

RELIGIOUS STUDIES

In Religious Studies, you will study 3 different units; Ethics, Philosophy of Religion and New Testament

You can find out more about the different parts of the syllabus by going to the Edexcel website:

<https://qualifications.pearson.com/en/qualifications/edexcel-a-levels/religious-studies-2016.html>

Ethics

In Ethics we consider different ways in which we can make moral decisions. Should I act like a Utilitarian and base my decision making on what will lead to happiness for the largest number of people? Or should I follow the Kantian rule of universalisation, ensuring that everyone acts in the way that I do?

Read the chapters suggested below and the BBC website to help you find out.

Here are some questions for you to consider and answer, using the help of the BBC website

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/ethics/introduction/>

1. What is ethics and what use is it?
2. Are ethical statements objectively true or merely human opinions?
3. Are there universal moral rules?
4. What is consequentialism? Why might this be a 'good' way of making moral decisions? Why would we class Utilitarianism as a consequentialist approach to ethics?
5. What is subjectivism? How useful/reliable is this as a way of making moral decisions?
6. What is meant by a deontological approach to morality? Why would we class Kant as a deontological approach to ethics?
7. What is virtue ethics? What virtues would you argue are most important for moral living in the 21st century?

Books

- Vardy – Ethics Matters (SSCM 2012)
- Pojman – Ethics: Discovering Right and Wrong (Wadsworth 2002) - chapters 6 & 7
- Norman – The Moral Philosophers (Oxford University Press 1998) - chapters 6 & 7

If you want a different way of finding out then you can also watch some videos online such as those on study.com. They also have an end of topic quiz for each video.

<https://study.com/academy/lesson/what-are-values-morals-ethics.html>

<https://study.com/academy/lesson/what-is-morality-definition-principles-examples.html>

<https://study.com/academy/lesson/understanding-moral-relativism-subjectivism-objectivism.html>

<https://study.com/academy/lesson/what-is-utilitarianism-definition-theory-quiz.html>



We also study applied ethics and the ways people put ethics into action in their lives, such as the environment, human sexuality and medical issues. If you can, also try to **watch one or more of the films** below and consider how ethically people behave in given situations. Try to answer the question at the end of each film. **Challenge yourself:** Can you see any links with the different forms of moral thinking you carried out in your reading?

Films

- *Never let me go* - Is it ethical to create another human being for the purpose of saving others?
- *Gattaca* – What are the implications of genetically engineering human life?
- *Vera Drake* – should abortion be legal? What would be the repercussions if it was illegal?
- *Blindside* – how virtuous is Touhy (Sandra Bullock)? Does she become more virtuous through her interactions with Mike?
- *The invention of lying* - is it sometimes better to tell a lie than the truth?
- *Million Dollar Baby* - should people be allowed to end their own lives?
- *Rules of engagement* - Who is it acceptable to target in war?
- *An Inconvenient Sequel: Truth to Power* – what issues do we have with the global climate? What can we do to redress this?
- *Selma* – what methods did Martin Luther King use to achieve racial equality in the USA? How effective were they?
- *The Dark Knight* - What is Batman's duty? Can his actions be universalised?

If you have enough time then you can also enroll in an online ethics course. Go to <https://peped.teachable.com/p/ocr-ethics-h573-2> and use their resources, including lectures, to gain an insight into different ways of making moral decisions. Although we don't do OCR, the majority of the topics are the same as those we study (you can miss business ethics and conscience).

