practices and their relationship to significant human experiences.

All of the following topics should be studied. To study less than the full Specification content may disadvantage a candidate's synoptic grasp of the material. Candidates may use information and ideas from one topic to answer questions on another where relevant and appropriate.

An awareness of the contribution of modern scholarship to understanding these topics is expected.

Scriptural quotations are not required, but reference should be made to scriptures when considered relevant to the question.

Four structured essay questions will be set, of which candidates will be required to answer two. All questions will carry equal marks.

A note on terminology: Terminology used in the study of Buddhism comes from a number of languages. Because of this there are often alternative spellings for terms. In general it is best to use Pali terms in the context of Theravada Buddhism and Sanskrit terms in the context of Mahayana Buddhism. There are, however, occasions when the context is indeterminate. For this reason any legitimate spelling of terms will be accepted.

Subject Content

Topics	Issues
<p>1. The Life of the Buddha</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The social and religious background against which Buddhism emerged. • Candidates should be familiar with accounts of the following key events in the life of the Buddha and be able to use these accounts to explain Buddhist doctrines and concepts: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ the birth ▪ the four sights ▪ the renunciation ▪ the enlightenment ▪ the decision to teach ▪ the death 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The influence of his background on the Buddha and the degree to which he was a religious innovator. • The relative significance of his life events, in the context of his biography, and in the lives of modern Buddhists. • The nature of the narrative: sacred biography, myth or history? Its varied meanings for modern Buddhists. • Evaluation of the worldview expressed through the Buddha's biography: is it pessimistic?

<p>2. Some Central Concepts</p> <p>The role and significance in Buddhism of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the historical Buddha. Candidates should be aware that the different forms of Buddhism attribute different status to the Buddha • the Three Jewels (Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha) • the wheel of life, karma and pratitya samutpada (connectedness) • the three marks of existence (dukkha, anicca and anatta) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluation of the relative importance of the historical Buddha within Buddhism as a whole – a man, an example, an archetype, a supernatural being, enlightenment itself. How important is the Buddha's life to Buddhists? • Evaluation of the role and significance of the Three Jewels: their relationship to each other and to Buddhism as a whole. Which is the most important of the Three Jewels? • Evaluation of the importance within Buddhism of the key Buddhist concepts identified; awareness of the range of ways in which they are expressed. Critical engagement with these concepts: do they reflect reality? Are they 'ethical'? How are they to be understood in the modern world? • Is Buddhism a pessimistic religion?
<p>3. Buddhist Lifestyle</p> <p>The role in and influence on Buddhist lifestyle of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the Four Noble Truths • the Noble Eightfold path • monasticism in the context of the sangha • lay and monastic precepts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluation of the place in Buddhism as a whole of the teachings of the Four Noble Truths, the Noble Eightfold Path (including the Middle Way), and the lay and monastic precepts. • Critical engagement with these concepts: do they reflect reality? how are they to be understood in the modern world? • Does the sangha put more into the Buddhist community than it takes out?
<p>4. Some Central Practices</p> <p>The purpose, nature and main features of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • meditation: vipassana, samatha and zazen • puja 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluation of the role of meditation within Buddhism. • How does meditation relate to concepts such as enlightenment, and the self? • Meditation as only being a means to escape from the realities of life. • Is puja worship? • Does the notion of worship have a place in Buddhism?

SECTION B: Introduction to Hinduism

This option should be studied in the light of the overall aims and objectives for Religious Studies and the Subject Criteria for Religious Studies. It aims to give candidates a broad introduction to Hinduism and encourage awareness of some key beliefs and practices and their relationship to significant human experiences.

All of the following topics should be studied. To study less than the full Specification content may disadvantage a candidate's synoptic grasp of the material. Candidates may use information and ideas from one topic to answer questions on another where relevant and appropriate.

An awareness of the contribution of modern scholarship to understanding of these topics is expected.

Scriptural quotations are not required, but references should be made to scriptures when considered relevant to the question.

Four structured essay questions will be set, of which candidates will be required to answer two. All questions will carry equal marks.

Subject Content

Topics	Issues
<p>1. Beliefs about Deity and Humanity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The diversity of beliefs about the divine to be found within Hinduism (polytheism, monotheism, henotheism, monism); the relationship between atman and Brahman The two major devotional traditions of Vaishnavism and Shaivism; the notion of avatar and the tradition of bhakti 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To what extent are polytheism, monotheism, henotheism and monism useful labels for Hindu belief? Is it possible to worship a god without form or attributes? Vaishnavism and Shaivism – are they religions in themselves? Does the notion of avatar make sense in the modern world? Evaluation of the centrality of bhakti to Hindu religious life.
<p>2. Some Key Beliefs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Karma and reincarnation The traditional notion of the four varnas (Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya and Shudra); the status of Dalits (i.e. equal in law, less so in practice) The role played by varnashramadharm in the daily lives of many Hindus; the key rites of passage and the obligations in each stage of life 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Karma –evaluation of its role and importance in Hinduism and influence on moral behaviour Does a belief in reincarnation make sense in the modern world? Critical engagement with the notion of varna, and with the treatment of Dalits, recognising Hinduism's diversity. Is varnashramadharm Hinduism? Do rites of passage serve a useful purpose in a modern society?

<p>3. Gods and Goddesses</p> <p>The stories associated with the following gods and goddesses should be studied. Attention should be paid to the nature of narratives, including ideas of myth, history, and allegory. Candidates will be expected to be able to explain layers of meaning in the stories, and their significance to modern Hindus. Features, significance and stories associated with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parvati • Rama • Sita • Ganesh • Lakshmi • Durga • Kali 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Critical engagement with the notion of gods and goddesses as role models. • Critical engagement with notions of the feminine divine. • To what extent do goddesses provide positive role models for modern Hindu women? • To what extent are stories about the gods and goddesses to be understood literally?
<p>4. Festivals and worship</p> <p>Candidates are expected to demonstrate a broad understanding of Hindu worship, and the relationship between practice and beliefs. Focus is on both daily domestic worship and on annual community festivals. Nature, role and importance of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Puja – with special reference to Durga Puja, Lakshmi Ganesh Puja and Kali Puja • Holi • Navaratri • Dusshera • Diwali • Ganesh Chaturthi 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is puja a religious experience? • How important is puja compared with other aspects of Hinduism? • Does participation in a festival demonstrate commitment to a set of beliefs in the Hindu context? • How important are festivals compared with other aspects of Hinduism?

SECTION C: Introduction to Sikhism

This option should be studied in the light of the overall aims and objectives for Religious Studies and the Subject Criteria for Religious Studies. It aims to give candidates a broad introduction to Sikhism and encourage awareness of some key beliefs and practices and their relationship to significant human experiences.

All of the following topics should be studied. To study less than the full Specification content may disadvantage a candidate's synoptic grasp of the material. Candidates may use information and ideas from one topic to answer questions on another where relevant and appropriate.

An awareness of the contribution of modern scholarship to understanding of these topics is expected.

Scriptural quotations are not required, but reference should be made to the Guru Granth Sahib when considered relevant to the question.

Four structured essay questions will be set, of which candidates will be required to answer two. All questions will carry equal marks.

Subject Content

Topics	Issues
<p>1. The Ten Gurus</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The social and religious background against which Sikhism emerged • The contribution made to the development of Sikhism by the Ten Gurus, especially Gurus Nanak, Arjan, Tegh Bahadur and Gobind Singh 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To what extent does Sikh teaching come from other religions? • Evaluation of the development of Sikhism through the gurus and the contribution of each guru. • To what extent was each guru an innovator? • How are the Gurus viewed today?
<p>2. Sikh Teaching</p> <p>Main features of the Sikh understanding of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • God • the role of the Guru Granth Sahib • equality • soul and rebirth <p>Candidates should explore the main features of these beliefs. They should be able to explain the importance of each teaching. They should be able to cite the sources of authority for each teaching. They should be able to explain how each teaching is expressed in the daily lives of Sikhs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Critical engagement with the Sikh teaching about God. • Whether Sikhs worship the Guru Granth Sahib. • Evaluation of the importance of the Guru Granth Sahib. • The relative importance and distinctiveness of Sikh teachings; how far they are unique.

<p>3. Some Key Beliefs and Practices</p> <p>Candidates are expected to demonstrate a broad understanding of the following distinctive features of Sikh life and should be able to explain the relationship between practice and beliefs. In particular candidates must be able to explain the nature, role and importance of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Khalsa (including its founding and its role within Sikhism): the panj piare, amrit samskar and the five 'k's • the features of the gurdwara and langar, and the role played by these in Sikh society; the practice of sewa 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluation of the relative importance of the founding of the Khalsa compared with other events in Sikhism. • Critical engagement with the meaning of the symbols of Khalsa within Sikhism as a whole. • Evaluation of relative importance of ways of expressing identity (symbols, dress, rituals, behaviour). • The relative importance of practices of langar and sewa in Sikhism as a whole. • Evaluation of the role of the gurdwara in Sikh life.
<p>4. Worship and Festivals</p> <p>Candidates are expected to demonstrate a broad understanding of Sikh worship, and the relationship between practice and beliefs. Focus is on both gurdwara worship and on annual community festivals. In particular, candidates must be able to explain the nature, role and importance of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • worship in the gurdwara • Diwali • Vaisakhi • gurpurbs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To what extent does celebrating festivals demonstrate commitment to a particular set of Sikh beliefs, and how far are they necessary for expression of Sikh identity? • Is celebrating historical events on festival days pointless or meaningful? Is it living in the past or expressing hope for the future? • Are festivals the most important part of Sikhism? • Critical engagement with the notion that ritual activity (e.g. sewa, langar) expresses a particular morality.

