



A-LEVEL
RELIGIOUS STUDIES
RST3BR

PAPER 3B PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION

Mark scheme

June 2016

Version: 1.0 Final

Mark schemes are prepared by the Lead Assessment Writer and considered, together with the relevant questions, by a panel of subject teachers. This mark scheme includes any amendments made at the standardisation events which all associates participate in and is the scheme which was used by them in this examination. The standardisation process ensures that the mark scheme covers the students' responses to questions and that every associate understands and applies it in the same correct way. As preparation for standardisation each associate analyses a number of students' scripts. Alternative answers not already covered by the mark scheme are discussed and legislated for. If, after the standardisation process, associates encounter unusual answers which have not been raised they are required to refer these to the Lead Assessment Writer.

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

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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>	AS 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	

Indicative content

Note: This content is indicative rather than prescriptive and students are not obliged to refer to all the material contained in this mark scheme. Any legitimate answer will be assessed on its merits according to the generic levels of response.

Question 1 Ontological argument and the relationship between reason and faith

0 1 A key objection to the ontological argument is that the existence of God cannot be derived from the definition of God. Explain this objection.

- We cannot be certain that the human mind has the correct definition of God (Aquinas).
- God is beyond human understanding so humans cannot prove that God exists from a human idea of God (Aquinas).
- God cannot be limited or defined by human words.
- All a priori arguments for the existence of God fail as 'God exists' is not self-evident to the human mind.
- Humans can only know God through his works, not through a human definition (Aquinas), etc.
- Gaunilo argued that you cannot prove anything exists simply by giving a definition eg the perfect island.
- Hume argued that people cannot take an idea in the mind, apply pure logic to that idea and reach a valid conclusion about the external universe. Physical evidence is needed to validate the existence of something.
- The original definition of the ontological argument implies that the thing exists; the argument is merely a verbal sleight of hand.
- Davies argued that 'is' can be used to define a thing but the word 'is' is used in a different sense in the definition than it is in saying that the thing exists.
- 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.
- It is invalid to presume that just because people are talking about something, therefore the thing exists, for example, vampires, etc.

[30 marks] AO1

0 2 'This key objection proves that the ontological argument has absolutely no value.'

Assess this claim.

In support:

- Since it is impossible to define God, the ontological argument that starts from a definition cannot do what it claims.
- There are so many things in life that people talk about without the thing existing eg dragons, vampires, that God cannot be put into a separate category from these or classified as different.
- For anything to have value as a fact, it needs to be evidenced in some way. Simply talking about it does not prove that it exists.
- It is valid to suggest the word 'is' is being used incorrectly/in a misleading way in the ontological argument so this means that the argument is invalid as it tries to hoodwink people through the use of words, etc.

Other views:

- Anselm's definition of God is not a limiting definition – it is not 'God is the greatest thing that can be thought' but 'God is that than which nothing greater can be thought' – in other words Anselm says that God goes beyond human definition. Criticisms of this are invalid as they misunderstand what Anselm is saying. Therefore, the ontological argument still has validity.
- A thing cannot be totally perfect if it does not have existence. Descartes' definition of God does show that God has to exist, as the alternative is self-contradictory.
- Malcolm's view that God has necessary existence must entail that the definition shows that God actually does exist.
- There might be some value in the ontological argument for the believer, even if the believer accepts that the argument itself is founded on faith, possible reference to Barth's comments on Anselm's argument, etc.
- Nothing about God can be definitively proved in any way, so the objections are as much a matter of opinion as is the original argument.

[20 marks] AO2

Question 2 Religious language

0 3 Explain both:

- **religious language as non-cognitive**
- **language games.**

Religious language as non-cognitive:

- Some people argue that religious language is cognitive, that there is something about God that can be known. If this is the case, then God has to be limited.
- Some people claim that this is not the way humans talk about God; religious language is non-cognitive.
- Non-cognitive statements do not seek to give proof about God.
- Religious language is not about objective facts that can be proved true or false.
- Religious language, like ethical language, cannot be proved true or false but humans can still understand the meaning behind the statement.
- Religious language is evocative rather than factual; it appeals to the emotions rather than to the mind.
- Religious language can be performative rather than descriptive eg Austin.
- Examples like Swinburne's toys in the cupboard coming out to play at night show how people can understand an idea without it necessarily being proved correct or incorrect, etc.

