

GCE A Level



WJEC GCE A Level in RELIGIOUS STUDIES

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GLOSSARY OF KEY TERMS Version 2 - January 2021

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| A STUDY OF CHRISTIANITY: GLOSSARY | |
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| TERM | DEFINITION |
| accommodation, doctrine of | The doctrine (or theory) of accommodation proposes that God 'accommodated' God's self to humanity by using relevant and understandable human terms and concepts. This may be used to explain, for example, why the biblical creation narratives are closer to other mythologies of the time than modern scientific understandings. |
| apocryphal | Relating to apocryphal works. In this context, apocryphal works are texts concerning biblical times, places, or characters (usually), but which are not part of a religious canon. They are normally of unknown authorship and/or dubious authenticity. In this context, not to be confused with the collection of books included in some editions of the Bible known as "the Apocrypha". |
| ascetic ideal | The use of asceticism to ultimately preserve power and/or life. |
| asceticism | Abstinence from worldly pleasures (e.g. pleasurable physical experiences or material possessions), normally for the sake of spiritual growth. |
| canon (biblical) | The biblical canon is the list of books considered to be authoritative scripture, and which therefore make up the Christian Bible. Note that the books included and the order in which they appear differs between some Christian denominations. |
| Charismatic Movement | Term describing the adoption of charismatic beliefs and practices in traditionally mainstream churches due to the influence of the revival in Pentecostalism. |
| critical realism | In this context, a movement of scientists-turned-theologians and the argument that, since the language of science and the language of Christian theology are so similar, the two can be brought into conversation. Critical realism entails the assumption that the object of inquiry (often the divine) is real, but that knowledge of it can only be achieved through dialogue between the knower and the thing known. |
| Ecumenical Movement | Name of the (Christian) movement aiming for unification of all Protestant denominations and ultimately of all Christians. |
| exclusivism | The belief that only one religion, belief system, or sometimes denomination is true. |
| God of the gaps | Name given to the invocation of the divine to fill gaps in scientific knowledge, which is then used as evidence for the existence of the divine. Now discredited as an apologetic. |
| inclusivism | The belief that, while only one religion or belief system is true, others may be partially true as well. |
| inspiration | Biblical inspiration refers to the Christian doctrine that specific works of biblical authors and editors was divinely led or guided, with the result that biblical texts may be considered the word of God. Within Christianity, there are many interpretations of 'inspiration' – see http://www.gotquestions.org/inspiration-theories.html for a brief introduction to the main interpretations. |
| liberation theology | Used here to refer mainly to South American liberation theology but can encompass many theological perspectives with a view to the liberation of an oppressed group (e.g., Black theology, Palestinian liberation theology). |

| TERM | DEFINITION |
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| messiah | Hebrew word meaning ‘anointed’, mainly used in the Abrahamic religions to designate a political, social, or religious leader. Within Christianity, the term ‘Messiah’ (which translates to Christos in Greek, hence ‘Christ’) has been adopted as a title for Jesus and now implies divinity, though this sense of the word is not present outside Christianity. |
| ordination | The name of the process by which individuals are prepared for, and set apart to, act as leaders of a given religion/denomination, which normally includes the ability and permission to perform particular religious rites. |
| pluralism | In this context, religious pluralism is the belief that all religions and belief systems are equally valid, with equal claim to truth. Pluralism in its broader sense is the promotion of tolerance for, and working with, others from different faiths and world-views. |
| prosperity gospel | The belief that financial means and success is a blessing from God and that faith and/or good acts will result in material recompense from God. Also known as “prosperity theology”. |
| religious liberty | The freedom of individuals and groups to teach, observe, and practice a given religion or belief system, as well as the freedom to change between religions and belief systems (or to/from no religion or belief system). Also known as “freedom of belief” and “freedom of religion”. In the UK, this also means that individuals and groups are free to teach, observe, and practice a religion other than the state religion (Anglican Christianity). |
| reverse mission movement | A term used from a UK/Western perspective to describe evangelists being sent to the West from areas which traditionally received missionary attention from the West. |
| stewardship | The belief that human beings are responsible for caring for the earth and the beings and resources on it. Within Christianity, this is usually paired with the belief that the earth (and its creatures and resources) were created and are owned by God, but are under the care of humans. |
| universalism (in Christian theology) | Broadly, the belief that all humans (and sometimes all animals or all living beings) will be saved. The belief that all humans will ultimately be reconciled to God in heaven and will be in right relationship with God. |
| World Council of Churches | An international organisation of most Christian churches (excluding the Roman Catholic church) which aims to encourage dialogue and understanding between Christian denominations. |
| World Missionary Conference | Also known as the “1910 World Missionary Conference” or the “Edinburgh Missionary Conference”. A meeting of major Protestant churches and mission groups, sometimes believed to be the start of the Protestant ecumenical movement. |
| worship | An act of praise, thanksgiving, devotion, or similar towards a deity. Worship can be private and individual e.g. personal prayer, saying the Rosary (Catholicism), the practice of Lectio Divina, etc., or, it can be public and congregational e.g. church services, led prayer meetings, etc. |

| A STUDY OF ISLAM GLOSSARY | |
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| TERM | DEFINITION |
| Afshar, Haleh | Contemporary Shi'a Muslim academic, Baroness and Professor of Politics and Women's studies at York University. |
| Big Bang | Scientific theory explaining the expansion of the universe from a single point. |
| fiqh | Lit. 'deep understanding' with reference to the rules of shari'a. |
| hadith | Collated written 'records' of the sayings, teachings and actions of Muhammad from those that knew Muhammad. |
| hudud | Lit. 'restricted'; under Islamic law hudud ('hadd' singular) are fixed punishments for specific crimes. |
| ijma | 'Consensus' of scholars on matters of religion or 'shari'a'. |
| ijtihad | Academic, internal struggle or 'personal struggle (through deep thought)'; the process of reasoning that recognised scholars use, arriving at ra'y (personal judgement or discretion) to establish matters of Islamic teaching and behaviour based upon what is in the Qur'an and Hadith. |
| Imam | Muslim leader or cleric; usually head of a local community or masjid. |
| Islamophobia | Lit. 'fear of Islam' but is irrational and based in prejudice or ignorance. |
| Jihad | Lit. 'struggle' or sometimes 'perseverance' or 'applying oneself' and refers to the application of Islamic religious principles to everyday life; traditionally classed as jihad of the heart, jihad of the tongue, jihad of the hand (all greater jihad) and jihad of the sword (lesser jihad). |
| Mahdi | Lit. "guided one"; in Islamic eschatology it refers to the leader that will appear a few years before the final Day of Judgement. |
| mujtahid | An Islamic scholar competent in interpreting and applying shari'a. |
| muraqaba | A specialised form of Sufi meditation. |
| muta | Shi'a temporary marriage. |
| Oscillating Universe | Scientific theory explaining the never-ending expansion and contraction of the universe. |
| People of the Book | A term used in the Qur'an for Christians and Jews. |
| qisas | Specific teaching of retribution in Islamic law, open to the family of a victim. |
| qiyas | Use of analogy in a hermeneutical framework to deduce and establish correct behaviour by comparing and contrasting Hadith against Qur'anic teaching. |