RS1/2 WR: Western Religions (AS)

Candidates must choose EITHER Section A OR Section B

SECTION A: Introduction to Islam

This option should be studied in the light of the overall aims and objectives for Religious Studies and the Subject Criteria for Religious Studies. It aims to give candidates a broad introduction to Islam and encourage awareness of some key events, beliefs and practices and their relationship to significant human experiences.

All of the following topics should be studied. To study less than the full Specification content may disadvantage a candidate's synoptic grasp of the material. Candidates may use information and ideas from one topic to answer questions on another where relevant and appropriate.

An awareness of the contribution of modern scholarship to understanding these topics is expected.

Qur'anic and hadith quotations are not required, although references should be made when considered relevant to the question.

Four structured essay questions will be set, of which candidates will be required to answer two. All questions will carry equal marks.

Subject Content

Topics	Issues
<p>1. Foundations</p> <p>Candidates will be expected to understand the significance of the following key features of Islam:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Qur'an – its origins, nature and relevance in the 21st Century • Qur'an – its use and importance in worship and daily life • Qur'an and sunna as the basis of shari'a law • Concept of Allah – tawhid • Risalah (belief in messengers and helpers) and akhira (the final judgement) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluation of the relevance and practicality of the Qur'an in the 21st Century. • The importance of the Qur'an today in relation to other sources of authority. • Is it possible to understand the concept of Allah as revealed in the Qur'an? • Critical engagement with beliefs about the Day of Judgment and life after death: the importance of these beliefs for Muslims today.

<p>2. Muhammad</p> <p>Candidates should understand the significance of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Muhammad and the Night of Power • Key events in Muhammad's life – early life, call to prophethood, revelations, life in Makkah, hijrah, life in Madinah, final sermon, death in Madinah • Sunna and hadith of Muhammad 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How far was Muhammad the author of the Qur'an? • Evaluation of authenticity of sources of information about Muhammad • The relative importance of each of the key events in Muhammad's life. • How far Muhammad may be seen as a role model.
<p>3. Beliefs and Practices</p> <p>Candidates should understand the relationship between beliefs and practices in relation to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The role of the mosque in Islam. • the significance of the Five Pillars (shahadah, salah, zakah, sawm and hajj) and their role in the ummah • understandings of Jihad – greater and lesser. • the celebration and importance of festivals: Id-ul-Adha and Id-ul-Fitr. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are mosques essential to Islam? • Difficulty of performing pillars and their relevance today • Jihad as the sixth pillar? • Are traditional festivals relevant today? • How far is Islam a religion that changes with the times
<p>4. Family Life</p> <p>Candidates should understand the relationship between beliefs and practices in relation to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Muslim family life including roles of men and women • life cycle rituals (birth, marriage and death) • divorce • halal and haram • Islam in the 21st Century including non-Muslim perceptions and misunderstandings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluation of the relative influences of religion, culture and tradition in relation to Muslim family life • Arranged marriages – are they Islamic? Do they guarantee happiness and few divorces? • Critical evaluation of issues regarding food/clothing, etc. in relation to Islam. • Can the traditions of Muslim family life survive in modern Britain?

SECTION B: Introduction to Judaism

This option should be studied in the light of the overall aims and objectives for Religious Studies and the Subject Criteria for Religious Studies. It aims to give candidates a broad introduction to Judaism and encourage awareness of some key events, beliefs and practices and their relationship to significant human experiences.

Candidates should be aware of the diversity that exists within Judaism.

All of the following topics should be studied. To study less than the full Specification content may disadvantage a candidate's synoptic grasp of the material. Candidates may use information and ideas from one topic to answer questions on another where relevant and appropriate.

An awareness of the contribution of modern scholarship to understanding these topics is expected.

Scripture quotations are not required, although references should be made to the scriptures when considered relevant to the question.

Four structured essay questions will be set, of which candidates will be required to answer two. All questions will carry equal marks.

Subject Content

Topics	Issues
<p>1. Foundations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Abraham – his role and significance as Father of the nation, and in relation to covenant and circumcision. Moses – his role and significance in relation to the exodus from Egypt, Covenant, Laws. Nature and authority of Torah Orthodox and Reform attitudes towards Torah Character and authority of Talmud 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluation of the continuing importance Abraham and Moses. Covenant – to what extent is it a privilege or responsibility? Issues of debate in Judaism about the authenticity and authority of Torah Relative importance of Torah and Talmud
<p>2. Beliefs and Practices</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monotheism – the Shema. The Covenant – chosen people – implications of this and different understandings of this. Observance of mitzvot including kashrut; diversity of practice. Various roles and importance of the synagogue in Judaism. Worship – its nature and importance in the synagogue and at home; the different obligations of men and women. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is the Covenant still the main strength of Judaism? Critical evaluation of the focus on rules within Judaism (e.g. relevance of food laws) Is Judaism possible without the synagogue? The relative value and importance of worship at home as opposed to synagogue worship.

<p>3. Festivals</p> <p>Candidates should be able to explain the relationship between practice and beliefs in relation to the following festivals, and should understand the nature, role and significance of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shabbat • Pesach • Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluation of Shabbat observance as the strength of Judaism. • Evaluation of the emphasis on history in Judaism. • To what extent festival observance is social and cultural rather than religious. • The relative importance of the different festivals.
<p>4. Family Life</p> <p>Candidates should understand the relationship between beliefs and practices in relation to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jewish family life including roles and status of men and women • life cycle rituals (birth, bar/bat mitzvah, marriage and death). • divorce. • the practice of Judaism in the 21st Century. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How far family life is the main strength of Judaism? • Debate over the equality of men and women in Judaism. • The relevance of traditional rituals in the 21st Century. • The justice/injustice of Jewish divorce laws. • How far Judaism is a religion that changes with the times?

Advanced Level

Candidates will be required to study both RS3 and RS4.

RELIGIOUS STUDIES RS3 - Studies in Religion

Candidates will be required to study **ONE** of the following options:

RS3 CS	Studies in Religion in Contemporary Society
RS3 ETH	Studies in Religion and Ethics
RS3 PHIL	Studies in Philosophy of Religion
RS3 BS	Studies in Biblical Studies (either Old Testament or New Testament)
RS3 CHR	Studies in Christianity
RS3 ER	Studies in Eastern Religions (either Buddhism or Hinduism or Sikhism)
RS3 WR	Studies in Western Religions (either Islam or Judaism)

Each of these units presupposes that candidates have studied the corresponding AS unit. However, it is not a requirement that they must have done so. If it is thought appropriate, a candidate may enter for any of these units regardless of previous studies. The responsibility for doing whatever foundation work may be necessary to undertake this advanced study lies with the candidate and the centre.

RELIGIOUS STUDIES UNIT 4 - Religion and Human Experience

Candidates will be required to study

RS4 HE	Religion and Human Experience (see page 59)
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RS3 CS: Studies in Religion in Contemporary Society (A2)

This option should be studied in the light of the overall aims and objectives for Religious Studies and the Subject Criteria for Religious Studies. It provides the opportunity for candidates to further their study and develop a synoptic understanding of some key aspects of religion in contemporary society that are significant in human experience.

All of the following topics should be studied. To study less than the full Specification content may disadvantage a candidate's synoptic grasp of the material. Candidates may use information and ideas from one topic to answer questions on another where relevant and appropriate. In particular their analyses and discussions should show synoptic understanding.

An awareness of the contribution of modern scholarship to understanding of these topics is expected.

Four structured essay questions will be set, of which candidates will be required to answer two. All questions will carry equal marks.

Subject Content

Topics	Issues
<p>1. Religion and Contemporary Issues</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Religion and the State in the UK: • Religion and government: prayers in Parliament; the Lords Spiritual; monarch as defender of the faith • Debates concerning free speech and blasphemy • Religious freedom in matters of dress, speech and worship • Religion in marriage ceremonies and civil partnership ceremonies • The involvement of religion in conflicts in the Middle East, and the impact of those conflicts on religious communities in Britain 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The advantages and disadvantages of religious establishment and involvement of religion in government • Should religions be open to satire and criticism, or should religions be protected in the same way that races are? • Is religious freedom more important than community cohesion? • When law and conscience are in conflict, which should have priority? • How far is religion at the root of the conflicts in the Middle East and their impact elsewhere?

