



General Certificate of Education

Religious Studies 1061

RSS02 Religion and Ethics 2

Mark Scheme

2009 examination - January series

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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**1 (a) Explain Kant's theory of duty.**

The emphasis in the responses to this question may vary, so expect different approaches.

- Some might spend time on establishing the deontological basis of Kant's ethics, e.g. in response to utilitarian (teleological) claims about the importance of happiness.
- Duty for Kant is a universal obligation. What establishes duty is the willing obedience to universal laws derived from universal maxims. Kant established these by distinguishing between the 'ought' of hypothetical imperatives (which are concerned with teleological items such as career success or general happiness) from the 'ought' of categorical imperatives. Hypothetical imperatives take the form '*if ... then ...*', whereas categorical imperatives have intrinsic authority, and take the form of absolute commands or prohibitions. Moral actions cannot be based on hypothetical purposes or goals, but require an unconditional statement of one's duty.
- Candidates might describe the different formulations of the categorical imperative. Most are likely to mention universalizability.
- Some might give examples, such as Kant's picture of the grocer who is kind to his customers in order to secure their custom, as opposed to the grocer whose kindness derives simply from doing his duty.
- Duty, then, is linked to the good will.

(30 marks) AO1

(b) 'In Kant's ethics, doing your duty is the only thing that matters.'**Assess this claim****Candidates who agree**

- Will probably relate this to Kant's comments about duty, obligation, the good will, and so on, perhaps in relation to the idea that duty is correctly concerned with intentions, and not with consequences.
- Perhaps illustrated with practical examples of duty through good will being preferred to insincere acts which nevertheless have a good outcome.
- Some might comment on duty not being inclination, or feeling, or disposition, which have a weaker moral force.

Other views

- Note that the question requires a consideration of duty in *Kant's* ethics. Candidates who contrast Kant's theory of duty with other approaches to ethics are not likely to achieve higher than Level 4, since although they might establish a good case in favour of the claim, other views may not be relevant.
- There is a difference between saying, 'The only intrinsically good thing is a good will' and the claim that, 'Doing your duty is the only thing that matters.' Kant did not think that 'only duty matters', since establishing a kingdom of moral ends, for example, can only be for the benefit of those who live in it, so people matter, and what happens to people matters. Comments of this kind would be high-grade.
- Some might list other aspects of Kant's theory, e.g. the Categorical Imperative, or the faculty of reason, or the synthetic *a priori*, and argue that these do matter. Levels here will depend upon the quality of the reasoning.

(15 marks) AO2

2 (a) Explain how Aquinas developed the idea of Natural Law in ethics.

- The wording of the question might be taken to refer to 'historical development', and invites reference to the background in Aristotle (e.g. his concept of natural justice, and his ideas about causality), but this is not a requirement of the question, and candidates can gain up to full marks through explaining Aquinas' ideas alone.
- Aquinas replaced Aristotle's First Efficient Cause with the Christian God - fellowship with God being the only final cause available to all humans.
- Central point in Aquinas is the belief in a common human nature, so that 'good' actions are those which help us become 'fully human'.
- Reference perhaps to general points, such as absolutist / deontological status of Natural Law.
- Reference likely to Aquinas' 5 main principles: the role of reason, the confusion between real and apparent goods, the necessity to develop habitual virtues in support of reason, the emphasis on intrinsic as opposed to instrumental good, and the establishment of primary and secondary principles.

Some might expand on these, for example the secondary precepts governing sexual ethics; possibly the principle of Double Effect.

(30 marks)

AO1

(b) Aquinas' system of Natural Law Ethics is no longer relevant.'**Assess this claim.****For negative assessments**

- Neilson for example challenges Aquinas' belief that there is only one common human nature, e.g. Spartan nature was to kill weak or defective children.
- Vardy questions whether Aquinas was right in the primary precepts he laid down about human purpose, e.g. he could have been wrong in stating that the final cause of human sexuality is procreation. Hence many would claim that Natural Law Ethics is now inappropriate in a society that prefers to follow scientific principles rather than theological ideas.
- If Aquinas could have been wrong about primary precepts, he could also have been wrong about secondary precepts.
- For example, in practical terms, Natural Law Ethics describes an approach to sexual conduct that is not followed by the majority because it is considered an anachronistic irrelevance.
- Usual criticism that Aquinas' Natural Law is too inflexible, e.g. over issues such as abortion, euthanasia, contraception.
- Criticism of Double Effect, e.g. its alleged distance from real life.
- Some might contrast it unfavourably with various other systems of ethics.
- Some might argue that a God-based ethic is no longer relevant to an increasingly secular society.

In defence of Aquinas

- Reference is likely to be made to the dangers of abandoning the concept of a common human nature.
- Also to the value of absolutist / deontological systems which create guidance for all to follow.
- Some will contrast the strengths of an accepted system of guidance with weaknesses of teleological systems, such as subjectivity, relativism, etc.
- Some might ask, 'Relevant to whom?' It can hardly be claimed that Natural Law Ethics is irrelevant to Roman Catholics.
- Could point to Finnis' version of natural law, as an indication that it is still relevant, although the same example could also be used to claim the opposite.

Where candidates discuss the strengths and weaknesses of Natural Law Ethics but do not assess whether or not Aquinas' system is still **relevant**, they should not achieve above Level 5.