| TERM | DEFINITION |
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| Qutb | Lit. 'pole' or 'axis' and used in Sufism to depict a spiritual leader that has a divine connexion and can pass this direct knowledge of God on to the rest of Sufism. |
| Rahman, Aisha Abd Al | Muslim professor of literature who studied and wrote about early Muslim women and was the first Muslim women to undertake Qur'anic exegesis. |
| Salafi | 'Pious one' referring to the early Muslim followers; used today often with reference to the Salafi movement or Salafism. |
| sama | Lit. 'listening'; a meditational ceremony usually involving singing, music, dancing, poetry, prayers and specific religious dress. For example, the practices of the 'Whirling Dervishes'. |
| shari'a | 'Straight path' or 'the way'; body of religious, social, moral and political guidance materials for Muslims, the basis of which is in the Qur'an, developed throughout the early history and expansion of Islam. |
| Shi'a | Second largest branch of Islam; followers hold to the principle of Ali ibn Ali Talib as the rightful successor to Muhammad and Shi'a Islam has several distinctive features that distinguish it from Sunni in terms of beliefs and practices. |
| Steady State | Scientific theory explaining the universe in a constant state of expansion yet appearing the same at any given point in time due to increasing density and a continuous creation of matter. The universe has no beginning and no end. |
| Sufi | Islamic mystic tradition, comes from the word 'wool', which referred to the garments worn by the early ascetics. |
| sunna | Oral tradition referring to an understanding of the 'custom' of Muhammad's behaviour; teachings, actions or sayings of Muhammad |
| Sunni | Main branch of Islam characterised by the 'rightly-guided caliphs', the five pillars and four law schools. |
| taqiyya | Also spelt taqiya, Shi'a teaching allowing a Muslim to conceal, deny or disguise beliefs and associations with Islam in times of danger and in order to promote Islam in the longer term. |
| taqlid | To follow the interpretation and instruction of a Mujtahid. |
| tazir | Where no punishment is specified according to Qur'an or Hadith, the use of tazir means that a judge uses their discretion and experience to apply sentence for a crime. |

| A STUDY OF JUDAISM: GLOSSARY | |
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| TERM | DEFINITION |
| Aggadah | Refers to non-legalistic exegetical texts in the classical rabbinic literature of Judaism, particularly as recorded in the Talmud and Midrash. |
| agunah | Lit. 'chained' or 'tied', describing a woman who is married separated from her husband and cannot remarry or notably her husband refuses to grant a woman a divorce. Plural is 'aganot'. |
| anti-Semitism | Hatred of Jews or prejudice against them and associated discriminatory acts. |
| bereshit | Lit. 'in the beginning (of)' and the first words of the Torah, although surrounded with debate as to what this term actually means and the implications of this. |
| derash | Related to the word 'midrash'; this is the exegesis of a Hebrew text by considering it in comparison to other similar texts and applying the meaning. |
| devekut | 'Attachment to God'; 'devotion'; describes having God permanently in the mind or being with God. A concept found mainly in Hasidic writings. |
| Dreyfus affair | The Alfred Dreyfus case (1894-1906): his trial and the public demand of 'Death to the Jew', which appear to have prompted the journalist Theodor Herzl (1860-1904) to come to the conclusion that the only solution to the persecution of the Jews was the establishment of a Jewish homeland. |
| En Sof | The term is sometimes taken in Kabbalah to refer to God's very essence; when more precisely used, it refers to God's infinite light, before the beginning of the creation process. |
| Gemara | Meaning 'completion'. Rabbinic discussions of the Mishnah. It is a careful examination of the Mishnah sentence by sentence and so can be seen as an extension and elaboration of the Mishnah and, therefore, a component of the Talmud. |
| Halakah | Jewish law; comes from the root halakh, 'to go' or 'to walk'; the halakah is concerned with Jewish law as a whole—the rules and regulations by which the Jew 'walks' through life. |
| Holocaust | A large-scale 'destruction by fire'; or 'sacrifice wholly consumed by fire'. The term is often used to describe the Nazi genocide of over six million European Jews during the period 1941-1945. The term 'Shoah' (meaning 'catastrophe') is another phrase often used to describe this period. |
| Kabbalah | Jewish mystical tradition developed in the 11th and 12th centuries, culminating in the Zohar, 'Illumination' or 'Brightness', the classical work of the Kabbalah. |
| kashrut | The laws governing the kinds of food Jews can eat. The roots of these laws are to be found in the Bible, most can be found in Leviticus 11 and Deuteronomy 14. |
| kibbutz | A collective community in Israel, traditionally based on agriculture. A voluntary society in which people live, which is dedicated to mutual aid and social justice. |

| TERM | DEFINITION |
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| Maimonides | Medieval Spanish Jewish philosopher and Torah scholar, also known as Rambam. |
| midrash | Meaning 'to search' or 'to root out' and is a reference to the method of interpretation of the Hebrew Scriptures as opposed to an actual text in itself. |
| Mishnah | Both a method and a text. The Mishnah is a collection of Oral Laws over a period of some 400 years and collated together under six main Orders. |
| mitzvot | Commandments. |
| peshat | The plain, literal meaning of a text used in midrash. |
| pikuach nefesh | The obligation to save a life; the Jewish notion of the 'sanctity of life'. Pikuach nefesh is derived from the biblical verse, "Neither shall you stand by the blood of your neighbour" (Lev. 19:16). According to pikuach nefesh a person must do everything in their power to save the life of another. |
| Rashi | Medieval French Jewish rabbi famous for his comprehensive commentaries on Hebrew texts. |
| rebbe | A variation of 'rabbi' and used to describe a rabbi from the Hasidic guide / master also called a tzaddik (zaddik). His main function would be to teach the Torah and give decisions on Jewish law, but also a spiritual guide who would pray on his follower's behalf. |
| remez | Allegorical interpretation of a text used in midrash. |
| Sefirot | Virtues emanating from a source: in Jewish mystical thought, the ten sefirot emanating from En Sof. |
| sod | Lit. 'hidden' mystical interpretation of a text used in midrash. |
| Talmud | Lit. 'teaching' or 'study': the work of collected scholars, as a running commentary to the Mishnah. There are two Talmuds: Palestinian and Babylonian; which digest and provide a guide on the Jewish Scriptures. |
| tashlikh | Ritual washing as part Rosh Hashanah to cast away sins, usually performed in a river, sea or spring. |
| Tikkun Olam | A concept defined by acts of kindness performed to perfect, repair or heal the world. The phrase is found in the Mishnah, a body of classical rabbinic teachings. It has become associated with social action and social justice. |
| Zionism | The desire to return to 'Zion' and often associated with the Zionist Movement. The movement that started at the end of the 19th century with the aim of establishing a homeland for Jews in Palestine. |