<p>2. Religion in Film</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Religious identity in film: a consideration of the way in which film represents members of faith communities and their relationship with others, e.g. <i>Bend it like Beckham</i>; <i>East is East</i>; <i>Anita and Me</i>; <i>Solomon a Gaenor</i>. Religious ideas in film: a study of the way in which film media can convey religious or spiritual ideas, e.g. <i>The Matrix</i>; <i>Star Wars</i>; <i>Superman Returns</i>; <i>Chronicles of Narnia</i>, etc Film as a way of teaching about religion: a study of how film is used to retell aspects of religious belief:, e.g. <i>Prince of Egypt</i>; <i>Little Buddha</i>; <i>Miracle Maker</i>; <i>A Little Princess</i>, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is there a risk of stereotyping faith communities in film? Whether the use of film can communicate complex religious ideas about humanity and the world Whether film is a more effective way of teaching individuals about their religious heritage than traditional methods Whether important religious events should ever be reduced to a 'movie event'
<p>3. Religion and the Community</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Definitions of religion: theological/metaphysical definitions, reductive definitions, the problem of defining religion Functional understandings of religion (Durkheim: religion as expression of social cohesion, Weber: the relationship between religion and capitalism, and Marx: religion as the 'sigh of the oppressed') Religious diversity in the UK: the strain on communities arising from the fact of religious and cultural plurality 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tension between reductive and metaphysical definitions of religion The adequacy of functionalist explanations of religion Tension between the fact of religious plurality and competing truth claims Tension between celebrating diversity and notions of national identity Tension between religious difference and social cohesion
<p>4. Religion and the Individual</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Effect of personality, gender, age and environment on religious belief and experience Developmental theories of religion. Candidates should make reference to work of James Fowler (six stages of faith) and Ronald Goldman (readiness for religion) Theories relating to religion and psychological health. Candidates should make reference to work of James, (healthy-mindedness v. sick soul) Maslow (the peak experience and self-actualisation) and Berger (the sacred canopy) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluation of factors in religious belief and experience, including personality, gender, environment and age Evaluation of the explanatory power of developmental theories of religion Evaluation of evidence demonstrating religious belief/experience leads to more positive attitudes and psychological health

RS3 ETH: Studies in Religion and Ethics (A2)

This option should be studied in the light of the overall aims and objectives for Religious Studies and the Subject Criteria for Religious Studies. It provides the opportunity for candidates to further their study and develop a synoptic understanding of Religion and Ethics by examining some complex ethical theories and issues and to examine ethical issues from a religious perspective.

All of the following topics should be studied. To study less than the full Specification content may disadvantage a candidate's synoptic grasp of the material. Candidates may use information and ideas from one topic to answer questions on another where relevant and appropriate. In particular their analyses and discussions should show synoptic understanding.

Candidates will be expected to have an overall knowledge and understanding of these topics and an awareness of the contribution of modern scholarship to our understanding of them.

Four structured essay questions will be set, of which candidates will be expected to answer two.

Subject Content

Topics	Issues
<p>1. Aristotle's Virtue Theory</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Virtue defined as what makes a person good. • The distinction between intellectual virtues and moral virtues • The doctrine of the mean and the way in which these concepts contribute to ethical decision-making • Virtue theory as deontological or consequentialist (or teleological) • The religious perspective on Aristotle's moral theory <p>Candidates will be expected to be familiar with the re-evaluation of virtue ethics by scholars such as Alasdair MacIntyre and Elizabeth Anscombe</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The validity of defining the ultimate goal of morality as the achievement of virtue • How relevant are the concepts of intellectual and moral virtues in ethical decision-making? • To what extent may moral character be defined in terms of the mean between excess and deficiency? • Are a person's moral character or a person's ethical actions the most significant, from an ethical perspective? • To what extent is virtue theory compatible with a religious perspective?

<p>2. Kant's Moral Theory</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Defining ethics without reference to a transcendent being and authority • The highest good or <i>summum bonum</i> as the goal of morality in understanding morality • The role of human duty and human reason in ethical decision making and moral action • The Categorical Imperative in its three forms of The Universal Law of Nature, The End in Itself and the Kingdom of Ends, and its compatibility with a religious perspective • The role of synthetic and analytical statements <p>Candidates will be expected to be familiar with W.D.Ross's attempt to apply the Categorical Imperative and to define moral duty in terms of <i>primo facie</i> duties</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does a morality that is not rooted in religious belief have any moral authority? • How acceptable is it to define morality in terms of the highest good? • To what extent do duty and rational thought provide an adequate basis for morality? • To what extent is the Categorical Imperative as defined by Kant an adequate means of understanding which moral actions are good in themselves? • How helpful is it to define moral statements as <i>a priori</i> synthetic and, therefore, liable to being right or wrong, true or false?
<p>3. The Ethics of War</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The concepts of 'Just War' and 'Holy War' • The nature and causes of civil conflicts and wars • Issues raised by the existence and use of conventional and nuclear weapons • Self-defence and pre-emptive military action • Pacifism as a response to conflict and warfare <p>Candidates will be expected to be familiar with recent explorations of 'Just War' and 'Holy War'. Candidates will be expected to be able to examine these issues from the perspective of at least one major world religion</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To what extent are the concepts of 'Just War' and 'Holy War' applicable to modern warfare and conflict? • Is the manufacture and sale of weapons ethically justifiable? • Does the right of self-defence justify pre-emptive strikes? • How far is participation in war compatible with religious belief? • To what extent is pacifism a realistic response to modern conflict? <p>Where appropriate, candidates may draw upon one or more ethical theories when making their evaluations.</p>

<p>4. Medical and Genetic Ethics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Medical dilemmas, including:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• abortion and the welfare of very premature babies• euthanasia• Issues raised by genetic manipulations, including cloning and stem cell research <p>Candidates will be expected to be familiar, in a general way, with recent developments in these fields and with ethical responses such as those of Peter Singer. Candidates will be expected to be able to examine these issues from the perspective of at least one major world religion</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Evaluation of the moral issues raised by abortion, the maintenance of the life of very premature babies and persons in terminal stages of illness• The religious and non-religious debate on 'the right to die'• Under what ethical conditions would genetic manipulation for medical, research or economic purposes be justifiable?• How far is human intervention into natural processes compatible with religion? <p>Where appropriate, candidates may draw upon one or more ethical theories when making their evaluations.</p>
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RS3 PHIL: Studies in Philosophy of Religion (A2)

This option should be studied in the light of the overall aims and objectives for Religious Studies and the Subject Criteria for Religious Studies. It provides the opportunity for candidates to further their study and develop a synoptic understanding of Philosophy of Religion by examining some complex philosophical themes.

All of the following topics should be studied. To study less than the full Specification content may disadvantage a candidate's synoptic grasp of the material. Candidates may use information and ideas from one topic to answer questions on another where relevant and appropriate. In particular their analyses and discussions should show synoptic understanding.

An awareness of the contribution of modern scholarship to understanding these topics is expected.

Four structured essay questions will be set, of which candidates will be required to answer two. All questions will carry equal marks.

Subject Content

Topics	Issues
<p>1. Is religious faith rational?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The ontological argument for the existence of God Theories about the nature of faith and its relation with reason and revelation Propositional and non-propositional concepts of revelation <p>Candidates will be expected to be familiar with the relevant arguments of major philosophers from the past (Anselm, Descartes, Gaunilo, Hume, Kant and Kierkegaard) as well as modern philosophers, but questions will not be set on individual philosophers.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To what degree the ontological argument is convincing The extent to which faith is more valid if based on reason rather than revelation Whether faith and reason are contradictory or complementary How far revelation is an adequate basis for religious belief To what extent the two stated forms of revelation are compatible with each other
<p>2. Is religious language meaningful?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inherent problems of religious language and challenges to its meaningfulness Philosophical concepts of falsification and verification The concept of religious language as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> analogical symbolic a language-game <p>Candidates will be expected to be familiar with the relevant work of the Vienna Circle, Ayer, Flew, Aquinas, Ramsey, Tillich, Wittgenstein and Phillips, but questions will not be set on individual philosophers.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How far inherent problems of using religious language have been resolved by religious philosophers To what extent arguments asserting either meaningfulness or meaninglessness are convincing Whether religious language can only be understood in the context of religious belief How far each of the three stated concepts of religious language is an adequate solution to the problems of religious language

<p>3. Is religious faith compatible with scientific evidence?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Philosophical definitions and concepts of miracle, including inherent difficulties with the concepts of 'laws of nature' and 'an interventionist God' • Challenges to belief in miracles, with particular reference to Hume, and arguments in defence of the reality of the miraculous. Candidates will be expected to be familiar with several definitions of 'miracle' and be able to outline the concepts and theories mentioned • The relationship between contemporary religious and scientific world views of the origin of the universe and human life, including concepts of creation and evolution and theories of Intelligent Design, Big Bang and continuous creation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The adequacy of philosophical definitions of 'miracle' • How far belief in miracles is reasonable • To what extent arguments against the occurrence of miracles are convincing • Whether belief in miracles is essential for a religious believer • How far attempts to reconcile religious and scientific views of the origin of the world and of the origin of human life are successful
<p>4. Are we 'free beings'?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Philosophical concepts of 'hard determinism' and 'soft determinism', including consideration of the nature/nurture debate and Libertarianism • Religious concepts of 'free will' and 'predestination', with particular reference to Augustine, Pelagius, Calvin and Arminius or equivalent authorities in a religion other than Christianity • The relationship between concepts of determinism/free will and religious beliefs and moral attitudes <p>Candidates will be expected to be familiar with a few philosophers representing varying approaches to determinism/free will, but questions will not be set on individual philosophers.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To what extent we are shaped more by our genes than our environment • How far any individual has 'free choice' • Whether religious beliefs in 'free will' and in 'predestination' can be reconciled • The degree to which concepts of determinism/free will influence religious beliefs and moral attitudes

RS3 BS: Studies in Biblical Studies (A2)

Candidates must choose EITHER Section A OR Section B

SECTION A: Studies in the Old Testament (A2)

Use of a Bible in A Level Examinations

The use of a Bible is NOT permitted in this examination

This option should be studied in the light of the overall aims and objectives for Religious Studies and the Subject Criteria for Religious Studies. It aims to enable candidates to further their study and develop a synoptic understanding of Old Testament literature, encourage awareness of critical methodology and provide opportunities for deeper study of selected aspects.

