



**General Certificate of Education
June 2013**

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 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 <u>two</u> key objections to the ontological argument <u>and</u> explain the responses made to them.
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The specification lists the following as key objections based on: the definition of God; existence as a predicate of God; the possibility of deriving existential claims from a definition. Expect **two** of these areas to be outlined along with the respective responses.

Because there is a lot of material that can apply to more than one of these objections/responses the examiner must allow flexibility in the use of the material, even if the same point is made twice, as long as there is a relevant application of the material not simply duplication.

The definition of God: "That than which a greater cannot be thought" / "The supremely perfect being".

- Aquinas argues that the human mind cannot be certain that it has a correct concept of God, because God is beyond human understanding.
- All a priori arguments to prove the existence of God fail as we cannot define God. 'God exists' is not self-evident to the human mind.

Response:

- The whole issue depends on God being perfect. A perfect being must exist or it cannot be perfect.
- God must go beyond human thoughts. God is not limited / dependent on human thoughts.
- Descartes defined existence as one of God's many perfections. If God does not have this perfection, then God must be imperfect; he cannot be God.
- Humans cannot develop the idea of a perfect being themselves; the idea must come from the perfect being itself.
- Some argue that Anselm was not trying to prove the existence of God but just acknowledging his existence through prayer, so, in a way, the actual definition used about God is not an issue.

Existence as a predicate of God:

- Kant argued that existence is not a predicate that can be added to or subtracted from something.
- Hume claimed that no existential statements can be analytic / all existential statements are synthetic.
- All we are doing is thinking about God, not proving his existence.
- We can get rid of both the idea and its existence without any contradiction. 'Exist' is not used correctly in the arguments about God as existence cannot be a predicate (e.g. Russell's syllogism of Father Christmas).

Response:

- Descartes argues that God must possess existence to be perfect, therefore existence must be a predicate of God.
- It is illogical: thinking of God without the predicate of existence is like thinking of triangles without sides.

The possibility of deriving existential claims from a definition:

- Gaunilo argued that you could not prove anything existed simply by giving a definition e.g. the perfect island.
- Hume argued that it is not possible to take an idea, add logic to it and reach a conclusion about the existence of that idea.
- The original definition used implies that the thing exists; the argument is merely a verbal sleight of hand.
- God cannot be placed into a separate category from other things.
- For Frege existence is a second order concept that does not add to our understanding of the concept and cannot be used as a predicate to prove the existence of God.
- For Davies we should not confuse the use of “is” as a definition with its use as stating the existence of an object.
- The ontological argument only gives a definition of God; it says nothing about God’s existence.

Response:

- The ontological argument only applies to God as all other objects are by definition limited and contingent.
- For Malcolm it is not possible to think of a being that necessarily exists not existing, therefore God must exist.

If only one relevant objection and response is covered, max Level 5.

If two objections are covered without any mention of the relevant responses, max level 4.

(30 marks)

AO1

0

2

'Objections to the ontological argument are unconvincing.'**To what extent do you agree?**

The approach could either be in breadth (e.g. comparing the whole approach of the objections against the ontological argument and the responses of those who support the argument) or in depth (e.g. analysing certain aspects of the arguments already presented). They can introduce other objections than those covered in 01.

In support (e.g.)

Many people misunderstand the ontological argument as they misread what the definitions of God are, e.g. Anselm says God is "that than which a greater cannot be thought" not "the greatest thing that can be thought" so he is not limiting God as he insists that God goes beyond human understanding. Starting from a weak understanding of the argument means that nothing can really convince other people. A similar thing applies to the idea of existence: people confuse the use of the term or create confusion in other people's minds by switching the use or meaning of "exists" throughout their arguments. Confusion leads to misunderstanding, which means that people cannot be fully persuaded by the arguments. A similar confusion applies to the idea of existence being a perfection and the supporters being accused of playing tricks, sleights of hand but this is open to the challenge of being superficial game-playing, trying to con people against following the logic of the original argument(s). The objections tend to isolate elements for attack rather than see the argument as a coherent whole.

Contrary to claim (e.g.)

