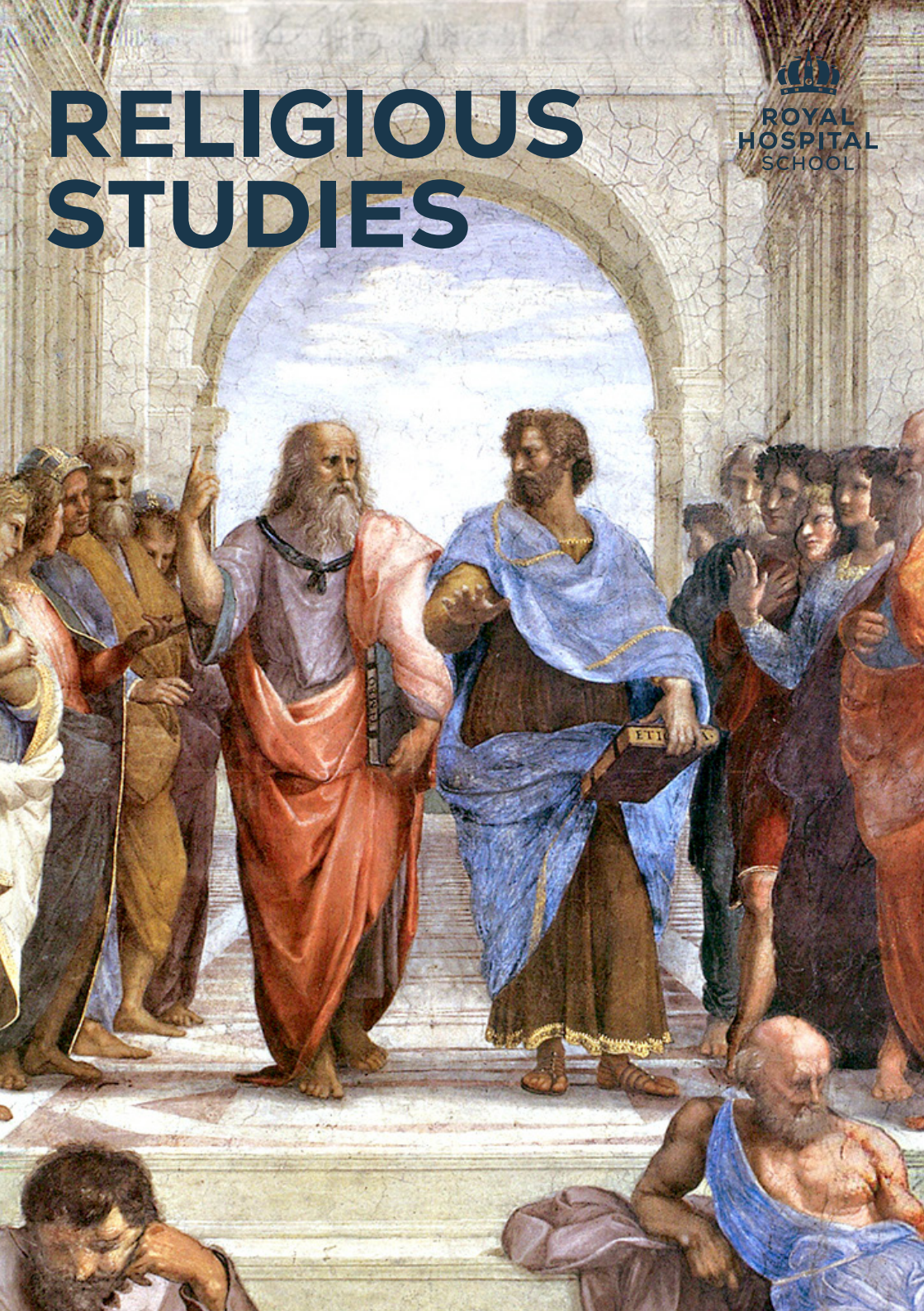


# RELIGIOUS STUDIES

  
ROYAL  
HOSPITAL  
SCHOOL





# PHILOSOPHY, RELIGION & ETHICS (PRE) IN THE SIXTH FORM

If you have picked this document up, then you will at the very least be actively considering this subject. There may be a number of reasons why you are showing some interest:

- You have studied GCSE Religious Studies and want to take it further.
- You haven't studied GCSE Religious Studies but are interested in the subject.
- You haven't made up your mind about your A Level choices but think that PRE could be on the shortlist.