All of the following topics should be studied. To study less than the full Specification content may disadvantage a candidate's synoptic grasp of the material. Candidates may use information and ideas from one topic to answer questions on another where relevant and appropriate. In particular their analyses and discussions should show synoptic understanding.

An awareness of the contribution of modern scholarship to understanding these topics is expected.

Four structured essay questions will be set, of which candidates will be required to answer two. All questions will carry equal marks.

Subject Content

Topics	Issues
<p>1. Ways of Reading the Old Testament</p> <p>A broad view of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Textual criticism: establishing the text • The historical-grammatical exegesis: the author's meaning • Engagement: concern with text's content • Critical methods: a broad view of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Source criticism • Form criticism • Redaction criticism <p>Candidates will be expected to give examples of the application of each method of study, which may be drawn from passages listed under other topics below or any others that are appropriate.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is textual reconstruction valuable? • Who determines the meaning: the author? scholars? tradition? church/synagogue? the reader? • The relative merits and restrictions of each type of criticism. • How far do methods of criticism undermine the idea that the Old Testament is divinely inspired? • Do critical methods enhance our reading of the text?

<p>2. Concept of God</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monotheism • God as <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • immanent/transcendent • (Genesis 1-3; Exodus 19-20; Isaiah 6) • Creator (Genesis 1-2; Psalm 8; Isaiah 40) • Judge (Genesis 6-9; Hosea 5; Amos 1-2) • Deliverer (Exodus 7-15; Joshua 6-8; Jeremiah 31) • Holy One (Exodus 3:1-6; Isaiah 6; Isaiah 41:13-20) <p>Appropriate use of other passages will also be credited.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there a concept of God that is shared by all Old Testament writers? • Is there an evolved perception of God in the Old Testament? • Variations of the concept of God in different Hebrew traditions and in different Old Testament books • Is there any one concept of God that is more important than any of the others? • How far are Old Testament ideas of God credible today?
<p>3. Early Prophecy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The characteristics of prophecy up to the eighth century BCE, and the different types of prophet, particularly the ro'eh and the nabi. (1 Samuel 24: 11-19; 1 Kings 18-19, 21-22; 2 Kings 6:1-7) • A study of the historical background and the main messages of either Amos or Hosea 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there any development in Old Testament prophecy? • Foretelling versus forthtelling • Were the prophets respectable people with status, or lone unheeded voices? • How much of their message was religious and how much social/political? • Does their message have any relevance today?
<p>4. Later Prophecy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The historical background and main themes of either Jeremiah or Ezekiel • Jeremiah's call; teaching on idolatry, future hope, the new covenant and individual responsibility; attitude to the Temple cult; personal experiences and 'confessions'; acted parables. • Ezekiel's teaching on future hope and individual responsibility; blueprint for a new Jerusalem; personal experiences and visions; acted parables 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How far did the prophet's personal peculiarities and experiences influence his message? • How much influence did the prophet have in his own time, and what useful legacy has he left? • Was the message primarily one of doom or of hope? • Was the prophet's emphasis mainly on the individual or on the community? • How far was he the conscience of the nation? • Was his ministry a success?

SECTION B: Studies in the New Testament (A2)

Use of a Bible in A Level Examinations

The use of a Bible is NOT permitted in this examination

This option should be studied in the light of the overall aims and objectives for Religious Studies and the Subject Criteria for Religious Studies. It aims to enable candidates to further their study and develop a synoptic understanding of New Testament literature, encourage awareness of critical methodology and provide opportunities for deeper study of selected aspects.

All of the following topics should be studied. To study less than the full Specification content may disadvantage a candidate's synoptic grasp of the material. Candidates may use information and ideas from one topic to answer questions on another where relevant and appropriate. In particular their analyses and discussions should show synoptic understanding.

An awareness of the contribution of modern scholarship to understanding these topics is expected.

Four structured essay questions will be set, of which candidates will be required to answer two. All questions will carry equal marks.

Subject Content

Topics	Issues
<p>1. A Systematic Study of Acts 1:1 - 6:7</p> <p>Candidates should focus on the organisation of the early Christian community in Jerusalem, especially its unity and communal life, worship, discipline and connection with Judaism</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Was the Jerusalem church inward-looking and exclusive, or did it have a universalist vision and attitude? • Was it democratic, autocratic or theocratic? • Did it have any coherent unity? • What were its strengths and weaknesses?
<p>2. The Significance of the Resurrection for the Early Church</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early Christian preaching as found in Peter's sermons in Acts 2:14-36 and 10:34-43, and Paul's in Acts 26:12-23 • Paul's teaching on the resurrection, with special reference to 1 and 2 Corinthians • The Christological titles used in the preaching: Messiah, Son of David, Servant, Son of Man, Lord, Son of God. Christian modification of these Jewish terms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are the sermons in Acts authentic, or Luke's inventions? • Can the Easter faith be isolated from the resurrection event? • What contribution does the resurrection make to our understanding of the person and work of Jesus? • Did Jesus himself lay claim to these titles?

<p>3. Christian Leadership and Mission</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Patterns of leadership in the developing 1st century church: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • apostleship (Acts 1:12-26; Romans 1:1-7); • bishops/presbyters/deacons (Acts 6:1-7, 14:21-23, 20:17-35, 1 Timothy 3:1-13); • spiritual gifts (1 Corinthians 12:4-30) • Establishing the Church in the Gentile world: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • basis: The Great Commission (Matthew 28:19-20, Acts 1:8) • events: Peter and Cornelius (Acts 10), The Council at Jerusalem (Acts 15:1-35) • Pauline teaching: Galatians 2:1-14, 5:2-12, Ephesians 3:1-13 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issues regarding the pre-eminence of the apostles; the three layers of ministry; the significance of the charismata • The role of women • Is the New Testament biased towards the Gentiles? • The successes and failures of the Gentile mission
<p>4. The Ethical Teaching of the New Testament</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marriage and divorce: Mark 10:11-12; Matthew 5:31-32, 19:1-12; Romans 7:1-6; 1 Corinthians 7:1-16, 25-40. • Observance of the Law: Matthew 5:17-48; Romans 2:17-5:11 <p>Candidates should be familiar with the background of each teaching, its content and interpretation then and now</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How compatible are the teachings of Jesus and Paul? • Do these teachings have any relevance today? • Is the teaching on divorce more important than that on marriage? • Evaluation of Jesus' attitude to the Law.

RS3 CHR: Studies in Christianity (A2)

This option should be studied in the light of the overall aims and objectives for Religious Studies and the Subject Criteria for Religious Studies. It aims to enable candidates to further their study and develop a synoptic understanding of the organisation of the Church, encourage awareness of how Christian identity and mission are expressed in the modern world and provide opportunities for deeper study of selected aspects.

All of the following topics should be studied. To study less than the full Specification content may disadvantage a candidate's synoptic grasp of the material. Candidates may use information and ideas from one topic to answer questions on another where relevant and appropriate. In particular their analyses and discussions should show synoptic understanding.

Candidates will be expected to take into account the Orthodox, Catholic and Protestant traditions as appropriate. An awareness of the contribution of modern scholarship to understanding these topics is expected.

Four structured essay questions will be set, of which candidates will be required to answer two. All questions will carry equal marks.

Subject Content

Topics	Issues
<p>1. The Church: its Nature, Role and Ministry</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nature: One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic; Body of Christ; Communion of Saints. Role: sign and instrument of God's saving action in the world today; Christianity in action. Ministry: ordained and lay 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Issues relating to the modern interpretation and relevance of these terms. Issues relating to peace, poverty, fair trade, overseas mission charity work etc. Issues relating to priesthood, apostolic succession, the ordination of women, the priesthood of all believers, authority, pastoral/liturgical/teaching responsibility
<p>2. Contemporary Christological Debates</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Jesus of history The Christ of faith Jesus as Suffering Servant, New Adam/Moses, Saviour, Logos 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The debate on what can be known about the historical Jesus Whether Jesus was God incarnate How much of the language used to describe him is mythological/symbolic? The relevance of these titles today

<p>3. Feminist Theology</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Patriarchal structures • Male oriented theological language • The Person of Christ • Exclusion of women from ecclesiastical activity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does Christianity have a male emphasis? • Implications of Jesus' gender for Christian ministry • Is Feminist Theology aimed at revising Church structures? • How successful has Feminist Theology been in producing change?
<p>4. Christianity in the Modern World</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the Ecumenical Movement: the contribution of the WCC, Vatican II, Taizé • Liberation Theology • Pentecostalism and the Charismatic Movement: origins, growth and development; characteristic worship and emphases 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengths and weaknesses. Unity versus uniformity. • Theology and politics. Strengths and weaknesses • Appeal of Pentecostalism and the Charismatic Movement. • How far has each movement been influential in making Christianity relevant in the modern world?

RS3 ER: Studies in Eastern Religions (A2)

Candidates must choose EITHER Section A OR Section B OR Section C.

SECTION A: Studies in Buddhism

This option should be studied in the light of the overall aims and objectives for Religious Studies and the Subject Criteria for Religious Studies. It aims to enable candidates to further their study and develop a synoptic understanding of Buddhism, encourage awareness of the diversity which exists within Buddhism and provide opportunities for deeper study of selected aspects.

