# Scheme of work

Introduction

This scheme of work offers a route through the A-level Religious Studies, Philosophy of Religion and Ethics (7062) specification.

It covers the specification in a logical order and suggests possible teaching and learning activities for each section of the specification.

The specification references are shown at the start of each section, whilst the learning outcomes indicate what most students should be able to achieve after the work is completed.

Timings have been suggested but are approximate. Teachers should select activities appropriate to their students and the curriculum time available.

The order is by no means prescriptive and there are many alternative ways in which the content could be organised.

The resources indicate those resources commonly available to schools, and other references that may be helpful. Resources are only given in brief and risk assessments should be carried out.

Assumed coverage

This scheme of work is based on 360 guided learning hours for the whole A-level course.

**Contents**

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**Topic**

Arguments for the existence of God.

**Suggested timing**

Week 1-4.

**Specification content**

* Design:
	+ Presentation: Paley’s analogical argument.
	+ Criticisms: Hume.
* Ontological:
	+ Presentation: Anselm’s a priori argument.
	+ Criticisms: Gaunilo and Kant.
* Cosmological:
	+ Presentation: Aquinas' Third Way. The argument from contingency and necessity.
	+ Criticisms: Hume and Russell.
* Students should study the basis of each argument in observation or in thought; the strengths and weaknesses of the arguments; their status as ‘proofs’; their value for religious faith and the relationship between reason and faith.

**Suggested coverage and learning activities**

* Ensure the following aims are covered for each argument:
	+ Faith: as intellectual assent – the belief that God exists.
	+ Faith: ‘belief in’ a personal relationship with God – not necessarily based on reason and ‘reasons’ may not be offered for it.
	+ Reason: as justification and defence of something people have already come to believe by other means.
	+ Reason: as basis of faith (belief that).
	+ Proof: deductive proof /inductive argument – ‘personal proof’, ie an argument that convinces/establishes beyond reasonable doubt but does not entail truth of the conclusion.
* Consider that the arguments may be:
	+ Aimed at non-believers to persuade them of the truth of the beliefs.
	+ Aimed at believers to give them ammunition against critics.
	+ A reflection on faith to deepen understanding of, test, or confirm, what is already believed.
* Dialogues: the above points would all be useful in Dialogues. The evaluation of whether beliefs are reasonable is vital.

**Cosmological argument: suggested coverage and learning activities**

* A handout with the steps of the argument, then work through the steps in discussion to ensure the reasoning is clear.
* A ‘borrowing’ chain (ie chain that cannot start without someone first having the money to lend) can be a good analogy.
* Discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the argument: students should look at the stages of the argument and find weaknesses in each one. It is likely that they will raise points developed by Hume and/or Russell. (NB: these could be assessed as AO1 or AO2 questions.
* Create a chart of strengths and weaknesses, leaving space to add contrasts and counters from the other arguments, eg the particular strengths of ‘a posteriori’ reasoning over ‘a priori’.
* Explain the value for faith, including the distinction between the ‘God of philosophy’ and ‘the God of faith’. Apply understanding of the concept of faith and, where relevant, of the concept of God studied for Component 2.
* **Extension**:students can considerthe problem of induction and drawing conclusions that go beyond the evidence available; impossibility of empirical proof for an immaterial being, the nature of inference from observation to the explanation of that observation, both in science and in religion.

**Design argument: suggested coverage and learning activities**

* Students to compare the image of a watch/cogs/wheels/etc with a diagram of an eye/butterfly’s wings/etc. You can also ask students to look out of window and spot things that are designed, or look at each other’s eyes, own thumbs etc.
* Summarise Paley’s watch argument from *Natural Theology*. The exact wording of Paley’s conclusion after observing the watch is worth using to elicit discussion and evaluation.
* Hume’s text (an extract from *Dialogues concerning natural religion*) is fairly accessible, but students may need help in organising their ideas by way of a chart or mind map.
* For discussion: two sets of criticisms may be found:
	+ of the reasoning supporting the claim that the universe has been designed
	+ from the reasoning that leads to the conclusion that the designer is God.
* Consider the strengths and weaknesses of the argument and value for faith. Students could add to their chart from Cosmological.
* **Extension**: the ambiguity of the ‘evidence’ can be taken as support for the idea of a ‘hidden’ God who preserves human freedom by making his presence sufficiently clear to allow humanity to believe in him but conceals it sufficiently for it not to be coercive. This will link to the epistemic distance of Hick’s theodicy. The whole topic anticipates the ‘problem of evil’ debate later.