| A STUDY OF BUDDHISM: GLOSSARY | |
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| TERM | DEFINITION |
| Abhidhamma pitaka | The third section of the Pali Canon containing detailed scholastic commentaries on the teachings. |
| Amaravati | Theravada Monastery of the Thai Forest Tradition in Hertfordshire, run by the English Sangha Trust. It was founded in 1984 as an extension of the Chithurst Buddhist monastery in West Sussex. |
| Amida | Japanese word for Amitabha. |
| Amitabha (Skt) | The Buddha of infinite light and life, devotion to whom ensures rebirth in his pure land after death; he is the main buddha revered by the Pure Land School. Also one of the five dhyani buddhas. |
| arhat (Skt) arahant / arahat (P) | ‘One who is worthy’. In Theravada Buddhism, this describes one who has achieved the highest state attainable in this life – the ‘deliverance of mind’ or ‘enlightenment’. |
| atman (Skt) | The eternal soul in Hinduism |
| bhavachakra | The Tibetan wheel of life, sometimes called the ‘Wheel of Samsara’. |
| Bodhi Tree | The devotional name given to the pipal/banyan/fig tree under which tradition states Siddhartha became enlightened. |
| Bon | Indigenous Tibetan religion |
| buddha-nature | In Mahayana Buddhism, the underlying state of all things, therefore the potential of all beings. |
| Buddhist Society | Founded in 1924 by Christmas Humphreys, the Society is a UK Charity founded to publish and make known the principles of Buddhism |
| Chithurst | Founded in 1979, a Buddhist monastery of the Thai Forest Tradition. |
| concept | Something conceived in the mind; a thought or notion. |
| daimoku | The practice of chanting ‘namu myoho renge kyo’ (I take refuge in the Lotus Sutra) performed by Nichiren Buddhists. |
| Dalai Lama | Spiritual and political leader of the Tibetan people, in exile. The Dalai Lama is a ‘tulku’ (preserver of a particular lineage) of the Gelug tradition of Tibetan Buddhism and is considered to be a manifestation of Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva. The present Dalai Lama, Tenzin Gyatso, is the fourteenth. ‘Dalai’ means ocean of wisdom, and a lama is a teacher. |
| Ekayana (Skt) | Literally ‘one way’. A theme of the Lotus Sutra which promotes the bodhisattva path to enlightenment. |
| enlightenment for all | A principle expounded in the Lotus Sutra and recognised in many forms of Mahayana Buddhism that there are no monastic pre-requisites for the attainment of enlightenment. |
| gohonzon | ‘Object of worship’: the inscription of the daimoku. |

| TERM | DEFINITION |
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| Hanh, Thich Nhat | Vietnamese Thien (Zen) Buddhist meditation teacher and peace activist born 1926; he is author of many books and lives in a community called Plum Village in France. He founded the Order of Interbeing, which teaches mindfulness and Engaged Buddhism. |
| Heart Sutra | Prajnaparamitahrdaya Sutra – a short sutra, communicating the Mahayana concept of emptiness. |
| Heritage Buddhists | Buddhists who are born into practising Buddhist families. The term is often used to distinguish convert Buddhists from communities who are culturally Buddhist. There are strong 'heritage' Buddhist communities in the UK amongst Sri Lankans, Thais, Chinese and Tibetans. |
| Jodo Shinshu | Founded in the 13 th century by the Japanese monk Shinran, Jodo Shinshu is a form of Pure Land Buddhism which describes humanity as living in the era of mappo, an age in which it has become impossible to achieve enlightenment because humans are too corrupt and proud. Those who despair of their own ability to attain it, and who call on the Buddha Amida in a practice known as nembutsu, will be reborn in the Pure Land |
| Kalama Sutta | Important Pali text in which the Buddha entreats his followers not to accept teachings as true based on any other authority than their own experience that the teachings led to freedom from suffering. |
| Kathina (P) koan | Ceremony at the end of the Rains Retreat, at which monks are presented with new robes A dialogue, statement or puzzling question, used by a Zen teacher to encourage his or her disciples to abandon ordinary dualistic, discriminative thinking. |
| Lotus Sutra | An important Mahayana Sutra, with a mythological setting, and which explores themes of upaya (skillful means), the bodhisattva path, and the potential for Buddhahood of all beings |
| mandala | A symbolic representation of the universe which is visualised in Tibetan meditation. Mandalas are depicted in paintings and are often ritually made using coloured powders that are erased at the end of the ritual. |
| mantra | A series of syllables used in Tibetan ritual. Usually a mantra contains the name of an enlightened being, and in repeating the mantra the meditator manifests the qualities of that enlightened being. |
| mindfulness | The word has been used to translate the Pali term 'sati' which is a Buddhist practice recommended in the Mahasatipatthana Sutta and other sacred texts. This is to be distinguished from The Mindfulness Movement in which mindfulness refers to the adaptation of Buddhist meditation by Jon Kabat-Zinn and schematized into various therapeutic systems. |
| nembutsu | Reciting 'Namu Amida Butsu' – I take refuge in Amida Buddha. This is done spontaneously by Jodo Shinshu Buddhists, in desperation of attaining enlightenment through their own efforts, and relying on the grace of Amida to secure them rebirth in the Pure Land. |