All of the following topics should be studied. To study less than the full Specification content may disadvantage a candidate's synoptic grasp of the material. Candidates may use information and ideas from one topic to answer questions on another where relevant and appropriate. In particular their analyses and discussions should show synoptic understanding.

An awareness of the contribution of modern scholarship to understanding these topics is expected. A more substantial awareness of scriptures is required at A2 than at AS and specific references should be made to the Buddhist scriptures where relevant. Candidates will be expected to demonstrate awareness of the diversity within Buddhism.

Four structured essay questions will be set, of which candidates will be required to answer two. All questions will carry equal marks.

A note on terminology:

Terminology used in the study of Buddhism comes from a number of languages. Because of this there are often alternative spellings for terms. In general it is best to use Pali terms in the context of Theravada Buddhism and Sanskrit terms in the context of Mahayana Buddhism. There are, however, occasions when the context is indeterminate. For this reason any legitimate spelling of terms will be accepted.

Subject Content

Topics	Issues
<p>1. Scriptures</p> <p>Taking account of the differences (and similarities) of Mahayana and Theravada Buddhism—</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the Pali Canon: its role in Buddhism as a whole: • the teachings of the historical Buddha to be found in the suttas • the instructions for the sangha to be found in the Vinaya • the Lotus Sutra – main themes and concepts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The importance of the Pali Canon in Buddhism as a whole • The relative importance of the different scriptures in Mahayana and Theravada Buddhism • The importance of regulation in Buddhist communities • The difference and similarity of Mahayana and Theravada as exemplified in scriptures

<p>2. Enlightenment</p> <p>Taking account of the differences (and similarities) of Mahayana and Theravada Buddhism—</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • nirvana and samsara • arhat • bodhisattvas and other enlightened beings • notions of buddha-nature and enlightenment for all • contemporary Buddhist teachers: the Dalai Lama and Thich Nhat Hanh 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The diversity of conceptions of enlightenment to be found in Buddhism • The diversity of figures associated with enlightenment and the path to it – arhat, bodhisattva, living teachers. • The relationship between the quest for enlightenment and lifestyle – arhat, bodhisattva, living teachers • The relationship between the concept of enlightenment and Buddhist teachings about wisdom and compassion • How far each concept is consistent with the Buddha's teachings
<p>3. Buddhist Beliefs and Practices</p> <p>The meaning and significance of the following distinctive practices:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • going for refuge – in a range of traditions • koan – in Zen • nembutsu in Jodo Shinshu • daimoku and gohonzon in Nichiren Buddhism • mudra, mandala and mantra in Tibetan Buddhism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How far particular practices express Buddhist concepts and commitments • How far different practices illustrate Buddhism's conceptual diversity • The importance of practices compared to other factors • The relationship between the teachings of the historical Buddha and the range of practices found in Buddhism
<p>4. Buddhism in Britain</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The history of Buddhism in Britain • the possible reasons for the growth of Buddhism in Britain • the history and lifestyle of the Friends of the Western Buddhist Order • the history and lifestyle of other Buddhist groups in the UK (for example, The Buddhist Society, Amaravati, Chithurst, Throssel Hole Priory & the Order of Buddhist Contemplatives, Samye Ling) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The degree to which British Buddhism is unique in comparison with the Buddhism found in other countries • The relative importance of different features of Buddhism, and different features of British society, in Buddhism's growth • The degree to which forms of British Buddhism may be seen to be 'deviant' forms • The degree to which forms of British Buddhism has made Buddhism relevant in the west

SECTION B: Studies in Hinduism

This option should be studied in the light of the overall aims and objectives for Religious Studies and the Subject Criteria for Religious Studies. It aims to enable candidates to further their study and develop a synoptic understanding of Hinduism, encourage awareness of the diversity which exists within Hinduism and provide opportunities for deeper study of selected aspects.

All of the following topics should be studied. To study less than the full Specification content may disadvantage a candidate's synoptic grasp of the material. Candidates may use information and ideas from one topic to answer questions on another where relevant and appropriate. In particular their analyses and discussions should show synoptic understanding.

An awareness of the contribution of modern scholarship to understanding these topics is expected. A more substantial awareness of scriptures is required at A2 than at AS and specific references should be made to the Hindu scriptures where relevant. Candidates will be expected to demonstrate awareness of the diversity within Hinduism.

Four structured essay questions will be set, of which candidates will be required to answer two. All questions will carry equal marks.

Subject Content

Topics	Issues
<p>1. Vedic Hinduism</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The 'Origins' Controversy • Indus Valley and Aryan Culture • The Vedas – content and significance, with reference to the Upanishads • Vedic practices: the Vedic sacrifice, the structure of Vedic society 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The similarities and differences between Indus Valley and Aryan Culture • The controversy over the origins of Hinduism • The importance in Hinduism of the Vedas and the Upanishads • The degree to which modern Hinduism is continuous or discontinuous with both Indus Valley and Aryan traditions
<p>2. The Bhagavad Gita</p> <p>Candidates should be able to demonstrate understanding of the following themes and to make reference to the text where appropriate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bhakti (devotion) – 9, 16-34; 11, 14-20; 18, 67-78 • Karma Yoga – 3, 1-9 • The nature of Krishna – 4, 6-14; 7, 4-14; 11, 1-55 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The relative importance of the Bhagavad Gita in Hinduism as a whole • The different levels at which the Bhagavad Gita is interpreted (a historical account, an allegorical account, etc) • The relative importance of the themes expressed in the Bhagavad Gita—both in terms of the text itself, and in terms of Hinduism in general • The complexity of the nature of Krishna

<p>3. Contemporary Hinduism</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The relationship between belief and practice in the following movements <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON), with special reference to A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, and to the lifestyle of devotees. • The Swaminarayan Movement, with special reference to the life and work of Swaminarayan and to the lifestyle of devotees • Hindutva—Hindu nationalism; the relationship between Hindu religion and politics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The degree to which modern movements 'deviate' from 'traditional' Hinduism • The degree to which Prabhupada and Swaminarayan were innovators • The degree to which modern movements tackle modern issues (eg women, caste, family, society) • The impact of Hindutva on modern Hinduism
<p>4. Women in Hinduism</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The diverse and changing roles of women in Hinduism with reference to home and family, ritual purity, dharma, society, worship and leadership • Relationship between the feminine divine in Hinduism and the role of women • Female foeticide, infanticide and sati 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The contemporary significance of notions such as ritual purity and stridharma • The importance and roles of women in diverse Hindu worldviews • The degree to which girls/women are discriminated against by the religion and/or the society • The relationship between 'theology' and 'society' with reference to women in Hinduism

SECTION C: Studies in Sikhism

This option should be studied in the light of the overall aims and objectives for Religious Studies and the Subject Criteria for Religious Studies. It aims to enable candidates to further their study and develop a synoptic understanding of Sikhism, encourage awareness of the diversity which exists within Sikhism and provide opportunities for deeper study of selected aspects.

All of the following topics should be studied. To study less than the full Specification content may disadvantage a candidate's synoptic grasp of the material. Candidates may use information and ideas from one topic to answer questions on another where relevant and appropriate. In particular their analyses and discussions should show synoptic understanding.

An awareness of the contribution of modern scholarship to understanding these topics is expected. A more substantial awareness of scriptures is required at A2 than at AS and specific references should be made to the Guru Granth Sahib where relevant. Candidates will be expected to demonstrate awareness of the diversity within Sikhism.

Four structured essay questions will be set, of which candidates will be required to answer two. All questions will carry equal marks.

Subject Content

Topics	Issues
<p>1. Scriptures</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contents, function and history of composition of <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adi Granth/Guru Granth Sahib • Dasam Granth • The significance in Sikhism of <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the Japji of Guru Nanak • the Mul Mantra 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluation of the role and importance of these different sources for Sikh belief • The relative importance of each scripture/written source • The degree to which Sikh belief and practice can be traced to these sources • The significance of historicity in the composition of these sources
<p>2. Modern developments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Historical relationship with Hinduism and Islam in the Punjab • The contribution made to Sikh history by Maharaja Ranjit Singh • The reform movements of 19th & 20th Centuries (Namdhari, Nirankari and Singh Sabha) • Vaisakhi Massacre 1919, Partition 1947, Operation Bluestar 1984 • The aspiration for Khalistan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The degree to which these figures and movements impacted on the development of Sikhism • The degree to which persecution forms a part of Sikh identity and the development of Sikh religion • The relative importance of particular events in Sikh history • The relative importance of the aspiration for Khalistan within Sikhism as a whole, and justifications for it

<p>3. Sikh Morality</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The status and role of Rahit Maryada and Rahit Namas • The concepts of miri and piri • Equality (caste and the role of women) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The importance of sources in the development of Sikh morality • The importance of the relationship between miri and piri in Sikh daily life • The ways in which Sikhs solve moral problems • The degree to which teachings about equality are expressed in daily life
<p>4. Sikh Identity in Britain</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Origins and development of the Sikh community in Britain • The relationship between religion and culture, including issues of language, dress, music, marriage customs, caste • Provision in British Sikhism for the religious education of the young in gurdwaras, schools and camps • Legal issues in the UK (turban, kirpan) • Challenges of religious and ethnic minority status 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Could Sikhism exist without its Punjabi language and culture? • Inter-generational tensions in the Sikh community in Britain • How successful is British Sikhism? • The degree to which being a practising Sikh is difficult in the secular culture of the UK • The importance of the plurality of Sikh identities in the modern world.

