

Scheme of work – Christianity

This scheme of work for AS Religious Studies (7061) is designed to help you plan your teaching.

Assumed coverage

This scheme of work is based on 180 guided learning hours.

Sources of wisdom and authority

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Week** | **Guidance** | **Learning activities** | **Resources** |
| 1–2 | Underpins most/all discussions on the causes, and significance of similarities and differences in religious thought belief and practice among Christians throughout the study of Christianity. Different is taken here as ‘fundamentalist’ ‘modernist’ and ‘liberal’ positions. These are general (and in part contentious) labels and exemplification will be specific to avoid partially accurate generalisations.Textual example: creation narratives in Genesis 1.Another facet of the reasons for differences between Christians that may be applied in later debates.A Protestant perspective: Sola Scriptura, Baptists, Lutheranism. The importance of the individual believer in interpreting text (priesthood of believers).Catholic:concept of tradition as unbroken transmission of oral (unwritten) teaching and practice from the time of Jesus to the present; the Magisterium, the teaching office of the Catholic Church. Pope and Bishops believed to teach with the authority of Jesus. Biblical support/basis for the authority of the Pope. How beliefs about the authority of the Bible are dependent on teachings, in particular Churches – regardless of denomination.While related to the earlier debate on the nature of scripture and how far it may be taken as a record of Jesus’ teaching, this is focused on beliefs about Jesus and their implications and links to teaching on Trinity and Jesus as Son of God in next section.‘Including’ means that questions can only be asked about the specified material but students may include other understandings in their answer.The study of the text extract is strictly contextualised – the topic is the authority of Jesus and its implications for Christian responses to his teaching and example. | Class activity identifying different strands of Christian thinking; this can function as an ice breaker. Independent research on ‘fundamentalist’ and ‘modernist’ and/or specific denominational attitudes to Genesis 1.The impactof contrasting views of the nature of the Gospels on beliefs about their authority/use as a source of beliefs and teaching. Matching statements to the different beliefs.Differentiation and extension:understanding general reasons for the emergence of biblical criticism (including eg impact of geology for the date of the earth and theory of evolution) can be supplemented with reference to specific scholars and their views.Different Christian attitudes to the authority of reason as a tool for understanding scripture.Independent research on Sola Scriptura and Catholic understandings of the authority of the ChurchDifferentiation and extension: how the development of the Canon reflects the interplay between the authority of the Church and the Bible.Review of work on nature of scripture –reading Biblical passage and considering likely fundamentalist and modernist perspectives on it. (possibly Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden: Genesis 3:1–23)Presentation of the contrasting views of Jesus’ authority – activity linking these to different Christian responses to Jesus’ teaching and example.Activity – based on the whole of the section on sources of wisdom and authority explain three reasons why Christians have different views about the authority of the teaching of Jesus as recorded in the Bible. In your answer you should refer to beliefs about: the nature of scripture; the authority of the Church, and the authority of Jesus.Differentiation and extension: how far can anyone who considers Jesus’ authority to be ‘only human’ be considered a Christian? | Background reading on reasons for, and the general nature of, Biblical criticism and on reasons for the emergence of fundamentalism. A handout summarising contrasting Christian views of the nature of the Gospels. Selection of statements about the authority/accuracy /truth of the record to be matched to the appropriate belief about the nature of scripture.[Britannica article – Christian fundamentalism](http://www.britannica.com/topic/Christian-fundamentalism)[Article – the authority of the Bible](https://www.baptistdistinctives.org/resources/articles/the-authority-of-the-bible/)[Article – creation and genesis](http://www.catholic.com/tracts/creation-and-genesis)[Article – how to read the first chapter of Genesis](http://www.catholiceducation.org/en/controversy/answering-atheists/how-to-read-the-first-chapter-of-genesis.html)[Article – scripture and tradition](http://www.catholic.com/tracts/scripture-and-tradition)[Article – Sola Scriptura](http://www.sgbcsv.org/literature/SolaScriptura.pdf) (teacher or advanced reading)Matthew 5:38–48 (any version)Mark 9:7Matthew 28:18; John 17:2Handout summarising the two contrasting positions and statements of Christian views – task to match the individual views to the positions taken. |