(15 marks)**AO2**

3 (a) Explain the view that any world created by God must be the best of all possible worlds.

- This can be explained with reference to religious systems or philosophical / ethical arguments, or both.
- For the former, for example, the Judaeo-Christian system describes the creation of the world / universe in a specific order that follows God's purpose. Each separate act of creation is described as '*tam*' (perfect), as a reflection of God's perfection. Humans are described as being made 'in God's image', so later theology envisaged this as the creation, therefore, of a perfect species reflecting the God-given virtues of reason and morality.
- Similarly in Islam – creation of a universe of perfect proportion without flaw.
- For philosophical / ethical arguments, God's omnibenevolence might be said to produce the best possible world as a reflection of perfect goodness.
- That this is 'the best possible world' might be asserted in connection with the totality of God's attributes, since an omnipotent, omniscient, perfect creator might be supposed to produce the best possible world.
- Might say that the best possible world is not necessarily perfect (as witness the existence of evil).
- Some might refer to the origin of 'best possible world' theory in the philosophy of GW Leibniz, who argued that evil provides some necessary features of such a world. Leibniz's approach was ridiculed in Voltaire's 'Candide', and largely disappeared from philosophy after the 1755 Lisbon earthquake.
- Some might refer to Swinburne's view that this is 'a' best possible world, i.e. one of several 'best possible' arrangements.

Accept relevant views from quantum physics about the optimisation of God's plan through multiple universes.

(30 marks) AO1

(b) 'The view that this world is perfect is impossible to defend.'

Discuss how far this is true.

This can be approached from a number of different but equally valid angles.
Do not expect clear demarcation between ideas, many of which are interlinked anyway.

- Most are likely to outline the problem, in the extent of both natural and moral evils, to illustrate the lack of perfection in the world.
- Some will extrapolate from their material in (a) to suggest that 'perfection' means 'perfect for purpose', and that God's purpose can be achieved by no other kind of world, so the world is perfect for achieving that end.
- Some might argue similarly that perfection is possible for God, but not for a physical system, so God could have created this as the best possible world containing unavoidable evil, possible reference to Process Theology.
- Most are likely to consider the problem of evil in relation to God's omnipotence and omnibenevolence, e.g. the view that God *created* the world perfect, but perfection was lost, either through the intervention of satanic powers or of human free will, or both (Augustine); or the view that perfection might be seen as the goal of creation, and not as the starting point (Irenaeus).

(15 marks) AO2

4 (a) Explain religious teachings about human responsibility for the environment.

- Whatever religion is selected, the answer needs to discuss human responsibility for the environment rather than just issues of environmental concern. Responses that simply refer to environmental concern are not likely to achieve higher than Level 4.
- For Hinduism, for example, human responsibility might be rooted in seeing nature as a manifestation of Brahman. Brahman sustains all living creatures, so humans must live in harmony with the environment, abuse of the environment is irreligious, and humans must practise *ahimsa*.
- For Christianity, the limits of human responsibility are defined by the view of humans as created in God's image, and thereby having 'dominion' over the environment, which can be interpreted instrumentally or intrinsically. Thus Thomist teaching has an instrumentalist / anthropocentric view of human responsibility in which humans for example have only indirect duties to animals. Intrinsicist interpretations see dominion as 'stewardship', whereby humans have a duty to care for the environment as a whole, perhaps illustrated by Process Theology, and Christian Feminist theology.
- In connection with the last point, some might show in various ways that religious teaching about the environment, and the interpretation of that teaching, often varies greatly within each religion. In other words, religious teachings do not take a clear line, for example on the issue of eating meat.

Accept material which is religious by association, e.g. where candidates assert that Christians / Jews / Muslims are often members of environmental groups such as Deep Ecology, so their responsibilities are interpreted in line with the aims of such groups.

(30 marks)

AO1

(b) Assess the view that religious teachings are of no value in helping to protect the environment.

Those who agree

- In Christian teaching, the Thomist approach is heavily influential, and is criticised for example by Peter Singer for placing humans at the moral centre and for assuming that the natural world can be used for human benefit.
- Candidates might indicate that religious teachings provide a major difficulty in attempts to help the environment in so far as all such teachings are related to doctrines which may be unreasonable, unscientific, or both. Hence for Aquinas, for example (as with Descartes), humans have souls but animals do not, a doctrine which rests on a pre-scientific understanding of natural law, and which is arguably of little value in protecting animals.
- Some might argue in favour of other responses to protecting the environment, such as those based on Utilitarian or Kantian ethics, or Deep Ecology.

Other views

- In Buddhism, for example, there is a tacit understanding that the practices of loving-kindness and no-harm apply to the environment as a whole, and these are frequently illustrated through the Buddha's life, with the result that Buddhist approaches to environmental protection are often cited with approval.
- Intrinsicist Christian approaches to environmental issues similarly attribute intrinsic value to the planet as a whole, so it might be said that both religions are of value in helping to protect the environment.
- Candidates might provide examples of current religious environmental initiatives which derive from specific teachings.
- Some might point out that there is a difference between theory and practice; thus religious authorities often speak convincingly about the need for environmental protection, but in practice achieve very little.

Some will pick up on the absolute nature of "no value", and might suggest that although religious teachings possibly have limited value, there is a difference between that and having no value at all.

(15 marks) A02