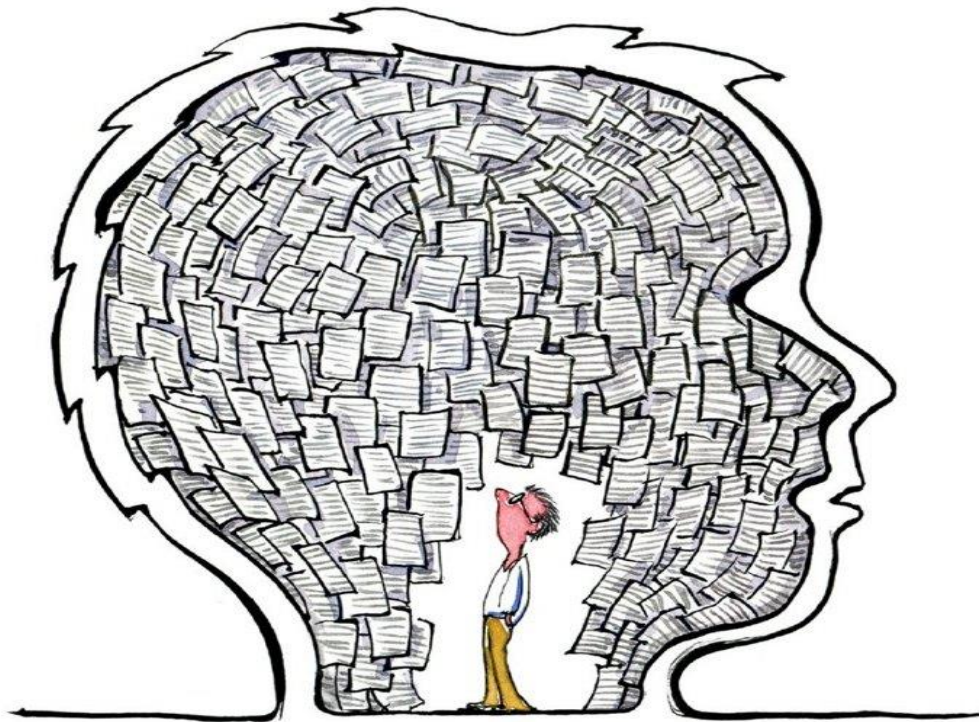


**Newstead Wood School**

**Sixth Form**

**September 2021**

**Religion, Philosophy and Ethics  
Handbook**



*‘Science gives us knowledge, but only Philosophy gives  
us wisdom’.*

**Will Durant**

**Name**\_\_\_\_\_

# **Welcome to Religion, Philosophy and Ethics at A level Year 1**

## Who's who?

### **Ms Harvey – Head of Religion, Philosophy and Ethics**

Ms Harvey teaches the Religion side of the course and part of the Ethics course. She can be found in her office which is opposite Room 41 in the Religion, Philosophy and Ethics block.

### **Mr Bournat – Head of Sixth Form, Religion, Philosophy and Ethics teacher, Government and Politics teacher**

Mr Bournat teaches the Philosophy side of the course and part of the Ethics course. He can be found in his office in the Sixth form block.

## **Religion, Philosophy and Ethics Year 1**

### **Advanced learning in this subject**

Religion, Philosophy and Ethics (RPE) demands a commitment to higher level thinking, it is not simply enough to read material and remember quotations, students need to engage actively with the subject, thinking critically about ideas.

### **How is A level different from GCSE?**

At A level, there is an expectation that students will be reading around the subject as well as exploring the materials covered in lessons. Whilst at GCSE it may be enough to recall information, advanced students must be able to adapt information to suit a multitude of question styles and to develop a line of argument. Answers take an essay form, rather than the very structured style of GCSE questioning.

### **In what different ways will you be expected to work?**

Students will be expected to be able to note-take and take an active role in class discussions. Students will also be expected to regularly complete essays both in class and for homework. Students will have to complete independent tasks resulting in presentations to the rest of the class. Students will be set materials to read before the next class and will be expected to lead discussions on certain areas that they have prepared. There will be a high emphasis on independent learning.

### ***What do successful learners in this subject do?***

Successful students arrive on time and complete all homework. They also attend all support sessions as directed. They seek to improve already good work through speaking to staff outside of lessons. Successful students attend revision conferences and seek out further reading connected to material covered in class. Further ideas for top level attainment in RPE are contained in the following 'Learning to Fly' document.

