

You have chosen to study one of the oldest and most prestigious subjects as part of your A Levels. Despite its age and history, the subject remains just as important and relevant today as it always has. You will track philosophical, ethical and religious thought throughout the centuries and examine its relevance today. You'll complete the course with an extensive range of knowledge and deep critical thinking skills.



Below are some activities that will be useful in preparation for September and will give you a head start on some content.

You may find this useful for the work below: Note making: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ErSic1PEGKE>

Philosophy: Pre-Course Introduction Task

Philosophy is the general term which means to love knowledge.

(Philos is Greek for 'love of' and Sophia is Greek for 'Wisdom' – hence Philosophia = Love of wisdom).

Every aspect of learning you do today comes from philosophy. Philosophy is the pursuit of knowledge (not opinion), it seeks to use logic, reason, evidence and a range of human experiences to make sense of the world. It seeks to move away from opinion and come to some helpful and useful established ideas. For example, Aristotle (an Ancient Greek Philosopher) who is seen as the father of modern science sought to observe the world and make sense of the phenomenon in the world gives us epistemology (science) and biology. Philosophy of mind eventually gives us psychology. Logic gives us mathematics etc.

1. Watch the clip on an Introduction to Philosophy.

Introduction to Philosophy: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1A_CAKYt3GY

2. Listen to the following clip:

Simply listen to this introductory clip: <https://www.spreaker.com/user/12255612/philosophy-podcast-1-introduction-why-ph>

3. Listen to the three podcasts below. Write a short paragraph explaining each of the core concepts:

Pythagoras and Heraclitus: <https://www.spreaker.com/user/12255612/philosophy-podcast-2-pythagoras-and-hera>

Atomists and Sophists: <https://www.spreaker.com/user/12255612/philosophy-podcast-3-atomists-and-sophis>

Socrates and Plato: <https://www.spreaker.com/user/12255612/philosophy-podcast-4-socrates-and-plato>

4. **Evil and Suffering:** This is the first topic in September. Here's how you can get a head start:

Watch the following clips and answer the questions below:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qilO5AJkvw&t=4s>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E1ysPBjXXk4>

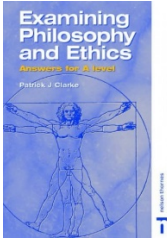
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zWcgHmXV09g>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NEB72UE7P2A>

A) Outline the problem of evil. What is it? Can you use a range of key words? What is the evidential problem of evil? What is the logical problem of evil?

B) Can you explain the most popular theodicies Augustine, Irenaeus and Freewill Defence? What is a theodicy?

A useful book to purchase for Philosophy and one that will be needed for the course in September is Patrick Clarke, Examining Philosophy and Ethics Answers for A Level. This book is £27 to purchase new so you are strongly encouraged to purchase a preloved version on eBay, Amazon, WorldOfBooks etc.



Christianity: Pre-Course Introduction Task

What is the Bible: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ak06MSETeo4>

How to read the Bible: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7_CGP-12AE0

1. **Write a detailed summary of the Bible. You may want to supplement your writings with extra research from elsewhere.**

Things to consider: What is the Bible and whose history does it track? Who are the prophets and why are they important? How is the Old Testament organised? Who is Jesus and why was he so significant? What does the Bible reveal about God?

2. **Can you describe the Christian view of God?** We will look at the nature of God in both Philosophy and Christianity. Western philosophy and God go back a long way. Plato and the ancient Greek Philosophers were discussing the viability of God (is God a logical possibility) and metaphysical (non-physical) ideas 400+ BCE. Western philosophy is greatly influenced by Christianity but Philosophy itself takes into consideration many different approaches to an understanding of the divine. Christianity however has a very specific view of God i.e. that of the trinity. However, in the early centuries there was much disagreement about the nature and role of Jesus (many did not think Jesus was part of God and the main reason for this was that they used the ancient philosophical writings of Plato that contradicted the idea that God could become physical flesh – but more on that during the course).

Below is a link to the Bible project that gives you an introduction to the Christian idea of God. **Use it to write a detailed summary of the Christian view of God.** You may want to use your own notes to supplement your ideas.