**Design argument resources**

* Read: Paley, *Natural theology*, OUP.
* Read: Hume, *Dialogues concerning natural religion*.

**Ontological argument: suggested coverage and learning activities**

* Identify the two forms of the ontological argument in Anselm’s Proslogion. The first form in Proslogion 2, the second in Proslogion 3.
* Dialogues: Does faith require a basis in logic/reason? Would the argument have any impact on faith?
* Discussion of Gaunilo’s criticisms – links to second form of the argument.
* Discussion of Kant’s criticisms.
* Consider value for faith: eg Aquinas rejected the argument; the only characteristic of God considered is necessary existence so Anselm’s argument does not on its own show what kind of being may have that quality or explain why it/he may be worthy of worship.
* **Extension:** consider whether omnipotence, omniscience and consciousness (personal nature) could be argued to be necessary qualities of the GCB (greatest conceivable being) and the extent to which this God is the God of philosophy rather than of faith.
* Students can add a section on Ontological to their chart, emphasising the strengths and weakness of the three arguments and how they can be used to critique each other.
* Dialogues: the evaluation of types of reasoning, value for faith, etc, is useful.

**Ontological argument: resources**

Read: [Logos Library – Proslogion](http://www.logoslibrary.org/anselm/proslogion/).

**Topic**

Evil and suffering.

**Suggested timing**

Week 5-6.

**Specification content**

The problem of evil and suffering:

* The concepts of natural and moral evil.
* The logical and evidential problem of evil.
* Responses to the problem of evil and suffering.
* Hick’s soul making theodicy.
* The free will defence.
* Process theodicy as presented by Griffin.
* The strengths and weaknesses of each response

**Suggested coverage and learning activities**

* Explanations of natural and moral evil, and presentations of arguments.
* In groups, students could mind map as many as possible and classify them, eg use newspapers. Then the examples of natural and moral evil can be used to ‘test’ the claims of the logical and evidential problems. Each student/small group of students should be able to explain the two problems of evil with reference to different examples.
* Summarise Hick’s soul-making: ‘The encounter with ‘evil’ is the way to maximise human potential’ and evaluate its strengths and weaknesses when applied to the problems of evil.
* Discuss key ideas of the free will defence, use examples such as Swinburne’s ‘toy world, Genesis 3, Hick’s robots, etc.
* Identify and evaluate strengths and weaknesses of free will defence.
* Key ideas of process theodicy according to Griffin; consider the strengths and weaknesses.
* Summarise the three theodicies as responses to the problems of evil. Students could complete an AO1 style question explaining each theodicy or problem. In small groups plan AO2 responses evaluating the success of each theodicy or, for example, whether evil means there is no God. Get students to use the mark scheme to self-assess their answers.

**Resources**

* Read: [Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy – The evidential problem of evil](http://www.iep.utm.edu/evil-evi/#H2).
* Watch the video: [YouTube – Free will defence](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qJYycge3eFc) (1.56 minutes).

Topic

Religious experience and verifying religious experiences.

**Suggested timing**

Week 7-8.

**Specification content**

* The nature of religious experience:
	+ Visions: corporeal, imaginative and intellectual.
	+ Numinous experiences: Otto, an apprehension of the wholly other.
	+ Mystical experiences: William James; non sensuous and non-intellectual union with the divine as presented by Walter Stace.
	+ The challenges of verifying religious experiences.
	+ The challenges to religious experience from science.
	+ Religious responses to those challenges.
	+ Swinburne’s principles of credulity and testimony.
* The influence of religious experiences and their value for religious faith.

**Learning activities**

* Visions: students can identify examples and explain the classification of each. They could write, or plan in detail, an AO1 essay on visions.
* Numinous experiences: explanation of each aspect.
* Mystical experiences: explanation of each aspect. (Passive and noetic are often the least well understood.)
* Discuss the challenges of verification, science and the responses to the challenges. Students could work in groups and critique a variety of examples of experiences from the perspectives of science and other atheist/theist views, eg Teresa of Avila, Pam Reynolds, Moses and the burning bush, Mohammad’s night journey, the Buddha’s enlightenment, Davey Falcus, John Wesley, etc.
* It is recommended, but not required, that students study the influence of religious experiences solely on the religion they are studying for Component 2.
* Discuss the influence of religious experiences.To avoid generalisations this needs to be specific, eg:
	+ source of knowledge of/about God
	+ motivation, including conversion
	+ ‘proof’ of divine credentials.
* Discuss the value for religious faith: contrasting views could consider the positive contribution of such experiences both past and present and scepticism among believers today, both about the experiences of others from within their faith, and the experiences of those from other faiths. This can lead to the problems caused by seemingly contradictory revelations.

