



General Certificate of Education

Religious Studies 1061

RSS02 Religion and Ethics 2

Mark Scheme

2009 examination – June series

This mark scheme uses the [new numbering system](#) which is being introduced for examinations from June 2010

Mark schemes are prepared by the Principal Examiner and considered, together with the relevant questions, by a panel of subject teachers. This mark scheme includes any amendments made at the standardisation meeting attended by all examiners and is the scheme which was used by them in this examination. The standardisation meeting ensures that the mark scheme covers the candidates' responses to questions and that every examiner understands and applies it in the same correct way. As preparation for the standardisation meeting each examiner analyses a number of candidates' scripts: alternative answers not already covered by the mark scheme are discussed at the meeting and legislated for. If, after this meeting, examiners encounter unusual answers which have not been discussed at the meeting they are required to refer these to the Principal Examiner.

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Examination Levels of Response

Religious Studies (Advanced Subsidiary) AS Level Descriptors

Level	AS Descriptor AO1	Marks	AS Descriptor AO2	Marks	AS Descriptors for Quality of Written Communication in AO1 and AO2
7	A thorough treatment of the topic within the time available. Information is accurate and relevant, and good understanding is demonstrated through use of appropriate evidence / examples	28-30	A well-focused, reasoned response to the issues raised. Different views are clearly explained with supporting evidence and argument. There is some critical analysis. An appropriate evaluation is supported by reasoned argument.	14-15	Appropriate form and style of writing; clear and coherent organisation of information; appropriate and accurate use of specialist vocabulary; good legibility; high level of accuracy in spelling punctuation and grammar.
6	A fairly thorough treatment within the time available; information is mostly accurate and relevant. Understanding is demonstrated through the use of appropriate evidence / example(s)	24-27	A mostly relevant, reasoned response to the issues raised. Different views are explained with some supporting evidence and argument . There is some analysis. An evaluation is made which is consistent with some of the reasoning.	12-13	
5	A satisfactory treatment of the topic within the time available. Key ideas and facts are included, with some development, showing reasonable understanding through use of relevant evidence / example(s).	20-23	A partially successful attempt to sustain a reasoned argument. Some attempt at analysis or comment and recognition of more than one point of view. Ideas adequately explained.	10-11	Mainly appropriate form and style of writing; some of the information is organised clearly and coherently; there may be some appropriate and accurate use of specialist vocabulary; satisfactory legibility and level of accuracy in spelling, punctuation and grammar.
4	A generally satisfactory treatment of the topic within the time available. Key ideas and facts are included, showing some understanding and coherence.	15-19	A limited attempt to sustain an argument, which may be one-sided or show little ability to see more than one point of view. Most ideas are explained.	7-9	Form and style of writing appropriate in some respects; some clarity and coherence in organisation; there may be some appropriate and accurate use of specialist vocabulary; legibility and level of accuracy in spelling, punctuation and grammar adequate to convey meaning.
3	A summary of key points. Limited in depth or breadth. Answer may show limited understanding and limited relevance. Some coherence.	10-14	A basic attempt to justify a point of view relevant to the question. Some explanation of ideas and coherence.	5-6	
2	A superficial outline account, with little relevant material and slight signs of partial understanding, or an informed answer that misses the point of the question.	5-9	A superficial response to the question with some attempt at reasoning.	3-4	Little clarity and organisation; little appropriate and accurate use of specialist vocabulary; legibility and level of accuracy in spelling, punctuation and grammar barely adequate to make meaning clear.
1	Isolated elements of partly accurate information little related to the question.	1-4	A few basic points, with no supporting argument or justification.	1-2	
0	Nothing of relevance.	0	No attempt to engage with the question or nothing of relevance.	0	

RSS02 Religion and Ethics 2

01 Explain the key differences between deontological and teleological approaches to ethics. Refer to Kant's theory of ethics in your answer.

Candidates might pick out a number of deontological features in Kant's ethics in order to contrast them with teleological systems of ethics.

