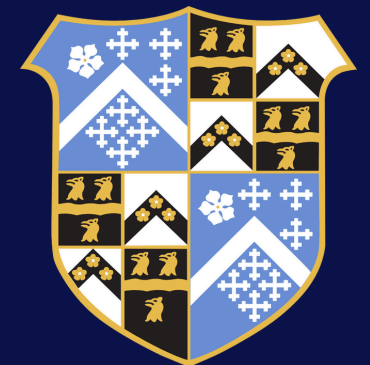




Studying Religious Studies at the Latymer Sixth Form

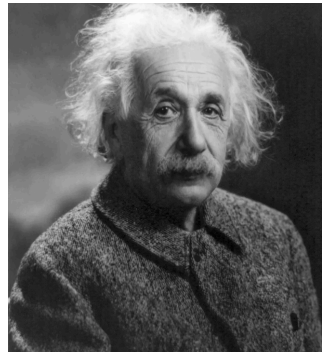


Religious Education (RE) is an exciting and dynamic subject and we hope that the students will enjoy, be inspired and be challenged by their RE Lessons. We want students to develop their intellectual curiosity with lively enquiring minds and are encouraged to think, reflect, question and discuss ideas about meaning and purpose.

We also encourage students to develop their depth of knowledge and understanding of a range of religions and non-religious views that they will encounter in life, to consider the eclectic nature of the study of religion and to help them develop skills of analysis and evaluation to arrive at a thoughtful, personal response about the many issues of faith, ethics and philosophy that we study. In addition, we want to encourage an appreciation of the nature of revealed texts and the variety of ways that these texts can be, and are, interpreted in everyday life in society.

We also hope that students will become more aware of spiritual, ethical and philosophical issues beyond the classroom, in wider society to help them to become participating members in their society.

Mr D Phillips
Head of Department

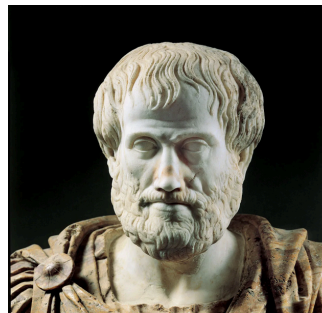
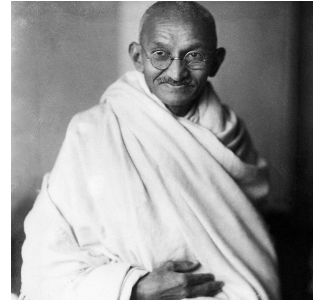


Albert Einstein

“Science without religion is lame, religion without science is blind.”

Mahatma Gandhi

“I believe that religious education must be the sole concern of religious associations.”



Aristotle

“Knowing yourself is the beginning of all wisdom.”

Malala Yousafzai

“I truly believe the only way we can create global peace is through not only educating our minds, but our hearts and souls.”



So why take A Level Religious Studies?

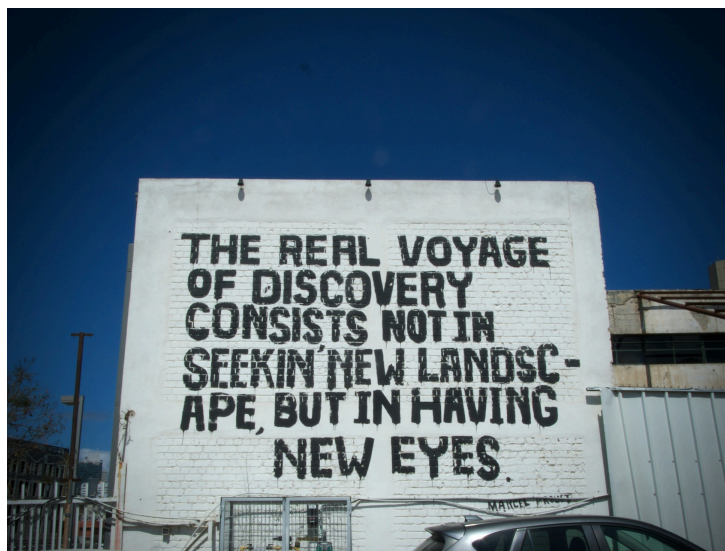
Because the study of philosophy, ethics and theology is just so interesting!