Pupils come to the subject by lots of different pathways, and the vast majority leave PRE both having enjoyed it and having learned a great deal.

## WHAT DOES IT DO FOR YOU?

PRE, like other essay-based subjects, will help you to develop:

- Your thinking skills
- Your writing skills
- Your ability to communicate in debate
- Your ability to evaluate your own arguments and the arguments of others

These skills are crucial, not just at university but in many walks of life beyond. The good thing about PRE is that these are the skills which are most to the fore in the subject.

PRE will also introduce you to some of the most important thinkers in Western history. There is a factual content to the subject, much of which will be new to you. As in other A Level subjects, you will be on a journey – an intellectual journey of discovery.

**THE ESSENCE OF ALL RELIGIONS IS ONE.  
ONLY THEIR APPROACHES ARE DIFFERENT.**

– Mahatma Gandhi

## WHAT WILL YOU STUDY?

At RHS we will be following the Religious Studies (RS) A Level specification offered by OCR. It consists of three components, each of which is examined in a 2 hour paper. There is no coursework.

### COMPONENT 1

#### Philosophy of Religion

- ancient philosophical influences – Plato and Aristotle
- mind, body and soul
- arguments for and against the existence of God – including the design argument, the cosmological argument and arguments from science
- religious experience – including visions, voices and conversions
- the problem of evil – including natural disasters and human cruelty
- the nature of God: what is He like? – including omnipotence, omniscience and omnibenevolence
- religious language

### COMPONENT 2

#### Religion and Ethics

- ethical theories – including utilitarianism and situation ethics
- the application of ethical theory to euthanasia and business ethics
- ethical language and thought – including: are moral judgements just expressions of emotion?
- the conscience – including: is it the voice of God or the voice of parents?
- sexual ethics

### COMPONENT 3

#### Developments in religious thought

- religious beliefs, values and teachings – including Original Sin, and death and the afterlife
- religious wisdom
- religious identity – including Christian moral action
- social and historical developments in religious thought
- the relationship between religion and society – including gender
- challenges to religious thought – including science and Marxism



# HOW IS IT TAUGHT AT RHS?

The subject of religious studies is a vast one. The OCR examination board has decided, and we in the PRE Department at RHS agree, that the most stimulating, rewarding and useful approach is the one that looks at a particular religion and then explores how followers of that religion have thought and how that religion has been treated by philosophy, whether that be the philosophy of religion or philosophical ethics.

Any proper study of a religion must grapple with the key ideas that have shaped that religion and how those ideas have been affected by, and how they have affected, historical and social developments.

Philosophy of religion touches on some old ideas about God and the world. The reason we continue to study these ideas is that they have a remarkable capacity to survive the many challenges which have been issued against them. So, you will find that your study of the subject will also pick up on arguments and debates which still feature today in the 21st century.

Philosophical ethics deals with the kinds of moral decisions which most, if not all, of us will have to face at some point in our lives. Hardly a day goes by when the newspapers do not touch on an issue that you will have had the opportunity to explore in PRE. This makes the subject relevant, alive and exciting.

Lessons will be conducted in the spirit of exploration, debate and evaluation. We will provide bespoke resources, built through first-class subject knowledge, to help you gain top grades in the subject. It is, of course, a two-way process, and you will be expected to engage fully with the material, ensuring that you get the key concepts, arguments and theories under your belt in readiness for rigorous class investigation.

In addition, you will be expected to study independently throughout the course. This means reading new material on your own and putting the fruits of your efforts into your written work. This kind of learning is vital and it is ideal preparation for university study.



If you would like to discuss the RS OCR A Level specification further, please do not hesitate to contact Mrs Kellyanne O'Callaghan, Head of Philosophy, Religion & Ethics