Language games:

- Wittgenstein said that it was unrealistic to assume that words only referred to objects
- Meanings depend on the context in which words are used.
- Just as each type of game has its own rules, so each context of language has its own rules about what is and what is not meaningful.
- Just as in a toolbox, specific tools have specific functions, so with language. The user needs to appreciate the function of the word. Without appreciating the function of the word, the word only has a superficial meaning.
- People not in the game will not be able to understand the use of the language, but that does not mean that the language has no meaning. For those inside the game, including users of religious language, the meaning is quite clear.
- Language is a social product, so users share an understanding of a particular application of language.
- Phillips takes the approach that religious language has its own internal logic and rationality. To understand religious language, the grammar appropriate to religion has to be used. This cannot be dictated about by another type of discipline, etc.

[30 marks] AO1

0 4 'Using language games is effective in enabling people to speak meaningfully about God.'

How far do you agree?

In support:

- People share the same understanding of the words in a particular context, so they are talking in a meaningful way to each other, even though 'outsiders' might not correctly understand what they are saying.
- While it may be difficult to make sense of the infinite in limited human terms, the sense of a shared experience or awareness of the divine enables people to communicate effectively about God.
- Users of religious language are basing their discussion on faith not proof and, as they accept this starting point, everything they say has a valid basis.
- Language games would accept the use of analogies, symbols etc to talk about God as the people can base their understanding of the analogy, symbol etc on the expressions of the shared faith that has been passed down.
- These analogies, symbols etc have stood the test of time and so must be able to convey deep understanding of the divine to believers, etc.

Other views:

- God cannot be put into any form of words as the limitations imposed by words destroys the unlimited nature of God, so all words used about God are meaningless.
- No two people can guarantee that they are using words in the same way as nobody can read another person's mind.
- Using language is, at best, based on guesswork and when this is applied to God the whole discussion loses any possibility of making sense.
- Language games does not indicate how many people are needed to make sense of an idea / it is not acceptable to have an idiosyncratic understanding of a word, but there is no guarantee that even 1000 people are using a word in the same way, so what everyone says could be meaningless.
- For real meaning there does need to be a concrete, verifiable referent / since God is not verifiable or falsifiable, anything said about God is meaningless.
- Faith is a leap into the unknown / any words used about the unknown are themselves expression of the unknown, therefore they have no meaning, etc.

[20 marks] AO2

Question 3 Body, soul and personal identity

0 5 Examine differing views of the idea that a person is made up of body and soul.

Dualism:

- Plato believed that soul and the body are two separate substances that interact. The soul is captured by and the body is limited by it during the lifetime of the individual. Without the soul, there would not be a real individual person, as knowledge, the sense of truth, justice and love etc all come from the realm of the forms. The body is limited matter that is given life by the soul.
- For Aristotle, the soul is part of the body that knows and understands. It is the combination of these two, which are inter-dependent, that creates the whole person. Without both body and soul, the person ceases to exist.
- For Descartes the rational soul or mind meets the body in the pineal gland. The physical body and the non-physical mind are distinct substances with distinct qualities that combine to make the individual.
- For Aquinas, the soul animates the body and without the soul there is no individual, etc.

Materialism:

- Hard materialists would argue that there is no soul, only a physical body. The person is simply a collection of chemical responses eg Dawkins 'bytes and bytes and bytes of digital information.'
- Some support the view of Ryle that the soul is just the 'ghost in the machine', it doesn't exist; it is simply a category mistake.
- Soft materialists would argue that a person is more than just the physical body, as thoughts etc are more than just chemical reactions. These people accept that the word 'soul' reflects the idea that there are inner workings within the individual that creates a sense of otherness, a sense of the soul, but that without the body, there would be no individual, etc.

Buddhism:

- Buddhists deny that there is a soul / there is an ever-changing individual character that moves from rebirth to rebirth / the body and mind combine and interact to form the individual / the body helps the development of the individual, etc.

Hinduism:

- The atman is the eternal, invisible, unchanging reality / it exists deep inside the individual is not to be confused with the body and mind / atman enters the body as part of the creative process / atman can only be realised by disciplining the mind and the body, / the eternal soul is inside the individual helping him to fulfil the ultimate destiny, etc.

Maximum Level 5 if only one view is examined.

[30 marks] AO1

0 6 'The notion of a soul is not coherent.'

To what extent do you agree?

