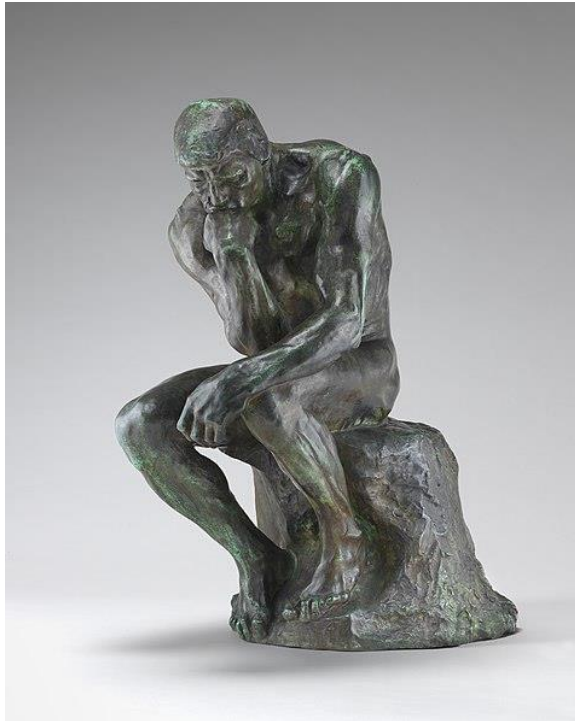


Religious Studies Transition Work 2026

(Philosophy, Ethics and Theology)

What will I study in this course?

A-Level Religious Studies covers three disciplines of study: philosophy, ethics and theology.



Philosophy is the study of the most important questions that human beings ask. You will explore questions such as: What is reality? What is knowledge? What does it mean to be human? What arguments might suggest that God exists? How effective are those arguments? What do religious experiences mean? Why is there evil and suffering in the world? What language can we use to talk about God?

Ethics is the study of morality. You will explore questions such as: What is goodness? Is there a natural law that we should all follow? Does morality change with different circumstances? Is euthanasia morally acceptable? Do businesses have a responsibility to society? How do different thinkers respond to premarital sex and homosexuality? What is conscience?

Theology is the study of religious teaching and belief. You will explore questions such as: Why is Jesus Christ important for Christians? What do Christians believe happens after death? What duties to Christians have towards the state? Is there only one path to heaven? Are all religions equal? Does religion oppress women? Should Christians adapt to a more secular world?

What skills will this course develop?

This is a subject without easy answers. You will learn to listen to other viewpoints, to debate and to come to your own conclusions.

You will develop your ability to understand complex material and be reflective.

You will gain confidence in discussing ideas and presenting them to others.

Studying Religious Studies helps you to write persuasively by selecting relevant material and analysing and evaluating ideas. These are vital skills for further study and the workplace.

What can I go on to study?

Religious Studies is a highly regarded academic qualification. This course is ideal preparation for a wide range of subjects at university including Law, Politics, History, Philosophy, Sociology, Theology and Philosophy.

Religious Studies Transition Work: The Copleston-Russell Debate

One of the first topics we will study in the Year 1 Religious Studies course at St Dominic's, is the question of whether or not it is rational to believe in God. The Copleston–Russell debate was a famous radio discussion in 1948 between two prominent philosophers: Frederick Copleston, a Jesuit priest, and Bertrand Russell, a well-known atheist. They debated the existence of God, with Copleston arguing from the cosmological argument—that the existence of the universe needs a necessary being (God) to explain it—while Russell rejected this, claiming that the universe could just exist without needing a cause. The debate is a key moment in modern philosophy of religion, showing the clash between religious belief and philosophical skepticism.

Summer task:

Option 1: Print out the debate script and annotate the text to help you understand it, as you did with texts in your English Literature GCSE.

Option 2: Take hand-written notes on the text.

You will use these notes to complete a piece of written work in the Autumn term. This will be 'open book' – you will be allowed to use your summer notes to help you. In this piece of writing, you will be expected to refer to Copleston and Russell's arguments to support your views on whether it is rational to believe in God.

Extra help:

You can use the website listed below if you need additional support in understanding the debate.

[Copleston & Russell summary - PHILOSOPHY DUNGEON](#)