

YEAR 12 – BRIDGING UNITS

# A-LEVEL RELIGIOUS studies

(philosophy, ethics, theology)



ST HILDA'S  
COLLEGE

The 6<sup>th</sup> Form  
@ St Hilda's

bridging  
units

Name:

Anything is

POSSIBLE

# A level Religious Studies

## Philosophy, Ethics and Theology

Firstly, welcome to the Religious Studies department at St Hilda's College – you have made a great decision with your subject choice here and we hope that you will find your studies stimulating and challenging. This subject offers the opportunity for you to become a much better thinker, through exploring the big questions in life that have been pondered and discussed by philosophers and theologians for centuries. In learning to think well, not only can you better understand and analyse the issues, puzzles and problems that we tackle in lessons, you will also be able to evaluate the beliefs and values that *you* hold. As such, Religious Studies offers you a valuable opportunity to reflect critically upon who you are, how you should live, and what your place is in this grand old place we call the universe – exciting times!

Your course of study is **OCR Religious Studies**. There are three strands to the course: The Study of a Religion (Christian Theology), Philosophy of Religion, and Religion & Ethics. The specification, giving full information on the course can be found here:

<http://www.ocr.org.uk/Images/242913-specification-accredited-a-level-gce-religious-studies-h573.pdf>

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## Bridging unit tasks

In preparation for the course, please complete the tasks below. You should e-mail your work to [nmartin@st-hildas.co.uk](mailto:nmartin@st-hildas.co.uk) by the deadline of 4pm 31<sup>st</sup> August OR bring a print out to your first lesson in September. Specific instructions for Task 5 are provided. Meeting the deadline is very important – please do not forget!

### Task 1: Philosopher Fact-File

Choose a philosopher to research. It can be anyone, female or male, from any time or place – just someone who strikes you as an interesting character with interesting ideas. Complete the fact-file below and we can discuss your findings when we meet as a class.

|                                              |  |
|----------------------------------------------|--|
| Name of philosopher                          |  |
| When did she/he live?                        |  |
| Where did she/he live?                       |  |
| Which famous books did she/he write?         |  |
| Key idea 1                                   |  |
| Key idea 2                                   |  |
| Key idea 3                                   |  |
| An interesting/funny story from his/her life |  |

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## Task 2: Philosophy Questions

Using the internet and/or books, find three philosophical questions – write them in the table below and, in the right column, write your response to the questions, giving your reasons to support your answer. Again, we will discuss these in class

| Philosophy Question, e.g. is it ever right to kill? | Your response (with reasons) |
|-----------------------------------------------------|------------------------------|
|                                                     |                              |
|                                                     |                              |
|                                                     |                              |

### Task 3: Research Questions

Find out the answers to the following questions, which connect to your course topics (Study of a Religion – Christianity; Religion and Ethics; Philosophy of Religion):

1. Summarise Plato's 'analogy of the cave'
2. What is the difference between a priori and a posteriori?
3. What does the term creation-ex-nihilo mean?
4. Name three philosophers who created arguments to prove  
The existence of God
5. What is meant by the term messiah in Christianity?
6. What does John Hick mean about Jesus when he talks about the myth incarnate? In what way does he think Jesus is like Moses or Muhammad?

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7. Explain what is meant by the term new atheist. Explain one reason why new atheists like Richard Dawkins think that religion is dangerous.
8. How does the utilitarian argue we should make moral decisions?
9. What is meant by Aristotle's 'golden mean'?
10. What is meant by 'agape love'?

#### Task 4: Why are we alive?

**This is the surprisingly existential question posed by a character in Toy Story 4! The film tells the story of a plastic spork that comes to life.**

“I am not a toy,” insists a spork named Forky in the trailer for Pixar’s Toy Story 4. “I was made for soup, salad, maybe chilli, and then the trash.” And, yet, a little girl gives Forky a face and arms. So, he gains consciousness. The rest of the film is spent grappling with the consequences of this. “Why am I alive?” asks Forky. The world of Toy Story is built upon the idea that everything in the world has a purpose. A toy’s purpose is to be there for its child. But what about toys that are made out of other objects?” director Josh says, “Forky wants to fulfil his purpose as a spork, but now has a new toy purpose thrust upon him.”



Forky is far from the first to ponder such deep questions. Many philosophers have also wondered why we are alive. In other words, what is the meaning of life? For Woody, it is to make children happy. He spends much of the film trying to convince Forky that it is worth living for this. For Plato, it was the pursuit of the highest form of knowledge. For Aristotle, it was the highest good. In the 20th century, Friedrich Nietzsche argued that life had no meaning at all. Humanists argue that each person must find their own purpose, as long as it adds to the “common good”.

#### To infinity and beyond?

Do you agree with Woody — that life is about doing good and making others happy? Perhaps we get the most meaning out of life when we set our own egos aside, and try to make the world a better place for everyone. Or do you agree with Forky and the humanists — that we each have our own purpose, and we will be happiest when we find and fulfil it? Instead of spending our whole lives trying to make other people happy, we must spend our lives being true to ourselves.

**Task: What are your thoughts on the meaning of life? Write at least a paragraph in response in the space provided below.**

You may wish to consider different religious responses to this question as well as those of the philosophers mentioned above

Anything is

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### Task 5: Being Creative!

Choose **ONE** of the following tasks to complete

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Cave Theatre</b></p> <p>Draw your own illustration of, or create a puppet theatre of, Plato's analogy of the cave. This must include the cave, the walkway, a fire, prisoners, the escaped prisoner, the outside world, and the sun.</p> <p><b>ONCE COMPLETED, PHOTOGRAPH YOUR WORK AND E-MAIL IT TO <a href="mailto:nmartin@st-hildas.co.uk">nmartin@st-hildas.co.uk</a> AND BRING TO YOUR FIRST LESSON IN SEPTEMBER</b></p>                                                                                                      | <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Pinterest Christianity!</b></p> <p>Create a Pinterest 'board' (this can be on paper or on computer) which gathers key ideas and concepts in Christianity. Use images, key words and quotations. You should also provide a small summary for anybody who may wish to 're-pin' in!</p> <p><b>ONCE COMPLETED, E-MAIL YOUR PINTEREST LINK OR, IF ON PAPER, PHOTOGRAPH YOUR WORK AND E-MAIL IT TO <a href="mailto:nmartin@st-hildas.co.uk">nmartin@st-hildas.co.uk</a> ALSO, BRING TO YOUR FIRST LESSON IN SEPTEMBER IF ON PAPER.</b></p> |
| <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Outline the Arguments</b></p> <p>Choose one of the following arguments for the existence of God</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>*Ontological</li><li>*Cosmological</li><li>*Teleological</li></ul> <p>Create a three-dimensional flow diagram of the stages of the argument. Highlight any strengths or weaknesses as branches of the diagram.</p> <p><b>ONCE COMPLETED, E-MAIL YOUR DIAGRAM TO <a href="mailto:nmartin@st-hildas.co.uk">nmartin@st-hildas.co.uk</a> AND BRING TO YOUR FIRST LESSON IN SEPTEMBER</b></p> | <p style="text-align: center;"><b>The eternal debate!</b></p> <p>Write a screenplay and/or record a video for a debate between those who argue that God exists, and those who argue that God does not exist. If you are recording a video, this should be e-mailed (address below) or uploaded to Youtube.</p> <p><b>ONCE COMPLETED E-MAIL YOUR SCREENPLAY AND/OR VIDEO RECORDING TO <a href="mailto:nmartin@st-hildas.co.uk">nmartin@st-hildas.co.uk</a></b></p>                                                                                                      |