# Learning to fly in Religion, Philosophy and Ethics

These are the skills and habits which outstanding students of RPE develop. Do as many of these as possible to develop the skills and knowledge needed to attain an A/A\*

## In your lessons

- Asking questions is a positive thing! Try asking more questions in lessons.
- Contributing to class discussion – volunteer your ideas/opinions and comment on those of others to help to develop your thinking skills.
- Think carefully about your opinions and try to justify them with reasoning and argument.
- Think critically about ideas – try to identify strengths, weaknesses and contradictions.
- Make thorough notes. Whether you have a powerpoint/handout to annotate or are working on lined paper, always jot down additional information/ideas that your teacher or classmates raise during the lesson.
- Make connections with other topics/subjects or news items.
- RPE involves lots of pair and group work. This is a crucial part of your learning and not an opportunity for a rest! Experiment with different ideas and stay on task.

## Between your lessons

- Reading - Don't rely purely on one textbook. You will be provided with additional reading materials in class and via In Touch. Always read these fully and make notes on them. Try to bring up this wider reading in class and in your essays.
- Ensure you have a list of practice questions for each topic from your teacher, the exam board website or from the textbook. Identify the most challenging and produce plans or write the essays out to ensure you are prepared for even the trickiest questions. Hand these plans and essays to your teachers for marking.
- When you receive marked work, improve it until it would receive full marks. If you don't know how, ask your teacher or another student whom you consider an 'expert'.
- Review and analyse model answers. Identify strengths and weaknesses of the essays and use them the next time you are completing an answer.
- Always start your homework in good time so that you have time and space to think.

## Beyond your lessons

- Be tenacious in asking your teachers for extra help and asking for an appointment to see them outside of lessons.
- Visit the well-stocked RPE section of the school library. Ask Ms Mullins for details of new arrivals and your teachers for recommendations.
- Watch Ted talks by contemporary philosophers such as Peter Singer or Sam Harris.
- Listen to podcasts such as Panpsycast or Philosophy Bites.
- Attend free lectures in London such as those run by the Royal Society of Philosophy.
- There are a couple of great journals for RPE A Level – you could either subscribe yourselves or back copies are kept in the library: Dialogue, RS Review, Philosophy Now.
- Read news article and try to spot stories with a religious, ethical or philosophical angle. Try to use them as examples in your essays.
- Discuss your ideas with family and friends. See if you can persuade them to agree with you.

## Overview of the year

Term	Topics
Half Term 1	<u><b>Topics</b></u> <b>Philosophy</b> – Arguments for the existence of God <b>Ethics</b> – Introduction to Ethics, Utilitarianism
Half Term 2	<u><b>Topics</b></u> <b>Philosophy</b> – Philosophical influences <b>Ethics</b> – Situation Ethics, Natural Law
Half Term 3	<u><b>Topics</b></u> <b>Philosophy</b> – The nature of the soul, mind and body <b>Ethics</b> – Kantian Ethics, Euthanasia
Half Term 4	<u><b>Topics</b></u> <b>Philosophy</b> – Religious Experience, The Problem of Evil <b>Ethics</b> – Business Ethics <b>Religion</b> – Moral Principles
Half Term 5	<u><b>Topics</b></u> <b>Religion</b> – Death and the Afterlife, Jesus, Knowledge of God Revision classes and mock examinations
Half Term 6	<u><b>Topics</b></u> <b>Religion</b> – Moral Action, Augustine's ideas about human nature

# Specification Summary

## Year 1 Religious Studies H573

Area of course	Content breakdown	Exams	Weighting
<b>Philosophy of religion (01)</b>	Learners will study: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ancient philosophical influences</li> <li>• the nature of the soul, mind and body</li> <li>• arguments about the existence or non-existence of God</li> <li>• the nature and impact of religious experience</li> <li>• the challenge for religious belief of the problem of evil</li> </ul>	2 hours 120 marks Three questions from four	<b>33.3%</b> of total A level
<b>Religion and ethics (02)</b>	Learners will study: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• normative ethical theories – Natural Moral Law, Utilitarianism, Situation Ethics, Deontology</li> <li>• the application of ethical theory to two contemporary issues of importance: Euthanasia and Business Ethics</li> </ul>	2 hours 120 marks Three questions from four	<b>33.3%</b> of total A level
<b>Developments in religious thought - Christianity</b>	Learners will study Christian ideas on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Augustine's view on human nature</li> <li>• Death and the Afterlife</li> <li>• Knowledge of God's existence</li> <li>• The person of Jesus Christ</li> <li>• Christian moral principles</li> <li>• Christian moral action</li> </ul>	2 hours 120 marks Three questions from four	<b>33.3%</b> of total A level

## Assessment Criteria

At A Level there are two assessment objectives:

<b>A01</b>	Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of religion and belief, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• religious, philosophical and/or ethical thought and teaching</li><li>• influence of beliefs, teachings and practices on individuals, communities and societies</li><li>• cause and significance of similarities and differences in belief, teaching and practice</li><li>• approaches to the study of religion and belief.</li></ul>	40%
<b>A02</b>	Analyse and evaluate aspects of, and approaches to, religion and belief, including their significance, influence and study.	60%

### How we will support you...

Teachers will provide regular feedback regarding each student's progress and will offer support to ensure each student achieves their personal target grade. This support will include; constructive comments on written work, meetings during study periods to clarify and explain ideas, guidance on the investigation, questioning thinking, and support workshops on essay skills and revision.