This eclectic course is made up of the study of ideas, texts and how to interpret them, history, cultures and lifestyles, and how all these ideas impact the world around us today. As a recent former student wrote, "... it is more relevant and interesting than people often realise." (Maya Okorodudu). Students are often wonderfully surprised how enthralling theology is as well as how it sheds light on situations in the world today!

A level Religious Studies is academically rigorous, but it also gives you the space to discover how to steer yourself through tricky issues, while still allowing the freedom to think and discover new ideas (as well as some very old ones!), a safe space to be confronted with, and to discuss and reflect on, some sensitive and personal issues, as well as many enjoyable discussions.

In the course you will be introduced to many of the main scholars who have shaped ideas through history – and who you will no doubt bump into in future academic courses (especially if you do philosophy or theology). It's a good all-round education!

Read through the syllabus and the views of a few former students below, from different backgrounds and worldviews, to reveal what skills are developed and how useful they are, and then do what they did – take Religious Studies for A level. You won't regret it!



A Level Religious Studies - Syllabus



1) Philosophy of Religion

This component explores philosophical issues and questions raised by religion and belief.

- **Ancient philosophical influences** - Plato & Aristotle.
- **Soul, mind and body** - Dualism, Substance dualism, Monism & materialism.
- **The existence of God** - Arguments based on observation & reason.
- **Religious experience** - Mystical & conversion experiences, visions.
- **The problem of evil** - Theodicies and the challenge evil poses to belief in God.
- **The nature of God** - concepts such as omnipotence, omniscience, benevolence.

2) Religion & Ethics

Students study ethical theories and apply them to moral issues.

- **Normative ethical theories** - Natural Law, Situation Ethics, Kantian Ethics, Utilitarianism.
- **Applied ethics** - Euthanasia, Business ethics and Sexual ethics
- **Conscience** - Aquinas' theological and Freud's psychological approaches.
- **Meta-ethics** - Naturalism, Intuitionism and emotivism.

3) Developments in Christian Thought

This component dives into the history, beliefs and the impact of Christianity.

- **Human nature** - Augustine's teachings of the Original Sin.
- **Death & afterlife** - Christian beliefs in Heaven, Hell, Purgatory & Resurrection.
- **The person of Jesus Christ** - Jesus' role as the Son of God, teacher and liberator.
- **Christian moral principles & actions** - differing approaches examples of Bonhoeffer.
- **Gender & society** - gender roles and feminist ideology.
- **Challenges of secularism** - Christianity's response to secularism.
- **Liberation theology & Marx** - Influence of Marxism on Liberation Theology.

Mahdi Ali, Class of 2023

Studying Theology at Azhar High School, Cairo



Your Top Tips

Read a lot about things that interest you, and ask lots and lots of questions to people you trust and admire. The more ideas you engage with, the more you will be able to come up with ideas yourself, and there is nothing better for a philosophy student than to be lost in the world of ideas.

What A Levels did you take?

English Literature, History, Religious Studies.

What would you say to current students considering taking a Religious Studies A Level?

Religious Studies helped me develop my thinking a lot, especially in understanding why we believe what we do, and how we often do not think much about our deeply-held beliefs.

Religious Studies has helped me become more respectful of other points of view, and it helped me better understand how to be intellectually mature when it comes to interacting with other worldviews. For example, two people can disagree on a certain ethical problem, like abortion or euthanasia, but their principles of justice and fairness, or human rights can be remarkably similar. Alternatively, two people can agree on the same conclusion on a topic, but for completely different reasons. It has helped me realise that people's worldviews are more complicated than we might expect, and to truly appreciate them, we have to engage with potentially uncomfortable ideas to truly understand where other people are coming from.

As I am studying Theology in Egypt, this experience has been invaluable to me, as it helps me to approach new ideas and philosophies without judgement, and to be okay with the uncomfortable feeling of not knowing the correct answer to a moral dilemma, or to not understand the cultural norms of an unfamiliar society.

Mahdi Ali, Class of 2023

Student at Azhar High School, Cairo

Of all the practical skills that Religious Studies has given me, the one I am most grateful for is the ability to think about issues myself, and be happy with not reaching a conclusion (which I understand can be frustrating for some!).