| TERM | DEFINITION |
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| Nichiren | (1222-82) A Japanese Buddhist reformer who believed that the Lotus Sutra contained the true essence of Buddhism, and all other forms of Buddhism were misguided. He founded the Nichiren shu, from which developed the movements of Nichirensoshu and Soka Gakkai International. He believed that the only workable practice was chanting the name of the Lotus Sutra 'namu myoho renge kyo' (the daimoku). |
| Order of Buddhist Contemplatives | The Order of Buddhist Contemplatives is a religious order practising Serene Reflection Meditation. The order was founded in 1978 by Reverend Master Jiyu-Kennett (1924-1996) from the Soto Zen tradition. Its headquarters in the Britain is Throssel Hole Buddhist Abbey in Northumberland. |
| Pali Suttas | Sutta means 'thread'. The Pali Suttas are collections of discourses allegedly given by the Buddha. |
| pessimistic | A tendency to stress the adverse aspects of a situation or event or to expect the worst possible outcome. |
| pluralism | The reality of different beliefs about truth and commitments to different religious traditions within the same society. |
| puja | A devotional ceremony showing respect or honour. |
| Pure Land | The paradise said to have been 'ripened and adorned' by the Buddha Amida, and upon which all those who call his name are reborn, there to attain instant enlightenment. |
| Pure Land Buddhism | A form of Mahayana Buddhism which believes enlightenment is only possible in the Pure Land of Amida Buddha, into which the adherent who despairs of attaining enlightenment through self-effort is born. |
| samatha (P, Skt) | Form of meditation designed to achieve mental tranquillity and the cessation of unwholesome mental activities. |
| Samye Ling | Centre for Tibetan Buddhism of the Kagyu lineage in Dumfries and Galloway, Scotland. |
| Siddhartha | The Buddha's given name. He is usually referred to as Siddhartha before his enlightenment. |
| skilful means | In Sanskrit upaya kausalya. Skilful means is a theme in the Lotus Sutra. It refers to the ability of enlightened beings to use whatever resources are available to help people on the path to enlightenment. As such, the teachings are described as 'skilful means' i.e. not 'The Truth' in themselves, but techniques for achieving a purpose. They are merely fingers pointing at the moon. |
| Socially Engaged Buddhism | Any type of Buddhism which argues that action to alleviate suffering (of sentient beings and of the environment) in this world should be undertaken by Buddhists. |
| supernatural | Departing from what is usual, so as to appear to transcend the laws of nature. |
| Sutta Pitaka | The second section of the Pali Canon, containing the discourses of the Buddha. |

| TERM | DEFINITION |
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| Tipitaka (P) Tripitaka (Skt) | ‘Three baskets’: The three sections of the Pali Canon – namely the Vinaya, Sutta and Abidhamma Pitakas. |
| three marks of existence | (lakshanas) The Buddha’s diagnosis of the human condition. The only thing we can be sure of is that there are three marks of existence - dukkha (suffering), anicca (impermanence) and anatta (no permanent self). |
| Throssel Hole Abbey | Monastery of the Order of Buddhist Contemplatives in Northumberland. |
| Tibetan Buddhism | The various forms of Buddhism (usually understood to be six schools) to have originated in Tibet (each based to a greater or lesser extent on previous traditions). |
| Triratna (formerly Friends of the Western Buddhist Order (FWBO)) | The WBO and the FWBO were in 1967 founded by an English Buddhist, Denis Lingwood, who took the name Sangharakshita. Sangharakshita’s vision was for a form of Buddhism suitable for westerners. As such, FWBO Buddhism is highly eclectic, and ‘lifestyle’ is seen as less important than commitment. In 2010 they changed their name to Triratna. |
| triratna (Skt) tiratana (P) | ‘The three jewels’: buddha, dhamma (teachings) and sangha (community), in which Buddhists ‘take refuge’. |
| Upali | A former Jain, who converted to Buddhism after hearing the dhamma taught by the Buddha. The story of the Buddha’s conversation with Upali is recorded in Majjhima Nikaya 56. |
| wheel of life | The Tibetan wheel of life depicts the Buddhist concept of pratityasamutpada - the way things exist and are interdependent. |
| Wisdom | Sanskrit prajna. One of the twin features of enlightenment, the other being compassion. |

| A STUDY OF HINDUISM: GLOSSARY | |
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| TERM | DEFINITION |
| Advaita Vedanta | Non-dual Vedanta which teaches that atman and Brahman are identical. |
| adhyasa | Superimposition – the false identification of that which is with that which is not. |
| arthashastras | An important and necessary objective of government which includes social, legal, economic and worldly affairs. |
| Aryabhatta | Indian mathematician/astronomer. |
| bhakti | Devotion. In bhakti traditions it is believed that love of God is the path to moksha (liberation). |
| bhakti marga | Way of loving devotion, lifestyle of those who dedicate themselves to knowing the divine through one particular god. |
| Bhave, Vinoba | Indian advocate of non-violence and human rights. Best known for the Bhoodan Movement. |
| brahmacharya | The student ashrama – marked by devotion to one’s guru and celibacy. |
| Chandogya Upanishad | One of the largest Upanishads. The foundation of the Vedanta school of Hinduism. |
| Charaka | Charaka – a native of Kashmir who contributed to Ayurveda a system of medicine developed in Ancient India. He is regarded as the ‘father of medicine’. |
| Crawford, S. Cromwell | Professor of Religion, University of Hawaii associated with Hindu bioethics. |
| Gandhi, Indira | First female prime minister of India. |
| Gandhi, Mahatma | Notable figure of the Hindu renaissance. Leader in the struggle for Indian independence. |
| ishtadeva / ishtadevata | Chosen deity. |
| International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON) | Hindu Vaishnava movement, founded in the USA in 1965 by A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prahbhupada. It follows the tradition of Caitanya and aims for the state of permanent Krishna consciousness. Dancing and chanting the maha-mantra are important features of worship. It welcomes non-Indians who are willing to commit to its stringent rule and regulations. |
| jnana | Experiential knowledge of Brahman. |
| Katha Upanishad | One of the primary and most widely studied of the Upanishads. |
| Kishwar, Madhu | Indian academic and writer. |
| Maitri Upanishad | An important ancient text which refers to elements of Samkhya, yoga and ashrama. |

