

General Certificate of Education

Religious Studies 6061

Studies in the Philosophy of Religion RS11

Mark Scheme

2006 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 ontological argument as presented by Anselm, and explain why this argument is considered a ‘proof’ of the claim ‘God exists’.**

Anselm

Candidates should be aware of the two forms of the argument identified in Anselm’s proslogion:

- (1) Definition of God as ‘that than which none greater can be thought / greatest conceivable being’.
When the fool who rejects God’s existence hears this, he understands it, so it exists in his understanding.
It is greater to exist in reality and understanding than in understanding alone.
Therefore, the Greatest Conceivable being must exist in understanding and in reality.
- (2) The argument to God’s necessary existence.
The God whose non existence is possible / conceivable is not as great as the God whose non-existence is impossible / inconceivable. The greatest being is that whose non-existence is impossible / inconceivable. Therefore, God exists so truly that he cannot even be conceived as not existing.

Proof

The candidate must consider the meaning of ‘proof’ and answer the question accordingly.

One possible approach: the question asks about the proof of a claim or proposition. A focused answer may explain that the statement ‘God exists’ is demonstrated by the argument to be contained within the meaning of the premises which are, in turn, assumed to be true. The argument is therefore a formal (logical) proof of the claim. This may be explained in terms of deductive / analytical / *a priori* argument.

It would be possible for a candidate to conflate the explanation of why it is a proof with an outline of the argument, but most likely that candidates will treat each task separately.

Maximum Level 2 for ‘explain why it is considered a proof’ only.

Maximum Level 3 (9 marks) for one form of Anselm’s ontological argument only.

Maximum Level 3 (12 marks) for outline of argument alone – in a high level answer, the reasoning of the argument should be clear.

Maximum Level 4 for one form of Anselm’s argument and an explanation of why it is considered a ‘proof’.

(20 marks) AO1

- (b) ***Explain what this argument shows about the relationship between reason and faith, and assess the view that this argument is useless for the non-believer and pointless for the believer.***

Explain

Reason and faith.

Expect the idea that faith precedes reason and is therefore independent of it. Anselm writes of ‘faith seeking understanding’. Reason may, however, confirm faith and be consistent with it. There may also be discussion of how proof would exclude faith / faith does not need proof. This leads on to the debate.

(10 marks) AO1

Assess

Various arguments possible here, e.g.

Useless

No reason to accept the definition, or that existence can be demonstrated by this type of argument. BUT the argument challenges the non-believer to consider his / her understanding of God and raises the possibility that those who can doubt God’s existence simply do not understand what God is. Anselm writes that those who can doubt the existence of God know the word ‘God’ but not God himself.

Pointless

Those who know God have no need for ‘proof’ of God’s existence, since to know God and to know / understand that God exists are one and the same, BUT gives the believer a tool through which faith can be understood.

The argument that it is ‘useless’ for the non-believer may be supported by a rehearsal of many of the major criticisms of the argument. It is not necessary for the candidate to rehearse all of these, but some awareness will be needed to make the point.

For an answer dealing with only one of ‘useless’ or ‘pointless’ maximum Level 4 (14 marks).

(20 marks) AO2

- 2 (a) ***‘In the Irenaean Theodicy, the purpose of suffering is soul-making.’***

Explain this view.

Explanation of the Irenaean theodicy with direct reference to purpose and soul-making. It is likely that most candidates will associate the phrase ‘soul-making’ with Hick’s presentation of the theodicy, but this is not required in the answer. The emphasis here is that the world is planned to be as it is to allow human beings the space in which to fulfil their potential. Following Hick’s presentation of the theodicy: the first stage of creation was an act of God by which immature life forms were created by God ‘in his image’ in order to develop into ‘his likeness’. Life is the second phase of creation, and a world containing suffering the context for soul making – providing challenge. Risk taking and responsibility are an inevitable part of human existence. Living is an evolutionary / developmental / educative process by which human beings mature from image of God towards likeness of God. This second phase is free self-development at an epistemic distance from God. Reference may be made to the counterfactual hypothesis used by Hick to explain why a world in which there is no suffering is not suitable for soul development.

