



**General Certificate of Education
June 2011**

Religious Studies

RST3B

Philosophy of Religion

A2 Unit 3B

Final

Mark Scheme

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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 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 which 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

01 Analyse the reasoning of the ontological argument as presented by Anselm, and explain its purpose.

The commentary below suggests how the reasoning of the argument may be analysed, but it is not a checklist, nor is it exhaustive. The question allows candidates to draw on a variety of ideas, including their general understanding of the logical form of the argument, and on issues of religious language: e.g. the meaning of 'God' and the meaning of 'exist'. Good answers will show a clear understanding of how the conclusion(s) of the argument are reached.

In order to deny God's existence, the fool must have a concept of God, and the argument is addressed to such fools. Anselm shows through logical development that the fool has 'thought what cannot be thought', that is, his thinking is incoherent and self-contradictory. According to Anselm, the fool does this because he knows only the word God, not God himself. The argument could be summed up as 'God exists' is true by definition. Those who reject this do not know God.

Even the fool has to accept the definition of God as 'That than which nothing greater can be conceived' – there could be comment on the adequacy of the definition.

The fool must accept that God exists at least in his imagination: there could be comment on relationship between 'God' and the 'Idea of God';

There could be comment on meaning of 'exist' in this context.

It is greater to exist in (mind and) reality than in the mind alone: there could be comment on this idea.

Therefore greatest conceivable being must be conceived as existing in both mind and in reality and/or must exist in both mind and in reality; there could be comment on 'true by definition' and/or 'logically necessary'.

Development of, or second form of, argument in response to the point that defining the greatest conceivable being does not mean that it exists:

The logic applies uniquely to God.

Being whose non-existence can be conceived /imagined not as great as being whose non-existence cannot be conceived: there could be comment on this idea e.g. aseity of God: a being whose non-existence is possible must (by definition) be dependent on something else to make it exist or to allow it to continue to exist. 'God' cannot be either.

Note: this may be developed in terms of 'contingent and necessary existence' in which case concepts must be clearly explained.

Claim: God exists so truly that he cannot even be thought of as not existing. There may be reference to scholars such as Norman Malcolm.

Purpose: e.g. to understand a faith that already exists; to demonstrate to those who deny God's existence that their denial is proof that what they are thinking of is not God, and to offer a proof that God exists. The purpose may be briefly explained or could be explained at some length, and the explanation may include reference to scholarly opinion. Explanation of the purpose of the argument could be integrated into the analysis. There does not have to be a separate section focused on it.

For answers lacking reference to both reasoning and purpose: max level 5
(30 marks)

AO1

**02 'The ontological argument has no value for the non-believer.'
Assess this view.**

Expect a rehearsal of the recognised weaknesses of the argument, and its strengths, and a conclusion which will be closely related to the question in the best answers.

In support: (e.g.)

Fails as a 'proof' in so far as it offers no empirical evidence for existence and arguably existence can be established only by empirical evidence – this can be illustrated with reference to a variety of scholarly views.

Is not intended to be a rationally convincing argument, but an exploration of existing faith. Assuming that non-believers have no adequate understanding of God, and are looking for a being among other beings, with a similar quality of existence, this argument will not meet their needs.

Contrary to claim: (e.g.)

Argument poses a direct challenge to the non-believers' concept of God, on the grounds that their ability to think that God does not exist is 'proof' that what they are denying the existence of is not God.

The question 'Is there something corresponding to the definition of God in the 'real' (i.e. empirical) world' can only be asked by those who know only the word 'God', and not God himself.

(20 marks) AO2

Question 2 Religious language

03 Explain what it means to say that religious language is:

- **non-cognitive**
- **symbolic.**

Candidates should show understanding of both the non-cognitive theory of religious language and the idea that religious language is symbolic, with appropriate use of examples and reference to scholarly views.

There is an overlap between non-cognitive and symbolic, so apply suggestions below flexibly. Key idea: language not used literally but represents something other than itself.

Non-cognitive: not intended to convey information e.g. Braithwaite and the idea of religious language as 'moral discourse' expressing attitudes and intentions. Religious language as evocative e.g. intended to evoke a sense of the presence of God rather than to inform the intellect about God.

Symbolic: Note analogical use of language may, but need not, be included here. Symbolic language 'participates' in the reality it relates to (Tillich) so opening up that reality to human understanding. The power of symbols changes over time and their interpretation may vary. Use of symbolism in (e.g.) religious poetry, myth, scripture, prayer.

