



## **A LEVEL PHILOSOPHY AND ETHICS (RS)**

### **What does the course involve?**

Philosophy and Ethics is an academic course but is also related to issues you will come across in everyday life. It is therefore interesting and practical. Every day in a newspaper or on the TV you will find the issues you are studying discussed and debated. This is a relevant, enjoyable and challenging course that will develop your ability to think critically, logically and analytically. There is also much opportunity for discussion and debate. You will become clearer about what you think on a whole range of issues and be able to articulate and explain your beliefs more clearly. Philosophy is about the asking of what might be called ultimate questions. These are some of the most important questions, but those that cannot be easily answered and therefore require exploration and thought. Ethics is moral philosophy – the study of right and wrong. How do we know what action to take? How can we defend our views against those who say we are wrong about something? It will clarify your own thinking and help you to evaluate different arguments and points of view. It encourages attitudes of tolerance, open-mindedness and respect for others. You will also explore interesting social, ethical and cultural issues. This A-Level also includes an in-depth study of Buddhism, an interesting philosophy followed by millions worldwide. This course is a very good academic preparation for university, for a range of careers, and for life in general. It is well-recognized by top universities as suitable preparation for degree level study.

### **What exams and coursework are involved?**

**NO COURSEWORK: ALL ASSESSMENT IN MODULAR EXAMINATIONS**

H573/01: Philosophy (Paper: 2 hours)

Topics include: How has Ancient Greek philosophy influenced our beliefs? What IS a human person eg. do we have 'souls' or are we just physical beings? Why do people suffer? Why are people moral? Are disasters a divine punishment for the bad actions of humans? How can we explain the evidence of design we see in the world? Is there evidence for life after death? How has language shaped religious belief? How do we arrive at knowledge – through reason or empirical data? Is Philosophy the friend or enemy of religion? How has the concept of God been understood over time?

H573/02: A2 Religious Ethics (Paper: 2 hours)

Topics include: How do I know what is right or wrong? Is there a standard of morality that applies to everyone or is it just a matter of personal opinion? Is deciding what is right or wrong to do with calculating the consequences? Does religion have anything to do with morality? Is there a moral law written in nature? Students will apply their knowledge to real questions eg. should a person help their relative to die? How has social media influenced attitudes to sexuality in society? Is morality discovered or is it invented? Is there such a thing as a moral fact? Do we have a conscience? Is ethics about being a 'good' person? What is a 'good' person? Are we free to make moral choices or are we determined? Is being moral about following rules or calculating consequences?

H573/06: Developments in Buddhist Thought (Paper: 2 hours)

Topics include: Who was the Buddha? Key elements of Buddhist Philosophy eg. what are the key questions the Buddha asked and what answers did he find? What is the structure of a Buddhist society? What is the Buddhist understanding of the self? What is mindfulness? How are women understood within Buddhism? Different types of Buddhism worldwide including a study of Buddhism in the Western World.

### **What are the entry qualifications?**

Ideally students will have obtained a GCSE grade 5 or above in Religious Studies and a 5 or above in English, but no previous knowledge is required. As well as this it is useful to have an open mind and the desire to really think about, and explore, ideas and issues. Philosophy could be called the history of ideas. Students need to be able to demonstrate an interest in and ability to explore and understand different points of view and have the ability to articulate and analyze their own, and others views orally and in writing. They should be willing to contribute to class discussions and to listen respectfully to the views of others.

### **What could I do after completing the course?**

Philosophy is a good preparation for most university courses. It can lead into a wide range of careers in education, journalism, the medical, caring and legal professions, politics, the Civil Service and business; in fact a knowledge and understanding of Philosophy and Ethics is useful simply in living life itself. Everyone asks philosophical questions. Many students go on to enjoy philosophizing for the rest of their lives, whether or not they go on to advanced study of the subject.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, CONTACT MISS D PESKETT OR MR D EVANS.**