

General Certificate of Education

Religious Studies 6061

RS11 Studies in the Philosophy of Religion

Mark Scheme

2005 examination – June series

Mark schemes are prepared by the Principal Examiner and considered, together with the relevant questions, by a panel of subject teachers. This mark scheme includes any amendments made at the standardisation meeting attended by all examiners and is the scheme which was used by them in this examination. The standardisation meeting ensures that the mark scheme covers the candidates' responses to questions and that every examiner understands and applies it in the same correct way. As preparation for the standardisation meeting each examiner analyses a number of candidates' scripts: alternative answers not already covered by the mark scheme are discussed at the meeting and legislated for. If, after this meeting, examiners encounter unusual answers which have not been discussed at the meeting they are required to refer these to the Principal Examiner.

It must be stressed that a mark scheme is a working document, in many cases further developed and expanded on the basis of candidates' reactions to a particular paper. Assumptions about future mark schemes on the basis of one year's document should be avoided; whilst the guiding principles of assessment remain constant, details will change, depending on the content of a particular examination paper.

Examination Levels of Response

Religious Studies (Advanced) A2 Level Descriptors

[Marks for 10-mark questions are shown in brackets]

Level	A2 Descriptor for Quality of Written Communication in AO1 and AO2	A2 Descriptor AO1	Marks	A2 Descriptor AO2	Marks
5	Highly appropriate form and style of writing; clear and coherent organisation of information; appropriate and accurate use of specialist vocabulary; good legibility and high level of accuracy in spelling, punctuation and grammar.	A thorough treatment of the topic, which may be in depth or breadth. Information is accurate and relevant. A thorough understanding is shown through good use of relevant evidence and examples. Where appropriate good knowledge and understanding of diversity of views and / or scholarly opinion is demonstrated.	17-20 [9-10]	A very good response to issue(s) raised. Different views, including where appropriate those of scholars or schools of thought, are discussed and evaluated perceptively. Effective use is made of evidence to sustain an argument. Systematic analysis and reasoning leads to appropriate conclusions. There may be evidence of independent thought.	17-20
4	Appropriate form and style of writing; clear and coherent organisation of information; appropriate and accurate use of specialist vocabulary; good legibility and high level of accuracy in spelling, punctuation and grammar.	A generally thorough treatment of the topic. Information is accurate and relevant. Good understanding is demonstrated through use of relevant evidence and examples. Where appropriate, alternative views and / or scholarly opinion are satisfactorily explained.	13-16 [7-8]	A good response to issue(s) raised. Different views, including where appropriate those of scholars or schools of thought, are discussed. A process of reasoning leads to an appropriate conclusion. There may be some evidence of independent thought.	13-16
3	Mainly appropriate form and style of writing; generally clear and coherent organisation of information; mainly appropriate and accurate use of specialist vocabulary; good legibility and fairly high level of accuracy in spelling, punctuation and grammar.	A satisfactory treatment of the topic. Information is mostly accurate and relevant. A reasonable understanding is demonstrated through use of some relevant evidence and examples. Where appropriate, some familiarity with diversity of views and / or scholarly opinion is shown.	9-12 [5-6]	A satisfactory response to issue(s) raised. Views are explained with some supporting evidence and arguments, and some critical analysis. A conclusion is drawn that follows from some of the reasoning.	9-12
2	Form and style of writing appropriate in some respects; some of the information is organised clearly and coherently; some appropriate and accurate use of specialist vocabulary; satisfactory legibility and level of accuracy in spelling, punctuation and grammar.	A superficial answer, which includes some key facts and demonstrates limited understanding using some evidence / examples. Where appropriate, brief reference may be made to alternative views and / or scholarly opinion.	5-8 [3-4]	Main issue is addressed with some supporting evidence or argument, but the reasoning is faulty, or the analysis superficial or only one view is adequately considered.	5-8
1	Little clarity and coherence in organisation; little appropriate and accurate use of specialist vocabulary; legibility and level of accuracy in spelling, punctuation and grammar barely adequate to make meaning clear.	Isolated elements of accurate and relevant information. Some signs of understanding. Evidence and examples are sparse.	1-4 [1-2]	Some simple reasons or evidence are given in support of a view that is relevant to the question.	1-4
0	Little clarity and coherence in organisation; little appropriate and accurate use of specialist vocabulary; legibility and level of accuracy in spelling, punctuation and grammar barely adequate to make meaning clear.	Nothing of relevance.	0	No valid points made.	0

RS11: *Studies in the Philosophy of Religion*

- 1 (a) ***Outline the cosmological argument for the existence of God as presented by Aquinas and by the Kalam tradition.***

Aquinas

The three ways of Aquinas – from motion / cause and effect and contingency. Observations of motion and cause, and rejection of infinite regression, lead to the conclusion that an unmoved mover and uncaused cause must exist and that this first mover and first cause is God.

The argument that a world of contingent things would not exist leads to the conclusion that there must be a necessary being on which the world depends and this is God.