**Resources**

* Read: [Britannica – Otto](https://www.britannica.com/biography/Rudolf-Otto#ref226756).
* Research: ‘mysterium tremendum et fascinans’.
* Read: James W, *The varieties of religious experience.*
* Read: Cole P, *Religious Experience*

Topic

Religious language.

**Suggested timing**

Week 9-11.

**Specification content**

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

**Suggested coverage and learning activities one**

* Throughout this section consider how examples from religion of study for Paper 2 can be applied to language about God, life after death claims, etc.
* Introduction: explore the problem with words used of God, eg ‘He’ and ‘Said’. The way language anthropomorphises or objectifies God.
* Link to the Ontological argument and the definitions of God used, the criticism of attempting to define God in human terms (eg Aquinas), and the responses to the problem of evil, based on our human lack of understanding of terms like ‘omnibenevolent’ when applied to God.
* Define and give examples of cognitive/non-cognitive statements, eg ‘the Eiffel Tower is in Paris’ (observable by sense experience) and ‘this weather makes me feel happy’ (not directly dependent on observable facts).
* Overall consideration of whether religious language is cognitive or non-cognitive with reference to the arguments below from Hick, Hare, Wittgenstein.
* Verification Principle – A.J Ayer.
* Explain falisifcation – Popper (scientific falsification); Flew and the example of Wisdom’s ‘Parable of the Gardener’.
* Eschatological Verification – Hick and his example of the ‘Celestial City’.
* Hare’s ‘bliks’ and the example of the ‘lunatic and the don’.
* Examples of ‘language games’ that can be applied to the ideas of Wittgenstein, eg explaining a game of cricket to an alien and talking about team spirit.

**Resources**

Read: [Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy – Ludwig Wittgenstein](http://www.iep.utm.edu/wittgens/).

**Suggested coverage and learning activities two**

* Link Paley’s design argument and Aquinas’ analogy of proportionality and attribution.
* **Extension**: Ian Ramsey’s models and qualifiers.
* Via negativa: link to Religious Experience and the ineffability of God (Otto, Stace). Mainmonides, Aquinas.
* Symbols: examples of symbolism used within religious traditions, eg bread and wine of the Eucharist, water, light.
* Dialogues: link to content from ‘Religion’, eg God as Love.
* Explore Tillich as a possible solution to the problem of analogy and via negativa.
* Evaluate these theories: draw on AO2 evaluative skills throughout by adding criticism to each viewpoint. Use examples of statements to help qualify claims made.
* Evaluation of all the above ideas: Does religious language have meaning?
* Dialogues: the meaningfulness of religious claims is a topic for discussion. Links to units on Miracles, Religious experience and Arguments for God’s existence and the impact of an understanding of language on their claims. This may help students to draw on useful examples to add to their answers. Ensure that examples from chosen religion are used.

**Resources**

* Read: [Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy – Religious language](http://www.iep.utm.edu/rel-lang/).
* Read: [Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy – Philosophy of religion](http://www.iep.utm.edu/religion/).
* Read: [Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy – Maimonides](http://www.iep.utm.edu/maimonid/).
* Read: [Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy – Ludwig Wittgenstein](http://www.iep.utm.edu/wittgens/).

Topic

Miracles.

**Suggested timing**

Week 12-13.

