**OCR Religious Studies A Level:**

Year 12 Personalised Learning Checklist

**Philosophy of Religion**

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| **Content/key knowledge:** Ancient philosophical influences | Notes | Revision 1 | Revision 2 | Revision 3  |
| Understanding of reality: Plato’s reliance on reason as opposed to the senses |  |  |  |  |
| The nature of the Forms; hierarchy of the Forms |  |  |  |  |
| The analogy of the cave |  |  |  |  |
| Understanding of reality: Aristotle’s use of teleology |  |  |  |  |
| material, formal, efficient and final causes |  |  |  |  |
| The nature of Aristotle’s Prime Mover and connections between this and the final cause |  |  |  |  |
| *Comparison and evaluation of Plato’s Form of the Good and Aristotle’s Prime Mover* |  |  |  |  |
| *Comparison and evaluation of Plato’s reliance on reason (rationalism) and Aristotle’s use of the senses (empiricism) in their attempts to make sense of reality* |  |  |  |  |
| **Essay:** | Tick  |
| **Essay:** | Tick  |
| **Content/key knowledge:** Soul, mind and Body | Notes | Revision 1 | Revision 2 | Revision 3 |
| Plato’s view of the soul as the essential and immaterial part of a human, temporarily united with the body |  |  |  |  |
| Aristotle’s view of the soul as the form of the body; the way the body behaves and lives; something which cannot be separated from the body |  |  |  |  |
| Substance dualism: the idea that mind and body are distinct substances |  |  |  |  |
| Substance dualism: Descartes’ proposal of material and spiritual substances as a solution to the mind/soul and body problem |  |  |  |  |
| Materialism: the idea that mind and consciousness can be fully explained by physical or material interactions |  |  |  |  |
| Materialism: the rejection of a soul as a spiritual substance |  |  |  |  |
| *Materialist critiques of dualism, and dualist responses to materialism* |  |  |  |  |
| *Whether the concept of ‘soul’ is best understood metaphorically or as a reality* |  |  |  |  |
| *The idea that any discussion about the mind−body distinction is a category error* |  |  |  |  |
| **Essay:** | Tick  |
| **Essay:** | Tick  |
| **Content/key knowledge:** Arguments based on observation  | Notes | Revision 1 | Revision 2 | Revision 3 |
| The teleological argument: Aquinas’ Fifth Way |  |  |  |  |
| The teleological argument: Paley |  |  |  |  |
| The cosmological argument: Aquinas’ first three ways |  |  |  |  |
| Challenges to arguments from observation: hume’s criticisms of these arguments for the existence of God  |  |  |  |  |
| Challenges to arguments from observation: the challenge of evolution |  |  |  |  |
| *Whether a posteriori or a priori is the more persuasive style of argument* |  |  |  |  |
| *Whether or not teleological arguments can be defended against the challenge of ‘chance’* |  |  |  |  |
| *Whether cosmological arguments simply jump to the conclusion of a transcendent creator, without sufficient explanation* |  |  |  |  |
| *Whether or not there are logical fallacies in these arguments that cannot be overcome* |  |  |  |  |
| **Essay:** | Tick  |
| **Essay:** | Tick  |
| **Content/key knowledge:** Arguments based on reason  | Notes | Revision 1 | Revision 2 | Revision 3 |
| The ontological argument: Anselm |  |  |  |  |
| The ontological argument: Gaunilo’s criticisms |  |  |  |  |
| The ontological argument: Kant’s criticisms |  |  |  |  |
| *Whether a posteriori or a priori is the more persuasive style of argument* |  |  |  |  |
| *Whether or not existence can be treated as a predicate* |  |  |  |  |
| *Whether or not the ontological argument justifies belief* |  |  |  |  |
| *Whether or not there are logical fallacies in this argument that cannot be overcome* |  |  |  |  |
| **Essay:** | Tick  |
| **Essay:** | Tick  |
| **Content/key knowledge:** Religious experiences | Notes | Revision 1 | Revision 2 | Revision 3 |
| The nature and influence of religious experience: mystical experience |  |  |  |  |
| The nature and influence of religious experience: conversion  |  |  |  |  |
| The views and main conclusions of William James |  |  |  |  |
| Different ways in which individual religious experiences can be understood: as union with a greater power |  |  |  |  |