In support:

- There is no evidence that the soul exists, so attempts to talk about it do not make sense. All ideas about the soul are based purely on people's acceptance of a possibly imaginary thing.
- Science has shown that there are links between the brain and the body which prove that the mind cannot exist on its own, so the idea of a soul being a separate substance within the individual does not make sense.
- The soul is not needed to appreciate a human being; other people respond to the external reality and the products and deeds of that individual.
- All suggestions about the soul require people to believe in something that is not visible, not limited etc and yet an individual is a very physical, limited being. How can a physical being be affected by something that is not physical?
- Humans have no experience of anything unlimited or metaphysical, so to make knowledge claims about such things is incoherent (Hume, Kant), etc.

Other views:

- When people are asleep, they dream and are aware of things beyond them. Since these are not limited by the body, there must be a deeper part of the individual.
- Out of body experiences, near-death experiences all point to the person being more than just the body, so there must be a non-physical part of the person that is referred to as the soul.
- The physical body dies, but the promise of many religions is that the individual will never end. Since the physical has come to an end, there must be a non-physical soul that continues after death.
- While people might not be able to clearly define or prove the soul, the sense of the depth of the self, strongly suggests that there is an unlimited part of themselves. It would not make sense to deny this reality even if there is no physical proof of what causes it. 'Absence of proof is not the same as proof of absence' (Hick), etc.

[20 marks] AO2

Question 4 The problem of evil

0 7 Explain the existence of both natural evil and moral evil according to the Augustinian tradition.

While there are a number of possible approaches to answering this question, the most likely to be chosen will be either to present the main principles of Augustine's theodicy and show how they apply to both natural and moral evil or to look at natural evil and moral evil as separate items and show how Augustine explained each one. Whichever option is chosen, the focus of the question has to be on natural and moral evil. Simply presenting Augustine's theodicy is unlikely to gain more than Level 3.

- God made a perfect world/when angels deliberately turned against God, they destroyed the perfection/this included the distortion of the perfection of the natural order.
- When Adam and Eve disobeyed God, this was the start of moral evil/the use of free will/their disobedience led to the destruction of the harmony of all creation/evil is either sin or the punishment for sin/natural evil is part of the punishment for sin.
- Every person is morally corrupt because everyone was seminally present in Adam's loins/every person is contaminated by moral evil and deserves to be punished/natural evil is fitting punishment for sin.
- Privatio boni – evil is a lack of perfection/it does not exist in itself but is a failure of things to be what they were created for/all apparent natural and moral evils must have some good in them even though they are not living up to the perfection for which God in his love created them/humans fail to live up to God's design/natural evils are distortions of God's plan of harmony.
- Aesthetic argument – human perceptions are limited/when humans can see things as God sees them they might appreciate that what they see as natural evils are only aspects of the total perfection of creation/linked to the theory of plenitude – everything works together to make a whole/the black helps us to see the white/natural evils and moral evils are needed to help see the good, etc.

Maximum level 5 if only one part of the question (natural evil or moral evil) is addressed.

[30 marks] AO1

0 8 'Natural evil challenges faith in God more than moral evil.'

Assess this claim.

Note:

Candidates can address this question using any theodicies.

In support:

- Natural evils raise the different issues of why a loving God created an imperfect world / how could anybody believe in a God who created this type of world? / aren't Hume and Mill right in saying that there can be no God who would allow such natural evils to exist if God had the love and power to make things perfect?
- Augustine does not explain why nature had to be distorted when humans disobeyed God / God cannot be the perfect loving being as he punishes all nature for the failures of human beings / does this mean that God is a God of imperfections?
- Creation has always been violent and cruel even before humans appeared / regardless of moral evil, natural evils prove that there is no all-powerful, creative God.
- Moral evils have to exist if humans are to be totally free / the fact that humans have free will is a sign of God's loving nature / if God did not allow humans freedom and therefore allow moral evils, there would be serious questions about whether having faith in God was valid / Hick's theodicy would support this view / this means that moral evils are acceptable, but does not really explain natural evils, etc.

Other views:

- Natural evils are needed to allow humans to exercise their free will by committing moral evils / natural evils are therefore an integral part of the creation of a loving God and show just how much God is prepared to do to allow humans to be free / therefore natural evils do not challenge but support faith in God.
- If humans did not live in a world where things could and did go wrong, they would not be free and therefore unable to commit moral evils.
- All evils are signs of imperfection, whether natural or moral / there cannot be a God who would allow any form of evil to exist / moral evils challenge faith in God as much as natural evils do.
- Process thought would suggest that God is not omnipotent but is good / the existence of natural evils is an inevitable part of the development of creation / this allows for the development of human virtues / both natural and moral evils are needed and both show that God is loving and so people can have faith in God, etc.

[20 marks] AO2