- Expect reference to rules / laws in deontological systems / Kant's emphasis on rules derived from universalizability / the categorical imperative.
- Teleological systems also produce moral rules, but the emphasis is on the consequence of obedience to the rule rather than on the intrinsic value of the rule itself: with deontological ethics, actions are right in themselves, irrespective of any benefit or harm they bring about as a consequence.
- Deontological approaches emphasise duty, motive and obligation, and this is exemplified in Kant's ethics, particularly in contrast with the utilitarian emphasis on happiness. For Kant, happiness is the product of doing one's duty, and not an end in itself.
- Broadly speaking, deontological approaches are absolutist, whereas teleological approaches are relativist, hence Kant's rules have no exceptions.
- For Kant / deontology, right and wrong are determined primarily by reason, whereas teleological approaches tend to emphasise the role of experience in achieving the best outcome.
- Some might take the view that different systems of ethics have both deontological and teleological features, although perhaps one aspect is favoured above the other.

For answers which do not refer to Kant, maximum Level 3 (12 marks).

(30 marks)

AO1

02 'Kant's deontological theory of ethics fails because it ignores the consequences of our moral choices.'

Assess how far this is true.

Some might agree

- Obedience to Kantian rules is absolute and inflexible, one cannot lie in order to save a life (e.g. Kant's example of the madman with an axe). Most find this counter-intuitive, and would lie to achieve the best consequence.
- Some might refer to attempts to rescue Kant, e.g. through Hare's principle of 'overridingness', or Ross's *prima facie* duties, both of which show a dissatisfaction with a system which appears to encourage unfair consequences as the cost of obeying the rules.

In defence of Kant

- He would insist that where exceptions are permitted to the rules, then the value of the rule is lost, even if that leads to unfair consequences in individual cases.
- Kant argues that ethics is not about how to achieve happiness, but how to be worthy of the *Summum Bonum*, so the comfort (or otherwise) of one's life now is less important than achieving the *Summum Bonum*. Some might argue that this does indeed show a teleological aspect to Kant's ethics, since being worthy of the *Summum Bonum* relates to Kant's belief that it must be achievable as a consequence of doing one's duty.
- Moreover Kant does consider consequences – not when testing or establishing the moral law, but when applying it, the practical imperative and the kingdom of ends are about achieving a caring society.
- It would also be appropriate for candidates to argue that Kant's deontological theory fails not because it ignores the consequences of our moral choices, but for other reasons, e.g. it gives no advice on how to behave, as such; it is regarded as cold and emotionless, thus eliminating feelings from moral decision-making, and so on.

(15 marks)

AO2

03 Explain Aristotle's doctrine of the four causes.

- Weaker responses are likely to give a list of the four causes, with limited explanation.
- Stronger responses might begin, for example, with the explanation that Aristotle's belief that the only primary realities are empirical things. He had to explain why we seem to have reliable / repeatable knowledge of things which by nature are always changing. He did this by suggesting that substances have two aspects: matter which changes, and form which is permanent. Matter cannot exist without form (you can't just have an undefined 'blob' of matter), whereas form can sometimes exist without matter (as in non-material intellects). Form is a thing's actuality – what it actually is now; matter is a thing's potentiality – a thing's potential to become a different form. All forms are actual, and every thing has the possibility / potential to become something else. Act always precedes potential (e.g. fathers procreate sons, a father is a being in which the form of a man is already actualised); so there must always be an actual being existing as the cause of any potential being – an idea which led Aristotle to consider the idea of a First Efficient Cause to start the ball rolling.
- According to Aristotle, then, there are four causes which explain why the world works the way it does, and why everything is the way it is: the matter itself, the efficient cause (the actual thing which causes potential things to become actual), the form, which for example causes a human to be a human and not a mongoose; and the purpose – the final cause for which something comes into existence. The final cause includes modern ideas about mental causation, such as volition.
- The emphasis placed on the different aspects of Aristotle's theory is a matter for candidates' choice, since essays will be judged on the quality of explanation.
- Credit will be given to candidates who draw out the ethical dimension of the question, for example, that the final cause of human existence is reason / morality, hence humans are able to be moral beings; virtue follows from determining that every action is done with some goal in mind, and that goal is 'good'. Eudaemonia, the highest good, is desirable for its own sake, achieved through fulfilling purpose through the rational soul.