**Specification Content**

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

**Suggested coverage and learning activities**

* General introduction to the study of miracles could possibly include discussion of issues such as: Are miracles a literal/physical possibility? Why does God preform some miracles but let others suffer? If he created the world out of love and nature reflects him, then why is there a need for miracles? How can we understand miracles in light of scientific discovery? Explore whether or not it is rational to believe in miracles and perhaps look at Swinburne’s toys in the cupboard example.
* Consideration of the views of Aquinas and Augustine; look at a selection of scriptural and ‘modern’ miracles. (Use examples from the religion studied in Paper 2.)
* Dialogues: links to content on religious experience and verifying religious experiences.
* Explain/discuss the following:
	+ Miracles as chance or coincidence; expression of God’s action through a person; events which have no known cause; violation of laws of nature (eg Mackie, Hume).
	+ Realist views generally accept the ‘truth’ in claims, such as scientific claims (contrast with religious language). For a realist a miracle is a ‘real’ event, the resurrection for example is understood as a historical event by believers. Look at the views of Flew and Hume (Hume takes a realist view, although he believes that the claims that are made are false).
	+ An anti-realist will argue that we can have no knowledge of a mind-independent world, since the phenomena observed by our senses are interpreted by the mind. We can have no knowledge of a transcendent realm, so the idea of miraculous intervention in this world by a transcendent God is not a sensible idea. Miracles are ‘in the mind’ – they are mental states or attitudes that are to be understood in terms of psychology and sociology. Look here at Tillich and Hick.
	+ If natural laws cannot be violated, then clearly miracles must be natural events. This approach would fit well with anti-real understandings of miracles such as those we looked at from Tillich, Hick and Holland
	+ Evaluation of these views.
* Comparison and evaluation of the Wiles and Hume’s arguments – students could create venn diagrams, charts or debate which view is the most plausible.
* Consider the relevance of miracles to proving the existence and nature of God (whether miracles revive a ‘God of the gaps’ approach) and evil and suffering (eg Keith Ward).
* Dialogues: links to science and religion from the perspective of the religion studied. How has the religion responded to scientific claims? Does science compromise the authority of such religious claims in a secular society? Evidence and observation versus faith?

**Resources**

* Research: Choir miracle at West Side Baptist Church – Beatrice, Nebraska.
* Read: Parting the Red Sea (Exodus 13:17–14:22).
* Research: R.F Holland’s train example.
* Read: Miracles of Jesus such as walking on water (Mk 6:45–52); turning water into wine (Jn 2:1–11); raising Jairus’ daughter (Mk 5:21–43); woman with the haemorrhage (Mk 5:25–34).
* Read: Modern ‘miracles’ can be found in various places and are useful for evaluation, including [Catholic news agency](http://www.catholicnewsagency.com/tags/miracles/).
* Read: [Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy – Miracles.](http://www.iep.utm.edu/miracles/)
* Read: [Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy – David Hume](http://www.iep.utm.edu/hume-rel/).

Topic

Self, death and the afterlife.

**Suggested timing**

Week 14-15.

**Specification content**

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

**Suggested coverage and learning activities**

* Explore beliefs about the nature and existence of the soul, and therefore the possibility of continued personal existence beyond death/the existence of a self or soul. Useful scholars could include Plato, Aristotle, and Descartes.
* A sorting exercise or chart for students to learn which view comes from which philosopher. Group presentations, guessing games and hot seating could also be used.
* Compare and evaluate these views:
	+ Dualism – this could be addressed during the previous section on Descartes’ beliefs about the soul as well as using Plato. Plato’s charioteer analogy is a useful illustration.
	+ Materialism (Physicalism) – could be covered initially as part of the ‘nature and existence of the soul’. Useful views to consider could be Richard Dawkins and Gilbert Ryle’s ‘Ghost in the Machine’.
* Around the room display quotes from Dawkins and others. Students can then gather these ideas and evaluate them in pairs along with contrasting them against the beliefs about the soul from Descartes, Plato, etc.
* Dialogues: contrast with the view of the chosen religion on the soul and the possibility of continuing personal existence.
* Study of near-death experiences (NDE) and whether they are evidence of life after death. Useful points could be the research of Raymond Moody/the Greyson scale, Phylis Atwater and other popular examples, as well as the possibility of ‘negative’ or hell-like experiences. How valid are the NDE accounts given by children?
* Students could gather information on different beliefs about continuing existence after death in the form of a mind map, a group jigsawing activity or mini presentations.
* Resurrection: one way in which our personal existence could continue. Jesus’ resurrection as central to Christianity. See also Augustine, Hick’s replica theory (Replica theory is also an interesting extension of Hick’s theodicy from the Problem of evil unit).
* Consider other possibilities that have been researched or suggested such as Price’s Dream World, and Hameroff and Penrose’s consciousness studies relating to the quantum level particles in the brain.
* Consider reincarnation and rebirth as alternative ideas: see any basic summaries of Hindu and Buddhist concepts.
* Evaluation of these theories: Is continuing personal existence possible? How conclusive is the evidence we have from NDEs, scripture, research?
* Dialogues: Are any of these claims reasonable?

