
A-LEVEL

RELIGIOUS STUDIES

RST3B Philosophy of Religion
Mark scheme

2060
June 2014

Version: 1.0 Final

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

It must be stressed that a mark scheme is a working document, in many cases further developed and expanded on the basis of students' reactions to a particular paper. Assumptions about future mark schemes on the basis of one year's document should be avoided; whilst the guiding principles of assessment remain constant, details will change, depending on the content of a particular examination paper.

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Examination Levels of Response

Religious Studies (Advanced) A2 Level Descriptors

<i>Level</i>	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 critically analysed perceptively. Effective use is made of evidence to sustain an argument. Appropriate evaluation is fully supported by the reasoning. 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 and critically analysed. Appropriate evaluation is supported by reasoned argument. 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. An evaluation is made that is consistent with 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	Outline Descartes' ontological argument and explain key objections that may be used against it.
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The argument

- God is the supremely perfect being.
- This idea can only come from outside the individual.
- God must possess all possible perfections, including existence.
- Existence must be a necessary attribute of the perfect being. (Credit reference to a triangle having the sum of its three angles equal to two right angles or the idea of a mountain having a valley.)
- It would be contradictory to think of a supremely perfect being without existence.

Objections

- "Existence is not a predicate." (Kant)
 - Existence is not a property, characteristic or attribute so it cannot be an extra attribute of the supremely perfect being.
 - If there is no quality of existence, Descartes cannot claim that God must have this quality. (Expect reference to real and imaginary hundred thalers.)
- "You can't derive an existential claim from a definition."
 - Can't go from giving a definition to simply stating that the thing defined exists, more evidence is needed.
 - You can't assume, just because a triangle by definition has three angles equal to two right angles, that any such triangles actually exist. (Kant)
 - God cannot be an exception to the rule.
 - It is logically impossible for any existential proposition to be logically necessary.
 - Reference could be made to Russell's 'is' of predication and 'is' of existence. Is the concept of "most perfect being" instantiated anywhere?
- "Human beings cannot give a correct definition of God." (NOTE: Credit can be given for any relevant material that was written before Descartes but which can be applied to Descartes' idea e.g. Aquinas.)
 - God is infinite, beyond human understanding.
 - Any human explanations of the nature of God e.g. "the supremely perfect being" are limited and so are inaccurate.
 - You cannot start from an inadequate statement about God to prove that God exists etc.

Maximum Level 4 if only the outline Descartes' version is addressed.

Expect some breadth for marks above Level 5.

Any material that is Anselm's but attributed to Descartes cannot be credited.

[30 marks]

AO1

0

2

'Descartes' version of the ontological argument strongly challenges disbelief in the existence of God.' How far do you agree?

In support

- There is great logic in the argument.
- God must have existence to be perfect so those who disbelieve in God's necessary existence are being self-contradictory.
- Descartes' definition of God reflects the classical understanding of God and helps to show people that God must exist.
- Since the parallels of mountains/valleys and triangles with three angles are so clear, a person must accept the implications that Descartes proposes and accept that there must be a God.
- Descartes' version does show that faith is logical as it is based on reason etc.

Other views

- The argument only states that if there is a God he must be existent, which actually means nothing, so it does not have any effect on disbelief.
- Both belief and disbelief go beyond logic and are more in line with personal commitment based on a gut feeling/faith.
- Arguments about God's existence can only show the probability/possibility of God's existence, they can do nothing to instil belief or disbelief.
- Faith cannot be based on reason, as they are two totally separate types of commitment.
- Just as it is possible to reject the triangle with its three sides, while accepting that if there is such a thing as a triangle it must have three sides, so it is perfectly acceptable to reject/disbelieve in the notion of a God that has existence.
- As there are so many objections to the argument, particularly the misuse of the word existence, a person would be misguided into believing in God based on this argument etc.

Any material that is Anselm's but attributed to Descartes cannot be credited.

[20 marks]

AO2

Question 2 Religious language

0	3
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Explain how the verification and falsification principles challenge religious language.

