KS5 Curriculum Overview - Philosophy of Religion
Philosophy of Religion

Topics	Philosophical Language and Thought	The Existence of God	God and the World	Theological and Philosophical Developments	Religious Language: Negative, Analogical or Symbolic	Religious Language: Twentieth Century Perspectives
Focus of Enquiry	The study of significant concepts and issues in the philosophy of religion through the works of key thinkers, providing important foundational knowledge for the study of philosophy and religion	A critical analysis of three contrasting arguments about the existence or non-existence of God	An introduction to the nature, significance and influence of religious experience, and the challenge posed to religious belief by the problems of evil and suffering	An examination of how philosophy of religion has, over time, influenced and been influenced by developments in religious beliefs about the nature of God	The first of two enquiries on the nature of religious language, exploring different views about the understanding of religious language, and the comparison of significant ideas presented in the works of key philosophers	The second enquiry into how views of religious language have changed over time with a particular focus on the key ideas of the twentieth century, studying a variety of approaches and views
What Content will we Cover?	<u>Ancient Philosophical Influences</u> * The philosophical views of Plato in relation to the understanding of reality, the nature and hierarchy of the Forms, Plato's analogy of the cave and its purpose and relation to the theory of Forms * The philosophical views of Aristotle in relation to the understanding of reality, the four causes and the Prime Mover * A comparison and evaluation of the following ideas: Plato's Form of the Good and Aristotle's Prime Mover; Plato's reliance on rationalism and Aristotle's reliance on empiricism in attempting to make sense of reality <u>Soul, Mind and Body</u> * Plato's view of the soul as the essential and immaterial part of a human, temporarily united with the body * Aristotle's view of the soul as the form of the body, the way the body behaves and lives and something which cannot be separated from the body * The metaphysics of consciousness, including substance dualism and materialism * An evaluation of the following ideas: critiques of dualism and materialism; understanding the soul as metaphorical or real; whether any discussion about the the mind-body distinction is a category error	<u>Arguments based on Observation</u> * The teleological argument, including reference Aquinas' Fifth Way and Paley's Design Argument * The cosmological argument, including reference to Aquinas' first three ways * Challenges to arguments from observation: Hume's criticisms of these arguments for the existence of God from natural religion; the challenge of evolution * An evaluation of the following ideas: the persuasiveness of *a posteriori* and *a priori* arguments; challenges to and defences of arguments based on observation; the issue of logical fallacies <u>Arguments based on Reason</u> * The ontological argument, including reference to Anselm's *Proslogion*, Gaunilo's criticisms and Kant's criticisms * An evaluation of the following ideas: whether existence can be treated as a predicate; whether the ontological argument can justify belief; the issue of logical fallacies	<u>Religious Experience</u> * The nature and influence of religious experience, including mystical experience, conversion experience and the key ideas of William James * Different ways in which individual religious experiences can be understood: as union with a greater power, as the product of a psychological effect, as the product of a physiological effect * An evaluation of the following ideas: the validity and reliability of religious experiences; the nature of individual and corporate religious experiences; whether religious experience can justify belief in God <u>The Problem of Evil</u> * Different presentation of the problem of evil and suffering, including the logical problem of evil and the evidential problem of evil * Theodicies that propose some justification for divine action or inaction in the face of evil, including Augustine's use of original perfection and the Fall and Hick's reworking of Irenaeus' soul-making theodicy * An evaluation of the following ideas: whether Augustine's or Hick's theodicy can defend God in the face of evil; whether the logical or evidential problem of evil poses the greater challenge to belief; whether monotheism can be successfully defended in the face of evil	<u>The Nature of God</u> * Developments in the understanding of the following attributes of God: omnipotence, omniscience, omnibenevolence, eternity and free will * Alternative possibilities in relation to the attributes of God presented by Boethius, Anselm and Swinburne * An evaluation of the following ideas: the resolution of apparent conflicts between divine attributes; whether Boethius, Anselm or Swinburne provides the most useful understanding of the relationship between divinity and time; whether the attributes of God should be understood as subject to the limits of logical possibility or of divine self-limitation	* The apophatic way (the *via negativa*): the argument that theological language is best approached by negation * The cataphatic way (the *via positiva*): the understanding of religious lamnguage in terms of analogy, with reference to Aquinas' analogy of attribution and analogy of proper proportion * The understanding of religious language as symbolic, with reference to Tillich * A comparison and evaluation of the following ideas: the usefulness of the apophatic way, the cataphatic way and symbolism as approaches to religious language; the effectiveness of the apophatic way and the cataphatic way in discussing God; the comprehensibility of religious discourse if religious language is understood as symbolic	* Logical Positivism: the impact of the verification principle on the use of religious language, with reference to Ayer's approach to verification * Wittgenstein's language games * The falsification symposium: the varying arguments, with their associated parables, about religious language proposed by Flew, Hare and Mitchell * A comparison and evaluation of the following ideas: whether any of the twentieth-century perspectives give religious language meaning; whether a cognitive approach or a non-cognitive approach to religious language is more effective; the influence of non-cognitive approaches on the interpretation of religious texts
Skill Development	**AO1: Knowledge and understanding -** Demonstrate, organise and communicate knowledge and understanding, supported by thorough, accurate and prcise use of technical terms and vocabulary and with reference to an extensive range of scholarly views, academic approaches and/or sources of wisdom and authority					
	AO2: Analysis and evaluation - Critically analyse and give a detailed evaluation of the issue, supported by skilfully and clearly stated, coherently developed and fully justified views to provide a clear line of reasoning					
	Y12 - Term 1	**Y12 - Term 1 & 2**	**Y12 - Term 2**	**Y13 - Term 2**	**Y13 - Term 2 & 3**	**Y13 - Term 3**