RS3 WR: Western Religions (A2)

Candidates must choose EITHER Section A OR Section B

SECTION A: Studies in Islam

This option should be studied in the light of the overall aims and objectives for Religious Studies and subject criteria for religious Studies. It aims to enable candidates to further their study and develop a synoptic understanding of Islam, encourage awareness of the diversity which exists in Islam and provide opportunities for deeper study of selected areas.

All of the following topics should be studied. To study less than the full Specification content may disadvantage a candidate's synoptic grasp of the material. Candidates may use information and ideas from one topic to answer questions on another where relevant and appropriate. In particular their analyses and discussions should show synoptic understanding.

An awareness of the contribution of modern scholarship to understanding these topics is expected. Candidates should be aware of the diversity that exists within Islam. Where considered relevant to the topic, candidates should make reference to Sunni, Shi'a and Sufi traditions.

Specific Qur'anic and hadith references and quotations should be made when considered relevant to the question.

Four structured essay questions will be set, of which candidates will be required to answer two. All questions will carry equal marks.

Subject Content

Topics	Issues
<p>1. Foundations & Law</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> History of Four Rightly Guided Caliphs: contributions of Abu Bakr, Umar, Uthman and Ali. Kharijite assassination of Ali Qur'an: history of formation of Qur'an Divine Will (shari'a) and its importance to Muslims. The science of jurisprudence (fiqh) Sources of shari'a (Qur'an; sunna; qiyas; ijma): ijithad, ra'y. The five principles and application of the law 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengths and weaknesses of Caliphs' contributions—were they 'rightly guided' or 'three traitors of Islam'? To what extent is Qur'an eternal, direct and unchanging revelation, given Shi'a view and Uthman standardisation? Relevance of shari'a in modern society Validity of 'divine' sources of shari'a

<p>2. Diversity within Islamic Ummah</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • History of division between Sunni and Shi'a • Beliefs and practices distinctive of Shi'a Islam: role and status of Imamate; martyrdom of Husayn, Ashura, pilgrimage to Karbala • Beliefs and practices distinctive of Sufi Islam: Rabi'a of Basra; meditation, Sufi art and whirling dervishes (sema) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Divided or united religion? • Sunni and Shi'a similarities and differences • To what extent is devotion towards Husayn conventional Islamic worship? Validity of Husayn iconography? • Sunni and Sufi similarities and differences • How far is it possible to argue for priority of personal mystical union with God rather than more conventional Islamic worship?
<p>3. Community and Family Life</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Challenges of being a religious and ethnic minority in Britain • Family life & Muslim education (madrasahs) in secular society / Britain • Role of women in Islam. References to role of women in Islamic sources and how this relates to status of women in modern society and cultural tradition. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To what extent is it possible for Muslims to assimilate to secular society in Britain? • The advantages and disadvantages of faith schools to Muslims • Evaluation of the role of women in Islamic sources • Evaluation of role of women in cultural tradition / religious and family life • Reappraisal of role of Islamic women in response to changes in Muslim and Western society
<p>4. Islam in Contemporary Society</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Debate on relationship between religion and politics • Concept of an Islamic state and the role of shari'a • Western perceptions of Islam • Fundamentalist Islam and understanding of jihad (greater & lesser); relevance of jihad in the 21st century • Kharijite assassination of Ali • Nation of Islam 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To what extent is Islam compatible with democracy? • Western misconceptions and prejudice towards Islam / jihad • Validity of lesser jihad in modern society • Reasons for the growth of modern fundamentalist Islam • Validity of Nation of Islam as genuine Islamic movement

Section B: Studies in Judaism

This option should be studied in the light of the overall aims and objectives for Religious Studies and subject criteria for religious Studies. It aims to enable candidates to further their study and develop a synoptic understanding of Judaism, encourage awareness of the diversity which exists in Judaism and provide opportunities for deeper study of selected areas.

All of the following topics should be studied. To study less than the full Specification content may disadvantage a candidate's synoptic grasp of the material. Candidates may use information and ideas from one topic to answer questions on another where relevant and appropriate. In particular their analyses and discussions should show synoptic understanding.

An awareness of the contribution of modern scholarship to understanding these topics is expected. Candidates should be aware of the diversity that exists within Judaism. Where considered relevant to the topic, candidates should make reference to Orthodox, Conservative and Reform traditions.

Specific scriptural references and quotations should be made when considered relevant to the question.

Four structured essay questions will be set, of which candidates will be required to answer two. All questions will carry equal marks.

Subject Content

Topics	Issues
<p>1. Mysticism & Hasidism</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mysticism (Kabbalah): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • practice and beliefs including the Zohar • mystical understandings and encounters with God (Ein Sof; sefirot; devekut; tikkun) • Hasidism: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • role of rebbe (tzaddik) • growth and opposition: Baal Shem Tov and Mitnagdim 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How far is mystical Judaism authentic to conventional Jewish belief and practice? • To what extent is Zohar acceptable to traditional Torah study • Differences that exist between rabbi and rebbe • Hasidism's contribution to survival of Judaism • Evaluation of Baal Shem Tov's contribution
<p>2. Expressions of Jewish Faith</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Beliefs and practices distinctive of Reform, Conservative and Orthodox (including Hasidic) Judaism in Britain • Development of Reform Judaism • Importance of prayer and meditation (centrality of Shema and Amidah); Torah and Talmud study; home and synagogue life 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Similarities and differences between different forms of Judaism • To what extent does each group view strict adherence to covenant as necessary in modernity • Pittsburgh Platform's contribution to survival of Judaism • Evaluation of importance of prayer / Torah study / home and family life / synagogue to survival of Judaism

<p>3. Community and Family Life</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Challenges of being a religious and ethnic minority in Britain • Family life & Jewish education in secular society; Shabbat observance • Responses of different Jewish groups to the issues of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jewish identity • the role of women • the covenant • strict Torah adherence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How far is it possible for Jews to assimilate to British society? • The advantages and disadvantages of faith schools to Jews • Issues of Jewish identity concerning matrilineal descent; conversion – Reform or Orthodox; Orthodox view of non-orthodox Jewry • Evaluation of role and status of women in Jewish family life and community (within different branches of Judaism) as backbone of Jewish home and society
<p>4. Significant Issues and Events</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Zionist Movement: an outline of its rise, including Herzl, the Dreyfus affair, the First Zionist Congress; the establishment of the state of Israel • Jewish opposition to Zionism; its relation to Judaism as a religion, including liturgical references and links to the covenant • Holocaust theology, including traditional Biblical understanding of Jewish suffering as divine punishment (Jeremiah 32:26-30; Amos 3:1-2). Candidates will be expected to be familiar with the relevant work of the following holocaust theologians— Rubenstein; Wiesel; Maybaum, Berkovitz and Fackenheim—although questions will not be set on named individuals. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluation of the responses of Jewish groups to the development and growth of political and religious Zionism • How far are the responses of Jewish groups to the establishment of state of Israel valid? • To what extent is Zionism inextricably linked to Judaism? • Strengths and weaknesses of Holocaust theology responses • Whether the Holocaust poses an unique challenge to traditional Biblical understanding of Jewish suffering as divine punishment

RS4 HE: Studies in Religion and Human Experience (A2)

This compulsory unit should be studied in the light of the overall aims and objectives for Religious Studies and the Subject Criteria for Religious Studies. It aims to provide candidates with the opportunity to make a holistic study on a specified theme and also draw together synoptically knowledge, understanding and skills learned throughout their Advanced course and apply them to a human experience issue.

Candidates will be required to write an essay under controlled conditions on a specified aspect of **EITHER** Religious Authority **OR** Religious Experience **OR** Life, Death and Life After Death.

Topics	Issues
<p>Religious Authority</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The nature of different types of religious authority – e.g. religious founders, religious leaders, sacred writings, religious institutions, religious traditions, religious experiences, conscience, religion-endorsed ethical theories • Specific examples and illustrations of different types of religious authority • Different ways in which specific types of religious authority are used as an authority in religion and influence religious believers – e.g. source of beliefs, source of religious practices, basis of moral teachings, basis of liturgy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The inherent strengths and limitations of individual religious authorities • To what degree any religious authority commands universal respect amongst religious believers • Comparative importance of different religious authorities • To what extent any religious authority is really authoritative in the 21st century
<p>Religious Experience</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The nature of different types of religious experience – e.g. mysticism (James' four characteristics), prayer, conversion, charismatic phenomena, individual scholars' classifications (such as Swinburne's five categories, Momen's four types or Caroline Franks Davis's six-fold division) • Specific examples and illustrations of individual and communal forms of religious experience • Distinctive features of religious experiences (e.g. the numinous, awe and wonder) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How far religious belief and commitment is determined by one's religious experiences or lack of them • To what extent religious experiences are misinterpretations of natural experiences • Whether a religious experience is only of value to the individual who experiences it • Whether personal religious experience is a reliable means of understanding the nature of God

<p>Life, Death and Life After Death</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Different beliefs about the nature and purpose of <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • life, • death and • life after death – e.g. Created or product of chance, sanctity of life, dualism, materialism, idealism, resurrection, reincarnation, rebirth, immortality of the soul • Specific teachings, writings and theories about the nature and purpose of life and life after death 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The significance of religious beliefs about life and death in the 21st century • To what extent the way a person lives life is influenced by belief in life after death • How far belief in life after death is essential to religion • Whether there is adequate evidence for belief in life after death
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Content Exemplars

1. Religious Authority

The following listed aspects offer opportunities for relevant illustration of the topic but are only examples, are not compulsory and are by no means exhaustive.

