



**General Certificate of Education
June 2011**

Religious Studies

RSS03

Philosophy of Religion

AS Unit C

Final

Mark Scheme

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Examination Levels of Response

Religious Studies (Advanced Subsidiary) AS Level Descriptors

Level	AS Descriptor AO1	Marks	AS Descriptor AO2	Marks	AS Descriptors for Quality of Written Communication in AO1 and AO2
7	A thorough treatment of the topic within the time available. Information is accurate and relevant, and good understanding is demonstrated through use of appropriate evidence / examples	28-30	A well-focused, reasoned response to the issues raised. Different views are clearly explained with supporting evidence and argument. There is some critical analysis. An appropriate evaluation is supported by reasoned argument.	14-15	Appropriate form and style of writing; clear and coherent organisation of information; appropriate and accurate use of specialist vocabulary; good legibility; high level of accuracy in spelling punctuation and grammar.
6	A fairly thorough treatment within the time available; information is mostly accurate and relevant. Understanding is demonstrated through the use of appropriate evidence / example(s)	24-27	A mostly relevant, reasoned response to the issues raised. Different views are explained with some supporting evidence and argument. There is some analysis. An evaluation is made which is consistent with some of the reasoning.	12-13	
5	A satisfactory treatment of the topic within the time available. Key ideas and facts are included, with some development, showing reasonable understanding through use of relevant evidence / example(s).	20-23	A partially successful attempt to sustain a reasoned argument. Some attempt at analysis or comment and recognition of more than one point of view. Ideas adequately explained.	10-11	Mainly appropriate form and style of writing; some of the information is organised clearly and coherently; there may be some appropriate and accurate use of specialist vocabulary; satisfactory legibility and level of accuracy in spelling, punctuation and grammar.
4	A generally satisfactory treatment of the topic within the time available. Key ideas and facts are included, showing some understanding and coherence.	15-19	A limited attempt to sustain an argument, which may be one-sided or show little ability to see more than one point of view. Most ideas are explained.	7-9	Form and style of writing appropriate in some respects; some clarity and coherence in organisation; there may be some appropriate and accurate use of specialist vocabulary; legibility and level of accuracy in spelling, punctuation and grammar adequate to convey meaning.
3	A summary of key points. Limited in depth or breadth. Answer may show limited understanding and limited relevance. Some coherence.	10-14	A basic attempt to justify a point of view relevant to the question. Some explanation of ideas and coherence.	5-6	
2	A superficial outline account, with little relevant material and slight signs of partial understanding, or an informed answer that misses the point of the question.	5-9	A superficial response to the question with some attempt at reasoning.	3-4	Little clarity and 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.
1	Isolated elements of partly accurate information little related to the question.	1-4	A few basic points, with no supporting argument or justification.	1-2	
0	Nothing of relevance.	0	No attempt to engage with the question or nothing of relevance.	0	

RSS03: *Philosophy of Religion*

Question 1 The Cosmological argument

01 Explain the weaknesses of the cosmological argument.

Expect weaknesses such as:

Inductive argument therefore not a proof; Aquinas does not explain why he rejects infinite regression. Infinite regression would remove need for God; identity of necessary being as God; drawing conclusions that go beyond the evidence; fallacy of composition.

Criticisms need to make clear how they weaken the cosmological argument.

Other forms of the cosmological can be discussed besides Aquinas. However full marks can be gained if only Aquinas referred to.

(30 marks) AO1

02 To what extent do the strengths of the cosmological argument outweigh its weaknesses?

Possible strengths – gives explanations, science supports argument of a beginning to universe, part of a cumulative argument for God.

Strengths may be shown to be limited. Force of criticisms discussed. Expect some replies to weaknesses identified earlier.

Focus is on weighing one against the other.

(15 marks) AO2

Question 2 Religious experience

03 Examine the main characteristics of both visions and conversion experiences.

Expect some descriptive accounts of relevant religious experiences.

There should be reference to the main characteristics:

Conversion – different types of conversion, gradual /sudden, self surrendering, passive/active, transforming.

Visions – an image/event in which there is a message, variety of images (religious figures/places/fantastic creatures/end of world), types of visions (group, individual, corporeal, imaginative).

Maximum Level 5 (23) if only one type of religious experience is discussed.

(30 marks) AO1

04 'All religious experiences have natural explanations.' Assess this claim.

Expect reference to natural explanations and how they could account for religious experiences e.g. drugs, ability to simulate experiences, temporal lobe epilepsy.

Expect criticisms of these natural explanations, other explanations and debate whether it accounts for ALL religious experiences.

(15 marks) AO2

Question 3 Psychology and religion

- 05 Explain why Jung's understanding of religious belief may be seen as more positive than that of Freud.**

Expect account of Freud's view drawing out why it is seen as negative. For example, collective neurosis, wish fulfilment, repressed guilt as negative aspects. Views religion as a mental illness.

Expect account of Jung's view drawing out why it is seen as positive – archetypes and the quest for integration. Important for mental health. Helps maintain the balance of the mind and prevents neuroses.

(30 marks) AO1

- 06 'Religion has been successful in its response to psychology's challenges to religious belief.' Assess this claim.**

Agree:

Expect critiques of Freud and Jung theories. E.g. challenge that religion is guilt based/attack on Oedipus complex/not all deities are male/theory of archetypes criticised.

Expect some to argue that Jung strengthens religion – positive view.

Disagree:

Role of mind in religious belief.

New understanding of "religion".

Religion meets psychological needs of people.

Assessment of "successful".

(15 marks) AO2

Question 4 Atheism and postmodernism

- 07 Explain the key ideas of a postmodernist view of religion.**

Central feature of postmodernism - rejection of trust in reason and experience to discover truth. Rejection of all claims to absolute knowledge of what is true, including meta-narratives.

Expect this approach to be illustrated in postmodernist view of religion by reference to such things as cultural constructs; no right or wrong religions; personal spiritual search, religious supermarket, living religion rather than intellectual faith.

(30 marks) AO1

- 08 'Postmodernism is an affirmation of religion rather than a denial.' Assess this claim.**

Agree:

Religion in wider context freed from dogma and particular statements of belief. Less narrow. The heart of religion – spiritual living religion. Emphasis on traditional religion needing to be reinterpreted for the post modern era.

Disagree:

Denies any content to religion. Belief is empty. Denial of absolute truth. Believe anything.

(15 marks) AO2

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