God: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eAvYmE2YYIU>

A useful book to purchase in readiness for the course (and will be needed on the course) is Alister McGrath, Christianity an Introduction. Again, we highly recommend that you buy a preloved version on eBay or amazon market place where worldofbooks etc sell preloved copies at a very reasonable price. You can purchase any of the following editions:



If you purchase this book you can then complete the following activity:

Additional Task: (This will be a first task in September, so you can get a head start now). **Read through the chapter entitled Christian History: An Overview and write a detailed summary of key aspects of Christian History.**

Ethics: Pre-Course Introduction Task.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/ethics/introduction/>

You will need to use extracts of different sections – questions are under the different headings.

The aim of the task is to introduce you to some of the key concepts of Ethics. In the subject we would normally use articles written by an established and recognised ethicist/philosopher who you would be able to quote when writing about them. This section on the BBC's site is not an article but does offer a straight-forward introduction that is easy to access.

Before you complete the tasks read the following glossary to ensure you have an understanding of different theories.

Glossary:

Ethics- A Greek word for human behaviour corresponding to the Latin word *mores*, meaning 'morals'.

Kantian Ethics – system of ethics associated with Immanuel Kant. It is an ethical system that stresses 'duty' and 'fixed' laws. The Categorical Imperative is a term used by Kant to mean an unconditional (categorical) requirement (imperative) to do one's duty. The Moral Law is a term used by Kant to indicate the existence of a law that was self-evident through the use of reason.

Natural Law/ Natural Moral Law – The ethical system associated with Aquinas. It is based on the claim that nature is a guide to right and wrong by taking the natural functions of things into account. It contests that there is a natural order to the human world and that this natural order is good and that therefore people ought not to go against or violate the natural order.

Prima Facie duties – A term used by W.D. Ross to indicate basic duties that are obvious (*prima facie*) to everyone, such as honesty, justice.

Situation Ethics – An ethical system associated with Joseph Fletcher that claims that ethical behaviour should be altered in accordance with particular circumstances or situations. Fletcher advocates 'agape' love as the controlling factor in all situations, and considers actions that are motivated by agape love to be intrinsically justified. A situationist enters into a moral dilemma with the ethics and principles of his or her particular tradition, but is prepared to set these aside in the situation if love seems better served by doing so.

Utilitarianism- An ethical system associated with Mill and Bentham based on the principle that happiness must be the aim of ethical behaviour. An action is useful if it serves happiness and is therefore the morally right action in that situation. It is a consequentialist theory based on results. Utilitarianism is a moral theory which says that what is morally right is whatever produces the greatest overall amount of pleasure or happiness.

Virtue Ethics-This is a theory that aims to develop a virtuous character. Being good requires developing habits that develop human qualities.

Consequentialist ethics – a theory based on results. An act is morally permissible if it brings good consequences/results. The view that morality should be judged by results or consequences, usually associated with Utilitarianism.

Read through the different sections highlighted by the titles carefully and then complete the tasks set below:

Write your answers in full sentences and in good depth.

Select: 'What is ethics: a General Introduction'.

What is ethics?

1. Define what is meant by ethics.
2. Where does the term ethics come from?
3. What does ethics cover?
4. What are the 3 main areas of ethics and what do they concern?

Where do ethics come from?

5. Outline and explain the 7 views mentioned here about where ethics come from.

Are there universal moral rules?

6. What is the difference between moral absolutism and moral relativism?
7. Why might someone criticise moral absolutism?
8. Why might a person disagree with moral relativism?

Select: 'Types of ethics' then 'Consequentialism'

We are going to be studying consequentialist ethics this year.

9. What is a consequentialist theory?
10. What does utilitarianism focus on?
11. What are the positives of results based ethics?
12. What are the problems with using a consequentialist system.

Consequentialist theories Conclusion: Which critique do you find most convincing and why? Justify your choice.

A useful book you may wish to purchase for Ethics is:

Peter Vardy, The Puzzle of Ethics. Again, we strongly recommend you purchase a preloved version. Any edition is useful. You can find used versions on eBay, worldofbooks and amazon. Amazon allows you to see 'used' copies available to purchase if you click on 'used'.

