



**General Certificate of Education
June 2010**

Religious Studies

RST3B

Philosophy of Religion

A2 Unit 3B

Final

Mark Scheme

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) A2 Level Descriptors

Level	A2 Descriptor AO1	Marks <i>Unit 4 italics</i>	A2 Descriptor AO2	Marks <i>Unit 4 italics</i>	A2 Descriptors for Quality of Written Communication in AO1 and AO2
7	A thorough treatment of the topic, which may be in depth or breadth. Information is accurate and relevant. A thorough understanding is shown through good use of relevant evidence and examples. Where appropriate good knowledge and understanding of diversity of views and / or scholarly opinion is demonstrated. Knowledge and understanding of connections with other elements of the course of study are demonstrated convincingly.	28-30 41-45	A very well-focused response to the issue(s) raised. Different views, including where appropriate those of scholars or schools of thought, are discussed and evaluated perceptively. Effective use is made of evidence to sustain an argument. Systematic analysis and reasoning leads to appropriate conclusions. There may be evidence of independent thought. The argument is related perceptively and maturely to the broader context and to human experience.	19-20 28-30	Appropriate form and style of writing; clear and coherent organisation of information; appropriate and accurate use of specialist vocabulary; good legibility and high level of accuracy in spelling, punctuation and grammar.
6	A generally thorough treatment of the topic which may be in depth or breadth. Information is almost all accurate and mainly relevant. Clear understanding is demonstrated through use of relevant evidence and examples. Where appropriate, alternative views and / or scholarly opinion are satisfactorily explained. Knowledge and understanding of connections with other elements of the course of study are clearly demonstrated.	24-27 36-40	A well-focused response to the issue(s) raised. Different views, including where appropriate those of scholars or schools of thought, are discussed. A process of reasoning leads to an appropriate evaluation. There may be evidence of independent thought. The argument is related clearly to the broader context and to human experience.	16-18 24-27	
5	A satisfactory treatment of the topic. Information is mostly accurate and mainly relevant. A reasonable understanding is demonstrated through use of some evidence and examples. Where appropriate, some familiarity with diversity of views and / or scholarly opinion is shown. Some knowledge and understanding of connections with other elements of the course of study are demonstrated.	20-23 29-35	A satisfactory response to the issue(s) raised. Views are explained with some supporting evidence and arguments, and some critical analysis. A conclusion is drawn that follows from some of the reasoning. Some of the response is related satisfactorily to the broader context and to human experience.	13-15 20-23	Mainly appropriate form and style of writing; generally clear and coherent organisation of information; mainly appropriate and accurate use of specialist vocabulary; good legibility and fairly high level of accuracy in spelling, punctuation and grammar.
4	Key ideas and facts are included; demonstrates some understanding and coherence using some evidence and examples. Where appropriate, brief reference may be made to alternative views and / or scholarly opinion. Limited knowledge and understanding of connections with other elements of the course of study are demonstrated.	15-19 22-28	The main issue is addressed with some supporting evidence or argument, but the reasoning is faulty, or the analysis superficial or only one view is adequately considered. Little of the response is related to the broader context and to human experience.	10-12 15-19	Form and style of writing appropriate in some respects; some of the information is organised clearly and coherently; some appropriate and accurate use of specialist vocabulary; satisfactory legibility and level of accuracy in spelling, punctuation and grammar.
3	A summary of key points. Limited in depth or breadth. Answer may show limited understanding and limited relevance. Some coherence.	10-14 15-21	A basic attempt to justify a point of view relevant to the question. Some explanation of ideas and coherence.	7-9 10-14	
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 8-14	A superficial response to the question with some attempt at reasoning.	4-6 5-9	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 1-7	A few basic points, with no supporting argument or justification.	1-3 1-4	
0	Nothing of relevance.	0	No attempt to engage with the question or nothing of relevance	0	

RST3B: *Philosophy of Religion***Question 1 Ontological argument and the relationship between reason and faith**

0

1

Analyse key objections that have been made to the ontological argument.

The Specification identifies three areas for debate and full marks are available for a full analysis of each one. In each case the 'fault' with the argument should be clear.

Those based on the definition of 'God'

This is not what all understand to be God, (e.g. following Aquinas); definition not coherent – what Anselm means by 'greater' can be explored here, (e.g. Norman Malcolm describes the idea that 'it is greater to exist in reality than in the mind alone' as 'remarkably queer'); definition not informative / lacks features of God of classical theism.

Those based on the idea that 'existence' is a predicate of God.

Analysis of the concept of 'existence' or of what it means 'to exist' and the demonstration that in normal discourse, existence is not a property or predicate of an object. Expect reference to the established debate, e.g. from Kant.

Those based on the possibility of deriving existential claims from definition.

