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| **Autumn Term – (1) Ancient philosophical influences, (2) Soul, mind & body, (3) Arguments based on reason & observation.** | | |
| Overarching Topic: | | |
| What has come before and what comes later: | Students will have studies GCSE Religious Studies and will have transferred the skills over e.g. having an informed judgement, identifying arguments for and against, and knowledge of Christian beliefs, which were influenced by key topics of the above. | |
|  | Core | Extension |
| The Big Questions (What questions will students be able to answer upon mastery of the topic?) | What is posteriori argument?  What is a priori argument?  What is the world of forms?  Explain the allegory of the cave  What are the four causes?  What is the prime mover?  What is dualism?  What is materialism?  What are the elements of the soul according to Plato?  What are the elements of the soul according to Aristotle?  Why does Ryle believe that the soul is a category error?  ‘I think there for I am.’ – Who said this and what does it mean?  What does Aquinas base his argument on?  What does ‘cosmological’ mean?  What is infinite regression?  What is the fallacy of composition?  What is the principle of contingency and necessity?  What does ‘ontological’ mean?  What does Anselm state to reason God’s existence?  What example does Anselm give?  How does Descartes defend this argument?  How does Gaunilo criticise the argument?  What does it mean to say that existence is a predicate? | * How does Plato’s Form of Good compare with Aristotle’s Prime Mover? * How does Plato’s rationalism compare with Aristotle’s empiricism? * How might the dualist respond to materialist criticisms? * Is the concept of ‘soul’ better understood metaphorically or as a reality? * Does discussion of a mind-body distinction always involve category error? * Do arguments from observation present logical fallacies, which cannot be overcome? * Do cosmological arguments simply jump to the conclusion of a transcendent creator without sufficient explanation? |
|  | Skill/Technique | How students will develop and demonstrate this |
| Key skills | Clear and thorough knowledge of key thinkers and the context in which they lived e.g. ancient Greece compared to a Christian society.  To give critical comment (evaluation) of key philosophers thinking e.g. Anselm’s a prior thinking because he was a priest.  To be able to compare and contrast the reasoning which leads each thinker to his conclusions. | * By identifying the context/background of key scholars. Identifying the timeline of thinkers, e.g. Aristotle was a student of Plato’s. * By having a clear understanding of the topic content, in order to articulate and identify problems or solutions. Within essay questions, students will use their knowledge and a structured thesis to critically comment on thinkers. * By understanding the scale in which scholars are placed e.g. rationalist and empiricist. Students will arrive at specific reasoning by understanding the key disciplines. |

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| **Spring Term (4) The problem of evil, (5) Religious experiences** | | |
| Overarching Topic: | | |
| What has come before and what comes later: | Topics before dealt with evidential issues, which will be transferred to the above topics. Student will have been in contact with many of the key scholars from these units, and therefore can recognise their thought processes when applied to different areas of the course. | |
|  | Core | Extension |
| The Big Questions (What questions will students be able to answer upon mastery of the topic?) | Define a religious experience.  What are the different types of religious experiences?  What is William James’ main conclusion about religious experiences?  How does Swinburne classify religious experiences?  How does Freud criticise religious experiences?  How does Karl Marx respond to the function and need for religious experiences?  How does John Hick define evil?  What is the Inconsistent Triad?  What is a theodicy?  How does Augustine defend God?  How does Irenaeus defend God?  What is the Free Will Defence? | * Which of the logical or evidential aspects of the problem of evil pose the greatest challenge to belief? * Can the need to create a ‘vale of soul-making- justify the existence or the extent of evils? * Is it possible to defend monotheism successfully in the face of evil? * Can corporate religious experiences be considered more reliable or valid than individual experiences? * Does religious experiences provide a basis for belief in God or a greater power? * Is personal testimony or witness enough to support the validity of religious experiences? |
|  | Skill/Technique | How students will develop and demonstrate this |
| Key skills | To assess the credibility of witness testimonies in light of the circumstances and beliefs.  To explore the different possible explanations for religious phenomena’s.  To identify logical and evidential arguments within the topic. | * By exploring famous examples of religious experiences and comparing this to their upbringing and environment. * Using detailed knowledge of key scholars, students will be able to arrive at different conclusions depending on the discipline .e.g. psychological or behavioural. * Possessing key knowledge of the problem of evil within a challenging world along with theistic knowledge from scriptures. |

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| **Spring Term (5) The Nature of God, (6) Religious Language (RL), (7) RL with 20th century perspectives** | | |
| Overarching Topic: | | |
| What has come before and what comes later: | Students will have a good understanding of the nature of God following the problem of evil topic, as well as critical thinking skills from religious experiences to explore the issue of talking about God, rather than experiencing God. | |
|  | Core | Extension |
| The Big Questions (What questions will students be able to answer upon mastery of the topic?) | What does it mean to say that religious language is cognitive/non cognitive?  How does the verification principle describe religious language and why?  How is the falsification principle a supposed improvement of the verification principle?  Describe Anthony Flew’s gardener analogy.  What is a blink according to Hare?  How is religious language a language game according to Wittgenstein?  What are the key attributes of God according to traditional Christian thought?  What is the problem of the stone and which attribute does this apply to?  What is the Euthyphro Dilemma?  How does God’s omniscience affect free will?  How does Aquinas define God’s omnipotence?  What does it mean to say that God is eternal/everlasting? | * Is it possible, or necessary, to resolve the apparent conflict between the traditional attributes of God? * Which understanding of the relationship between God and time is the most useful? * Have Boethius, Anselm or Swinburne successfully resolved problems connected with God’s attributes and human free will? * Should the attributes of God be understood as subject to the limits of logical possibility or divine self-limitation? * What has been the influence of non-cognitive approaches to religious language on the interpretation of religious texts? * How do the ideas of Aquinas on religious language compare with those of Wittgenstein? |
|  | Skill/Technique | How students will develop and demonstrate this |
| Key skills | To be persuasive within your thesis.  Possessing an understanding of literary devices and their effect within the English language.  To be able to navigate through religious texts, by understanding their structure and referencing style. | * By offering criticisms of the opinion you find weaker, and by saying why you find them unconvincing, Opportunities arise through class discussion and from written essays. * By exploring God-speak in the form of an analogy, symbol and metaphor. Student will demonstrate this by explaining the limitations of each and the desired effect of each. * Students will use the Bible to find examples of religious language and will be required at times, to cross-reference these with other examples. |