(30 marks)

AO1

04 Assess the view that Aristotle's doctrine of causation has serious weaknesses.

Some might agree

- One obvious weakness of Aristotle's theory of causation is its primitive scientific basis, e.g. his ideas about the perfect (spherical) motion of the heavenly bodies. On the basis of this, he argues back to a First Efficient Cause – a First Mover; but this is because he insists that matter cannot move itself. In 21st century science, it appears that matter can move itself, e.g. the nature of an electron is its properties of spin, and whether its quarks are 'up' or 'down'.
- Theists tend to describe it as weak because they see the concept of the First Mover as a supreme being, and not as absolute being itself, although this would not have bothered Aristotle.
- Most critics see the final cause as being the most unscientific – the belief that everything has some goal or purpose.
- With regard to morality, if the final cause is seen as unscientific, then its interpretation in terms of reason and morality loses its basis.

Other views

- Might discuss the question of what might constitute 'serious weaknesses'. In philosophy as in science, progress can only be made on the back of previous attempts to understand and to clarify. Given that Aristotle's efforts took place well over 2000 years ago, those efforts might be described as an intellectual triumph. It cannot be said that our understanding of causation is vastly greater than Aristotle's, despite Hume's efforts.
- Some attention might be given to "serious". For example, with reference to the weaknesses identified above, how serious a weakness is it to suggest that Aristotle might have been wrong about purpose in causation? There are a number of modern arguments that suggest that causation is directed, not least cosmological arguments for the existence of God.
- Some might defend Aristotle's teleological view of ethics on the grounds that it is fairly rooted in the observation of human virtue – morality is an agreed final end of human activity for most.

(15 marks)

AO2

05 Explain what is meant by the idea that God sustains the created world.

- The concept of God as creator and sustainer of the world is foundational to most accounts of God's relationship with the universe. Having created the universe, God is said to sustain it by his will – in other words its continued existence is willed by God, and without that act of will, nothing could continue to exist. God remains distinct from the universe, and transcends it.
- The concept is most prevalent in Judaeo-Christian and Islamic theology. In the latter, for example, the earthly king who sustains his subjects does so only through the sustaining power he derives from God.
- The idea of God as sustainer relates also to God's creation of the universe from nothing.
- Having been created in this way, no creature can have 'being in itself', but remains totally dependent on God.
- In Hebrew tradition, God is worshipped as the one who keeps the forces of chaos at bay, without which the universe would descend into that primordial chaos from which it came, e.g. in the 'Enthronement' Psalms (90-100), God establishes the world so that it shall not be moved.
- Aquinas argued that God's essence was his existence, so he is the 'ground of being' (Tillich). This is the most likely interpretation of the 'uncaused cause' of Aquinas' cosmological argument, explained by Copleston as a hierarchical arrangement in which God acts as the efficient cause who sustains all the lower causes that operate simultaneously in the workings of the universe at any one moment.

(30 marks) AO1

06 'If God sustains the world, then God cannot be morally good.'

Assess this view.

In support of this view

- If God sustains the world, then it appears to be a logical entailment of that position to say that all states of the world are attributable to God. This includes evil states, so it would appear that God wills evil, and therefore cannot be morally good.
- Candidates might discuss this with reference to pantheistic, or panentheistic models of the universe – the former supposing that the universe is in some way identical with God, the latter that it is contained within God. Given that the world contains moral and natural evil, then those states also must be sustained by God, or contained within God, and if so, then God himself contains moral imperfection.