Sources of religious authority and issues concerning authority in at least one of the following areas:

Religion in Contemporary Society

The influence of religious authorities in determining attitudes to medical and environmental issues; the challenge of religious authorities to representation and portrayal of religion in the media; concept of authority in fundamentalism; the place of religious authority in New Religious Movements.

Religion and Ethics

The place of ethical theories and argument as sources of authority; God as the source of and warrant for the moral beliefs of religious believers; the existence of moral feelings and beliefs as an authoritative argument for God's existence; challenges to the authority of moral absolutism and of religious concepts of truth and morality; the place of moral conscience in determining attitudes and behavior.

Philosophy of Religion

Different understandings of the authority and relevance of rational argument and philosophical reasoning for contemporary religious believers, with particular reference to arguments for the existence of God (including the moral argument); revelation as authoritative for beliefs of religious believers.

Old Testament

Different understandings of the authority and relevance of teachings, examples and religious expressions found in the Old Testament to contemporary Jewish and Christian beliefs and practices; role of priests/prophets; effects of various methodological criticisms on the authority of the Old Testament.

New Testament

Different understandings of the authority and relevance of teachings, examples and religious expressions found in the New Testament to contemporary Christian beliefs and practices; role of disciples/apostles, charismatic endowment, ecclesial pronouncement; effects of various methodological criticisms on the authority of the New Testament.

Christianity

The nature of the Bible, tradition and religious experience as sources of authority; different understandings of the nature of Christian leadership and the way in which it is recognized and exercised; individual conscience as a source of authority; problems associated with different denominational claims for the credibility of Christianity; challenges to authority arising from theological developments.

Buddhism

The variety of sources of authority for Buddhists, including the Buddha, the Dhamma, the Sangha, different founders and sacred writings; the role of the Dalai Lama and of other leaders; the role of the Lotus Sutra within Nichiren Buddhism; the wide tradition of taking refuge.

Hinduism

The various sources of authority in Hinduism, including sacred writings, dharma and family; the differences between smriti and shruti literature; the role and function of religious leaders (such as A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada).

Sikhism

The ultimate authority of God (Waheguru, Sat Guru); the equality that characterises the Sikh community; the different roles of the human Gurus, the Guru Granth Sahib, the Dasam Granth, the Rahit Maryada, the granthi, the Khalsa and the Panth.

Islam

Different forms of religious authority—the Qur'an, the sunna of Muhammad, shari'a law, the ulama etc; effects of modern scholarship on the status of traditional sources of authority.

Judaism

Different forms of religious authority, including the Torah, the Talmud, the codifiers, rabbis and beth din; effects of modern scholarship on the status of traditional sources of authority.

2. Religious Experience

The following listed aspects offer opportunities for relevant illustration of the topic but are only examples, are not compulsory and are by no means exhaustive.

The nature and importance of religious experience in at least one of the following areas of study:

Religion in Contemporary Society

Experiencing spirituality outside religious institutions; expression and experience of religion through television and film; psychological explanations for religious experience.

Religion and Ethics

Effects of experiencing Creation and of reading sacred writing on ethical attitudes towards the environment; ethics of stimulating religious experiences such as conversion and a sense of awe and wonder; the role of religious experience in making moral decisions and challenges to the belief that religious experience is essential for moral behaviour.

Philosophy of Religion

The nature and diversity of the miraculous, including the question of credibility; problems of identifying experiences as distinctly religious, including questions of objectivity and reliability; the value of religious experience as a basis for belief in God; characteristics and examples of various types of religious experience (such as conversion, mysticism and prayer); challenges to religious experience presented by the existence of evil and suffering.

Old Testament

The Israelites' concept of being God's Chosen People and their experiences of God expressed in Old Testament narratives, prophetic activity and psalms; variety of experiences, such as different forms of God's presence, prophetic compulsion to deliver 'the word of God' and interpretations of historical events as being controlled by God.

New Testament

The way the New Testament concentrates on direct experience of God via Incarnation (how the Gospels describe pre-resurrection and post-resurrection encounters with Jesus) and on the work of the Holy Spirit in terms of charismatic inspiration; individual and communal dimensions of religious experience (cf. Paul of Tarsus on road to Damascus and disciples at Pentecost); significance of worship (practice and content), including such issues in the Christian Church today.

Christianity

Different types of experiences such as conversion, mysticism, healing, ecstatic behaviour; worship, sacraments and rituals as vehicles for religious experience; examples of Christian spirituality and recorded experiences of Christian saints (e.g. Teresa of Avila and Julian of Norwich).

Buddhism

Experiences reported by the Buddha and other leaders (e.g. the Dalai Lama); experiences found in practising Buddhism (e.g. taking refuge, meditation, mantra and nembutsu); awareness of impermanence and no-self; the wider experience of nirvana/the Pure Land.

Hinduism

Experiences of religious leaders and those reflected in the Bhagavad Gita (e.g. Arjuna's vision of God); the relationship between god and the devotee and the notion of moksha or liberation; puja (worship), murti (image) and meditation; living according to varnashramadharma, and thereby participating in sanatana dharma.

Sikhism

Experiences recorded in sacred writings and by Guru Nanak and his successors, and those reported by Sikhs in their everyday lives; the key role played by worship in Sikhism; the practice of nam simran.

Islam

Muslim concepts of God and Muslims' experience of God as expressed in Qur'anic narratives and prophetic activity; varieties of religious experience of the prophets, especially those of Muhammad; the Sufi concept of God, of Muhammad and of religious experience.

Judaism

Jewish concepts of God and Jewish experience of God as expressed in the Tenach; varieties of religious experience of the prophets; the mystical tradition (Kabbalah).

3. Life, Death and Life after Death

The following listed aspects offer opportunities for relevant illustration of the topic but are only examples, are not compulsory and are by no means exhaustive.

Ideas about life, death and life after death in at least one of the following areas of study:

Religion in Contemporary Society

Concepts of 'the sanctity of life' and 'the quality of life', with reference to euthanasia, conservation and animal rights; expression of beliefs about life, death and life after death portrayed in the media; attitude to life, death and life after death evident in New Religious Movements.

Religion and Ethics

Concepts of 'the sanctity of life' and 'the quality of life', with reference to such topics as euthanasia and suicide; different estimates of the relative worth of an individual's life compared with the well-being of the community, as evident in various ethical theories; the impact of beliefs about life, death and life after death on moral behaviour.

Philosophy of Religion

Philosophical ideas about the nature of humanity, including dualism and materialism; nature/nurture debate; determinism/free will debate; strengths and weaknesses of evidential arguments for life after death; differing views on the form of individual survival after death; evaluation of arguments for the immortality of the soul, reincarnation/rebirth and resurrection/reanimation.

Old Testament Studies

Hebrew ideas about the cause of human mortality (Genesis 3) and the form of human existence after death; the diversity and range of ideas found in the Old Testament and Apocrypha, including those of resurrection, judgement, Sheol and messianic expectation.

New Testament

Judaeo-Christian ideas about the nature of human existence and influence of Greek philosophy in framing such ideas; various ways in which actual post-mortem existence is considered in New Testament literature and its metaphorical/realised application in terms of describing conversion experience; key concepts of sin, death, resurrection, judgement, forgiveness, eternal life, Heaven, Hell.

Christianity

Effects of Christology and theologies on ideas of life, death and life after death; humans as created beings; concepts of original sin and stewardship; how funeral rites and the mourning period reflect Christian beliefs about death and life after death; the doctrine of salvation/eternal life as expressed in the believer's relationship with Christ; concepts of heaven, hell and purgatory.

Buddhism

Concepts of samsara and kamma; idea of rebirth and how continuity after death connects with the notion of anatta; Tibetan beliefs about the dead and beliefs adhered to by Pure Land/Jodo Shinshu Buddhists.

Hinduism

Concepts of samsara and cyclical time; idea of divine element in all things; doctrines of karma and reincarnation; different understandings of the nature of moksha (liberation).

Sikhism

Sikh understanding of the soul and the cycle of life; humans as created beings; ideas of life, death and life after death in relation to concepts of miri and piri; hope for liberation and union with God (mukti) through the movement from self-centredness to God-centredness.

Islam

Muslim ideas on the nature of humanity; humans as created beings; concept of qadar; Qur'anic teachings on the last day, judgement and the after-life; variety of views on death and the afterlife in different Islamic traditions, including literal/allegorical interpretations.

Judaism

Jewish ideas on the nature and purpose of humanity; humans as created beings; narratives in Tanak on death and life after death; different concepts of Sheol, resurrection and messianic expectation.

5 SCHEME OF ASSESSMENT

AS and A level qualifications are available to candidates following this specification.

AS

The AS is the first half of an A level course. It will contribute 50% of the total A level marks. Candidates must complete the following **two units** in order to gain an AS qualification.

	Weighting Within AS	Weighting Within A Level
RS1 Discovering Religious Studies	50%	25%
RS2 Discovering Religious Studies	50%	25%

RS1: Written Paper (1¼ hours)

Four structured essay questions will be set. Candidates will be required to answer **two**. All questions will test

- AO1 (knowledge and understanding - 30 marks)
- AO2 (evaluative skills) - 15 marks.

