



General Certificate of Education

Religious Studies (5061/6061)

**RS11 *Studies in the
Philosophy of Religion***

Mark Scheme

2007 examination - June series

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Examination Levels of Response

Religious Studies (Advanced) A2 Level Descriptors

[Marks for 10-mark questions are shown in brackets]

Level	A2 Descriptor for Quality of Written Communication in AO1 and AO2	A2 Descriptor AO1	Marks	A2 Descriptor AO2	Marks
5	Highly 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.	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.	17-20 [9-10]	A very good response to 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.	17-20
4	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.	A generally thorough treatment of the topic. Information is accurate and relevant. Good understanding is demonstrated through use of relevant evidence and examples. Where appropriate, alternative views and / or scholarly opinion are satisfactorily explained.	13-16 [7-8]	A good response to 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 conclusion. There may be some evidence of independent thought.	13-16
3	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.	A satisfactory treatment of the topic. Information is mostly accurate and relevant. A reasonable understanding is demonstrated through use of some relevant evidence and examples. Where appropriate, some familiarity with diversity of views and / or scholarly opinion is shown.	9-12 [5-6]	A satisfactory response to 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.	9-12
2	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.	A superficial answer, which includes some key facts and demonstrates limited understanding using some evidence / examples. Where appropriate, brief reference may be made to alternative views and / or scholarly opinion.	5-8 [3-4]	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.	5-8
1	Little clarity and coherence in 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.	Isolated elements of accurate and relevant information. Some signs of understanding. Evidence and examples are sparse.	1-4 [1-2]	Some simple reasons or evidence are given in support of a view that is relevant to the question.	1-4
0	Little clarity and coherence in 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.	Nothing of relevance.	0	No valid points made.	0

RS11: Studies in the Philosophy of Religion

- 1 **'The cosmological argument is an a posteriori argument; the ontological argument is an a priori argument.'**

- (a) **Explain the contrasting approaches taken to the challenge of proving the existence of God by the cosmological and ontological arguments.**

The cosmological argument is an *a posteriori* argument, based on observation of the world (the effect) from which a conclusion about the cause is drawn. The existence of the world is held to point to the existence of something beyond the world, without which the world would not exist. This external factor is what all people understand to be God. Through Aquinas' argument, God is shown to be the present first mover, uncaused cause and necessary being – that which depends on nothing, non-contingent. Through the Kalam argument God is the origin of the universe.

The ontological argument is *a priori* and deductive. Its starting point is the definition of God as 'That than which none greater can be conceived', 'Sum of all perfection' and this 'greatness' is the only quality ascribed to God. God's necessary existence is demonstrated to be part of God's greatness – God cannot *not exist* and cannot even be conceived of as not existing (Anselm); God cannot lack the perfection of existence (Descartes).

There is no need for candidates to refer to more than one version of each argument in their answer.

For one argument only, maximum Level 4 (14 marks).

(20 marks) AO1

- (b) **'Faith does not need proof.'**

Explain why this claim might be made, and assess the view that the cosmological and ontological arguments for God's existence have no value for religious believers today.

Explain

Expect analysis of the nature of faith as operating in the gap left where there is doubt, so excluded where there is certainty or proof. Faith as belief *in* rather than belief *that* may also be considered.

(10 marks) AO1

Assess

The statement invites candidates to consider why arguments are offered by believers if faith does not need proof. Reference may be made to Anselm's 'faith seeking understanding' and some may be aware of Aquinas' claim that the existence of God can be shown by natural reason – and is not therefore a matter of 'faith'. The idea that the argument shows that faith is consistent with reason is also relevant.

For one argument only, maximum Level 4 (14 marks).

(20 marks) AO2

- 2 (a) ***Explain what the Augustinian Theodicy and process thought teach about the nature and origin of evil.***

Expect some general exemplification of 'evil'.

Augustinian Theodicy

Evil as 'privation of good' and its origin in the 'fall' – abuse of free will.
Natural evil as the effect of nature gone awry and the punishment of sin.

Process Thought

Evil: e.g. triviality and discord as opposed to harmony and intensity. Origin in primal chaos. Capacity for experiencing and inflicting suffering developing alongside the increasing God-directed complexity of existence.

For answers offering examples of 'evil' only, maximum Level 2 (8 marks).
For answers offering only one of Augustinian or process thought, maximum Level 4 (14 marks).

(20 marks) AO1

- (b) ***Explain why the existence of evil is a challenge to faith, and assess the view that the Augustinian Theodicy meets that challenge, but process thought does not.***

Explain

Evil as inconsistent with the God of classical theism. Inconsistent triad of 'God all-powerful', 'God all-loving' and 'evil exists'. (The logical problem of evil.) Pointless suffering as a challenge to the existence of God. (The evidential problem of evil.)

(10 marks) AO1

Assess

Most candidates are likely to accept that process thought does not defend God, on the grounds that it denies the God of classical theism, and then offer a full discussion of the Augustinian Theodicy. Other approaches are possible.

Basic answers will rehearse the standard criticisms of the Theodicy.
Maximum Level 3 (12 marks).

A developed discussion will discuss those criticisms and relate them to the challenge of faith.

(20 marks) AO2

- 3 (a) ***Examine the variety of mystical experiences.***

This invites a broad answer covering a range of mystical experiences, e.g. God / Nature / soul mysticism (Happold); theistic, non-theistic; extrovertive / introvertive (e.g. Stace). They could also offer a range of different analyses of mystical experiences, e.g. James / Otto / Buber.

Candidates should offer illustrative examples of key ideas and may consider explanations for the diversity of the experiences.

(20 marks) AO1

(b) ***'The essence of a mystical experience is beyond description.'***

Explain this statement, and assess the view that only those who have had a mystical experience are able to judge them.

Explain

This part of the question picks up on the quality of ineffability. An experience of a reality beyond normal experience cannot be described in words that take their meaning from worldly experience. This characteristic of mysticism is stressed by the key scholars and can be effectively illustrated from the accounts of mystical experiences – despite the otherwise vivid details they include.

(10 marks) AO1

Assess

This invites candidates to consider how far private / subjective experiences can be assessed by others. Various approaches are possible.

e.g. Is the fact that the description given of the experience is similar to descriptions others give of drug-induced experiences / epilepsy, etc. sufficient to show that they are the same?

Is it possible to dismiss claims that such events happen as 'lies' or misinterpretation of natural experiences? The principles of credulity and testimony may be relevant here. Are those who have the experience able to judge them, e.g. to accurately identify them as 'mystical'?

(20 marks) AO2