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PHILOSOPHY & ETHICS/ RELIGIOUS STUDIES

Can I do this subject if I have not studied it at GCSE?

Yes. The AS and A Level are very different from the GCSE.

What is actually in the OCR A Level course?

The course has three parts: **(1) Philosophy** (including arguments for the existence of God, free will versus determinism, the problem of evil); **(2) Ethics** (theories of right and wrong, the relationship between religion and morality, applied ethics). **(3) Buddhism** (which speaks for itself). Each counts for one-third of the final grade and is assessed by examination at the end of the course.

What is philosophy and what is ethics?

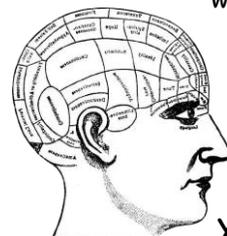
Philosophy deals with questions of meaning and truth, and ethics is a part of philosophy (the part concerned with good and bad, right and wrong). What do people mean when they say, for example, “I believe in miracles”, or, “I believe abortion is always wrong.” How do they justify what they say? We can only answer such questions by thought, by the marshalling of arguments.



Why Buddhism?

Buddhism is the most “philosophical” of all the world religions, and gives an important insight into several millennia of intellectual and cultural expression in countries like Japan,

Thailand and China, countries which are becoming increasingly important in today's world. Buddhism runs counter to much orthodox western religion, and always provides a challenging (and enjoyable!) learning experience.



Is Religious Studies a recognised qualification for entry to university?

YES. The Russell Group guide to post-16 subject choices, *Informed Choices*, says, “There are some advanced level subjects which provide suitable preparation for entry to university generally, but which we do not include within the facilitating subjects, because there are relatively few degree programmes where an advanced qualification in these subjects would be a *requirement* for entry. Examples of such subjects include Religious Studies.”

What other subjects does this subject “go with”?

In the past, probably the most popular combinations have been Philosophy and Ethics with English/ History/ Psychology. Don't be afraid of doing several essay-writing subjects, incidentally. It makes you better, and quicker, at doing essays.

What are the results like?

This year (2019), nine students took the AS exam: six gained A grades, three B's. Five students took the full A Level: they achieved an A, two B's and two C's. In 2018, we had nine A Level students; 100% achieved A*-B, with one A*, four A's and three B's. This year, we have 22 students in the Lower Sixth, nine of whom intend to carry on to the Upper Sixth.

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