The verification principle

- Only statements that can be verified or falsified by sense experience or which are analytically true have any meaning.
- Logically true statements are meaningful, but are any religious statements logically true?
- If a statement is not verifiable it is meaningless.
- Religious language is dealing with issues that are beyond the human sense experience and that therefore cannot be verified.
- Any talk about God, religion and ethics has no value and can be ignored as meaningless.
- Since there is no common understanding based on a shared experience or provability, religious language has no value.
- Even Ayer's introduction of the weak verification principle that a statement has meaning if people can understand what would be needed to prove that statement true has not been able to give religious language any validity since religious language is dealing with what is beyond this life's experience etc.

The falsification principle

- Any statement that could not, even in theory, be falsified, is empty of meaning.
- Students might refer to Wisdom's Parable of the gardener.
- Religious believers do not allow anything to count against their beliefs so no religious statement can be seen as either verified or falsified.
- Because believers raise constant qualifications in answer to any negative comment about a religious statement, Flew claims that religious statements "die the death of a thousand qualifications" i.e. show themselves to be meaningless etc.

Maximum Level 5 if only one part of the question is addressed.

[30 marks]

AO1

0

4

Assess how far religion has successfully defended itself against the challenges of the verification and falsification principles.

Successfully

- Most types of language are dealing with abstract concepts that cannot be verified or falsified as logical positivists want them to be.
- Language is not as narrow as the verification/falsification approaches insist.
- Religious language is as open and as meaningful as any other form of language.
- The verification principle itself cannot be verified so it cannot be used to dismiss other uses of language.
- Reference might be made to Hare's and Mitchell's bliks, Wittgenstein's language games, the via negativa and Hick's eschatological verification as effective religious defences against the challenges of verification and falsification etc.

Other views

- All aspects of religious language are dealing with things that are beyond this world, non-physical, spiritual, abstract but above all non-provable.
- No matter how believers try to wrap their arguments up, they have no evidence at all to justify any of their comments.
- Any statement that believers put forward can be challenged and these challenges cannot be responded to in any meaningful way.
- Flew is right when he speaks about religious language dying the death of a thousand qualifications etc.

[20 marks]

AO2

Question 3 Body, soul and personal identity

0

5

Examine differing ideas about the nature and existence of the soul.

Expect responses that cover the main approaches of dualism and materialism.

Dualism

Plato –

- The soul belongs to a higher reality, the world of the Forms.
- It is not physical in any way but is trapped in a physical body until it is released at death.
- The soul goes back to the world of the Forms where it can grasp the realm of ideas until it is trapped and limited again by a bodily form.
- The soul contains the real identity of the individual.

Descartes –

- The soul is an entity separate from the body, usually referred to as the rational mind.
- It is attached to the body in the pineal gland.
- It is a non-corporeal substance, unlimited.
- It gives humans their ability to think and reason.
- It survives death.

For Aristotle –

- The soul is part of the body that gives the body life and character.
- The soul cannot exist without the body, as the body and the soul are a unity.

Aquinas –

- The soul animates the body.
- It makes the body live but at death the soul departs the body.
- It retains the identity of the individual beyond death.

For Hindus –

- The soul is eternal, at one with the whole of creation.
- It moves on from one body to another at death.
- It carries the karmic build-up until the soul is released from reincarnation at moksha.

Hard materialism

- There is no separate soul.
- All things in the individual are related to the workings of the physical body.
- Reference might be made to Dawkins and Ryle, “category mistakes” etc.

Soft materialism

- The soul is not a separate entity but a way of talking about the aspects of the individual that seem to go beyond the purely physical but that have the physical aspects as their starting point.
- Talking about the soul is the same as referring to the workings of the mind, but “the soul” is totally dependent on the workings of the body etc.

Credit should be given for those answers that focus on the soul as mind/intellect or that deal with the soul as relating to God through mysticism.

The answers need to be assessed on the basis of breadth versus depth but Maximum Level 5 if only one idea is presented.

[30 marks]**AO1**

0

6

‘Souls do not exist. We are simply our physical bodies.’

How far do you agree?

