Introduction

Component 1: Philosophy of religion and ethics

Section A: Philosophy of religion

1 Arguments for the existence of God

1.1 The design argument
- Paley’s analogical argument: its basis in observation
- Paley’s analogical design argument
- Criticisms of design arguments from David Hume
- The strengths and weaknesses of Paley’s design argument
- The status of Paley’s design argument as a ‘proof’
- What value does Paley’s design argument have for religious faith?

1.2 The ontological argument
- The basis of Anselm’s argument in thought
- Anselm’s a priori ontological argument + Criticism from Gaunilo
- Criticisms from Kant
- The strengths and weaknesses of Anselm’s ontological argument
- The status of Anselm’s argument as a ‘proof’
- The value of Anselm’s argument for religious faith

1.3 The cosmological argument
- The basis of Aquinas’ argument in observation
- Aquinas’ Way 3: The argument from contingency and necessity
- Criticisms from Hume and Russell
- The strengths and weaknesses of Aquinas’ argument
- The status of Aquinas’ argument as a ‘proof’
- The value of Aquinas’ argument for religious faith

2 Evil and suffering

- The Bible’s perspectives on evil
- The concepts of natural and moral evil
- The logical and evidential problem of evil
- The Free Will Defence
- John Hick’s soul-making theodicy
- Process Theology as presented by Griffin
- The relationship between philosophy and faith

3 Religious experience

- Visions
- Numinous experiences
- Mystical experiences

4 Verifying religious experiences

- The challenges of verifying religious experiences
- The challenges to religious experience from science
- Religious responses to those challenges
- Swinburne’s principles of credulity and testimony
- The influence of religious experiences and their value for religious faith

Section B: Ethics and religion

5 Normative ethical theories

- Deontological
- Consequential
- Teleological
- Character-based
5.1 Natural moral law (John)
- Natural moral law and the principle of double effect with reference to Aquinas
- Proportionalism
- Strengths and weaknesses of natural moral law ethics
- Value of natural moral law for religion

5.2 Situation ethics
- Situation ethics, with reference to Fletcher
- Strengths and weaknesses of Fletcher’s situation ethics
- Value of Fletcher’s situation ethics for religion

5.3 Aristotle’s virtue ethics
- Virtue ethics, with reference to Aristotle
- The strengths and weaknesses of Aristotle’s virtue ethics
- Value of Aristotle’s virtue ethics for religion

6 Application of ethical theories
- Theft
  - Natural moral law
  - Situation ethics
  - Virtue ethics
- Lying
  - Natural moral law
  - Situation ethics
  - Virtue ethics
- Application to issues of human life and death
  - Embryo research; cloning; ‘designer’ babies
    - Natural moral law
    - Situation ethics
    - Virtue ethics
- Abortion
  - Natural moral law
  - Situation ethics
  - Virtue ethics
- Voluntary euthanasia and assisted suicide
  - Natural moral law
  - Situation Ethics
  - Virtue Ethics
- Capital punishment
  - Natural moral law
  - Situation ethics
  - Virtue ethics
- Application to issues of non-human life and death
  - The moral status of animals
  - The facts about each of the 4 issues and the ethical issues that arise from the facts
  - How natural moral law, situation ethics and virtue ethics address these issues

Component 2: Christianity

7 Sources of wisdom and authority
- The Bible
- The Church
- The Authority of Jesus
8 God

Christian Monotheism
God as Personal, God as Father and God as Love
The concept of God in process theology

9 Self, death and afterlife

The meaning and purpose of life
Resurrection
Different interpretations of judgement, heaven, hell and purgatory

10 Good conduct and key moral principles

Good conduct
Sanctity of life (including its application to issues concerning the embryo and the unborn child)
Just war theory (including its application to the use of weapons of mass destruction)
Dominion and stewardship

11 Expressions of religious identity

Baptism
Holy Communion
The last supper
The mission of the Church

The exam: specimen assessment materials