| TERM | DEFINITION |
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| neo-Vedanta | Modern interpretations of Hinduism that developed in the 19 th century.S |
| Nirguna Brahman | Brahman without form or qualities. |
| Patanjali and ashtanga yoga | Yoga sutras compiled by Patanjali around 400CE. Regarded as one of the foundations of Hindu classical yoga philosophy. |
| purusharthas | The four aims of human life – dharma, artha, kama, moksha. |
| Ram Mohan Roy | Ram Mohan Roy – founder of the Brahmo Sabha movement in 1828 and an influential figure in the Bengali renaissance. |
| Ramakrishna | Mystic who emphasised both bhakti and the idea that all religions are one. |
| Ramakrishna mission | A volunteer organisation founded by Vivekananda. It is involved in a number of areas such as health care, disaster relief and rural management and bases its work on the principles of karma yoga. |
| samkhya yoga | Patanjali’s synthesis of Samkhya philosophy and yoga practice. |
| sarvodaya | Meaning ‘universal uplift’ or ‘progress of all’. |
| Shankara | Primary thinker of Advaita Vedanta. |
| shaiva bhakti | Loving devotion to Shiva. |
| Shvetashvatara Upanishad | A principle Upanishad which is very important in Shaivism and the Yoga and Vedanta schools of Hinduism. |
| Swami Prabhupada | A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada founded ISKCON in 1965. |
| Swasti Bhattacharya | Indian academic – Professor of Philosophy and Religion at Buena Vista University. |
| three forms of Brahman | Ishvara, prakriti and atman; - personal, empirical, microcosmic. |
| the three gunas | Sattva, rajas and tamas; - three strands that make up prakriti – purity, passion, inertia. |
| Upanishads | The section of the Vedas that deals with the philosophical principles underlying the practices documented in the Vedas. The most famous Upanishads, for example, the Chandogya or the Brihadaranyaka, speak of the inherent unity of atman and Brahman, and delineate a monist philosophy. |
| Vaishnava bhakti | Devotion directed to Vishnu or his avatars. |

| A STUDY OF SIKHISM: GLOSSARY | |
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| TERM | DEFINITION |
| 5 khands | The five stages of spiritual progress leading to the ultimate truth. |
| Amritsar | The town which is the focus of Sikh religious life where the Golden Temple stands. |
| Five Shabads | Hymns from the Guru Granth Sahib seen by Sikhs as the divine word. The five <i>shabads</i> , consist of hymns/ prayers that were composed by five of the <u>10 Gurus</u> . They are recited/sung in their original Gurmukhi format and taken from the Guru Granth Sahib. They are used by Sikhs to help them meditate and become one with God, freeing themselves from misery and suffering. |
| Gill, Dr Mohinder Kaur | A prominent Sikh scholar and author of “The Role and Status of Women in Sikhism.” |
| gurdwara | ‘Gateway of the guru’—a building for congregational worship (though anywhere housing a copy of the Guru Granth Sahib is a gurdwara). The focus is the Guru Granth, and worshippers pay their respect by covering their heads, removing their shoes and prostrating themselves before the book. |
| Guru Arjan | Responsible for building the Golden Temple at Amritsar and installing it in the Adi Granth. |
| Guru Gobind Singh | The founder of the Khalsa in 1699 and the Guru who conferred guruship on the scripture now known as the Guru Granth Sahib. |
| Harmandir Sahib | The Golden Temple in Amritsar. |
| Japji | The introductory poem of the Guru Granth Sahib, commencing with the Mul Mantra, written by Guru Nanak. |
| Kaur, Dr Gurnam | A Sikh scholar based in Punjabi university. |
| Khalistan | The notional homeland of the Sikhs. |
| kirpan | One of the five Ks: sword or dagger (sometimes a miniature symbol of one) signifying courage in defence of right. |
| miri | Temporal power. Sikhs believe that there is no distinction between the temporal and the spiritual (piri). The Guru Granth Sahib governs both. |
| Mul Mantra | The opening lines of the Guru Granth Sahib, and containing the essence of the Sikh understanding of God. |
| Operation Bluestar | A military operation in 1984, undertaken at the command of Mrs Indira Gandhi, in which 554 Sikhs were killed. The action was taken against a Sikh agitator, Sant Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale, who had been stockpiling weapons and engaging in military activities against the Indian government. During Operation Blue Star, the Akal Takht was destroyed and the Golden Temple was severely damaged. |

| TERM | DEFINITION |
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| Partition | The act in 1947, that cut the homeland of the Sikhs in half. When India became independent, and Pakistan for the Muslims was created out of the Western portion of India, the Punjab, which lay right across the divide, was cut in half. This meant that those Sikhs living in the fertile region of the Punjab which was now in Pakistan, had to leave. This led to communal rioting, and a great sense of injustice. The Muslims had been given self-rule in their own land. The Sikhs had been denied it. |
| piri | Spiritual power. Sikhs believe that there is no distinction between the temporal (miri) and the spiritual. The Guru Granth Sahib governs both. |
| Punjab | The Sikh homeland in northern India. |
| Rahit Maryada | The Sikh code of discipline, approved in 1945, by the elected body the Shromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee. |
| Rahit Namas | A number of codes of discipline in use from the eighteenth century onwards. |
| Singh, Kanwaljit Kaur | A prominent Sikh scholar. |
| Singh, Maharaja Ranjit | 1780-1839 Ruler of the Punjab prior to British rule. |
| tegang deg | A cauldron or cooking pot and the sword referring to Sikh responsibility to provide food and protection for the needy and oppressed. |
| Vaisakhi Massacre | In 1919, the British forces under the command of General Dyer surrounded and massacred 337 Sikh men, 41 Sikh boys and a baby. This massacre was provoked by a peaceful public meeting of pilgrims on their way to Amritsar, who had stopped to rest in Jallianwala Bagh, a walled garden. This massacre resulted in Sikhs no longer supporting British rule and joining Mahatma Gandhi in calls for Indian Independence. |

RELIGION AND ETHICS: GLOSSARY

| TERM | DEFINITION |
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| ethics | This term comes from the classical Greek word <i>ethike</i> , meaning habit or behaviour and closely related to the word 'ethos'. For the Ancient Greeks it referred to the appropriate or customary way to behave in society. In modern times it refers to a branch of moral philosophy that aims to determine the meaning of right and wrong. |
| ethical | Dealing with behaviour that is deemed as morally right or wrong. |