The subject requires you to deeply consider differing points of view, and be able to articulate a convincing argument for each one. So for example, though I am a devout Muslim, I can really appreciate arguments that an atheist may have for the non-existence of God, or that a Christian may have for the person of Jesus Christ.

And of course, if you really give Religious Studies your all, you will go through a lot of ink and paper! It gave me the valuable skill of being able to write a coherent and powerful argument, which has helped me in my further studies, as it gives me an advantage over peers and colleagues I have from other parts of the world, who unfortunately did not have the privilege to study such a valuable subject.

What would you say to current students considering taking a a Religious Studies A Level?

If you dislike writing, this isn't for you!

But if you enjoy discussion in class, and arguing your case, and thinking about different views and challenging them where appropriate, you will enjoy Religious Studies.

Most of my classes were discussion based, and my teachers were really good at trying to get you to carefully consider other points of view, and appreciate that others may have a valid point that is being overlooked, while your own position may not be so defensible!

Jo Israel née Kingston, Class of 2001

Head of Teacher Pay and Conditions, Department for Education



What A Levels did you take?

English Literature, Latin, Music, Religious Studies.

What did you study after Latymer?

Theology at Robinson College, University of Cambridge.

After studying Theology at Cambridge I qualified as an RE teacher. I taught for two years and then joined the Civil Service Fast Stream*. I am now currently working as Head of Teacher Pay and Conditions at the Department of Education.

**The Civil Service Fast Stream is the government's accelerated development programme for the UK civil service. It provides talented graduates with the core skills needed to become the future leaders of government departments.*

Did your Religious Studies A Level contribute to your career/life?

It helped me to think critically and taught me how to write clearly, using balanced arguments.

What would you say to current students considering taking a Religious Studies A Level?

It will be really rewarding and it will be a great asset to your CV.

Mehvin Jugurnauth, Class of 2019

Trainee Solicitor at Slaughter and May



What A Levels did you take?

Economics, History, Religious Studies.

What did you study after Latymer?

LLB Law with Criminology at the University of Manchester.

I'm currently on secondment in Brussels for three months. On a six-month rotation, I am working on Disputes and Investigation, Competition, Corporate and Finance.

Did your Religious Studies A Level contribute to your career/life?

Yes it did. I believe it provided me with fundamental analytical skills. I remember vividly our deep, ethical discussions, especially those in relation to Natural Law. Religious Studies was one of my favourite subjects to study.

Your Top Tips

Work hard and do not slack off.

What would you say to current students considering taking a Religious Studies A Level?

Do it. You will be exposed to a breadth of deep topics and discussions that will relate to your everyday life, years after you leave Latymer.

Maya Kirlew, Class of 2019

Msc in International Business, University of Birmingham



Your Top Tips

You do not need anything to go into sales apart from drive, commitment and interpersonal skills. Work on how to influence people, and figure out what motivates you. Companies want to see that you are hungry for success and driven to get there.

What A Levels did you take?

French, Geography, Religious Studies.

What did you study after Latymer?

BA French with Management Studies at UCL.

I then worked in Sales at a multinational company leading in the workwear laundry industry. I'm currently doing an MSc International Business at the University of Birmingham.

How did your Religious Studies A Level contribute to your career/life?

It helped shape my opinions on Christianity, providing many different perspectives. The Philosophy section was very useful because it was relevant to my university course and provided important context for many perspectives on life (Socrates and Plato as building blocks for the way we see and study today).

What would you say to current students considering taking a Religious Studies A Level?

Do it! It's so interesting and provided a breath of fresh air compared to other subjects. Mr Phillips is so great and very understanding. Ethics helps you to formulate your own opinions on how you act, which is an important self-reflection.

I truly enjoyed my Religious Studies lessons and it gave me a lot of perspectives that I still use today.

Jeni McClean, Class of 1992

Assistant Head and Head of Sixth Form, Dame Alice Owens School



Your Top Tips

Imagine getting paid to discuss ethical, moral, and philosophical issues with some of the brightest young minds in the country! I often step back during the day and laugh to myself "They pay me for this!" Choose a job that makes you smile and think, and do it very well. Do not be put off teaching, it's the best job in the world.