The outline should trace the reasoning of the argument.

Kalam

Most commonly – everything that has a beginning has a cause, the universe had a beginning, therefore, it had a cause external to itself. That cause is God.

Most candidates will write much more on Aquinas than on the Kalam tradition.

For Aquinas alone, or a fully developed account of the Kalam argument alone, maximum Level 4.

Basic answers

Will loosely paraphrase the argument without making the reasoning clear.

Developed answers

Will present a coherent account of the arguments and may highlight distinctive points, e.g. for Aquinas, that the cause is contemporaneous with the effect rather than at the start of a temporal regression.

(20 marks) AO1

- (b) *Explain the strengths of the cosmological argument, and assess the view that the cosmological argument shows that it is reasonable to believe in God.*

Possible strengths include:

Certain first premise based on observation

Need to have an explanation very strong / reasonable

Most economical explanation reasonable.

At least two should be explained fully.

(10 marks) AO1

Assessment

There are many different ideas to discuss:

What it means to say 'it is reasonable'

Is the idea that God is the best explanation a reasonable one?

What reasons are there for identifying the first mover / causer as God?

Is the rejection of infinite regress reasonable? Why stop with God?

Does the argument contradict its own premise (e.g. nothing causes itself)?

Basic answers

Will raise rather than assess the points or cover only a very limited range.

Developed answers

Will be able to reflect the informed debate within the scholarship and focus on the question asked.

(20 marks) AO2

- 2 (a) *Explain what is meant by evil and summarise the explanation for the existence of evil found in process thought.*

Evil

Usually categorised as moral and natural, but may also include metaphysical.

Definitions with examples used to show understanding.

Process thought

The following points may be expected:

God not creator nor omnipotent – an influence within the universe, evolving with it.

Work of God to lure the universe towards its goal maximising intensity (quality) and harmony.

Nature of matter obstructs God's plan – tends to triviality and disharmony.

The development encouraged but not controlled by God makes extreme moral evil possible as well as extreme good. Natural evil is the direct result of God's lack of control over the world.

Justification for what God has done lies in the extreme good humanity is capable of – the alternative was no humanity.

Answer only defining evil maximum Level 2.

Answers not defining evil maximum Level 4.

(20 marks) AO1

- (b) ***Explain the role of free will in the Augustinian theodicy, and assess the view that free will is a satisfactory explanation for the existence of evil in God's world.***

Free will

Several points could be made. Expect:

Given to angels and humanity and abused; this abuse upsets the balance of nature; also directly causes suffering; gives opportunity of humanity to turn to God in faith – this justifies the gift of free will despite the price.

Developed answers

Should reflect both the cost and the value of free will.

N.B. the answer may be integrated within the discussion rather than in a separate section.

(10 marks) AO1

Assessment

Candidates may identify and discuss a range of problems associated with this view before arriving at a conclusion, including:

No evidence of an unspoiled paradise prior to the abuse of free will;

The idea of a perfect, free being doing wrong is self contradictory

A 'free' being should have been created who could and would have always chosen to do right.

Idea that we have free will is disputed – as is the idea that it is compatible with the omnipotence of God;

Punishment for abuse of free will in Hell seems inconsistent with the ideas of God as all loving.

N.B. The discussion may, but need not, go beyond the Augustinian Theodicy.

(20 marks) AO2

- 3 (a) ***Identify and explain the defining characteristics of a mystical experience.***

This requires knowledge and understanding of the relevant scholarship, including contrasting or complementary views.

e.g. William James: Ineffable, Noetic, Passive and Transient.

Introvertive and Extrovertive experiences – mystical union

Spiritual marriage and ecstasy.

Basic answers

May simply list a few characteristics and briefly define each one.

Developed answers

Will use illustration to explain the features identified.

There must be recognition of diversity of definitions for marks above Level 4 (14 marks).

(20 marks) AO1

- (b) *“The only thing that is religious about mystical experiences is the way in which some people interpret them.”*

Explain this statement, and assess how far you agree with it.

Explanation

Expect the main points in favour of this view.

Relevant points include:

Some experiences have no theistic content, e.g. nature mysticism.

Some may be naturally explained (intoxicants, psychological explanations, dreams)

The experiences are unverifiable because they are subjective, and largely indescribable.

(10 marks) AO1

Assessment

Expect refutation of the points given in the explanation with other views of what makes an experience “religious”, and discussion of whether these apply in this case.

The principles of credulity and testimony would be relevant here – reason is needed to reject subjective evidence.

Some experiences do have specifically religious content – especially an affective dimension.

‘Natural explanations’ are at best inconclusive, not least because physical changes taking place in the brain while the experience itself is happening may be effect rather than cause.

Basic answers

Are likely to limit themselves to arguing against points raised in their explanation.

Developed answers

Will recognise the issue of what makes such an experience religious (or not) and debate it.

(20 marks) AO2