**Learning conversations** – students will be given feedback about their work and will be encouraged to ask questions and seek clarification on how to improve. Students can request a learning conversation at any time with their teachers if they wish to explore their progress further. A learning conversation will be held with each student after the mock exams.

**Sixth form mentors** – if you are struggling with any aspect of the course you can request the assistance of a sixth form mentor. This will be a Year 13 student who is studying RPE at Advanced level and who has experience of the challenges of Year 12 study.

## **What to do when stuck...**

*'We all make mistakes, but only the wise learn from their mistakes'*

*Winston Churchill*

### **Class teacher**

Your teachers are available throughout the day to speak to. They will arrange specific times with you to offer support as it is needed, but you are responsible for your own learning. If you need support, the onus is on you to seek help, which will of course then be provided. Your teachers' email addresses are at the bottom of this page. This can be used to ask for a time for a meeting, to send additional essays for marking or even just to ask a quick question. We will provide additional materials and information on Microsoft Teams. We are here to help!

### **Classmates**

Your classmates will be an essential source of support and guidance throughout Year 1. Discussing queries and ideas with each other will develop your understanding and extend your learning. You could arrange to recap and consolidate your learning with another student in a study period each week.

### **Support sessions**

We run sessions throughout the year (both at lunchtime and after school) to support you with developing key skills such as how to structure essays or to revisit particular topics. We will notify you of specific dates and times during the course of the year. If you are seen to be struggling in a specific area or need to catch up on work missed, you may be directed to attend these sessions. In addition, anyone is welcome to attend throughout the year for additional support.

### **Email**

Ms Harvey: [harvey@newsteadwood.co.uk](mailto:harvey@newsteadwood.co.uk)

Mr Bournat: [mbournat@newsteadwood.co.uk](mailto:mbournat@newsteadwood.co.uk)



## Recommended textbook

**Textbook: Oxford A Level Religious Studies for OCR AS and Year 1 – Libby Ahluwalia and Robert Bowie by Oxford University Press**  
**ISBN 978 0 19 0 839285 9**

The book is available to buy on Amazon, new, for £19.99 for a used copy and approximately £27 for a brand new copy.

***All students should purchase this book and bring it to their first lesson.***

***We would also like students to purchase and read:***

- The next book is an excellent and engaging introductory text to ethics - '*The Puzzle of Ethics*' by Peter Vardy - William Collins, ISBN 9780006281443 - It costs £7.71 new, currently on Amazon and there are second hand copies from 30p!
- Lastly, '*God Matters*' by Peter Vardy, an introductory philosophy text - SCM Press, ISBN 978-0334043928. This costs £12.84 new at the moment on Amazon.

## Sixth Form Reading List

(all of these books are available in the School library)

Book Title	Author(s)	Topic(s) covered
<i>A History of God</i>	Karen Armstrong	The origins of belief in one God.
<i>The Bible</i>	Karen Armstrong	The origins of the Bible from the earliest texts to the New Testament.
<i>The Most Human Human</i>	Brian Christian	The ways computers are changing what it means to be human.
<i>God and the New Physics</i>	Paul Davies	How physics is throwing light on many questions formerly answered by religion.
<i>101 Ethical Dilemmas</i>	Martin Cohen	Amusing ethical dilemmas.
<i>The God Delusion</i>	Richard Dawkins	Attacks the existence of God and challenges the morality of religion.
<i>Breaking the Spell</i>	Daniel C Dennett	Considers what is religion and how did it evolve.
<i>Religion for Atheists</i>	Alain de Botton	A rejection of supernatural claims, while acknowledging the good ideas within religions.
<i>Philosophy Bites</i>	Edmonds & Warburton	Twenty-five interviews of philosophers speaking on a range of philosophical issues.
<i>Causing Death and Saving Lives</i>	Jonathan Glover	Considers the moral problems of life and death decisions such as abortion,