In support

- There is no evidence for any such thing as a soul.
- The idea was made up to stop people being afraid of death.
- The whole personality depends on the body and its abilities; without the body the individual cannot exist.
- Looks, characteristics etc. all come through the genetic structure, which is what forms the body.
- Without this particular body, I am somebody else, not me, so I am the same as my body.
- Dawkins is right to say that there is no such thing as a soul.
- The soul is simply a human way of dealing with aspects of the personality all of which are totally dependent on the body.
- The idea of a soul is a category mistake (Ryle etc.) but the body is empirical.
- Buddhist concept of anatta (no-soul); the Buddhists refer to the 5 skhandas rather than a soul or self etc.

Other views

- There is something missing in a dead body, so the person cannot be classed as just a body.
- Dreams, near death experiences, out of body experiences etc. all point to something that is beyond the physical aspect of the body, and this is what people refer to as the soul.
- The soul is not provable in a physical way, but there is so much more to the individual than the body that the soul must exist.
- Descartes’ idea of the physical and non-physical being separate substances with distinct properties justifies the idea of the soul.
- Humans are so much more than their bodies, as bodies are constantly changing but the individual personality often remains the same.
- Religious beliefs of life after death and reincarnation depend on the existence of the soul.
- The individual is often aware of something inside him/herself that is reaching beyond the immediate bodily form; this suggests that there is a lot more to the individual than just the body etc.

NOTE: It is possible to answer this question entirely from a religious or non-religious point of view, without any reference to philosophy e.g. the debate in Buddhism.

[20 marks]

AO2

Question 4 The problem of evil

0

7

Outline the concepts of natural evil and moral evil and explain how process thought responds to the problem of evil.

Natural evil

- Harm done by the way the world is structured.
- Causes problems to humans and other animals.
- Suffering is simply the consequence of the laws that govern the world coming into play.

Moral evil

- The harm done by the choices people freely make.
- Often seen as a rejection of God's will or law.
- Humans deliberately want harm doing to others or themselves.

Process thought's response to the problem of evil

- Whitehead and Griffin's idea that starts from the notion that God is not omnipotent.
- God did not make the world from nothing but from pre-existent matter that was flawed.
- This flawed aspect accounts for natural evils.
- God's role is to attract creation to a state of perfection rather than make it perfect from the start.
- God wants order and complexity, harmony and intensity, but the basic state of the created order is to reject God's attraction.
- God cannot force creation to be what he wants, he can only encourage it.
- Human freedom which is part of the natural evolutionary process, enables humans to ignore God.
- The freer humans are, the more chance there is that evil deeds will be done.
- God suffers along with the rest of his creatures as he does not want to see his creation damaged but is unable to prevent it.
- All evil is merely apparent since it contributes to the greater good of allowing humans to become closer to God of their own free will / of showing the contrast between good and evil that allows humans to value things and to enable humans to develop by responding to evil events.

Maximum Level 4 if only the concepts of natural and moral evil are addressed.

For natural and moral evil there needs to be some development, even though only an outline is asked for. A simple definition is inadequate.

[30 marks]**AO1**

0

8

'Process thought gives the best response to the problem of evil.'**How far do you agree?****In support**

- All other theodicies entail great problems about the nature of God, especially about an all-loving God.
- Process thought allows for God to be unaccountable for the existence of evil as it is part of the matter that existed for God to make the world.
- God is affected as much by the evil aspects of creation as other creatures, especially in so far as God suffers with others who suffer.
- The free will defence, Irenaean and Augustinian approaches try to defuse the existence away from God but always fail e.g. God gave humans free will so he must be to blame when humans misuse this free will etc.

Other views

- Process thought is weak as it only allows for a 'God' that is limited to using pre-existent matter in creation and who cannot be omnipotent.
- This fact removes God from the problem of evil only by denying that God really exists.
- The free will defence is a better response as it allows for an unlimited creator to lovingly give humans their freedom to choose and to experience the effects of their choices which might include evil things happening, without God interfering and damaging human freedom.
- The Augustinian theodicy is also better as it explains evil by stressing that God can only make good things and humans are too limited in their view of the world to understand how everything works together for good, including that which might seem evil etc.

The focus of this answer needs to be on process thought though appropriate reference may be made to other approaches.

There is no expectation that students cover all possible approaches.

[20 marks]**AO2**