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# Scheme of work

Religious Studies – Thematic studies

Religious, philosophical and ethical studies in the modern world: Theme C - The existence of God and Revelation

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To help teachers plan a course of study for the new GCSE Religious Studies specification A (8062), we have provided this scheme of work. This is purely illustrative of one way in which this course might be delivered and it is not intended to be in any way prescriptive. Teachers will need to develop schemes which suit the arrangements and time allocations of their own schools and colleges. Provided the specification content is covered, teachers may adopt any approach they wish.

## Assumed coverage

This scheme of work is based on 120 guided learning hours for the full GCSE.

Each of the themes studied should be covered in approximately 15 hours.

Teach alongside: the two religions studied for Component 1 and the other three thematic studies from Component 2.

Philosophical arguments for and against the existence of God					
Lesson Number	Topic title	Subject specific detail	Guidance	Learning activity	Resources
Lesson 1	The Design Argument	The Design Argument, including its strengths and weaknesses.	<p>Students will be able to identify the key features of the Design Argument.</p> <p>Students will be able to provide examples from the natural world to illustrate the Design Argument.</p> <p>Students will be able to explain why the Design Argument is an effective argument for God's existence.</p> <p>Students will be able to explain the potential problems with the argument.</p> <p>Students will be able to describe their own view of the effectiveness of the Design Argument.</p>	<p>Ice breaker. Students might be asked to discuss, in small groups, the most beautiful natural sights they have seen.</p> <p>Students might be given worksheets detailing key natural systems such as the water cycle and the intricacy of the formation of the eye.</p> <p>In small groups, students could consider the various explanations for the beauty, order and intricacy of the world. Students could share their findings with the rest of the class.</p> <p>Students could then be asked to consider how this evidence might be used to prove the existence of God.</p> <p>Students could be given an outline of William Paley's watch analogy to illustrate a formal representation of the Design Argument.</p> <p>In small groups, students could discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the argument and present their views to the whole class. These could be supported with a guided worksheet detailing the key strengths and weaknesses of the argument.</p>	<p>Photos of beautiful sights in nature – perhaps on a PowerPoint or using a YouTube clip.</p> <p>Worksheets detailing key natural systems.</p> <p>Worksheet or appropriate textbook which presents Paley's analogy of the watch.</p> <p>Guided worksheet on the strengths and weaknesses of the argument.</p> <p>Examination evaluation question on the effectiveness of the Design Argument as an argument for God's existence.</p> <p>Mark scheme.</p>

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				<b>Differentiation and Extension</b> Higher ability students could complete an exam question on the relative strengths and weaknesses of the Design Argument. Less able students could make lists – one showing the strengths of the Design Argument, the other the weaknesses.	
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Lesson Number	Topic title	Subject specific detail	Guidance	Learning activity	Resources
Lesson 2	The First Cause Argument	The First Cause Argument, including its strengths and weaknesses.	<p>Students will understand the principle of cause and effect.</p> <p>Students will be able to describe the main features of the Causal Argument.</p> <p>Students will be able to explain the strengths and weaknesses of the argument.</p> <p>Students will be able to explain their own view of the effectiveness of the argument.</p>	<p>Students can be shown a video of a series of dominoes falling and they could then discuss the reason each domino falls eg, the principle of cause and effect.</p> <p>In small groups, students could consider the cause and effects that result in them sitting in the room today. How far can they go backwards in time? In small groups, students could discuss how the principle of cause and effect relates to the existence of God. Students could then present their views to the rest of the class.</p> <p>The class could be divided into two groups; one group which argues that God could be the cause of the universe and the other group which argues that God is not needed to cause the universe. Students could ask questions of each group. Students could answer an evaluation question on whether the Causal Argument is an effective argument for God's existence.</p> <p><b>Differentiation and Extension</b> Students could complete some research into the Big Bang as the cause of the universe. Students could consider whether this theory can be compatible with the existence of God as the cause of the universe.</p>	<p>Appropriate video to demonstrate the principle of cause and effect.</p> <p>Evaluation question on the effectiveness of the Causal Argument as an argument for the existence of God.</p> <p>Internet or appropriate textbook for research.</p>

Lesson Number	Topic title	Subject specific detail	Guidance	Learning activity	Resources
Lesson 3	The Argument From Miracles	The Argument from Miracles, including two examples of miracles.	<p>Students will be able to describe the main features of the Argument from Miracles.</p> <p>Students will be able to describe one example of a miracle from Christianity and one other from another of the world's major religions.</p>	<p>Students could, in small groups, define what is meant by the word 'miracle' and share their definitions with the rest of the group. Students could be presented with the definitions of various philosophers and could discuss which they think is the most effective definition.</p> <p>Students could be shown a clip from a video which presents an example of a miracle; such as the Feeding of the Five Thousand, the Hindu milk miracle, or they could read an account of a miracle; such as the miracle of the Quran's revelation or the revelation of God to Guru Nanak. Students could write notes on the detail of a miracle story from Christianity and one from another faith.</p> <p>Students could then consider how miracles might prove the existence of God. Students could present their ideas to the rest of the class.</p> <p><b>Differentiation and Extension</b> Students could research a miracle from a different faith or from the current day (eg, Lourdes, Toronto Blessing).</p>	<p>Worksheet detailing various definitions of the word 'miracle'.</p> <p>Appropriate video clip/textual accounts.</p> <p>Internet or appropriate textbook for research.</p>

