

Philosophy & Ethics

Pathway 2

Course description:

Philosophy and Ethics is the ideal course for someone with a curious and deep thinking mind, who wants to engage with some of the most serious questions in human existence. The areas of study range from major questions for religious belief and religion as a valid idea, through what it means to be a moral person. Philosophy and Ethics as a course is designed to get students to think deeply about a range of contemporary and perennial issues.

Qualifications required:

- In line with the entry requirements for a Pathway 2 subject.
- Grade 5 and 6 in Religious Studies and English Language. This combination of grades can be either way round.

Aims of the course:

- Develop your ability to evaluate and critically analyse major issues and considerations.
- Advance your skills in considering the views of others and the impact well known philosophers have had on the world today.
- Understand the issues that face humanity from an existential and moral perspective.

Future prospects:

A Level Philosophy & Ethics is a well-regarded subject that leads very well into higher education, especially in fields such as Law, History, English and the Social Sciences.

Student feedback:

“Philosophy and Ethics is the only subject where I truly feel like I’m developing intellectually in terms of my ability to think and evaluate, and not just learning facts. It’s really inspired me to be more curious and inquisitive.”

“Philosophy and Ethics is a subject which feels really relevant to real life, which seems strange to say. It deals with the views of people who sometimes died hundreds of years ago, but you realise very quickly that what they’re saying and what they’re talking about is still as relevant to us today as it ever has been.”

Subject Teachers:

Miss Biggar (Head of RE), Mr Kneeshaw and Mr Benjamin.

Philosophy & Ethics

Features of the course:

- The study of philosophy and ultimate questions
- Exploring the philosophy of belief
- Analysing morality and ethical theory
- Developing critical and analytical skills
- Consideration of contemporary human issues
- Understanding of the development of religious thought

A Level Units

Unit 1: Philosophy

Learners will study:

- Ancient philosophical influences
- The nature of the soul, mind and body
- Arguments about the existence or non-existence of God
- The nature and impact of religious experience
- The challenge for religious belief of the problem of evil
- Ideas about the nature of God
- Issues in language.

Unit 2: Ethics

Learners will study:

- Normative ethical theories
- The application of ethical theory to two contemporary issues of importance
- Ethical language and thought
- Debates surrounding the significant idea of conscience
- Sexual ethics and the influence on ethical thought of developments in religious beliefs.

Unit 3: Developments in Religious Thought

Learners will study:

- Religious beliefs, values and teachings, their interconnections and how they vary historically and in the contemporary world
- Sources of religious wisdom and authority
- Practices which shape and express religious identity, and how these vary within a tradition
- Significant social and historical developments in theology and religious thought
- Key themes related to the relationship between religion and society

Methods of Assessment:

Unit 1: 2 hour written exam worth 33% of the A Level.

Unit 2: 2 hour written exam worth 33% of the A Level.

Unit 3: 2 hour written exam worth 33% of the A Level.