| Different ways in which individual religious experiences can be understood: psychological effect  |  |  |  |  |
| Different ways in which individual religious experiences can be understood: physiological effect |  |  |  |  |
| *Whether personal testimony or witness is enough to support the validity of religious experiences* |  |  |  |  |
| *Whether or not corporate religious experiences might be considered more reliable or valid than individual experiences* |  |  |  |  |
| *Whether or not religious experience provides a basis for belief in God or a greater power* |  |  |  |  |
| **Essay:** | Tick  |
| **Essay:** | Tick  |
| **Content/key knowledge:** the problem of evil | Notes | Revision 1 | Revision 2 | Revision 3 |
| The logical problem of evil: the inconsistency between divine attributes and the presence of evil |  |  |  |  |
| Evidential problem of evil: the evidence of so much terrible evil in the world |  |  |  |  |
| Theodicies: Augustine’s use of original perfection and the Fall |  |  |  |  |
| Theodicies: Irenaean theodicy  |  |  |  |  |
| Theodicies: hick’s reworking of the Irenaean theodicy which gives some purpose to natural evil in enabling human beings to reach divine likeness |  |  |  |  |
| *Whether or not Augustine’s view of the origins of moral and natural evils is enough to spare God from blame for evils in the world* |  |  |  |  |
| *Whether or not the need to create a ‘vale of soul−making’ can justify the existence or extent of evils* |  |  |  |  |
| *Which of the logical or evidential aspects of the problem of evil pose the greater challenge to belief* |  |  |  |  |
| *Whether or not it is possible to successfully defend monotheism in the face of evil* |  |  |  |  |
| **Essay:** | Tick  |
| **Essay:** | Tick  |

**Ethics**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Content/key knowledge:** Natural law | Notes | Revision 1 | Revision 2 | Revision 3 |
| Origins of the significant concept of *telos* in Aristotle and its religious development in the writing of Aquinas |  |  |  |  |
| The four tiers of law: Eternal law, divine law, natural law and human law |  |  |  |  |
| The precepts: synderesis (do good, avoid evil), primary precepts (preservation of life, ordering of society, worship of God, education of children, reproduction) and secondary precepts |  |  |  |  |
| *Whether or not natural law provides a helpful method of moral decision−making* |  |  |  |  |
| *Whether or not a judgement about something being good, bad, right or wrong can be based on its success or failure in achieving its telos* |  |  |  |  |
| *Whether or not the universe as a whole is designed with a telos, or human nature has an orientation towards the good* |  |  |  |  |
| *Whether or not the doctrine of double effect can be used to justify an action, such as killing someone as an act of self−defence* |  |  |  |  |
| **Essay:** | Tick  |
| **Essay:** | Tick  |
| **Content/key knowledge:** Situation ethics | Notes | Revision 1 | Revision 2 | Revision 3 |
| Origins of *agape* in the New Testament and its religious development in the writing of Fletcher |  |  |  |  |
| The six propositions: what they are and how they give rise to the theory of situation ethics and its approach to moral decision−making |  |  |  |  |
| The four working principles: what they are and how they are intended to be applied |  |  |  |  |
| What conscience is and what it is not according to Fletcher, i.e. a verb not a noun; a term that describes attempts to make decisions creatively |  |  |  |  |
| *Whether or not situation ethics provides a helpful method of moral decision−making* |  |  |  |  |
| *Whether or not an ethical judgement about something being good, bad, right or wrong can be based on the extent to which, in any given situation, agape is best served* |  |  |  |  |
| *Whether Fletcher’s understanding of agape is really religious or whether it means nothing more than wanting the best for the person involved in a given situation* |  |  |  |  |
| *Whether or not the rejection of absolute rules by situation ethics makes moral decision−making entirely individualistic and subjective* |  |  |  |  |