God

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Week** | **Guidance** | **Learning activities** | **Resources** |
| 3–4 | Contrasting threads of thought about God: the general, possibly impersonal concept that is not uniquely Christian, but may be supported by traditional philosophical argument; the distinctive Christian ideas of the Trinity, and Jesus as Son of God.This theme has many synoptic links, including links with ideas studied in AS Philosophy content.Contrast, in part, with transcendent and unknowable.The Trinity: concepts of mystery and paradox – faith beyond understanding. Key ideas re each person of the Trinity and the relationship between them. Difficulties in understanding some events recorded in the Gospel in the light of John 10:30. (eg Jesus’ prayer in Gethsemane). Jesus as Son of God:Contrasting perspectives of adoption and eternal sonship (eg alternate reading of Luke 3:21 – baptism ‘This day I have begotten you’).Son of God as a title for a human being (eg king) Son of God as second person of the Trinity.Father – links back to Trinity; Love – links forward to Situation Ethics.Descriptions of God as personal may be considered reductionist/evidence that humanity creates (the idea of) God in its own image/offering an opportunity for a personal relationship with God achieved by an individual through his/her religious experiences.Father: of Jesus only/all believers/all of humanity/whole of creation. If all believers, how does relationship between Jesus and God differ from relationship between any Christian and God, if at all? Galatians 4:4–7 Apostles Creed. Love:God as capable of feeling and expressing emotion? The nature of God’s love: ‘agape’ John 3:16; 1 John 4:7–8.Awareness of Biblical descriptions of God and God’s actions that appear to imply male and human, eg Garden of Eden Genesis 3.Challenge of literal interpretation – a limited view of God, theologically inadequate, God created in the image of man.Feminist rejections of male language (Father King). Key ideas: culturally conditioned/ reinforces patriarchal ideas of male superiority (if God is male, male is God)/God without gender or better described as female.Contrast with traditional theology (valid for questions on Christian beliefs about God as creator) and a focus on causes of differences. Will also be relevant to discussion of impact of science on Christianity (A-level), also appears in beliefs about afterlife and in problem of evil (AS Philosophy).Preference for observation and reasoning over revelation and faith as a source of understanding about God. | Review of previous work on Genesis 1 for doctrine of creation. Debate about how far Christians believe the universe was made out of God and is (part of) God.Present the idea of omnipotent controller. Investigation of the influence of these beliefs on: attitudes to the created world, beliefs about free will and the possibility of mystical experience of God within creation (could introduce debate about whether God can do the logically impossible note – links with philosophy content can vary according to course structure).Transcendent/unknowable: strengths and weaknesses including reference to Christian deism. Influence of this belief on: (eg) attitudes to religious art, possibility of a relationship with God and of religious experience of God.Explore AS levels of response with an answer explaining the doctrine of the Trinity (350 words), could offer a draft for improvement by students/ draft too long, too narrative and ignoring any treatment of links between the three persons.Extension: heresy of Docetism and why it was rejected, implications of belief in incarnation for authority of Jesus’ teaching and value as role model.Exploring understanding of Personal: who rather than what. Differentiation and extension: relevance of philosophical arguments to belief in personal God. Analogy between knowing God and knowing a person (rather than knowing about or knowing the works/words of, importance of religious experience as a basis for such a faith – especially given limitations of personal language used to describe God.Background to the development of Process thinking – A N Whitehead and changes to scientific understandings of nature of reality.Give three different Christian beliefs about God as creator. Explain reasons for the differences between these beliefs. | [Article – what does it mean that God is transcendent?](http://www.gotquestions.org/God-transcendent.html)Isaiah 55:8-9[Article – the Christian God](http://www.religionfacts.com/trinitarian-monotheism)[List of sources – Who is God?](https://carm.org/who-god)[Article – How can one god be three persons?](http://christiananswers.net/q-eden/edn-t002.html)[Article: the meaning of agape love](http://www.compellingtruth.org/agape-love.html)For future debates about Situation ethics note John 14:21[List of anthropomorphisms in Bible](https://carm.org/anthropomorphism-god-relates-us-human-terms)[Article – why God is father not mother](https://www.ewtn.com/library/Theology/NOTMOTHR.HTM)[Article – an overview of feminist theology](http://www.theologynetwork.org/theology-of-everything/an-overview-of-feminist-theology.htm)The previous specification’s A2 textbook for AQA philosophy of religion has a useful section on Process thinking.For more advanced reading: [Plato – God and creativity](http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/process-theism/#GodCre)Note – most resources are much broader than needed to understand views about God as creator and God as omnipotent. |

Self, death and afterlife

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Week** | **Guidance** | **Resources** |
| 5–6 | Links forward to the importance of good moral conduct.Be aware that the concept of an immortal soul is not Biblical but is an important part of Church (eg Catholic) tradition. Spiritual resurrection: needs careful definition of terms. The body dies and is not resurrected – only the soul/spirit is given life again (or continues) after death. Role of God in restoring/giving life – the soul/spirit really dies. The limited focus is on modes of interpretation.Consideration of each of the purposes which appear to imply (1) we exist for God’s benefit (to glorify God) and to maximise the quality of our life on earth (judged by our relationship with God). John 5:24 (2) that this life is only a preparation for the next. This can be linked to the idea that humans earn a place in heaven. (3) God’s kingdom ‘on earth’ suggests that the (or a) purpose for all Christians is to transform life so that all follow God’s will – that could imply political activism, but could also start with each individual Christian following the commandments. Note – Eschatological interpretations of the coming of the kingdom are not always to do with ‘on earth’.Each of these purposes influences actions/attitudes to life. New Testament references to ‘soul’ (psyche) (41 in total, only 4 in the Gospels).Does ‘soul’ simply mean inner self?Resurrection of the flesh – basis in accounts of Jesus’ resurrection, but difficulty in identifying nature of his body after the resurrection. Evidence from Gospel narratives and Augustine’s interpretation.Spiritual resurrection: reading of extract from 1 Corinthians 15. How it may/may not be taken to mean resurrection is only spiritual. Why some Christians may find this belief easier; how far it is/is not consistent with Christian understandings of the afterlife (see below).Awareness of some statements re these beliefs from Bible/Church tradition/individual Christians:* book of Revelation 4:1–11 (Heaven)
* judgement and Hell – the eternal fire Matthew 25:41
* Revelation 20 11–12
* purgatory: search for images online.

