

Overview

The Religious Studies Department is committed to promoting respect, tolerance and a sense of value and equality in the young people at Wyedean School and Sixth Form Centre.

Religious Studies develops students' knowledge and understanding of, and their ability to respond to, the six major world faiths represented in Great Britain and the wider world. By exploring issues within and across faiths, students learn to understand and respect different religions, beliefs, values and traditions (including ethical life stances), and their influence on individuals, societies, communities and cultures.

RS encourages students to consider questions of meaning and purpose in life. Students learn about religious, philosophical and ethical teaching, enabling them to make reasoned and informed judgements on religious, moral and social issues. Students develop their sense of identity and belonging, preparing them for life as citizens in a plural society. Through the use of distinctive language, listening and empathy, RS develops students' skills of enquiry and response.

RS encourages students to reflect on, analyse and evaluate their beliefs, values and practices and communicate their responses. RS does not seek to urge religious beliefs on students nor compromise the integrity of their own beliefs by promoting one religion over another. Students learn to articulate clearly and coherently their personal beliefs, ideas, values and experiences while respecting the right of others to differ.

The RS department chose to study EDUQAS specifications at GCSE and A Level due to their content, accessibility and relevance:

Content: Engaging topic areas focusing on philosophical and ethical issues within the modern world.

Accessibility: Opportunity for students of all abilities to achieve.

Relevance: Relevance of topic areas to students, the community and the wider world. Exam question style encourages development of a range of key skills applicable across the curriculum and for future learning and employment.

Key Stage 3

How does religious faith impact upon behaviour, attitudes and practice? What does it mean to be a religious believer in contemporary British society? These key questions are explored throughout Key Stage 3 with reference to all 6 of the major world religions.

Through exploration and investigation of the beliefs, values and practices of the major world religions and some alternative belief systems, the specific skills we seek to develop include:

1. The ability to empathise with the beliefs and lifestyles of others.
2. Consider a range of source materials as a means of formulating balanced opinions.
3. The ability to discuss a range of speculative issues.
4. Improve research skills and encourage students to learn independently.

Key Stage 4

Religious Studies is an option subject at KS4.

We follow the WJEC Eduqas GCSE specification Route A in Religious Studies:

- develops learners' knowledge and understanding of religions and non-religious beliefs, such as atheism and humanism
- develops learners' knowledge and understanding of religious beliefs, teachings, practices, and sources of wisdom and authority, including through their reading of key religious texts, other texts, and scriptures of the religions they are studying
- develops learners' ability to construct well-argued, well-informed, balanced and structured written arguments, demonstrating their depth and breadth of understanding of the subject
- provides opportunities for learners to engage with questions of belief, value, meaning, purpose, truth, and their influence on human life
- challenges learners to reflect on and develop their own values, beliefs and attitudes in the light of what they have learnt and contributes to their preparation for adult life in a pluralistic society and global community.

Following this specification will enable learners to:

- deepen their understanding of the relationship between people
- become informed about common and divergent views within traditions in the way beliefs and teachings are understood and expressed
- demonstrate knowledge and understanding of religious traditions of Great Britain
- understand that religious traditions in Great Britain are diverse and include the following religions: Christianity, Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism and Sikhism, as well as non-religious beliefs, such as atheism and humanism.

WJEC Eduqas GCSE Religious Studies takes a distinctive issues-based approach to the study of religious, philosophical and ethical studies in the modern world. The course will also enable learners to gain knowledge and understanding of two religions: Christianity and Hinduism.

WJEC Eduqas GCSE Religious Studies provides opportunities for learners to understand more about the world, the religious challenges it faces and their place within it. Following this GCSE course will deepen understanding of religions and their effect on society. It will develop learners' competence in a wide range of skills and approaches and enable young people to become religiously informed and thoughtful, engaged citizens.

Key Stage 5

The WJEC Eduqas A level in Religious Studies encourages learners to:

- develop their interest in a rigorous study of religion and belief and relate it to the wider world
- develop knowledge and understanding appropriate to a specialist study of religion
- develop an understanding and appreciation of religious thought and its contribution to individuals, communities and societies

- adopt an enquiring, critical and reflective approach to the study of religion
- reflect on and develop their own values, opinions and attitudes in the light of their study

A level Religious Studies is designed to enable learners to develop their interest in, and enthusiasm for, a study of religion and its place in the wider world. The WJEC Eduqas A Level specification contains three components which include a wide range of topics for consideration, including an in-depth and broad study of one of the six major world religions, philosophy of religion, religion and ethics.