**Resources**

* Watch the video: [YouTube – Chariot's allegory: Plato](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VcmQUJkubno) (2.40 minutes).
* Read: Ryle G, *The concept of mind*, 1949.
* Read: [Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy – David Hume](http://www.iep.utm.edu/hume-rel/).
* Read: [Get revising - Richard Dawkins' views](https://getrevising.co.uk/diagrams/richard_dawkins).
* Read: The transfiguration, Mark 9:1–13.
* Watch the video: [YouTube – Phylis Atwater: near death experience](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HMuM5dxP9TU) (17.54 minutes).
* Watch the video: [YouTube – NDE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=05jkPA-zssc) (14.47 minutes).
* Watch the film: *Heaven is Real*.
* Watch the video: [YouTube – Pam Reynolds' NDE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Bu1ErDeQ0Zw) (9.59 minutes).
* Watch the video: [YouTube – Hick's theory of replicas](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XnrLpL3Wtl4) (2.22 minutes).
* Watch the video: [YouTube – Hick's theory of replicas: brief overview](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZrI_W4YDrM0) (8.26 minutes).
* Read: [Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy – John Hick](http://www.iep.utm.edu/hick/).

Topic

Normative ethical theories.

**Suggested timing**

Weeks 16-18.

**Specification content**

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

**Suggested coverage and learning activities**

* Introduction to ethics: focus on the debate between actions being intrinsically right and wrong, and actions being wrong only because of their consequence, eg drinking alcohol.
* Students could create a handout summarising the view that drinking alcohol is intrinsically evil and the view that it may or may not be ‘good’ depending on the consequences. Use examples to illustrate two views of ‘duty’ the duty to obey the moral/divine law, the duty to avoid harm to self or others, eg the killing of Bin Laden by US forces.

**Natural moral law: suggested coverage and learning activities**

* Understandings of the concepts of ‘eternal law’ and ‘natural moral law’ from Aquinas. What is our purpose? Students could list ideas, or consider examples such as a pen, chair, etc.
* Aquinas: ‘all those things to which man has a natural inclination are naturally (seen) by reason as being good.’ Evaluate this view as a class.
* Note: Aquinas treats the precepts as three, many sources list them as five.
	+ Self-preservation – a natural inclination humans share with all things.
	+ Those things that nature has taught all animals such as the inclination to sexual intercourse and education of offspring.
	+ To know God and to live in society – these inclinations are natural to human beings as rational beings.
* Dialogues: Natural moral law theory is conventionally described as deontological but like other theories may also be considered a hybrid system of ethics.
* Classroom activities could include:
	+ Students to suggest secondary precepts following from primary precepts already identified. Examples of secondary precepts given by Aquinas – he regarded the following as wrong in themselves (intrinsically wrong) regardless of their consequence: masturbation, adultery, fornication, theft, lying, and killing the innocent (murder). Most of the secondary precepts devised by Aquinas are absolutist, but he allows that there will be debate about what the primary precepts require people to do, the secondary principles may be changed in some particular cases of rare occurrence.
	+ Justifying your answer with reference to the primary precepts: Why might it sometimes be right not to return to someone something they put into your care for safe keeping?
	+ How would natural moral law apply to theft and lying? (Could the example above be considered theft?)
	+ Create a scenario in which lying might be justified by proportionalism. Refer to the value of lying for those involved, the intention of the moral agent and the disvalue. Repeat for a scenario involving ectopic pregnancy and double effect.

**Natural moral law: resources**

* Read: [BBC - Introduction to ethics and types of ethics](http://www.bbc.co.uk/ethics/introduction/).
* Read: [Lonang Institute - Aquinas’ Summa Theologica](http://lonang.com/library/reference/aquinas-summa-theologica/).
* Read: [Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy - Doctrine of double effect](https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/double-effect/).
* Read: [The Tablet - Proportionalism](http://www.thetablet.co.uk/student-zone/ethics/natural-law/proportionalism).

**Fletcher’s situat****ion ethics:** **suggested coverage and learning activities**

* Creation of mind map/revision aid/mnemonic for concept of agape and how Fletcher justifies it as the ruling norm of Christian moral-decision making, contrast with natural law ethics.
* Apply the examples of lying and theft to show objections to following the law in specific situations and how a ‘loving’ decision is made, and how that decision could be different in other circumstances. Explain why theft may be right in some situations but not in others according to situation ethics.
* Discuss the strengths and weaknesses of situation ethics.