Lesson Number	Topic title	Subject specific detail	Guidance	Learning activity	Resources
Lesson 4	The Argument From Miracles	The Argument from Miracles, including its strengths and weaknesses.	<p>Students will be able to describe the main strengths and weaknesses of the Argument from Miracles.</p> <p>Students will be able to explain their view of the effectiveness of the argument.</p>	<p>In small groups students could explain how the miracles they previously researched could prove the existence of God. Students could share their ideas with the rest of the class.</p> <p>Using the miracle on which they focused, students could try and identify how the miracle might not be evidence for the existence of God. For instance, how the miracle may be a misinterpretation of a natural event, a result of a hallucination etc. Students could share their ideas with the rest of the group and discuss what they believe is the most probable explanation for the miracle.</p> <p><b>Differentiation and Extension</b> Students could be given an evaluation question on their view of the relative effectiveness of the Argument from Miracles for the existence of God.</p>	Evaluation question on the effectiveness of the Argument from Miracles as proof for the existence of God.

Lesson Number	Topic title	Subject specific detail	Guidance	Learning activity	Resources
Lesson 5	Evil and Suffering as an argument against the existence of God	Evil and Suffering as an argument against the existence of God.	<p>Students will be able to define the terms 'evil' and 'suffering' and will be able to differentiate between both terms.</p> <p>Students will be able to provide examples of evil and suffering.</p> <p>Students will be able to explain how evil and suffering may prove that God does not exist.</p>	<p>Students could be provided with various examples of evil and they could attempt to separate the examples into two groups (eg, natural and moral). Students could use an appropriate textbook or the internet to research the definitions of 'evil' and 'suffering'.</p> <p>In small groups, using examples of evil and suffering, students could attempt to explain how the examples undermine the existence of God.</p> <p><b>Differentiation and Extension</b> Students could research the views of Eli Weisel and why he concluded that God could not exist in the face of evil and suffering.</p>	<p>Worksheet detailing various examples of evil.</p> <p>Internet or appropriate textbook which provides definitions of 'evil' and 'suffering'.</p> <p>Internet or textbook for differentiation/extension task.</p>

Lesson Number	Topic title	Subject specific detail	Guidance	Learning activity	Resources
Lesson 6	Evil and Suffering as an argument against the existence of God	Evil and Suffering as an argument against the existence of God.	<p>Students will be able to explain the effectiveness of the argument that evil and suffering prove the non-existence of God.</p> <p>Students will be able to explain key theodicies used by religious people to defend God's existence in the face of evil and suffering.</p> <p>Students will be able to describe whether they think that the evil and suffering prove the non-existence of God.</p>	<p>In small groups, students could discuss whether, in their view, they believe that the existence of evil and suffering undermines the existence of God. They could share their views with the rest of the group.</p> <p>An outline of key theodicies (eg, free will/the existence of the Devil) could be positioned around the room in stations. Students could visit each station and make a note of each theodicy, putting each theodicy in order of effectiveness for being able to defend God's existence.</p> <p>In small groups, students could then discuss the theodicies and whether any of them are effective in undermining the view that evil and suffering prove the non-existence of God.</p> <p><b>Differentiation and Extension</b> Higher ability students could answer an evaluation question on whether the existence of evil and suffering proves that God does not exist. Less able students could make two lists – one supporting the idea that the existence of evil and suffering proves that God does not exist and one showing reasons against this.</p>	<p>Theodicy stations.</p> <p>An evaluation question on the effectiveness of theodicies in defending God.</p>



Lesson Number	Topic title	Subject specific detail	Guidance	Learning activity	Resources
Lesson 7	Arguments against the existence of God from science	Argument against the existence of God from science.	<p>Students will be able to describe how scientific theories – such as those associated with the Big Bang and Evolution – may prove the non-existence of God.</p> <p>Students will be able to explain whether they think that religious beliefs can coincide with scientific theories.</p>	<p>Students could research and explain the ‘Big Bang’ and ‘Evolution’ and how they relate to the origin of the universe and the origin of humanity.</p> <p>In small groups, students could consider how the Big Bang and Evolution can undermine the existence of God as creator of the universe and of humanity.</p> <p>Students could then consider how a theist might respond to those who argue that such scientific theories undermine the existence of God.</p> <p><b>Differentiation and Extension</b> Students could research the views of Arthur Peacocke and how he defends God in the face of science. Students could also research the views of Peter Atkins who argues that science does undermine the existence of God.</p>	Internet/appropriate textbook for research.