Lower level answers are likely to outline the theodicy without explicit reference to purpose and lacking examples of the way suffering is said to achieve it.

Higher level answers will focus on purpose and on suffering as a means to an end and are likely to show a greater awareness of the link between having the potential to suffer and being spiritually mature beings.

(20 marks) AO1

- (b) ***Explain why the existence of pointless suffering would challenge faith in God, and assess the view that a God who intends us to suffer cannot be an all-loving God.***

Explain

Pointless suffering as a challenge to faith in God

Example / explanation of (apparently) pointless suffering

Explanation of the problem of evil.

Maximum Level 4 (7 / 10 marks) if the evidential problem of evil is not dealt with.

(10 marks) AO1

Assess

Both the Augustinian* and Irenaean Theodicies could be used here, but an answer using the Irenaean / Soul-making theodicy on its own can score full marks.

Reference to other responses to the problem of evil may also be credited where they are made relevant.

*Since commentators on the Augustinian theodicy point out that the fall of Man, and therefore sin and its consequences, was planned by God.

The view that ‘a god who intends suffering must himself be evil’ is voiced by many. Discussion could include:

Intention – for a good purpose. Redemption through Christ to eternal life / soul making / free and loving relationship with God. Value of this said to justify God’s actions.

However, could same end have been achieved another way? (If not is God not omnipotent)

Could it have been achieved with less suffering?

What about the problem of unfair distribution of suffering?

Either – what is the point of going through all this suffering if universal salvation is guaranteed (Irenaean) or the problem of Hell (Augustinian).

(20 marks) AO2

- 3 (a) *Explain what is meant by a near-death experience and what it means to say that such experiences are ‘purely subjective’.*

Experience reported by a number of people, children and adults, who have recovered after period in which they ‘died’. Varies. Characteristics as identified, e.g. by Moody; Attwater; include Out of body experience; Tunnel; Light; Meeting dead relatives; being of light; barrier; return. Sometimes Christian / Buddhist images seen (e.g.); others no specific religious content; negative Near-Death Experiences. Sometimes transforming effect (e.g. conversion).

Purely subjective (no one precise definition) – general idea that the experience is: ‘in the mind’s eye’ only; real for the experient, but not really an experience of a realm beyond this realm; a projection.

Maximum Level 3 for answer lacking explanatory illustration(s) / example(s).
Maximum Level 4 (14 marks) for an answer lacking explanation of ‘purely subjective’.

All Level 5 answers must show awareness of variety among Near Death Experience.

(20 marks) AO1

- (b) *‘The experiences are real, but the interpretation of them as religious experiences is mistaken.’*

Explain why some people may hold this view of near-death experiences, and discuss how far you agree with it.

Explain

This means that the experience happened as the person reports (he / she is not lying) and this may be accepted because of the principle of credulity / testimony and because there is some apparent evidence that the out-of-body element of the experience is real (e.g. observation of the place in which the ‘body’ is). However, some also think that the experience should be interpreted as a ‘natural’ one (e.g. induced by anoxia) and not as an experience of a reality beyond this one. Also that people interpret them (wrongly) as religious simply because they match prior beliefs.

(10 marks) AO1

Assess

There are two issues here: (1) that the experiences are ‘real’, and (2) that they are ‘religious’, it is likely some will conflate these, or ignore the second. Possible questions the candidate may address include:

are arguments against the possibility that the consciousness can leave the body a good reason to dismiss the reports of these experiences? Are the natural explanations conclusive or reasonable? Has the ‘evidence’ that the person has genuinely left the body an alternative, natural explanation? What makes an experience a ‘religious experience’ and is anyone able to judge what another person’s experience actually is.

It is likely that candidates will conflate their answers to AO1 and AO2.

AO2 Maximum Level 4 (14 marks) for answers not dealing with both issues.

(20 marks) AO2