**Fletcher’s situation ethics: resource**

Read: Fletcher J, *Situation ethics: the new morality.*

**Virtue ethics:** **suggested coverage and learning activities**

* Discuss:
	+ What is the purpose(s) of education and how may it be seen to aim at happiness: Is ‘happiness’ the ultimate goal/purpose in life?
	+ Why pleasure, money and honours given by society may not be seen as ultimate goals in life.
	+ A working definition of happiness.
	+ Aristotle’s context in classical Greek society – the idea of being judged by one’s character, etc (clips of films like *Troy* could be useful).
* ‘Have a go hero’: a man steps in when he sees a man with a knife threatening a woman. Looking at the description of a ‘virtuous person’ above, explain why this may or may not be a virtuous act.
* Doctrine of the mean: students can create scenarios in which they can apply various virtues and illustrate the mean. Role plays could be used.
* Devise scenarios in which lying is a possible course of action: the group should decide if lying can be justified by virtue ethics in those situations.
* Strengths and weaknesses of virtue ethics.
* Create a revision sheet with the three theories and their evaluations on; this can be used to complete an AO1 style question on the features of the theories, or their strengths and weaknesses. Students to self-assess which theory they need to practise the most, complete a question, then this could be peer-assessed using the mark schemes.

**Virtue ethics: resources**

* Read: Aristotle, *Nicomachean ethics.*
* Read: [Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy – Ethics](http://www.iep.utm.edu/aris-eth/).
* Links to [free handouts – Ethics](http://www.alevelphilosophy.co.uk/resources/free-handouts-library/handouts-library/ethics/).

Topic

The application of natural moral law, situation ethics and virtue ethics.

**Suggested timing**

Week 19-20.

**Specification content**

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

**Suggested coverage and learning activities**

* Review the approach each theory takes to moral decision-making, imagined as a general list for decision-makers. Students could create a crib sheet for use when applying each theory to each ethical issue to aid in the scaffolding of answers.
* For each issue students need to be aware of intended benefits and the relevant ethical issues raised; then, using this key information, they need to apply the theories.
* This can lead to evaluation work using questions such as: Does the application to ‘real’ issues show any strengths and weaknesses of the theories? Do they lead to definite answers? Does the teleological approach work best? Etc.
* Dialogues: issues of human and animal life and death including analysis of ethical theory responses and those from the religion studied.

**Resources**

* Read: [Philosophy Investigations - Ethics resources](http://peped.org/philosophicalinvestigations/ethics/).
* Links to [free handouts – Ethics](http://www.alevelphilosophy.co.uk/resources/free-handouts-library/handouts-library/ethics/).
* Read: [BBC – Animal ethics](http://www.bbc.co.uk/ethics/animals/).
* Read: [Compassion in world farming website](https://www.ciwf.org.uk/).

**Resources extension**

* Read: [Academia - Philosophy resources](http://academia.edu/).
* Read [Foot P, *The problem of abortion and the doctrine of double effect*](http://pitt.edu/~mthompso/readings/foot.pdf)*.*
* Watch the video: [YouTube – Hursthouse, virtue, theory and abortion part 1](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5fic5rHRt7A) (18.25 minutes).
* Watch the video: [YouTube – Hursthouse, virtue, theory and abortion part 2](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jijfTiuMNXE) (13.54 minutes).
* Read: Hursthouse R, *Applying virtue ethics to our treatment of other animals.*

Topic

Introduction to meta ethics: the meaning of right and wrong.

**Suggested timing**

Weeks 21-22.

**Specification content**

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

**Suggested coverage and learning activities**

* General introduction to types of ethics: normative, applied, descriptive and meta.
* Types of ethical statement as cognitive (naturalism/non-naturalism) and non-cognitive.
* Dialogues: link with religious language. Do religious statements have any meaning?
* What is divine command? Consider issues such as ambiguity, difference in religious traditions and their views on what God commands.
* Christian divine command theory; Barth, Calvin.
* Evaluation of this view, including the euthyphro dilemma.
* Bentham’s utilitarianism (link to topic on Bentham and Kant) as naturalist because it rests on the observation of human nature and our motivation as hedonistic.
* Evaluation of this way of doing ethics as a consequentialist, naturalist, cognitive approach. Consider GE Moore’s naturalistic fallacy amongst other common strengths and weakness of utilitarianism and ethical naturalism in general.
* WD Ross’ intuitionism and evaluation of this approach as a contrast to naturalism.
* Dialogues: chosen religion’s view on divine command, moral absolutes, etc.
* Evaluate each approach as you go; completing an overall evaluation at the end and applying this to AO2 style questions would also be useful.