Lesson Number	Topic title	Subject specific detail	Guidance	Learning activity	Resources
Lesson 8	Special revelation as a source of knowledge about the divine (God, gods or ultimate reality)	<p>Special revelation, including visions and one example of a vision.</p> <p>Different ideas about the divine that comes from this source: the divine as omnipotent and omniscient, personal and impersonal, immanent and transcendent.</p>	<p>Students will be able to define 'special revelation' and will be able to explain how special revelation may demonstrate God's existence.</p> <p>Students will be able to explain the nature of visions and will be able to describe a vision from Christianity and one other major world faith.</p> <p>Students will be able to describe various ideas of God that come from special revelation.</p>	<p>Students could be provided with a definition of 'special revelation' and several examples of visions – eg, St. Bernadette, St. Theresa of Avila, Vision at Fatima. Students could choose one of these visions from Christianity and another from another faith and consider what these visions indicate about the nature of God.</p> <p>Students could share their ideas with the rest of the group.</p> <p>Students could be given a list of key definitions of God (omnipotent, omniscient, personal, immanent) and they could explain how each characteristic can be identified in the account of the vision.</p> <p><b>Differentiation and Extension</b> Students could research the impact of visions on the believer and how the effect of visions can potentially verify the experience.</p> <p>Less able students could be given a card search of the definitions to the key words about God.</p>	<p>Worksheet providing the definition of 'special revelation' as well as examples of visions from various religious traditions.</p> <p>Worksheet detailing key definitions of God.</p> <p>Internet/appropriate textbook for research.</p>

Lesson Number	Topic title	Subject specific detail	Guidance	Learning activity	Resources
Lesson 9	Experience as a source of knowledge about the divine (God, gods or ultimate reality)	The problems of different ideas about the divine arising from the experience, alternative explanations for the experience and the possibility that the people who claimed to have them were lying or mistaken.	<p>Students will be able to explain the key problems with special revelation; including those relating to the ideas of the divine, alternative explanations and whether the people who describe these experiences are mistaken.</p> <p>Students will be able to explain their own view of the validity of special revelation as a source of information about the nature of God.</p>	<p>Students could consider the example of the vision they previously studied and consider alternative explanations for its occurrence. These ideas could be shared with the rest of the group with key points highlighted.</p> <p>Students could answer an evaluation on the validity of special revelation for providing people with information about the nature of God.</p> <p><b>Differentiation and Extension</b> Students could research the views of Richard Swinburne relating to <i>testimony</i> and <i>credulity</i>. Students could consider whether or not they agree with Swinburne. If so – why? And if not – why not?</p>	<p>An evaluation question on the validity of special revelation in providing people with information about the nature of God.</p> <p>Internet/appropriate textbook for research.</p>

Lesson Number	Topic title	Subject specific detail	Guidance	Learning activity	Resources
Lesson 10	Enlightenment as a source of knowledge about the divine	<p>Enlightenment as a source of knowledge about the divine.</p> <p>Different ideas about the divine that comes from this source: the divine as omnipotent and omniscient, personal and impersonal, immanent and transcendent.</p>	<p>Students will be able to explain what is meant by the word 'enlightenment'.</p> <p>Students will be able to explain how enlightenment provides information about the divine and what can be known about the divine from this source.</p>	<p>Students could research or be given guided worksheets which provide key examples of people believing they have achieved enlightenment eg, the Buddha in Buddhism. They could also research or be given information on what is meant by the term 'Moksha' in Hinduism. This may be in the form of information or in the form of first-hand recollections of those who are attempting to achieve enlightenment. Students could infer definitions from such accounts.</p> <p>In small groups, students could consider what can be learned about God through the process of gaining enlightenment. For example, they could consider how the process to Moksha will result in Hindus understanding the relationship between the soul (atman) and Brahman. This infers that God is personal and immanent but also transcendent and impersonal insofar as Brahman is something beyond life to which one merges upon the attainment of Moksha.</p> <p><b>Differentiation and Extension</b> Students could answer a question on whether it is possible for God to be both immanent and transcendent, personal and impersonal at the same time.</p>	<p>Guided worksheets providing definitions or recollections of those searching for enlightenment.</p> <p>A question on whether it is possible for God to be both immanent and transcendent, personal and impersonal at the same time.</p>