Some conflation with the above is likely but expect an analysis of the idea of an existential claim as the claim that there is something corresponding to a particular definition in the 'real' world – so even if I have the idea in mind of God whose non-existence is impossible, I may still ask if there is something in the 'real' world that should correctly be called 'God'. Russell's argument is of particular value here.

(30 marks) AO1

0

2

To what extent would the success or failure of the ontological argument have any significance for religious faith?

A well-informed discussion must deal with the likely consequences of both 'success' and 'failure'. It may assume or analyse one or more concepts of 'faith' and consider what 'success' or 'failure' would actually be.

Some of the following points may be raised:

Proof negates / would negate faith, so failure as proof neither looked for nor relevant.

The argument starts from faith rather than ending with it – its 'success' is giving understanding to faith and would be significant for faith.

Success in challenging the 'fool's' concept of God would be valuable.

'The greatest conceivable being' (the God of philosophy) is not the God of (theistic) faith – so argument is irrelevant.

For an answer which discusses only the significance of one of 'success' or 'failure' maximum Level 5.

(20 marks) AO2

Question 2 Religious language

0	3
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Explain how the verification principle has challenged the meaningfulness of religious language and summarise how religion has responded to that challenge.

Verification Principle – the meaning of a statement lies in the method of its verification. Strong form – statement must be open to verification through definition or through empirical data. Weak form – must be possible to say what would verify claim were it possible to do so. Examples of religious language used to show that they apparently fail these tests.

Responses (e.g.): challenge to the principle itself (it fails by its own criteria); religious language as an expression of a ‘blik’; eschatological verification (Hick); religious language as non cognitive; language games / anti realism.

For an answer which deals with only one of ‘challenges’ or ‘responses’ maximum Level 5 (top) (23 marks).

(30 marks) AO1

0	4
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‘Religious responses to the verification principle have been largely unsuccessful.’ Evaluate this claim.

Unsuccessful

The isolation of religion within its own world of discourse, (e.g. ‘blik’ / language games / anti-realism) and non-cognitive analyses, challenge the relevance not only of religious language but also of religion to the ‘real’ world. These views also have their own specific weaknesses that may be referred to.

Successful

The verification principle has been undermined by criticisms from religion and philosophy. Idea of eschatological verification seems to meet the criteria of the verification principle (weak form); the claim that language is the expression of a ‘blik’ or a specific language game isolates religious discourse within its own world and rejects the concept of criticism from another ‘world’ or game.

(20 marks) AO2

Question 3 Body, soul and personal identity

0	5
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Examine the distinctive features of Near Death Experiences.

Expect a range of answers – there is a wealth of material available. Answer should show familiarity with scholarship and with some diversity within the reports and / or analyses of such experiences.

E.g. The classic view (Moody); Atwater’s analysis of four aspects / types: initial / positive / less than positive and transcendent; differing experiences, e.g. theistic / non-theistic; religious / non religious.

Answers without any diversity, e.g. Moody only maximum Level 5.

(30 marks) AO1

0

6

Consider how far Near Death Experiences are evidence of survival beyond death.

This can be approached in a variety of ways, e.g.

- A weighing up of the alternative explanations for the experiences reported;
- A consideration of attempts to replicate such experiences and the implications of these;
- A reflection on the fact they did not actually die;
- The possibility or impossibility of post mortem existence which could lead the critic to reject the so called 'evidence' without considering it.

In most cases there is likely to be a mix of these ideas. The conclusion may be supported by an analysis of what may constitute 'survival' beyond death.

*(20 marks)***AO2**

Question 4 The problem of evil

0

7

Analyse Hick's 'vale of soul making' theodicy.

Expect: two stage creation – (1) act of God, (2) free self development through experience; need for ambiguous world (epistemic distance) so that genuine freedom is protected; 'natural laws' providing the 'soul making' environment in which freedom is exercised. The intrinsic value of those 'goods' which are self-developed rather than ready made. The final, universal, achievement of being children of God. Role of the afterlife in that development.

*(30 marks)***AO1**

0

8

Discuss how far Hick's theodicy succeeds.

Moral evil – attributed to the immaturity of human beings and the value of free self development. God allows, not controls, so not responsible;

Natural evil – a necessary condition for human development – God's responsibility and a 'good' thing. Overcomes logical problem of evil by showing that suffering may be allowed for a good reason by an all powerful and all loving God.

However, Candidates should show awareness of some major criticisms of the theodicy and be able to debate those criticisms, e.g.

An all-powerful God should not need to use a means to an end – debated with reference to the intrinsic value of freely developed goods;

Distribution of suffering unfair – debated with reference to the idea that God does not distribute suffering, which is instead the result of the way the world is set up for human development.

If all are guaranteed to reach the goal (1) we are not actually free, (2) what is the point of the journey – debated with reference to limits on human freedom and the intrinsic value of the goods developed.

Counter to traditional interpretation of biblical Christianity (e.g. salvation role of Christ) – debated with reference to range of possible interpretations.

*(20 marks)***AO2**