RS2: Written Paper (1¼ hours)

Four structured essay questions will be set. Candidates will be required to answer **two**. All questions will test

- AO1 (knowledge and understanding - 30 marks)
- AO2 (evaluative skills) - 15 marks.

A Level

The A level specification consists of two parts: Part 1 (AS) and Part 2 (A2).

Part 1 (AS) may be taken separately and added to A2 at a further examination sitting to achieve an A level qualification, or alternatively, both the AS and A2 may be taken at the same sitting.

Candidates must complete the AS units outlined above plus a further two units to complete A level Religious Studies. The A2 units will contribute 50% of the total A level marks.

	Weighting within A2	Weighting within A Level
RS3* Studies in Religion	50%	25%
RS4* Religion & Human Experience	50%	25%

*Includes synoptic assessment

RS3: Written Paper (1¾ hours)

Four structured essay questions will be set. Candidates will be required to answer **two**. All questions will test

- | | |
|----------------------------------|-------------|
| AO1 (knowledge and understanding | - 30 marks |
| AO2 (evaluative skills) | - 20 marks. |

RS4: Written Paper (1¾ hours)

Three structured essay questions will be set. Candidates will be required to answer **one**.

All questions will test

- | | |
|----------------------------------|-------------|
| AO1 (knowledge and understanding | - 45 marks |
| AO2 (evaluative skills) | - 30 marks. |

Synoptic Assessment

Synoptic assessment, testing candidates' understanding of the connections between the different elements of the subject and their holistic understanding of the subject, is a requirement of all A level specifications. In the context of Religious Studies this means assessing the candidates' knowledge and understanding of different elements of the area(s) of study selected and connections between them. It draws together knowledge, understanding and skills learnt in different elements of the A level course. It also contributes to the assessment of the skill of relating such connections to aspects of human experience.

The Religious Studies subject criteria from the regulatory bodies say that examples of synoptic assessment might include requiring a candidate, across a specified area or areas of study, to:

- reflect on, select and deploy specified knowledge, and identify, investigate and analyse questions arising
- interpret and evaluate religious concepts, issues, ideas, the relevance of arguments and the views of scholars
- use appropriate language and terminology in context
- draw together knowledge, understanding and skills learnt throughout the course to tackle an issue that is new to them
- communicate with reasoned arguments substantiated by evidence.

The first of these examples is fundamental to AO1 questions, which provide opportunity for candidates to make connections with concepts learned in other units, including those studied at AS level. The first three and last of these examples are integral to the AO2 skills of evaluation. In A2 Unit RS3 candidates are required to demonstrate synoptic knowledge, understanding and skills. A2 Unit RS4 provides the fullest opportunity for synoptic assessment. In this unit candidates are encouraged to range widely in answering broad and demanding questions, drawing on the knowledge, understanding and skills learned in all of the other units.

Quality of Written Communication

Candidates will be required to demonstrate their competence in written communication in all assessment units. Mark schemes for these units include the following specific criteria for the assessment of written communication.

- legibility of text; accuracy of spelling, punctuation and grammar; clarity of meaning;
- selection of a form and style of writing appropriate to purpose and to complexity of subject matter;
- organisation of information clearly and coherently; use of specialist vocabulary where appropriate.

Availability of Units

All AS units are available both in January and June.

All A2 units are available in June only.

Awarding, Reporting and Re-sitting

The overall grades for the GCE AS qualification will be recorded as a grade on a scale from A to E. The overall grades for the GCE A level qualification will be recorded on a grade scale from A* to E. Results not attaining the minimum standard for the award of a grade will be reported as U (Unclassified). Individual unit results and the overall subject award will be expressed as a uniform mark on a scale common to all GCE qualifications (see table below). The grade equivalence will be reported as a lower case letter ((a) to (e)) on results slips, but not on certificates:

	Max. UMS	A	B	C	D	E
Units RS1 to RS4 (all units equally weighted)	100	80	70	60	50	40
AS Qualification	200	160	140	120	100	80
A level Qualification	400	320	280	240	200	160

At A level, Grade A* will be awarded to candidates who have achieved a Grade A in the overall A level qualification and 90% of the total uniform marks for the A2 units.

Candidates may re-sit units prior to certification for the qualification, with the best of the results achieved contributing to the qualification. Individual unit results, prior to certification of the qualification have a shelf-life limited only by the shelf-life of the specification.

6

KEY SKILLS

Key Skills are integral to the study of AS/A level Religious Studies and may be assessed through the course content and the related scheme of assessment as defined in the specification. The following key skills can be developed through this specification at level 3:

- Communication
- Problem Solving
- Information and Communication Technology
- Working with Others
- Improving Own Learning and Performance

Mapping of opportunities for the development of these skills against Key Skills evidence requirement is provided in 'Exemplification of Key Skills for Religious Studies', available on the WJEC website.

7 **GRADE DESCRIPTIONS**

Introduction

Performance descriptions have been created for all GCE subjects. They describe the learning outcomes and levels of attainment likely to be demonstrated by a representative candidate performing at the A/B and E/U boundaries for AS and A2.

In practice most candidates will show uneven profiles across the attainments listed, with strengths in some areas compensating in the award process for weaknesses or omissions elsewhere. Performance descriptions illustrate expectations at the A/B and E/U boundaries of the AS and A2 as a whole; they have not been written at unit level.

Grade A/B and E/U boundaries should be set using professional judgement. The judgement should reflect the quality of candidates' work, informed by the available technical and statistical evidence. Performance descriptions are designed to assist examiners in exercising their professional judgement. They should be interpreted and applied in the context of individual specifications and their associated units. However, performance descriptions are not designed to define the content of specifications and units.

The requirement for all AS and A level specifications to assess candidates' quality of written communication will be met through one or more of the assessment objectives.

The performance descriptions have been produced by the regulatory authorities in collaboration with the awarding bodies.

AS performance descriptions for religious studies

	Assessment objective 1	Assessment objective 2
Assessment objectives	<p>Select and demonstrate clearly relevant knowledge and understanding through the use of evidence, examples, and correct language and terminology appropriate to the course of study.</p> <p>In addition, for synoptic assessment, A level candidates should demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the connections between different elements</p>	<p>Critically evaluate and justify a point of view through the use of evidence and reasoned argument.</p> <p>In addition, for synoptic assessment, A level candidates should relate elements of their course of study to their broader context and to aspects of human experience.</p>
A/B boundary performance descriptions	<p>Candidates characteristically:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) select accurate and relevant material b) explain clearly relevant features or key ideas, supported by examples and/or sources of evidence c) use accurately a range of technical language and terminology d) show evidence of being familiar with issues raised by relevant scholars, or a variety of views, where appropriate. 	<p>Candidates characteristically:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) construct a coherent and well-organised argument supported by examples and/or sources of evidence b) identify strengths and weaknesses of the argument c) use accurate and fluent expression.
E/U boundary performance descriptions	<p>Candidates characteristically:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) select limited but relevant material b) show basic understanding of relevant features or key ideas, supported by occasional examples and/or sources of evidence c) show limited accurate use of technical language and terminology. 	<p>Candidates characteristically:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) demonstrate minimal organisation and/or limited coherence b) offer mainly descriptive answers with little argument, justification or evaluation c) use language and expression that lacks precision.

A2 performance descriptions for religious studies

	Assessment objective 1	Assessment objective 2
Assessment objectives	<p>Select and demonstrate clearly relevant knowledge and understanding through the use of evidence, examples, and correct language and terminology appropriate to the course of study.</p> <p>In addition, for synoptic assessment, A level candidates should demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the connections between different elements of their course of study.</p>	<p>Critically evaluate and justify a point of view through the use of evidence and reasoned argument.</p> <p>In addition, for synoptic assessment, A level candidates should relate elements of their course of study to their broader context and to aspects of human experience.</p>
A/B boundary performance descriptions	<p>Candidates characteristically:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) address the question specifically and select relevant material b) deploy comprehensive and mostly accurate knowledge, expressed lucidly c) use a range of technical language and terminology accurately and consistently d) competently explain appropriate examples and/or relevant sources/scholars. <p>In addition, for the synoptic assessment, candidates perform at this level in relation to connections between different elements of their course of study.</p>	<p>Candidates characteristically:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) construct a coherent and well-organised evaluative argument b) demonstrate an informed viewpoint and evidence of own thinking within the context of understanding different arguments and views c) use proficient, fluent and accurate language. <p>In addition, for the synoptic assessment, candidates show competent analysis of the nature of connections between elements of their course of study, their broader context and aspects of human experience.</p>
E/U boundary performance descriptions	<p>Candidates characteristically:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) select limited but relevant material b) deploy limited knowledge, some of which is accurate c) show limited accurate or consistent use of technical terms d) demonstrate basic understanding of key ideas, making occasional reference to examples and sources of evidence. <p>In addition, for the synoptic assessment, candidates perform at this level in relation to connections between different elements of their course of study.</p>	<p>Candidates characteristically:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) demonstrate minimal organisation and/or limited coherence b) demonstrate few personal insights, or little convincing argument or justification of a point of view with minimal evaluation c) use language and expression that lacks precision. <p>In addition, for the synoptic assessment, candidates show limited analysis of the nature of connections between elements of their course of study, their broader context and aspects of human experience.</p>