No human being can have any idea of God, even from a negative viewpoint, even if God does exist, so any argument that tries to prove God starting from the human mind is bound to fail. The whole approach of the ontological argument is wrong, regardless of any weaknesses within the argument. Anything that shows even one weakness within the argument can destroy the whole approach, as the ontological argument is a single argument, not a lot of different approaches that are valid individually. It is impossible to move from an idea of anything, no matter how the human mind tries to dress it up, to state that this idea exists in reality, without any valid, tangible proof. Human logic alone is not sufficient for anything. The supporters of the argument want to believe in God and want to convince themselves that their arguments are logical, but this wishful thinking cannot make the ontological argument sound or acceptable. All the points that can show the failings in the ontological argument individually make sense, but added together destroy the ontological argument.

Remember: this is AO2 so assessment of the argument is essential, not simply placing the arguments side by side.

(20 marks)**AO2**

Question 2 Religious language

0	3
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With reference to religious language, explain:

- **the verification principle**
- **a 'blik'**
- **eschatological verification.**

The verification principle:

- Verification says that we know the meaningfulness of a statement if we know the conditions under which the statement is true or false.
- As religious language is dealing with the spiritual / metaphysical aspects, it cannot be proven in any meaningful way so religious language and the ideas that it expresses does not make sense / cannot be proven.

'Blik'

- Put forward by Hare who says that religious language has meaning even though it is beyond the possibility of verification.
- Religious language influences the way people see the world and this affects their understanding of what is real.
- Reality is more about interpretation than about proof; it cannot be verified or falsified.
- Expect some reference to Hare's analogy of the university student threatened by the dons.

Eschatological verification

- Hick's response that there is one way to verify religious statements is to build on Ayre's weak verification.
- What would verify religious language would be to see God, angels etc after we die.
- If there is life after death, then a person is in a position to know the truth of religious language (eschatological verification). If there is no life after death, then the religious statements cannot be falsified or verified.
- We know what is needed to verify religious statements, even though it is after death, therefore religious statements do have meaning.
- Expect some reference to Hick's analogy of the travellers to the celestial city.

If there is not reference to all three aspects (the verification principle, 'blik' and eschatological verification), max Level 5.

(30 marks)

AO1

0	4	'Only believers can talk meaningfully about God.' How far do you agree?
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In support (e.g.)

- Believers have an understanding of what they mean by the word "God" which is a shared idea. They can use language happily enough to each other to express their understanding ("language games"). It is not their problem if those who do not believe fail to appreciate what the believers are trying to convey.
- The world view ("blik") created by belief is fundamental to any understanding of God; though different beliefs might end up with different "bliks" there is still some common ground between believers that is not shared by non-believers.
- The use of analogies is important for believers who accept that God cannot be limited by words but whose nature can be conveyed through images etc that are properly understood. Non-believers cannot appreciate the depth and the limitations of these images, so they fail to understand what is being said about God.

Contrary to claim (e.g.)

- It is impossible for anyone, believer or non-believer, to talk in any meaningful way about a thing that does not exist / is so far beyond the human mind that words cannot be applied to it.
- Non-believers can appreciate in a meaningful way what images are being used through analogies etc – they can understand the ideas, but reject the existence of God.
- All picture language depends on the imagination – one person does not know whether their interpretation of what is said about God is the same as the speaker meant etc.

(20 marks)**AO2**

Question 3 Body, soul and personal identity

0	5	Examine views of personal identity expressed in the theories of resurrection and reincarnation.
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Personal identity – what makes a person an individual? Is it the body, the soul, the body-soul combination, memories?

Resurrection

- The person is raised to a new life
- The individual continues in a perfected form
- The soul lives on in some form
- The comparison to the resurrection of Jesus – he was the same yet in some way different
- A variation on the original theme
- Is the resurrected individual simply the further development, as growing from a 5 year old to a 50 year old?
- Allow for Hick's replica theory – that God recreates the individual in a new state
- For those who believe that the resurrected person is disembodied (e.g. Price), how much of the individual personality will remain?

Reincarnation

- The soul (atman) moves onto a new body
- The person is the combination of all the different reincarnations, not simply the individual that is apparent in the present incarnation
- If personal identity has to be linked with the bodily form in some way, then personal identity cannot be seen as continuing when the soul is reincarnated in a different body
- However, the idea of individual development through all the reincarnations, including the build-up of karma, leading to moksha, does allow for some sense of personal identity, though of a different order to that shown in resurrection.