Answers that deal with only one of non-cognitive or symbolic, max level 5.

(30 marks) AO1

04 'It is not possible to talk meaningfully about God.' Evaluate this claim.

This can be approached in a variety of ways from both atheist and faith perspectives. The verification/ falsification debate may be, but need not be, used.

In support (e.g.)

Verification / falsification debate;

Impossible to talk meaningfully when there is no shared experience;

All words take their meaning from empirical world; God, since he is transcendent, not in the same category, so words do not apply;

Contrary to claim (e.g.)

Refutation of verification / falsification principles

God, through scripture, provides the words that may be used;

God guides human beings to a true understanding, the words are a medium of religious experience;

'God' as a term has rules for its use – that is its meaning e.g., 'God is omnipotent' and 'God is omniscient', are analytical statements and true by definition.

(20 marks) AO2

Question 3 Body, soul and personal identity

05 'I shall survive the death of my body.' Analyse the meaning of this statement.

This allows an analysis of the 'I' concept, and the grounds of personal identity: e.g. memory; personality and physical continuity, and an analysis of modes of survival beyond death: e.g. resurrection both spiritual and physical; replica; rebirth; reincarnation; contribution to life; children / genes. Candidates will vary in the attention they give to these two elements.

Description of the various types of supposed post-mortem existence is not sufficient to answer the question fully – they need to be related to the idea of continued existence of self after death, or, in the case of contribution to life and children/genes, to objective immortality.

A depth answer could analyse the criteria of personal identity and apply them to chosen modes of personal existence after death e.g. replica and resurrection.

A breadth answer could survey a range of different views about **what** survives after death, and in what sense it **'survives'**.

(30 marks) AO1

06 'There are no reasonable grounds for belief in the existence of a soul.'
How far do you agree?

In support:

Reasons for doubt based on lack of physical evidence e.g. take all physical parts of the body away nothing apparently remains which supports the view that both 'life' and 'soul' have been wrongly treated as objects.

Arguments in favour of soul have been strongly criticised. (Note that no particular arguments are specified; candidates may refer to any they choose.)

Contrary to statement:

Strengths remain in some of the arguments based on our sense of self, and, for example, evidence of reincarnation / rebirth

Near-death experiences appear to support possibility of existence and survival of the soul.

(20 marks) AO2

Question 4 The problem of evil

07 Explain the free will defence and examine its purpose.

Explain: The free will defence is presented in a variety of ways, and markers must expect a variety of different, but equally acceptable, approaches to this question.

Creation as it left the creator was both perfect and free – traditionally understood to mean that Angels and Man were free to act as they chose.

Free will is an essential part of developing as a spiritual being, in a freely chosen loving relationship with God, which is the greatest good. Denying human beings this free choice, and the possibility of this greatest good, would not have been good / loving.

All evil is the consequence of the abuse of free will. It is not the fault of God.

God will not intervene to remove the consequences of free will because this would make the use of free will valueless. Human beings have to appreciate the value and significance of free will; extending this, some argue that free will can only be meaningfully exercised in a world like this in which what we call natural evil occurs. In this way the free will defence may explain the existence of natural evil, but many presentations of it simply do not tackle the issue of natural evil at all.

Purpose: to answer the challenge to faith posed by evil; to construct a theodicy which shows that the existence of evil and of an all-loving and all powerful God is possible; to defend the justice of God in the face of evil.

There is not expected to be any balance between the two parts of the answer.
Max level 5 if only one tackled.

(30 marks) AO1

08 **How far is free will a satisfactory explanation for the existence of evil in a world created by God?**

This may, but need not, include a debate about whether free will actually exists. The following points do not form an exhaustive list, nor is it expected that candidates should refer to all of them.

Finitely perfect beings choosing to act against God's will – is that a contradiction?

Did suffering, and therefore evil, predate the first moral evil?

How can moral evil explain natural evil?

Where did the temptation to do evil come from if evil only existed after the decision was made?

The claim that God had the choice between creating robots controlled by God and beings who would freely choose to do wrong is a false one. God could, and should, have created beings who always freely chose to do good.

God's foreknowledge must mean that he knew the choices humanity would make, and the consequences of those choices, before they happened. Knowing this was God's action in creating such beings a loving one?

(20 marks) AO2

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