

RMGS

Philosophy and Theology

Pre U.

Cambridge Pre-U is a post-16 qualification equivalent to an A level that prepares learners with the skills and knowledge they need to succeed at university. It promotes independent and self-directed learning in preparation for undergraduate study.

This course is not for the intellectually faint-hearted. It allows students to explore some of the most profound questions that have puzzled humankind: Is life absurd and meaningless? Does God exist? Can we have knowledge prior to experience of the world? Is morality relative? What is the good life? Can science and religion converge? Is there a life after death? Why does evil exist?

What are the aims of the course?

To explore aspects of Philosophy and Theology that have preoccupied people throughout the history of ideas. To engage in open and rigorous debate about a range of controversial ethical and philosophical concepts. To encourage the critical evaluation of evidence and argument, and develop the ability to construct, develop and maintain a coherent argument. To encourage wide reading and introduce learners to some of the key ideas and texts which have played a large role in shaping our intellectual heritage.

What does it involve?

The course has three areas:

Paper 1: Introduction to Philosophy and Theology

- Empiricism vs. Rationalism; Plato's Forms and Aristotle's Four Causes; Relativism vs Absolutism; Free Will vs Determinism.

Paper 2: Philosophy of Religion

- Philosophical arguments for the existence of God.
- The problem of evil and suffering.
- The relationship between religion and science.
- Psychological and sociological understandings of religion.

Paper 3: Ethics

- Ethical theories—utilitarianism, Kantian ethics, virtue theory, Christian ethics and existentialist ethics.
- Applied ethics—abortion, euthanasia, business ethics, environmental ethics, embryology.

Why is this course intellectually challenging?

- In this course you will read significant philosophical texts such, as Jean-Paul Sartre's *Existentialism and Humanism*, John Stuart Mill's *Utilitarianism*, John Hick's *Evil and the God of Love* and John Polkinghorne's *Science and Creation*.

How is it assessed?

- 3 examinations at the end of year 13.
- Grades range from D1 which is beyond the A* to P3 which is equivalent to an E at A level.
- All universities recognise the pre-U and appreciate its rigour.

Are there any specific entry requirements?

GCSE Religious Studies is **not** a requirement but it is advisable that students have A grades (or a 7 and above) in GCSE English Language and Literature and a B in RS if it was taken.

Why is it a useful qualification?

This course is particularly useful for those students who want careers that involve arguments and disputation, like law. It trains students well for higher education by allowing them to explore whole philosophical texts. . Philosophy and Theology pre-U is an exciting new subject within the humanities field and is highly valued by higher education and future employers. It fits particularly well with English, Psychology, History, Geography, Sociology and languages, but may be studied profitably in conjunction with any subjects. The ethical arguments offer useful insights to those going on to study medicine or science related subjects.