What A Levels did you take?

Economics, Politics, Religious Studies.

What did you study after Latymer?

Religious Studies with a minor in Politics at Lancaster University.

Teacher Training at the University of London.

MEd Teaching & Learning at the University of Cambridge.

I'm currently Assistant Head and Head of Sixth Form at Dame Alice Owens school. I started as an RS teacher, then Head of Key Stage 3. Before this I was a researcher for BBC Religious (Factual) Programming. I worked on various programmes, mostly Everyman, Heart of the Matter and Moral Maze.

Did your Religious Studies A Level contribute to your career/life?

A Level Religious Studies was very important to how my career and life turned out. Not only because I worked in religious broadcasting and as a Religious Studies teacher. But possibly more because I learned to synthesise information, to listen to other people's viewpoints, and to back my own.

What would you say to current students considering taking a Religious Studies A Level?

Do it! Do not allow yourself to be put off by any preconceptions. I am a life-long atheist, but the study of religion (and ethics/philosophy) has been a huge interest of mine. It is academically challenging and incredibly interesting.

Maya Okorodudu, Class of 2020

Future Trainee Solicitor at Arnold & Porter

What A Levels did you take?

Biology, History, Religious Studies.

What did you study after Latymer?

Religions, Theology and Ethics at the University of Manchester.

I'm currently doing a law conversion course and I'm a future trainee solicitor at Arnold & Porter.

Did your Religious Studies A Level contribute to your career/life?

Yes! The A Level made me interested in doing it at university, and the degree gave me the analytical, research and creative skills that made me successful in my training contract applications.

What would you say to current students considering taking a Religious Studies A Level?

The course has a strong philosophical element and focuses on the role of religion in society, which is more relevant and interesting than people often realise. Additionally, it gives you a great foundation for essay writing, particularly if you're considering studying humanities at university. It is also less content heavy than history so make life easier for yourself.

Your Top Tips

Start getting work experience as early as possible, any experience is good experience. With regards to becoming a solicitor, your A level subject choices do not matter AT ALL, only your grades, so focus on doing something you find interesting/ enjoy rather than what you think will look impressive on an application.

Alisha Shah, Class of 2016

Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Manager, London South Bank University



What A Levels did you take?

English Literature, History, Religious Studies.

What did you study after Latymer?

English Literature & Theology at the University of Leeds.

Did your Religious Studies A Level contribute to your career/life?

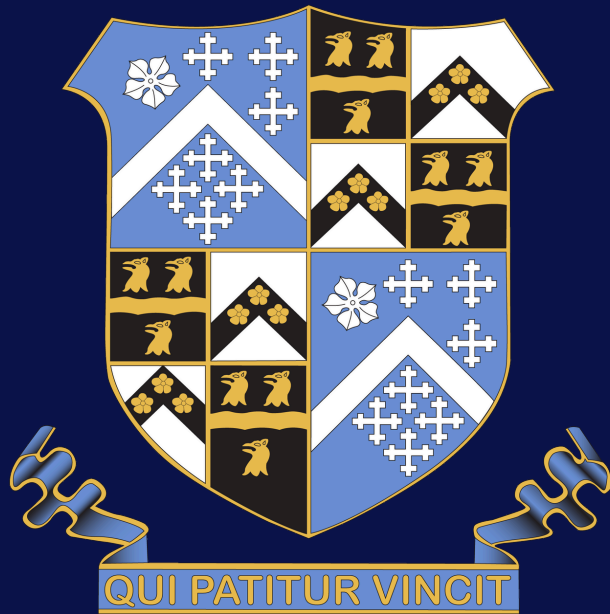
I ended up doing English Literature & Theology at university, and Theology was easily the most interesting subject I had learned in my life. It taught me about culture, sexual orientation, AIDs, Grenfell, Partition, Iranian Revolution, indigenous religions and more.

What would you say to current students considering taking a Religious Studies A Level?

If you take it to university level it is more fascinating than English Literature and History. You get more attention in your course because it's smaller, and lecturers tend to be more invested in the subject.

Your Top Tips

Take risks and try loads of different things to find something you like.



LATYMER
LINKS
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