| **Essay:** | Tick  |
| **Essay:** | Tick  |
| **Content/key knowledge:** Kantian ethics | Notes | Revision 1 | Revision 2 | Revision 3 |
| Origins of the concept of duty (acting morally according to the good regardless of consequences) in deontological and absolutist approaches to ethics |  |  |  |  |
| The hypothetical imperative: what it is (a command to act to achieve a desired result) and why it is not the imperative of morality |  |  |  |  |
| The categorical imperative and its three formulations: what it is (a command to act that is good in itself regardless of consequences) and why it is the imperative of morality |  |  |  |  |
| The three postulates: what they are and why in obeying a moral command they are being accepted: |  |  |  |  |
| *Whether or not Kantian ethics provides a helpful method of moral decision−making* |  |  |  |  |
| *Whether or not an ethical judgement about something being good, bad, right or wrong can be based on the extent to which duty is best served* |  |  |  |  |
| *Whether or not Kantian ethics is too abstract to be applicable to practical moral decision−making* |  |  |  |  |
| *Whether or not Kantian ethics is so reliant on reason that it unduly rejects the importance of other factors, such as sympathy, empathy and love in moral decision−making* |  |  |  |  |
| **Essay:** | Tick  |
| **Essay:** | Tick  |
| **Content/key knowledge:** Utilitarianism  | Notes | Revision 1 | Revision 2 | Revision 3 |
| The use of the significant concept of utility (seeking the greatest balance of good over evil, or pleasure over pain) in teleological and relativist approaches to ethics |  |  |  |  |
| The hedonic calculus: what it is (calculating the benefit or harm of an act through its consequences) and its use as a measure of individual pleasure |  |  |  |  |
| Act utilitarianism: what it is (calculating the consequences of each situation on its own merits) and its use in promoting the greatest amount of good over evil, or pleasure over pain |  |  |  |  |
| Rule utilitarianism: what it is (following accepted laws that lead to the greatest overall balance of good over evil, or pleasure over pain) and its use in promoting the common good |  |  |  |  |
| *Whether or not utilitarianism provides a helpful method of moral decision−making* |  |  |  |  |
| *Whether or not an ethical judgement about something being good, bad, right or wrong can be based on the extent to which, in any given situation, utility is best served* |  |  |  |  |
| *Whether or not it is possible to measure good or pleasure and then reach a moral decision* |  |  |  |  |
| **Essay:** | Tick  |
| **Essay:** | Tick  |
| **Content/key knowledge:** Euthanasia  | Notes | Revision 1 | Revision 2 | Revision 3 |
| Sanctity of life: the religious origins of this concept (that human life is made in God’s image and is therefore sacred in value) |  |  |  |  |
| Quality of life: the secular origins of this significant concept (that human life has to possess certain attributes in order to have value) |  |  |  |  |
| Voluntary euthanasia: what it is (that a person’s life is ended at their request or with their consent) and its use in the case of incurable or terminal illness |  |  |  |  |
| Non−voluntary euthanasia: what it is (that a person’s life is ended without their consent but with the consent of someone representing their interests) and its use in the case of a patient who is in a persistent vegetative state |  |  |  |  |
| *The application of* ***natural law*** *and* ***situation ethics*** *to euthanasia* |  |  |  |  |
| *whether or not the religious concept of sanctity of life has any meaning in twenty− first century medical ethics* |  |  |  |  |
| *Whether or not a person should or can have complete autonomy over their own life and decisions made about it* |  |  |  |  |
| *Whether or not there is a moral difference between medical intervention to end a patient’s life and medical non−intervention to end a patient’s life* |  |  |  |  |
| **Essay:** | Tick  |
| **Essay:** | Tick  |
| **Content/key knowledge:** Business ethics | Notes | Revision 1 | Revision 2 | Revision 3 |