Answer to this

- Might suggest that God's power as sustainer is limited, and that what we refer to as evil is a process within matter (for example the occasionally calamitous effects of gravity).
- Thus Process theologians hold that God as mind seeks to influence human minds for the good, looking forward to a future time when humans will be able to overcome evil.
- Others might argue that for humans to be morally free, the physical processes of the universe, although sustained externally by God, must be free also.
- Irenaeus held that evil has a formative role, giving rise to second-order goods such as sympathy with suffering, empathy and the like, and is therefore tolerated by the creator, who sustains all such processes simultaneously with a view to future harmony.
- Some might take the line that God cannot be morally good anyway, e.g. through considering Euthyphro's dilemma, i.e. does God command moral laws because he knows they are good, or does he command them arbitrarily. If the former, then God loses omnipotence, since he has to acknowledge the moral law; if the latter then he loses omnibenevolence, because he creates laws arbitrarily. Candidates could use Aquinas' response to this, that God is not a moral agent: instead, using his argument from analogy, Aquinas asserts that God's goodness lies in being perfectly whatever it means for God to be good. God can therefore remain perfectly good through sustaining the world, although that goodness is not moral.

(15 marks)

AO2

07 Outline how pollution threatens the environment, and explain the ethical problems raised by pollution.

Expect a range of material illustrative of the threat posed to the environment by pollution, for example:

- threat from global warming
- effects on sea-levels
- loss of habitable land
- increased severity of storms / changing weather patterns
- pollution of seas and rivers from oil spillage, effluent, toxic waste, sewage, etc. exacerbated by over-fishing
- loss of trees from acid rain, exacerbated by deliberate clear-felling
- loss of habitat for wildlife / loss of bio-diversity, etc.

Expect correlative explanation of the ethical problems raised, such as:

- the supposed right of humans, under some religious and non-religious ethical systems, to assume control of the planet and all its species / speciesism
- extinction of species in threatened habitats
- issue of carbon footprint – over consumption by industrialised nations exacerbates the effects on the developing nations, who are least able to deal with it
- religious issues of harm to God's perfect world
- dominion rather than stewardship, etc.

For answers which only deal with one of the demands, maximum Level 5.

(30 marks)

AO1

08 'The protection of the environment should be only for the good of humankind.'

Assess this claim.

Arguments in support of this

- Might be based on anthropocentric claims about the status of humans. These might be based on high intelligence, the ability to be moral agents utilising free will, the fact of self-awareness as opposed to 'simple' consciousness, and so on. Alternatively they might be based on religious texts in which humans are described as being the high point of creation.
- Christian interpretation can support the statement, in so far as the prevalent interpretation of the concept of humans having 'dominion' over the earth is that 'dominion' means *control and subjugation* of an unruly environment.
- This interpretation takes support from the notion that the environment as a whole is somehow 'fallen' from a state of perfection, through human and angelic sin: thus humans have a responsibility to control it in any way they see fit.
- Might be supported by practical arguments, e.g. the emerging economies of China, India, Pakistan depend on fossil fuel consumption, where pressure of population / need for land overwhelm other issues. Protection therefore has to be managed in line with the realities of the situation, which might mean that human concerns have to be given priority.

Rejection of the statement

- Likely to depend on selection of religious teachings. Buddhist teachings, for example, place humans firmly within the environment and not apart from it, so the environment as a whole has intrinsic value that does not derive from any act of creation. Protection of it cannot therefore be for the benefit of one species.
- Christian teaching contains a similar 'intrinsicist' interpretation of 'dominion', meaning *stewardship* rather than *control*. Humans on this view are the caretakers of creation, and have a responsibility to maintain all of it to the highest possible standard, being (ultimately) accountable to God.
- Ecological movements in most countries show a broad spectrum of agreement over the need to protect the environment and the planet as a whole, otherwise the threat of extinction is very real.
- Other arguments might be aesthetic, i.e. the view that the beauty of the environment must be protected for its own sake, and human concerns must be subordinate to this.
- Others might refer to ideas of justice and fairness, for example, as virtues which cannot limit environmental protection to what is good for humans.

(15 marks)

AO2