If there is not reference to both resurrection and reincarnation, max Level 5.

If the answer only explains resurrection/reincarnation without reference to personal identity max bottom Level 4 - 15 marks.

(30 marks)

AO1

0

6

'Neither theories about resurrection nor theories about reincarnation justify belief in the existence of a soul.'

To what extent do you agree?

In support: (e.g.)

- The soul is supposed to be immaterial and eternal, the part of the individual that survives. But there can be no proof for the existence of the soul as it cannot be tested for in any way. Even suggestions like near death experiences are open to so many interpretations that nothing can be based on them.
- Resurrection says that the individual continues beyond death, suggesting that there is such a thing as the soul, but how can the individual continue without the body? Claiming that the soul is what matters is simply wishful thinking.
- Reincarnation suggests that the soul is carried over from one body to the other to make the link between the two people. However, there is little/no proof of this happening and the soul can simply be an invention to make the belief in reincarnation justifiable etc.

Contrary to claim (e.g.)

- For Christians the resurrection of Jesus proves that there is life after death. The body is left behind so something of the real person must continue.
- Too many people think of the soul as a semi-physical entity rather than that which makes the body live (Aquinas) or a non-corporeal substance (Descartes).
- If something of the individual survives, something that is incorruptible and eternal (Paul), why not accept this as the soul, even though we cannot be more specific about what the soul entails?
- There is some evidence that people have lived lives before and can give details that would otherwise be unavailable to them if they have not been reincarnated. There is a link between these two/one individual(s) that is well summed up as the soul.
- The soul makes up the sum total of the final individual.
- If there is no soul, how can these links be made, how can karma be carried on, how can moksha eventually be reached?
- The soul has to exist, even though physical proof is lacking etc.

(20 marks)

AO2

Question 4 The problem of evil

0	7
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Explain the main themes of theodicies in the Augustinian tradition.

There are many aspects of the Augustinian tradition that could be classed as 'main'. Credit either breadth or depth approach.

- God made the world perfect as God can only make perfect things / evil does not exist, it is only a lack of perfection.
- Only God himself is perfect. Created things are open to change and therefore open to going wrong.
- God gave humans and angels free will and these rejected God and created evil. Their evil actions made all things imperfect. Evil is either sin or the punishment for sin.
- Everybody is guilty of sin as everybody is seminally present in Adam.
- God is right not to end suffering and evil as he should not interfere with the freedom he has given to humans.
- Humans need evil to be able to appreciate the good – just like we need contrasting colours. The world is wholly good when looked at in its entirety.
- Accept answers that include Calvin's idea of predestination and Leibniz's idea that this is the best of all possible worlds.

Note: the question asks for an explanation. Listing of ideas will be maximum Level 4.

If only one theme is examined Max Level 5

(30 marks)

AO1

0

8

'The theodicies of the Augustinian tradition have very few strengths.'**Assess this claim.****In support: (e.g.)**

- The starting point is very weak – a literal understanding of Genesis 1-3. There probably was no such person as Adam so no Fall.
- Humans cannot all be present in Adam so we should not be punished by his actions, making God an unjust being so not perfect.
- The world is millions of years old and there was evil and suffering before humans came along so God has to be responsible for the existence of evil and suffering.
- The reliance on the unproven existence of angels to justify evil on earth makes no sense.
- Even if humans and angels fell away from God, the fact that God gave them free will to bring about evil must mean that ultimately God is responsible for the presence of evil etc

Contrary to claim (e.g.)

- Augustine seems to remove any blame from God which means that he deals with the attacks on God of people like Hume and Epicurus.
- His theodicies lay the basis for the Free Will Defence, so that humans have their freedom respected, the freedom that makes them more than just animals, allowing for both God and evil to exist.
- His theodicies acknowledge the need for a contrast so that humans can value anything.
- His theodicies are flexible in their approach as the many strands work together, with the stronger parts of the argument reinforcing the weaker, but even the weaker aspects have value etc.

(20 marks)**AO2**