THEME 1: ETHICAL THOUGHT

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|-------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Ayer, A. J. | Ayer (1910-1989) was a British philosopher known for his promotion of Logical Positivism, particularly in his book 'Language, Truth and Logic (1936).' |
| Bradley, Francis Herbert | British idealist philosopher (1846-1924). Strongly influenced by Hegel, Bradley is known for his book <i>Ethical Studies</i> where, in chapter 5 (<i>My Station and its Duties</i>), he attempts a conflation and development of Kant's ethical philosophy and that of Naturalistic theories. |
| Emotivism (or Ethical Non-Cognitivism) | An ethical theory which argues that ethical decisions are expressions of feeling and emotion rather than meaningful, rational argument. |
| Ethical Egoism | An ethical theory that claims moral agents should do what is in their own self-interest. Therefore, an action is morally right if it maximises one's self-interest. |
| Hume's Law | Hume's Law (Hume's Guillotine). Hume argued there was a significant difference between descriptive statements (what is) and prescriptive statements (what one ought to do). In other words, you cannot derive what should be done from what is the case; Hume stated that 'ought, or ought not, expresses some new relation' that cannot be deduced from 'observations concerning human affairs' because they involve 'entirely different' lines of reasoning. |
| Intuitionism (or Ethical Non-Naturalism) | This is the view that intuition gives moral agents an awareness of morality. Therefore, intuitive knowledge forms the foundation of their ethical knowledge. |
| meta ethics | A form of ethics concerned with the meaning of ethical terms. |
| Naturalism | Ethical Naturalism (or Naturalistic Ethics) is the ethical position that objective moral principles can be derived from empirical, naturalistic facts. |
| naturalistic fallacy | An argument associated with G.E. Moore that states that ethical terms are unanalysable and that moral facts cannot be reduced to natural properties. |
| open question argument | Moore's argument to demonstrate that the Naturalistic Fallacy is true; that terms like 'good' are incapable of being defined in terms of some natural quality because any attempt to do allows the possibility of an open question. |
| Prichard, Harold Arthur | British philosopher (1871-1947) strongly associated with analytic philosophy and the development of Intuitionism. |

THEME 2: DEONTOLOGICAL ETHICS

| TERM | DEFINITION |
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| basic human goods | Finnis' Natural Law identifies seven basic human goods as the basis for morality. They are: life, knowledge, friendship, play, aesthetic experience, practical reasonableness and religion. |
| capital punishment | The legally authorised killing of someone as punishment for a crime. |
| evil moral act | An act that is defined as bad because it breaks a religious rule and therefore wrong or immoral. |
| Finnis, John | Finnis (1940-) is an Australian legal scholar and philosopher. In his book 'Natural Law and Natural Rights' he developed a contemporary version of Natural Law. |
| first moral principle (Finnis) | This is the idea that we act for the common good of the community as a whole not just as an individual. Such whole community action requires coordination, however, this requires authority (but not necessarily coercive authority). |
| good act | an act that follows a moral rule. |
| Hoose, Bernard | British-Italian philosopher and theologian born in 1945. He provided an overview of the Proportionalism debate in its early years. |
| immigration | The action of migrating to another country, usually for permanent residence. |
| Natural Law | Ethical theory based on the concept of a final cause or purpose, which determines everything's natural use or goal; a body of universal moral truths identified through reason and experience; a view associated with Aristotle and developed by Aquinas. |
| Pre-moral evil (or ontic evil) | Is, according to Loius Janssens, the lack of perfection at which we aim, any lack of fulfilment which frustrates our natural urges and makes us suffer. All our concrete actions involve ontic evils and this is unavoidable given our common sin-filled situation. Ontic evil includes natural disasters, that are a result of living in a fallen world, as well as the unintended evil that besets us in any decision we make. |
| Proportionalism | A 20 th century development of Natural Law, centred around the debate about proportionate reason as identified by Aquinas, in what has been called the principle of double effect. |
| requirements of practical reason | To achieve the seven basic human goods Finnis developed the nine principles of practical reasonableness. They create the optimum conditions to attain the basic goods. They are: view your life as a whole, no arbitrary preference amongst values (goods), basic goods apply equally to all, do not become obsessed with a particular project, use effort to improve, plan for your actions to do the most good, never harm a basic good, foster common good in the community and act in your own conscience and authority. |
| right act | An act that is not necessarily a good act but creates the lesser of two evils. |
| theoretical / practical reason | A crucial distinction for Finnis; theoretical reason is speculative reasoning and concerns factual, descriptive matters whereas practical reasoning is a specific form of reasoning that we use to determine what 'ought' to be done. They are separate lines of reasoning and, in agreement with Hume, Finnis argues that ethics cannot be derived from theoretical reasoning. |

| THEME 3: DETERMINISM | |
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| TERM | DEFINITION |
| Atonement | The reconciliation of God and humanity through the redemptive life and death of Jesus. |
| Augustine | (c354 –430) Early Christian Bishop of Hippo (North Africa). Came to Christianity relatively late on in life, having followed a number of different religions and ideologies beforehand, most notably Manicheanism. Hugely influential in the development of Christianity's moral framework, with particular emphasis on free will. His most famous works are Confessions and City of God. |
| Calvin, John | (1509-1564) Protestant reformer who held the belief that salvation was the province of God's sovereignty; thus promoting the idea of predestination. |
| compatibilist | A person who believes that the concepts of free will and determinism are not contradictory, but rather are entirely compatible with each other. |
| determinism | The philosophical proposition that suggests all events are necessarily the effect of antecedent causes . Hard determinism is the proposition that all actions are caused and therefore determined, meaning there is no such thing as a 'free' choice. Soft determinism is the belief that acts can have an element of free will within causally determined parameters i.e. Ayer in particular argued that not all choices are 'compelled'. Some compatibilists take this view. |
| doctrine of Election | Predestination theory developed by Calvin. The doctrine that the salvation of a man depends upon the election of God. Predestination is God's unchangeable command that from before the creation of the world he would save some people (the elect), foreordaining them to eternal life, while the others (the reprobate) would be "barred from access to" salvation and sentenced to "eternal damnation". |
| doctrine of original sin | A theological view developed by Augustine based on the idea that humanity's state of sin is a direct consequence inherited from the 'fall' of Adam and Eve. |
| Elect/Saints | Those chosen by God, before He created the world, to receive salvation. |
| Hobbes, Thomas | Hobbes (1588-1679) was an English philosopher best known for his work on political philosophy. He was associated with soft determinism. |
| irresistible grace | The Elect cannot resist the calling of God. |
| limited Atonement | Christ's death and atonement for our sins was for the elect only. |
| Locke, John | John Locke (1632-1704) was an English philosopher, widely regarded as one the most influential Enlightenment thinkers. Often referred to as the "Father of Liberalism". Considered to be one of the first of the British empiricists, he is also associated with hard determinism. |
| miracle | An act of wonder; variously defined including a violation of the laws of nature (Hume) and an unusual and striking event that evokes and mediates a vivid awareness of God (Hick). |
| normative ethics | Exploration and discussion of whether or not general principles and rules exist which can determine ethical attitudes and behaviour. |
| omnibenevolence | An attribute of God that states He is all-loving and/or infinitely good. |
| omnipotence | An attribute of God that states He has an infinite level of power. |

