

Teacher Resource Bank

GCE Religious Studies

Unit 1C: *Philosophy of Religion*

Additional Specimen Questions



**GENERAL CERTIFICATE OF EDUCATION
ADVANCED SUBSIDIARY**



**RELIGIOUS STUDIES UNIT C
PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION**

RSS03

ADDITIONAL SPECIMEN QUESTIONS

For this paper you must have:

- an 8 page answer book.

Time allowed: 1 hour 15 minutes

Instructions

- Use black ink or black ball-point pen.
- Write the information required on the front of your answer book.
The *Examining Body* for this paper is AQA. The *Paper Reference* is **RSS03**.
- Answer **two** questions.

Information

- The maximum mark for this paper is 90.
- The marks for questions are shown in brackets.
- In each question, part (a) tests your knowledge and understanding, while part (b) tests your skills of reasoning and evaluation.
- You will be marked on your ability to use English, to organise information clearly and to use specialist vocabulary where appropriate.

Answer **two** questions.

- 1** (a) (30 marks)
- (b) (15 marks)
- 2** (a) Examine the challenges to religious experience from philosophy and science. (30 marks)
- (b) 'It is science, rather than philosophy, that is the real challenge to religious experience.'
- To what extent do you agree with this claim. (15 marks)
- 3** (a) (30 marks)
- (b) (15 marks)
- 4** (a) Examine the key ideas of a postmodernist view of religion. (30 marks)
- (b) 'Postmodern religion is not really religion at all. It is closer to atheism.'
- To what extent do you agree with this claim? (15 marks)

END OF QUESTIONS



**GENERAL CERTIFICATE OF EDUCATION
ADDITIONAL SPECIMEN MARK SCHEME
PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION RSS03**

Mark schemes are normally prepared by the Principal Examiner and considered, together with the relevant questions, by a panel of subject teachers. When published, a mark scheme normally includes any amendments made at the standardisation meeting attended by all examiners and is the scheme which was used by them in the 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.

It must be stressed that a mark scheme is a working document, in many cases further developed and expanded on the basis of candidates' reactions to a particular paper. Assumptions about future mark schemes on the basis of this 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.

RSS03: Philosophy of Religion

2 (a) Examine the challenges to religious experience from philosophy and science

Lower level answers will tend to list some of the challenges without any explanation or illustration. For example, candidates may state that there are problems in verifying religious experiences without explaining what those problems are. Alternatively, candidates may describe, in detail, Persinger's helmet and the stimulation of the temporal lobe, but not explain why that can be seen as a challenge to religious experience, i.e. religious experience is nothing more than a pathological reaction to adverse stimuli. At this lower level, candidates will probably refer to just one of philosophy and science.

Higher level answers will move away from a list approach and explain clearly what the challenge is. For example, candidates may state that direct experience of God is impossible, and develop this in terms of the claim that the finite cannot experience the infinite. God, being infinite, means that we finite beings cannot experience God. Therefore the conclusion is that a religious experience is not possible. Expect candidates to refer to both philosophy and science.

The top level answers will have breadth and depth.

(30 marks) AO1

(b) 'It is science, rather than philosophy, that is the real challenge to religious experience.'

To what extent to you agree with this claim

Lower level answers will tend to present only one side. The view will be more factual than showing any process of reasoning. For example, candidates may argue that science is the real challenge, but make no reference to philosophy. In such answers, expect candidates to refer back to part (a) and defend the evidence. Better answers may make some reference to it being empirical evidence.

Higher level answers will either show more process of reasoning or present two views. If only one view is given, e.g. science is the real challenge, then there should be clear reasoning why the alternative view (philosophy is the real challenge) is rejected.

Top level answers will show clear reasoning and awareness of more than one view. The candidate will be aware of the strengths and weaknesses of both positions and show evidence of some reflection on the views expressed. There will be an appropriate conclusion.

(15 marks) AO2

4 (a) Examine the key ideas of a postmodernist view of religion.

Lower level answers will tend to list some of the key features without any explanation or illustration. For example, candidates may refer to emphasis on personal spiritual search, and that there is no right or wrong religion; they are all equally valid. However this will not be illustrated or developed. The points will tend to be isolated.

Higher level answers will move away from a list approach and explain the idea, possibly using examples. Expect candidates to understand postmodernist view of religion in broader terms of religions as cultural constructs, and the move away from intellectual faith to a more experiential and living faith.

The top level answers will have breadth and depth. Candidates at this level may well link the features of postmodernist view of religion with postmodernism in general.

(30 marks) AO1

(b) 'Postmodern religion is not really religion at all. It is closer to atheism.'

To what extent do you agree with this claim?

Lower level answers will tend to present only one side. The view will be more factual than showing any process of reasoning. For example, candidates may argue that postmodern religion is closer to atheism and list some reasons, such as the lack of any creeds or dogmas about "God". Expect these examples to be related from part (a).

Higher level answers will either show more process of reasoning or present two views. If only one view is given, e.g. postmodern religion is a religion, then there should be clear reasoning why the alternative view is rejected.

Top level answers will show clear reasoning and awareness of more than one view. The candidate will be aware of the strengths and weaknesses of both positions and show evidence of some reflection on the views expressed. There will be an appropriate conclusion.

(15 marks) AO2