Three components are studied. Each component has been designed to allow learners to acquire and develop knowledge and a critical understanding/awareness of:

- religious thought, belief and practice and the different ways in which these are expressed in the lives of individuals, communities and societies
- how religious texts and/or other relevant sources of wisdom and authority are interpreted and applied
- major issues, challenges and questions within and about the study of religion (for example, the role of tolerance, respect and recognition and interreligious dialogue, methods of study, relevance to contemporary society) and responses to these
- the causes, meanings and significance of similarities and differences in religious thought, belief and practice within and/or between religion(s)
- questions, issues and arguments posed by scholars from within and outside religious traditions
- social, religious and historical factors that have influenced developments in the study of religions and beliefs
- connections between the various elements of the components studied

Component 1: A Study of Religion

This component provides learners with the opportunity to undertake an in-depth and broad study of their chosen religion covering themes ranging from religious figures and sacred texts to practices that shape religious identity.

This component includes the study of the following content:

- religious beliefs, values and teachings, in their interconnections and as they vary historically and in the contemporary world, including those linked to the nature and existence of God, gods or ultimate reality, the role of the community of believers, key moral principles, beliefs about the self, death and afterlife, beliefs about the meaning and purpose of life
- sources of wisdom and authority including, where appropriate, scripture and/or sacred texts and how they are used and treated, key religious figures and/or teachers and their teachings
- practices that shape and express religious identity, including the diversity of practice within a tradition
- significant social and historical developments in theology or religious thought including the challenges of secularisation, science, responses to pluralism and diversity within traditions, migration, the changing roles of men and women, feminist and liberationist approaches

- a comparison of the significant ideas presented in works of at least two key scholars selected from the field of religion and belief
- two themes related to the relationship between religion and society, for example: the relationship between religious and other forms of identity; religion, equality and discrimination; religious freedom; the political and social influence of religious institutions; religious tolerance, respect and recognition and the ways that religious traditions view other religions and non-religious worldviews and their truth claims
- how developments in beliefs and practices have, over time, influenced and been influenced by developments in philosophical, ethical, studies of religion and/or by textual interpretation.

Component 2: Philosophy of Religion

This component provides learners with the opportunity to undertake an in-depth and broad study of fundamental philosophical themes, ranging from arguments for the existence of God to the use of religious language.

This component includes the study of the following content:

- philosophical issues and questions raised by religion and belief including at least three contrasting arguments about the existence or non-existence of God, gods or ultimate reality
- the nature and influence of religious experience
- challenges to religious belief such as the problems of evil and suffering
- philosophical language and thought through significant concepts and the works of key thinkers, illustrated in issues or debates in the philosophy of religion
- how views of religious language have changed over time; the challenges posed by the verification/falsification debate and language games theory over whether religious language should be viewed cognitively or non-cognitively; and a consideration of at least two different views about religious teachings being understood symbolically and analogically
- a comparison of the significant ideas presented in works of at least two key scholars selected from the field of the philosophy of religion, and developments in the way these ideas are applied to issues in religion and belief
- how the philosophy of religion has, over time, influenced and been influenced by developments in religious beliefs and practices, ethics or textual interpretation.

Component 3: Religion and Ethics

This component provides learners with the opportunity to undertake an in-depth and broad study of fundamental ethical themes, ranging from ethical language and thought to freewill and determinism.

This component includes the study of the following content:

- ethical language and thought through significant concepts and the works of key thinkers, illustrated in issues or debates in religion and ethics
- three normative ethical theories such as deontological, teleological or character-based ethics (at least two of which must be religious approaches)

- the application of ethical theory to two personal, societal or global issues of importance, including religious ethical perspectives
- how ethical language in the modern era has changed over time; including a study of meta-ethical theories and significant ideas in religious and moral thought such as free will, conscience or authority
- a comparison of the significant ideas presented in the works of at least two key scholars selected from the field of religion and ethics, and developments in the way these ideas are applied to significant issues in religion and belief
- how the study of ethics has, over time, influenced and been influenced by developments in religious beliefs and practices, the philosophy of religion and/or textual interpretation.

Extra-Curricular

The department is investigating opportunities to increase students' opportunity to meet people of faith and visit places of faith throughout Key Stage 3.

During Key Stage 4 to compliment and enrich their learning in preparation for their GCSE examinations the department organise an overnight trip to London. The trip enriches students' understanding of topics within the syllabus of injustice, religious expression and the importance of religious buildings for community cohesion.

The department is very proud to collaborate with the History department to offer a Key Stage 5 trip to Auschwitz and Krakow.