| TERM | DEFINITION |
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| Original Sin | Humanity's state of sin resulting from the Fall of Man; said to result from the time when Adam and Eve ate the forbidden fruit of a particular tree in the Garden of Eden. This first sin (the original sin), an action of the first human beings, is traditionally understood to be the cause of original sin, the fallen state from which human beings can be saved only by God's grace. |
| perseverance of the Elect | The elect cannot commit apostasy (give up their faith). The Holy Spirit ensures this. |
| philosophical determinism | Philosophical determinism is the theory that suggests all events are necessarily the effect of antecedent causes; therefore, the universe and all phenomena can be explained because every event is necessitated by antecedent events and conditions together with the laws of nature. |
| prayer | A devout petition to God or an object of worship. |
| predestination | The belief that God has already decided what will happen in all things; specifically, this relates to the idea that God has already elected certain souls for salvation. |
| predetermined | Something determined in advance. |
| psychological determinism | The study of human behaviour that believes all human behaviour, thoughts and feelings are the inevitable outcome of complex psychological laws. |
| Reprobates | Part of Calvin's predestination theory. Those not chosen by God as an elect are left to continue in their sins and receive just punishment for their transgressions of God's law. |
| scientific determinism | Based on the theory of causation, i.e. for every physical event there is a physical cause, and this casual chain can be traced back to the moment of the Big Bang. |
| unconditional election | God chooses the Elect purely through His own will. |

| THEME 4: FREE WILL | |
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| TERM | DEFINITION |
| Arminius, Jacobus | Jacobus Arminius (1560-1609), was a Dutch theologian from the Protestant Reformation period. He wrote many books and treatises on theology, and his views became the basis of Arminianism. He opposed Calvin's predestination theory and proposed his own theory of predestination that included free will within the notion of God's providence. |
| Elect/Saints | Those chosen by God, before He created the world, to receive salvation. |
| free will | The belief that God allows humanity the ability to choose between different courses of action. |
| irresistible grace | The Elect cannot resist the calling of God. |
| libertarianism | A philosophy which holds that human beings are free, have free will and that any concept of determinism is necessarily false. |
| limited Atonement | Christ's death and atonement for our sins was for the elect only. |
| Pelagius | (c354-420) Early Christian ascetic, who wrote extensively on the freedom of the human will and taught that humans could avoid being sinful and freely choose to obey God's commands. This brought him into direct opposition with St Augustine of Hippo, especially concerning Augustine's doctrine of Original Sin. |
| prevenient grace | The grace given by God that precedes the act of a sinner exercising saving faith in Jesus Christ. |
| psychological determinism | The study of human behaviour that believes all human behaviour, thoughts and feelings are the inevitable outcome of complex psychological laws. |
| Rogers, Carl | Rogers (1902-1987) was an influential American psychologist and one of the founders of the humanistic approach to psychology. |
| Sartre, Jean-Paul | Sartre (1905-1980) was a French philosopher who was a key figure in the philosophy of existentialism and phenomenology. He was associated with Libertarianism. |
| unconditional election | God chooses the elect purely through His own will. |

| PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION: GLOSSARY | |
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| THEME 1: CHALLENGES TO RELIGIOUS BELIEF (PART 2) | |
| TERM | DEFINITION |
| agnostic | A person who does not believe if it is possible to know whether God exists. In more popular usage it has come to refer to a person who is undecided as to whether God exists or not. |
| archetype | A typical example of something; the original from which others are copied. |
| atheism | A belief that there is no such thing as God. |
| collective unconscious | The collective unconscious is universal. It cannot be built up like one's personal unconscious is; rather, it predates the individual. It is the repository of all the religious, spiritual, and mythological symbols and experiences. Its primary structures—the deep structures of the psyche, in other words—Jung called archetypes, a later-Hellenistic Platonic and Augustinian Christian term that referred to the spiritual forms which are the pre-existent prototypes of the things of the material world. Interpreting this idea psychologically, Jung stated that these archetypes were the conceptual matrices or patterns behind all our religious and mythological concepts, and indeed, our thinking processes in general |
| Freud, Sigmund | Sigmund Freud (1856-1939), widely considered to be the father of modern psychology. He is best known for his theories of the unconscious mind and the defence mechanism of repression. His theories resulted in him redefining sexual desire as the primary motivational energy of human life which is directed toward a wide variety of objects, as well as his therapeutic techniques, including his theory of transference in the therapeutic relationship and the presumed value of dreams as sources of insight into unconscious desires. |
| fundamentalist | A religious believer or group who follow a strict adherence to the fundamental principles of any set of beliefs. Sometimes they are characterized as being intolerant of other views. |
| individuation | In Jungian psychology, the gradual integration and unification of the self through the resolution of successive layers of psychological conflict. |
| Jung, Carl | Carl Jung (1875-1961), Swiss psychiatrist and psychotherapist. He studied medicine and psychology. In 1912 he founded his own school of psychology in Zurich. He then became Professor of Psychology at the Federal Polytechnical University of Zurich. Jung proposed and developed the concepts of the extraverted and the introverted personality, archetypes, and the collective unconscious. |
| neurosis | A mental illness which results in high levels of anxiety, unreasonable fears and behaviour and, often, a need to repeat actions unnecessarily. |
| New Atheism | Philosophical movement from the late twentieth/early twenty-first century. Views the concept of God as a totalitarian belief that destroys individual freedom. Religion is seen as a threat to the survival of the human race. It is sometimes referred to as antitheism because of its aggressive countering of any form of theism. |