| Corporate social responsibility: what it is (that a business has responsibility towards the community and environment) and its application to stakeholders, such as employees, customers, the local community, the country as whole and governments |  |  |  |  |
| Whistle−blowing: what it is (that an employee discloses wrongdoing to the employer or the public) and its application to the contract between employee and employer |  |  |  |  |
| Good ethics is good business: what it is (that good business decisions are good ethical decisions) and its application to shareholders and profit−making |  |  |  |  |
| Globalisation: what it is (that around the world economies, industries, markets, cultures and policy−making is integrated) and its impact on stakeholders |  |  |  |  |
| *The application of Kantian ethics and utilitarianism**to business ethics* |  |  |  |  |
| *whether or not the concept of corporate social responsibility is nothing more than ‘hypocritical window−dressing’ covering the greed of a business intent on making profits* |  |  |  |  |
| *Whether or not human beings can flourish in the context of capitalism and consumerism* |  |  |  |  |
| *Whether globalisation encourages or discourages the pursuit of good ethics as the foundation of good business* |  |  |  |  |
| **Essay:** | Tick  |
| **Essay:** | Tick  |

**Developments in Christian Thought (DCT)**

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| **Content/key knowledge:** Augustine’s teaching on human nature | Notes | Revision 1 | Revision 2 | Revision 3 |
| human relationships pre− and post−Fall: Augustine’s interpretation of Genesis 3 (the Fall) including: the state of perfection before the Fall and Adam and Eve’s relationship as friends |  |  |  |  |
| human relationships pre− and post−Fall: Augustine’s interpretation of Genesis 3 (the Fall) including: lust and selfish desires after the Fall |  |  |  |  |
| Augustine’s teaching that Original Sin is passed on through sexual intercourse and is the cause of human selfishness and lack of free will |  |  |  |  |
| Augustine’s teaching that Original Sin is passed on through sexual intercourse and is the cause of the lack of stability and corruption in all human societies |  |  |  |  |
| God’s grace: Augustine’s teaching that only God’s grace, his generous love, can overcome sin and the rebellious will to achieve the greatest good (*summum bonum*) |  |  |  |  |
| *Whether or not Augustine’s teaching on a historical Fall and Original Sin is wrong* |  |  |  |  |
| *Whether or not Augustine is right that sin means that humans can never be morally good* |  |  |  |  |
| *Whether or not Augustine’s view of human nature is pessimistic or optimistic* |  |  |  |  |
| *Whether or not there is a distinctive human nature* |  |  |  |  |
| **Essay:** | Tick  |
| **Essay:** | Tick  |
| **Content/key knowledge:** Death and the afterlife | Notes | Revision 1 | Revision 2 | Revision 3 |
| Heaven, hell and purgatory are actual places where a person may go after death and experience physical and emotional happiness, punishment or purification |  |  |  |  |
| Heaven, hell and purgatory are not places but spiritual states that a person experiences as part of their spiritual journey after death |  |  |  |  |
| Heaven, hell and purgatory are symbols of a person’s spiritual and moral life on Earth and not places or states after death |  |  |  |  |
| Election: limited election (that only a few Christians will be saved) |  |  |  |  |
| Election: unlimited election (that all people are called to salvation but not all are saved) |  |  |  |  |
| Election: universalist belief (that all people will be saved) |  |  |  |  |
| The key ideas in Jesus’ parable on Final Judgement, ‘The Sheep and the Goats’ (Matthew 25:31−46) |  |  |  |  |
| *Whether or not God’s judgement takes place immediately after death or at the end of time* |  |  |  |  |
| *Whether or not hell and heaven are eternal* |  |  |  |  |
| *Whether or not heaven is the transformation and perfection of the whole of creation* |  |  |  |  |
| *Whether or not purgatory is a state through which everyone goes* |  |  |  |  |
| **Essay:** | Tick  |
| **Essay:** | Tick  |
| **Content/key knowledge:** Knowledge of God’s existence | Notes | Revision 1 | Revision 2 | Revision 3 |