**Resources**

* Watch the video: [YouTube – Metaethics](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FOoffXFpAlU) (9.33 minutes).
* Read: [Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy – Section three on ‘The Euthyphro dilemma](https://iep.utm.edu/divine-command-theory/)’.
* Watch the video: [YouTube – Divine command theory](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wRHBwxC8b8I) (9.01 minutes).
* Watch the video: [YouTube – Utilitarianism](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-a739VjqdSI) (10 minutes).

Topic

Free will and moral responsibility.

**Suggested timing**

Week 23-24.

**Specification content**

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

**Suggested coverage and learning activities**

* The relationship between freedom and responsibility with reference to examples, factors which inhibit our responsibility, etc.
* Where does our understanding of right and wrong come from? Innate knowledge, social/cultural context, etc. (Dialogues: link to Conscience)
* Include idea of responsibility for actions, eg the cases of Clarence Darrow and others.
* Consider:
	+ How genes/environment are claimed to affect behaviour, eg bullying, sexuality, drug dependency, etc.
	+ How one’s free will can be curtailed or compromised.
	+ Determinism, including for example: Locke’s ‘man in the locked room’, Spinoza, Skinner’s psychological determinism, theological determinism and scientific determinism (including contrasts from quantum theory which suggest events are far more random).
	+ Libertarianism (possible link to Descartes’ mind/body dualism).
	+ Compatibilism: Hume.
	+ Socially deviant and criminal behaviour could be explored – how would each approach studied explain crime? Are the criminals morally responsible? How should it be punished?
* Religious responses relating to judgement, karma, etc could also be briefly explored.
* Dialogues: How does this impact on moral decision-making? Does acting out of fear of punishment compromise the ‘goodness’ of actions?

**Resources**

* Read: Bowie R, *Ethical Studies*, pg 87–98.
* Read: [Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy – Theological determinism](http://www.iep.utm.edu/theo-det/).

Topic

Conscience.

**Suggested timing**

Week 25.

**Specification content**

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

**Suggested coverage and learning activities**

* Non-religious could include Freud, Kohlberg, Fromm and Durkheim.
* Religious views could include Aquinas, Augustine, Fletcher, Butler and scriptural references to conscience.
* Application of a range of viewpoints to lies, breaking promises and adultery. Students could create a chart and conduct talk-show style interviews/hot seating.
* Evaluation of the value of the conscience, considering issues raised by the above approaches and applications.

**Resources**

* Read: Bowie R, *Ethical Studies*, pg 144–160.
* Read: [RS Revision – The Bible and conscience](http://www.rsrevision.com/Alevel/ethics/a2conscience/).
* Read: [Revision world – Conscience](https://revisionworld.com/a2-level-level-revision/religious-studies-level-revision/ethics/conscience).

Topic

Bentham and Kant.

**Suggested timing**

Week 26.

**Specification content**

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

**Suggested coverage and learning activities**

* Evaluate:
	+ Bentham’s utilitarianism: hedonistic nature of humans, principle of utility, hedonic calculus and act utilitarianism.
	+ Kant: duty and good will, role of reason and three formulations of the categorical imperative.
* Comparison between these theories and a religious approach to moral decision-making.
* Dialogues: application to examples from ethics topics to illustrate and evaluate their methods of decision-making. Which system of ethics is most useful? Most compatible with religious ethics? Is your chosen religion’s approach largely deontological/teleological? Why?

**Resources**

* Read: [UCL – Bentham project](https://www.ucl.ac.uk/bentham-project/about-jeremy-bentham).
* Read: [Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy – Jeremy Bentham](https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/bentham/).
* Read: Guyer P and Wood A (eds), *The Cambridge edition of the works of Immanuel Kant*, Cambridge University Press, 1992.
* Read: [Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy – Immanuel Kant](https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/kant/).
* Read: [Revision world – Kantian ethics](https://revisionworld.com/a2-level-level-revision/religious-studies-level-revision/ethics/kantian-ethics).
* Read: [Revision world – Utilitarianism](https://revisionworld.com/a2-level-level-revision/religious-studies-level-revision/ethics/utilitarianism).