| TERM | DEFINITION |
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| Oedipus complex | The boy's tendency, around the age of five, to experience his freshly awakened sexual strivings toward his mother while wanting to replace his father in her affections. Mostly unconscious. When successfully resolved, these feelings are fully repressed, and the boy, afraid of castration, learns to identify with his father. As a result of all this, he internalizes his parents and acquires a superego whose ego ideal replaces some of his early narcissism. The name comes from King Oedipus, who killed his father, married his mother unknowingly, and put his own eyes out (which Freud interprets as symbolic castration) when he discovered the truth of his origins. |
| primal horde | Freud's idea was that both totemism and primitive taboo have their origin in Darwin's 'primal horde'. In this hominid group, the strongest tyrannical male dominated the females, and as his young approached maturity they were driven off by him. His offspring, dispossessed, one day united, killed and ate the father, and liberated the women whom they took for themselves. |
| totem | A sacred object or symbol that serves as an emblem of a group of people. |
| wish fulfilment | Attempts by the unconscious to resolve a conflict of some sort, whether something recent or something from the recesses of the past. |

| THEME 2 RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE (PART 2) | |
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| TERM | DEFINITION |
| Holland, R.F. | R.F. Holland (1923-2013), an English philosopher who advocated that miracles could be explained as a set of coincidences. They do not break the law but are seen as having religious significance. |
| Hume, David | David Hume, (1711-1776) 18th Century philosopher, whose work relating to empiricism was hugely influential on the twentieth century logical positivists. His <i>Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion</i> (published after his death) are particularly influential on the development of the philosophy of religion. |
| miracle | Act of wonder; variously defined including a violation of the laws of nature (Hume) and an unusual and striking event that evokes and mediates a vivid awareness of God (Hick). |
| Swinburne, Richard | Richard Swinburne (1934-) British philosopher and Christian apologist writing on numerous issues in philosophy of religion. On the topic of miracles, he argued that miracles not only broke the laws of nature but also had religious significance. |

| THEME 3 RELIGIOUS LANGUAGE (PART 1) | |
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| TERM | DEFINITION |
| analytic statement | A statement in which the predicate is contained in the subject. |
| Ayer, Alfred J. | A. J. Ayer (1910-1989), in his book <i>Language Truth and Logic</i> , argued for the verification principle. |
| belief | An acceptance that something is true. |
| bliks | Unfalsifiable beliefs according to which a worldview is established – which are not necessarily meaningless. A 'blik' is simply how you view something. Bliks are non-rational and cannot be falsified because they are groundless - they are based on no rational or reasonable grounds. Hare stated that even though they can't be falsified, they are still meaningful to those who believe in them. |
| cognitive | Connected with thinking or mental processes relating to knowledge, reasoning, etc. Cognitive statements are statements that have meaning. |
| empiricism | The view that the dominant foundation of knowledge is experience. |
| falsification principle | A statement is only meaningful if it is known what would show it to be false. |
| Hare, R. M. | R.M. Hare (1919-2002), 20th Century English philosopher, who proposed the idea of the 'bliks' - unfalsifiable beliefs according to which a worldview is established – which are not necessarily meaningless. A 'blik' is simply how you view something. |
| Logical Positivism | A movement that sought to find the ultimate test for meaningful statements – the verification principle. |
| Mitchell, Basil | Basil Mitchell (1917-2011), English philosopher whose Freedom Fighter parable was used to illustrate that religious language is meaningful. |
| Ramsey, Ian | Ian Ramsey (1915-1972) 20th Century English philosopher and, later, Bishop of Durham who provided his 'models and qualifiers' theory as a meaningful way to talk about God. |
| synthetic statement | A statement in which the predicate is not contained in the subject. |
| verification principle | A statement is meaningful only if it is analytic or one that is synthetic and empirically verified. |
| Wittgenstein, Ludwig | Ludwig Wittgenstein (1889-1951) 20th Century philosopher, originally championed logical positivism, later rejected this field of enquiry as flawed. His use of 'language games' contributes towards an understanding of the meaningfulness of religious language within society. |

| THEME 4 RELIGIOUS LANGUAGE (PART 2) | |
|-------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| TERM | DEFINITION |
| analogical | Non-literal; comparison between two distinct ideas; words/phrases are called 'analogical' when their meaning is similar but qualitatively different, especially when applying qualities found amongst humans to God. |
| language game | The idea that the meaning of language can only be understood if the rules of its particular context are understood – a term introduced by Wittgenstein. |
| mythical language | Non-cognitive language that may use fantastical imagery or legendary stories to convey meaning and truth, often about a fundamental issue about the purpose of existence. |
| non-cognitive | A statement that has no meaning because it cannot be reduced to empirical or factual knowledge. |
| Randall, John Hermann | John Hermann Randall (1899-1980), 20 th Century American philosopher, who observed that symbolic language served different purposes including social, motivational, communicative and clarification. |
| symbolic language | The use of picture, metaphor, and other common forms of symbol to express ideas in a non-cognitive way. |
| Tillich, Paul | Paul Tillich (1886-1965) 20 th Century German American philosopher who argued that "God-talk" is symbolic. He defined God as "that which concerns us ultimately". God is not "a being" but "being" itself. |
| Wittgenstein, Ludwig | Ludwig Wittgenstein (1889-1951) 20 th Century philosopher, originally championed logical positivism, later rejected this field of enquiry as flawed. His use of 'language games' contributes towards an understanding of the meaningfulness of religious language within society. |

| TEXTUAL STUDIES (NEW TESTAMENT): GLOSSARY | |
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| TERM | DEFINITION |
| allegory | Broadly, a symbolic narrative. Allegory is a literary device in which the author discusses a hidden issue through the use of symbolic events, figures, actions, etc. |
| apocalyptic | The word “apocalyptic” is frequently used in common discourse to refer to the end of the world, and the destructive events leading up to it. However, in this context the term is used for literature involving the disclosure of (divine or cosmic) knowledge, with certain other characteristics. The characteristics of apocalyptic literature (particularly with reference to the New Testament) are still widely debated in critical scholarship. |
| demoniac | In this context, the noun: a person purportedly possessed by a demon or (evil) spirit. |
| early Christian community | A term used in Biblical Studies and Church History to refer to the Christian community (or communities) prior to 325 CE. |
| Jewish Christians | The members of the Jewish movement that later became, along with the Gentile Christian movement - Christianity. (NB: Not to be confused with any strain of modern Messianic Judaism) |
| miracle | An effect or event in the physical world which surpasses known human powers, which may be attributed to a supernatural being, religious leader, and/or magic. |
| parable | A short, didactic story used to illustrate a religious or spiritual principle or moral lesson. |
| prophetic | Loosely, a (divinely inspired) revelation or instruction with the purpose of critiquing the current state of affairs. Note that although prophecy can sometimes include predictions of the future (“foretelling”), biblical prophecy more commonly involves “forthtelling” – proclaiming a message to address certain social, political, and religious circumstances. |