

# IB Philosophy HL and SL

The course explores the fundamental questions that people have been asking since the beginning of time and which are still relevant in our contemporary world. These include the following: What does it mean to be a human being? How do we know what is the right thing to do? What is 'truth'? IB Philosophy is not 'about' philosophy, its emphasis is on 'doing' philosophy. Doing philosophy requires a willingness to attempt an understanding of alternative views by applying intellectual rigour and cultivating an open and critical mind. It also invites the development of perspectives that encompass cultural pluralism and an awareness of the international context within which it unfolds. Clarity of thought is achieved through critical and systematic thinking, careful analysis of arguments, the study of philosophical themes and a close reading of texts.

## Content

The Philosophy course is divided into two parts:

### Part One – Themes

All students study the Core Theme, What is a Human Being? Central questions in the Philosophy of Mind include: What is a person? What are animals? Could animals be persons or machines? Can I know myself - or another? Do I have free will? All students then study, "The Theories and Problems of Ethics" which examines how people decide what is a good life. Questions asked include: How do I decide whether an action is right or wrong? Should I follow my emotions or reason? Is it wrong to be selfish? Ethical principles are applied to biomedical, environmental and global poverty issues.

HL students study an additional topic such as Ethics, which explores questions such as: Should I follow my emotions or reason? Is it wrong to be selfish? Are moral decisions culturally influenced? What do we mean when we say something is right or wrong? Or Political Philosophy, which explores questions such as: Are freedom and equality compatible? Can it be assumed that democracy is the best form of government? What is the relationship between international institutions and national sovereignty?

### Part Two – Texts

The detailed study of philosophical texts is another good way of enabling students to 'do' philosophy as this requires them to enter into a dialogue with another philosopher. The text to be studied by both HL and SL students is Peter Singer's *The Life You Can Save*. HL students also examine an unseen text in a separate exam.

## Assessment

All assessments are essay based. Paper 1 examines the themes section of the course with students answering questions from the core and option modules. Paper 2 examines the set text. Paper 3 is only for HL students and involves students writing a personal response to an unseen text. The internal assessment comprises a 1,600-2,000 word analysis of a philosophical topic raised by a non-philosophical source.



# A Level Religious Studies

## (Philosophy, Religion and Ethics)

Exam Board: OCR

Religious Studies deals with issues that are at the heart of our understanding of what it means to be a human being living in the twenty first century. Through teacher led discussions, independent research, class presentations and essay writing, as well as attending excellent conferences, students will seek answers to questions as diverse as: How do we know what is right? Do I have free will? What ultimately exists? Why is there suffering in the world? Is morality dependent on our culture? Students choose Religious Studies because they don't simply want to be given answers but discover them for themselves.

### Content

The Religious Studies A level is made up of three equal components, all of which are studied in the lower and upper sixth. The AS will be co-teachable.

#### 1. Philosophy of Religion

- Ancient Greek Philosophy, Plato and Aristotle's understanding of reality
- The soul, mind, and body
- Arguments for and against God's existence based on reason and experience, including the Problem of evil.
- The nature and influence of religious experience
- The nature and attributes of God
- Philosophical language and thought through the works of key thinkers

#### 2. Religion and Ethics

- Ethical theory, including duty-based, consequentialist, and character based ethics.
- Applied Ethics: Euthanasia, Business Ethics, and Sexual Ethics
- Meta-ethics
- Free will; Conscience; Moral authority

#### 3. Developments in Christian Thought

- The study of Christianity will include a deeper look at core theological issues in light of significant social, historical, and scientific developments, including:
- Human nature
- Death and the Afterlife
- The person of Jesus Christ
- Religious Pluralism
- Gender in society and religion
- The challenge of Secularism
- Liberation theology and Marx



### Assessment

For AS and A Level, each unit will be assessed through a written essay based exam.