		infanticide, suicide, euthanasia, capital punishment
<i>The End of Faith</i>	Sam Harris	Considers dangers of religion and evidence of spirituality as a biological need.
<i>Evil and the God of Love</i>	John Hick	Modern theological classic on the problem of evil.
<i>The Portable Atheist</i>	Christopher Higgins	A guided tour of atheism and agnosticism through the ages.
<i>The Great Philosophers</i>	Stephen Law	The ideas of key philosophers are explained in a simple and engaging way.
<i>Theology, the Basics</i>	Alister McGrath	Introduction to key theological issues.
<i>Dawkins' God</i>	Alister McGrath	A response to Dawkins' ideas and introduction issues of science and religion.
<i>The God Question</i>	Andrew Pessin	Consider philosophical responses on the question of whether God exists.
<i>Exploring Reality: The Intertwining of Science and Religion</i>	John Polkinghorne	A consideration of the nature of reality from a combination of scientific and religious approaches.
<i>The Elements of Moral Philosophy</i>	James Rachels	A standard undergraduate text on ethics which is readable and thought-provoking.
<i>Moral Philosophy</i>	Raphael	Considers the connections between abstract ethics and practical problems in law, government, medicine, and the social sciences in general.
<i>The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks</i>	Rebecca Skloot	A story which raises important issues around medical ethics.
<i>The Puzzle of God</i>	Peter Vardy	A Level introductory text to the philosophy of religion.
<i>Ethics Matters</i>	Peter Vardy	Excellent A Level introductory text to ethics.
<i>The Puzzle of Christianity</i>	Peter Vardy	Excellent A Level introductory text to theological issues.
<i>The Puzzle of the Gospels</i>	Peter Vardy	A Level introductory text to the four gospels.
<i>The Puzzle of Ethics</i>	Peter Vardy	Excellent A Level introductory text to ethics.
<i>Good and Bad Religion</i>	Peter Vardy	Considers what criteria can be used to separate good and bad manifestations of religion.
<i>The Thinker's Guide to evil</i>	Vardy & Arliss	Explores our changing approach to evil, particularly in the Western Christian tradition, and the different answers that have been given.

<i>Flourishing: Why We Need Religion in a Globalized World</i>	Miroslav Volf	Considers how religions and globalization have historically interacted and argues for what their relationship ought to be.
<i>A Little History of Philosophy</i>	Nigel Warburton	Introduces the great thinkers in Western philosophy and explores their most compelling ideas about the world and how best to live in it.
<i>Battling the Gods: Atheism in the Ancient World</i>	Tim Whitmarsh	A discovery of ancient forms of atheism.

## Optional Trips/Enrichment

We usually attend conferences run by Academy Conferences who invite well-known philosophers to speak. The entrance fee includes detailed notes. The course runs around February each year. Approximately £25 each.

We also usually participate in a Webinar through the University of Nottingham. The students virtually debate and discuss topical issues with university lecturers and students from other schools.

This year we entered an online ethics competition called the John Stuart Mill Cup. You can read more about it here. <https://millcup.wp.st-andrews.ac.uk/> We got through the regional heats and made it to the national finals where we finished as respectable quarter finalists.

These events are free.

## Resources and Equipment

- The Library – it is well stocked with philosophy and ethics books as well as philosophical fiction. Go and have a look....
- There are a couple of great journals for RPE A Level – you could either subscribe yourselves or back copies are kept in the library: Dialogue, RS Review, Philosophy Now.

## Links

- <https://ithinkthereforeiteach.com/> Excellent blog based site with exam and essay advice, as well as resources that can be purchased.
- <http://www.ocr.org.uk/qualifications/as-a-level-gce-religious-studies-h173-h573-from-2016/> - OCR website with specification information, past papers, mark schemes and examiners' reports
- <http://www.philosopherkings.co.uk/> Excellent website with detailed notes on a range of relevant topics.
- <http://www.rsrevision.com/contents/index.htm> Revision website
- <https://peped.org/> Resources relating to each section of the course
- <http://www.tutor2u.net/blog/index.php/religious-studies> - Revision notes and lots of articles about current and relevant topics.

# Leadership and Enrichment opportunities in RPE

## These are a few of the many opportunities that are available....

- Lead Philosophy discussions with Year 8 and Year 9
- Help out at information evenings for prospective students, sharing your love of the subject!
- Teach your peers and students in other years
- Run Philosophy Club
- Compete in next year's John Stuart Mill cup

## Progression

Students who have studied RPE in recent years have gone on to study: Philosophy, Law, Mathematics, Theatre and Performance Studies, Archaeology and Ancient Civilisations, Medicine and History. Three students last year went to Oxford University to study PPE (Philosophy, Politics and Ethics).

## Some top tips from past students

*Do as much extra reading as possible and revise for the end of units.*

*Keep a notebook at all times and jot down any new ideas, scholars, terms, concepts....Organise notes into topics categories regularly so that you don't have to worry about doing so before exam session. Before every unit test, summarise the topic; make a spider diagrams and flash cards – these'll come handy at the ends of the year. Read ahead/around.*

*Always ask if you don't understand something, make sure you have all your notes and copy up if you miss any lesson.*

*Wider reading always helps. Read the textbook and live, learn and love it!*

*Be open-minded and not scared to challenge your beliefs. Engage with everything you learn fully and try to apply it in your life.*