Influence of beliefs – including art; social control; motivation for good works/faith; faith in justice and fairness of life – vengeance against enemies. | [Article – the Lord's prayer as a paradigm of Christian prayer](http://ntwrightpage.com/Wright_Christian_Prayer.htm)John 9:3[biblegateway.com](https://www.biblegateway.com/) – keyword soul will give all references, filter can then be applied.[Article – resurrection of the body](http://www.catholic.com/tracts/resurrection-of-the-body)[Article – reflections on immortality](http://www.jesusjazzbuddhism.org/remembering-my-grandmother-reflections-on-immortality.html)Catechism of the Catholic Church 1021–1041[Article – what does the bible say Heaven is like?](http://www.whatchristianswanttoknow.com/what-does-the-bible-say-heaven-is-like/)[Pope John Paul II – Heaven, Hell and purgatory](https://www.ewtn.com/library/PAPALDOC/JP2HEAVN.HTM) |

Good conduct and key moral principles

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Week** | **Guidance** | **Learning activities** | **Resources** |
| 6–7 | Links back to purpose of life and God as omnipotent creator and controller of all things.Key differences in Christian thinking.Links with ethics – but very focused.Core discussion (1) whether the sanctity of life applies to the embryo and the unborn child.Core discussion (2) whether use of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD), nuclear and/or biological, could ever be part of a just war.Links with ethics – but very focused.Justification by works: the view that individuals can earn their way into heaven through ‘good works’. Reminder: parable of the sheep and the goats.James 2:24; 2:26; 1 John 2.4Justification by faith: the view that people have to be saved by God– a gift from God that has to be accepted through faith.Romans: 3:28; 4:5; 5:1.Arguments against the claim that the use of weapons of mass destruction could be part of a just war.Predestination: seen by some Christians as the obvious consequence of God’s role as omnipotent creator and controller. See Calvin extract.According to Christian teaching, what does the role of ‘steward’ involve in relation to animal life and the environment?As new knowledge about the impact of human activity on the environment is made available, the role of steward has to change. Explain why, with reference to (eg) global warming and the damage done to the environment by plastic. | Discuss the influence of these beliefs on Christian understandings of the importance of good moral conduct.Independent research on both doctrines – 350 words in each case on ‘what do they mean’.Discuss different Christian views about when embryo/unborn child is a person deserving of rights. How these views are justified by the different groups.Research the meaning of both dominion and stewardship and explain the difference between them.  | [John Calvin on predestination](http://www.theologian-theology.com/theologians/john-calvin-predestination)[Article – the just war theory](http://catholicism.about.com/od/beliefsteachings/p/Just_War_Theory.htm)Genesis 1:26, 28[Revision – care for the planet/animal rights](http://rsrevision.com/GCSE/christian_perspectives/carefortheplanet/animals/church.htm)  |

Expressions of religious identity

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Week** | **Guidance** | **Learning activities** | **Resources** |
| 7–8 | Only infant baptism – the two web pages cited are polar opposites in their views.Limited to Catholic and Baptist for practice, understandings and importance.Different understandings of Jesus’ actions at the last supper, but could be assessed separately, and contribute to reasons for the differences between Baptist and Catholic practices/understandings.How it has changed over time.Use examples to avoid generalisations.1910 Edinburgh conference is a useful starting point. | Divide group into two – each group researches one of the two web pages to list the arguments for and against baptism; in class one argument is offered by one group and the counter found by the other, so that by the end each has a point/counterpoint debate.Identify the distinctive features of each practice and the significance of the similarities and differences. Use the evidence from the webpages to list the main points about the meaning and importance of Holy Communion.Relevant areas to consider include:* evangelical aims of mission
* cultural impact of western missionaries in non-western societies
* attitudes to other faiths
* mission without evangelisation – ‘doctrine of love’.
 | [Article – infant baptism](http://www.catholic.com/tracts/infant-baptism)[Article – why Baptists do not baptise infants](http://www.baptistbecause.com/Tracts/baptisminfants.htm)[Article – the Lord's supper](http://www.bpnews.net/14088)[Article – baptism and the Lord's supper](https://www.baptistdistinctives.org/resources/articles/two-ordinances-baptism-and-the-lords-supper)[What is communion?](http://www.rydebaptist.org/communion.htm)[Liturgy of the Eucharist](http://www.usccb.org/prayer-and-worship/the-mass/order-of-mass/liturgy-of-the-eucharist/)[Article – what is the sacrament of Holy Eucharist?](http://www.gotquestions.org/Holy-Eucharist.html)[Church mission society](http://churchmissionsociety.org/how-we-do-mission)[Serving in mission](http://www.sim.co.uk/) |