Lesson Number	Topic title	Subject specific detail	Guidance	Learning activity	Resources
Lesson 11	Enlightenment as a source of knowledge about the divine	The value of enlightenment as a source of knowledge about the divine.	Students will be able to describe problems with enlightenment and the validity of such experiences as a source of knowledge about God's existence.	<p>In small groups, students could be given recollections of what people feel when approaching enlightenment eg, a feeling of unity/marriage/understanding of the divine.</p> <p>In these groups, students could consider other explanations that could be provided for these feelings and then share their ideas with the rest of the group. Students could place the potential alternative explanations in order of how convincing they are.</p> <p><b>Differentiation and Extension</b> Students could answer a question on the validity of enlightenment as a source of knowledge about the divine.</p>	<p>Information provided to the students, giving recollections of those who are approaching enlightenment.</p> <p>A question on the validity of enlightenment as a source of knowledge about the divine.</p>

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Lesson 12	General Revelation	<p>Nature as a way of understanding the divine.</p> <p>Different ideas about the divine that comes from this source: the divine as omnipotent and omniscient, personal and impersonal, immanent and transcendent.</p>	<p>Students will be able to explain what is meant by the term 'General Revelation'.</p> <p>Students will be able to describe how nature can provide information about God.</p> <p>Students will be able to provide examples to illustrate how God can be known from nature.</p> <p>Students will be able to describe different ideas about the divine that come from this source.</p>	<p>Students could be provided with a definition of the term 'General Revelation'. Using examples from nature, students could identify how the order, beauty and intricacy of nature (as studied in the Design Argument) can provide information about God. Students could share their ideas with the rest of the group, ensuring that examples can be given to illustrate God's omnipotence, omniscience, personal, impersonal, immanent and transcendent qualities.</p> <p><b>Differentiation and Extension</b> Students could consider what nature 'red in tooth and claw' suggests about the nature of God.</p>	Worksheet providing the definition of the term 'General Revelation'.

Lesson Number	Topic title	Subject specific detail	Guidance	Learning activity	Resources
Lesson 13	General revelation	The value of general revelation as a source of knowledge about the divine.	<p>Students will be able to explain problems with nature as a source of information and knowledge about the nature of God.</p> <p>Students will be able to compare and contrast Christian views with that of another world faith.</p>	<p>In small groups, students could consider each of the examples previously discussed as to how God can be revealed in nature. Consideration could be given to Christian and the viewpoint of another religion. In discussion, students could consider alternative explanations for each of these features in nature.</p> <p>Students could discuss how nature could be considered a reflection of the random processes of evolution rather than that of a designer God.</p> <p><b>Differentiation and Extension</b> Students could answer a question on the information about the divine that could be provided by nature.</p>	<p>Quotes from sacred writings.</p> <p>A question on the efficacy of a viewpoint which suggests that nature can provide us with knowledge of God.</p>

Lesson Number	Topic title	Subject specific detail	Guidance	Learning activity	Resources
Lesson 14	Scripture as a source of knowledge about the divine	<p>Scripture as a way of understanding the divine.</p> <p>Different ideas about the divine that comes from this source: the divine as omnipotent and omniscient, personal and impersonal, immanent and transcendent.</p>	<p>Students will be able to describe how scripture can provide information about God.</p> <p>Students will be able to provide examples to illustrate how God can be known from this source.</p> <p>Students will be able to describe different ideas about the divine that come from this source.</p>	<p>Students could be provided with a variety of texts from several religious traditions eg, Christianity, Judaism, Hinduism, Islam, Sikhism.</p> <p>Students, in small groups, could focus on the texts of one religious tradition and draw out the key features of God which can be inferred from the source. These could then be shared with the rest of the group and with other students who could have focused on a different religious tradition.</p> <p>Students could compare and contrast their findings in discussion and draw out the key characteristics of God which may be emphasised, generally, in scriptural narratives.</p> <p><b>Differentiation and Extension</b> Students could consider examples of scriptural texts from a different faith from that studied in the lesson. Students could draw out key teachings about God that can be inferred from the text. Less able students could be provided with clues to help them with this.</p>	Worksheet providing textual extracts.



Lesson Number	Topic title	Subject specific detail	Guidance	Learning activity	Resources
Lesson 15	General revelation	The value of general revelation as a source of knowledge about the divine.	Students will be able to explain the problems with seeing scripture as a source of information about the nature of God.	<p>Students, in small groups, could consider the key inferences about God's nature that they discussed during the previous lesson. They could then discuss the potential problems of seeing scripture as a source of information about the nature of God. Ideas could be shared with the rest of the group.</p> <p>In discussion, students could consider whether they think that scripture is an effective source to provide people with knowledge about the divine. Different groups could represent different views and questions asked of each group as appropriate.</p> <p><b>Differentiation and Extension</b> Suitable exam questions to conclude this section. Some extra guidance could be given to the less able.</p>	A question on whether general or special revelation is more effective in providing information about the divine and/or some exam questions to test the whole section.