| Natural knowledge of God’s existence:as an innate human sense of the divine; human openness to beauty and goodness as aspects of God |  |  |  |  |
| Human intellectual ability to reflect on and recognise God’s existence |  |  |  |  |
| As seen in the order of creation: what can be known of God can be seen in the apparent design and purpose of nature |  |  |  |  |
| Revealed knowledge of God’s existence:through faith  |  |  |  |  |
| Revealed knowledge of God’s existence: grace as God’s gift of knowledge of himself through the holy Spirit |  |  |  |  |
| Revealed knowledge of God in Jesus Christ through the life of the Church |  |  |  |  |
| revealed knowledge of God in Jesus Christ through the Bible |  |  |  |  |
| *Whether or not God can be known through reason alone* |  |  |  |  |
| *Whether or not faith is sufficient reason for belief in God’s existence* |  |  |  |  |
| *Whether or not the Fall has completely removed all natural human knowledge of God* |  |  |  |  |
| *Whether or not natural knowledge of God is the same as revealed knowledge of God* |  |  |  |  |
| *Whether or not belief in God’s existence is sufficient to put one’s trust in him* |  |  |  |  |
| **Essay:** | Tick  |
| **Essay:** | Tick  |
| **Content/key knowledge:** The person of Jesus Christ  | Notes | Revision 1 | Revision 2 | Revision 3 |
| Jesus Christ’s authority as: the Son of God - Jesus’ divinity as expressed in his knowledge of God, miracles and resurrection |  |  |  |  |
| Reference to Mark 6:47−52 and John 9:1−41 |  |  |  |  |
| Jesus’ moral teaching on: repentance and forgiveness |  |  |  |  |
| Jesus’ moral teaching on: inner purity and moral motivation |  |  |  |  |
| Reference to Matthew 5:17−48 and Luke 15:11−32 |  |  |  |  |
| Jesus’ role as liberator of the marginalised and the poor, as expressed in his: challenge to political authority |  |  |  |  |
| Jesus’ role as liberator of the marginalised and the poor, as expressed in his: challenge to religious authority |  |  |  |  |
| With reference to Mark 5:24−34 and Luke 10:25−37 |  |  |  |  |
| *Whether or not Jesus was only a teacher of wisdom* |  |  |  |  |
| *Whether or not Jesus was more than a political liberator* |  |  |  |  |
| *Whether or not Jesus’ relationship with God was very special or truly unique* |  |  |  |  |
| *Whether or not Jesus thought he was divine* |  |  |  |  |
| **Essay:** | Tick  |
| **Essay:** | Tick  |
| **Essay:** | Tick  |
| **Content/key knowledge:** Christian moral principles  | Notes | Revision 1 | Revision 2 | Revision 3 |
| The Bible as the only authority for Christian ethical practices |  |  |  |  |
| Bible, Church and reason as the sources of Christian ethical practices |  |  |  |  |
| Love (*agape*) as the only Christian ethical principle which governs Christian practices |  |  |  |  |
| *Whether or not Christian ethics are distinctive* |  |  |  |  |
| *Whether or not Christian ethics are personal or communal* |  |  |  |  |
| *Whether or not the principle of love is sufficient to live a good life* |  |  |  |  |
| *Whether or not the Bible is a comprehensive moral guide* |  |  |  |  |
| **Essay:** | Tick  |
| **Essay:** | Tick  |
| **Content/key knowledge:** Christian moral action  | Notes | Revision 1 | Revision 2 | Revision 3 |
| The teaching and example of Dietrich Bonhoeffer on: duty to God and duty to the State |  |  |  |  |
| The teaching and example of Dietrich Bonhoeffer on: Church as community and source of spiritual discipline |  |  |  |  |
| The teaching and example of Dietrich Bonhoeffer on: the cost of discipleship |  |  |  |  |
| *Whether or not Christians should practise civil disobedience* |  |  |  |  |
| *Whether or not it is possible always to know God’s will* |  |  |  |  |
| *Whether or not Bonhoeffer puts too much emphasis on suffering* |  |  |  |  |
| *Whether or not Bonhoeffer’s theology has relevance today* |  |  |  |  |
| **Essay:** | Tick  |
| **Essay:** | Tick  |

**Timed essays completed in 40 minutes\***

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| **Essay:** | Tick  |
| **Essay:** | Tick  |
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\*Students who get extra time – 50 minutes