PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION

These are fascinating and challenging courses in which pupils will be able to wrestle with some of the most perplexing questions known to mankind. You don’t need to have a religious belief; all you need is an inquiring mind and a willingness to think seriously about religion, spirituality and philosophy.

GCSE Religious Studies

GCSE Religious Studies focuses on some of the most important religious, philosophical and ethical ideas and controversies of our time. It requires pupils to develop skills of analysis and argument-building, and an ability to understand radically different viewpoints than their own, skills that strongly support a great many 6th-Form choices, university degrees, and careers. Pupils study a number of exciting and challenging philosophical and ethical themes:

- The origins and value of the universe, including the relationship between science and religion
- The origins and value of human life, including debates about euthanasia, abortion and life after death
- Philosophical arguments for and against the existence of God
- The nature of the divine and revelation
- Religion, crime and punishment
- Human rights
- Wealth and poverty

Pupils will study the beliefs and practices of two religions: Christianity and Buddhism, and the approaches these faiths take to the topics outlined above.

We will follow the AQA GCSE Religious Studies course*, which is assessed by two exams of 1 hour 45 minutes each. There is no coursework. More information can be found at http://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/religious-studies/gcse/religious-studies-a-8062

Contact for further information:

Mr. T. Kirby - tck@wellingtoncollege.org.uk
A-Level Religious Studies (Philosophy, Ethics, Theology)

Course description
A-Level Religious Studies offers an in-depth engagement with some of the most significant and profound problems to have challenged the human mind, drawing on methods of philosophy, moral reasoning, and theological reflection. Can belief in God be supported intellectually? Is there life after death? What is the nature of goodness? How should the figure of Jesus be understood?

The course followed is Eduqas (WJEC) A-Level Religious Studies. More information can be found at http://www.eduqas.co.uk/qualifications/religious-studies/as-a-level/

Requirements
You do not need to have studied Religious Studies before or have any religious beliefs to take this course. However, you are expected to have attained an A/A* grade at GCSE in at least one of the following: Philosophy, Religious Studies, English, or History. For students to succeed, it is essential for them to approach the subject with genuine curiosity and an open, inquiring and critical mind.

Assessment structure
The A-level is made up of the following three components:

- Component 1: Study of Religion
- Component 2: Philosophy of Religion
- Component 3: Religion and Ethics

Each component is assessed through a 2-hour exam at the end of the course, and each accounts for a third of the total final grade. There is no coursework.

Potential careers
Religious Studies can lead you into any career. The philosophical reasoning that you will learn is important for all careers, as you learn how to construct sound arguments and criticise bad ones. Former students have gone on to study a range of subjects at university, including Medicine, Law, English, Philosophy, Theology, Psychology and many others.

Contact for further information:
Mr. T. Kirby - tck@wellingtoncollege.org.uk
IB Philosophy (HL and SL)

Course description

Philosophy, the 'love of wisdom', is a fascinating and exciting subject which enables students to wrestle with the greatest questions known to mankind. The philosopher is tasked with an abstract challenge – thinking about thought itself. The aims of the IB Philosophy course are broad and enabling. Students are required to:

- develop an intellectually independent and creative way of thinking
- formulate arguments in a rational and logical way
- examine critically their own experiences, and their ideological and cultural biases
- become aware of the plurality of philosophical traditions, ancient and modern

Syllabus outline

Core Theme – Being Human

An in-depth analysis of the question, "What does it mean to be a human being?" Areas of focus include: how the mind relates to the body, whether machines could be human, or whether there is such a thing as human nature.

Optional Themes

Higher Level requires the study of two themes, while Standard Level requires the study of only one theme. The themes include the Philosophy of Religion (arguments for and against God, problems of suffering and sin, issues of religious language, etc.) and also the study Ethics (theoretical approaches to morality, the nature of 'good', modern ethical dilemmas, etc.).

Prescribed texts

The study of a complete philosophical text (usually, *The Ethics of Authenticity* by Charles Taylor).

Internal assessment

Students will work on a piece of extended writing i.e. 'coursework', which involves a philosophical analysis of non-philosophical material. The analysis must be 1600-2000 words in length, but the choice of topic is open; it could be a novel, song, poem, or a work of art.

Exploring Philosophical Activity (Higher Level only)

Students will demonstrate their ability to describe and apply philosophy as an activity. They must respond to an unseen text, analysing the meaning as well as describing how philosophy 'works' in the document.

Requirements

It is unlikely that pupils will have studied Philosophy formally at Middle School level prior to this course. However, candidates must have attained at least an A grade at GCSE one or more of the following subjects: Religious Studies, English Language, English Literature or History. Study of Classics may also be an advantage. You must be willing to approach the subject with an open, inquiring and critical mind.

Potential careers

Philosophy can lead to any career. The styles of argument and analysis that you will learn are important for all careers, as you learn how to construct sound arguments and criticise bad ones among other key skills. Taking this subject does not restrict you to any particular career path and pupils have gone on to study a wide range of subjects at university including Philosophy, Law, English literature, Theology, Psychology and even Sciences or Medicine.

Contact for further information:

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