

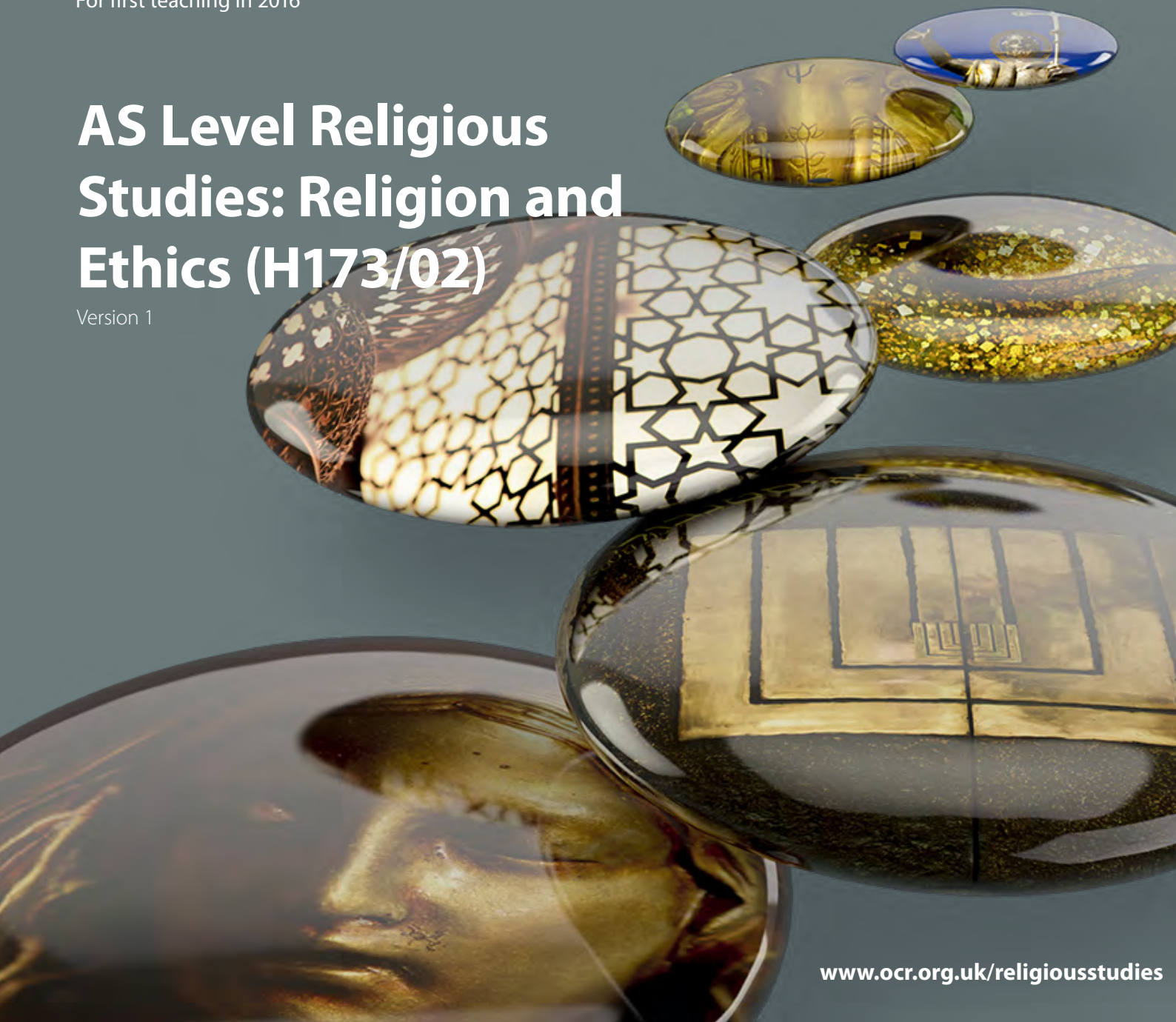
AS LEVEL
Candidate Exemplars

RELIGIOUS STUDIES

H173
For first teaching in 2016

AS Level Religious Studies: Religion and Ethics (H173/02)

Version 1



Contents

Introduction	3
Candidate A	4
‘The strengths of Natural Law outweigh its weaknesses.’ Discuss [30]	4
Final Examiner Comments	5
Candidate B	6
Assess the view that Fletcher’s Situation Ethics gives no useful guidance for making moral decisions. [30]	6
Final Examiner Comments	7

Introduction

We asked students to answer questions from the Sample Question Paper for H173/02 Religion and Ethics: <http://www.ocr.org.uk/Images/242918-unit-h173-02-religion-and-ethics-sample-assessment-material.pdf>.

The sample answers in this resource have been extracted from original candidate work to maintain their authenticity. They are supported by examiner commentary, both in annotations and in summary at the end of the document. Please note that this resource is provided for advice and guidance only and does not in any way constitute an indication of grade boundaries or endorsed answers.

Whilst a senior examiner has provided a possible level for each Assessment Objective when marking these answers, in a live series the mark a response would get depends on the whole process of standardisation, which considers the big picture of the year's scripts. Therefore the level awarded here should be considered to be only an estimation of what would be awarded.

How levels and marks correspond to grade boundaries depends on the Awarding process that happens after all/most of the scripts are marked and depends on a number of factors, including candidate performance across the board. Details of this process can be found here: <http://ocr.org.uk/Images/142042-marking-and-grading-assuring-ocr-s-accuracy.pdf>.

'The strengths of Natural Law outweigh its weaknesses.' Discuss

[30]

Candidate A

Natural Law is the theory founded by St. Thomas Aquinas. This theory states that humans are born knowing right from wrong. The weaknesses of this theory outweigh its strengths because for all the strengths I'll be writing about there are weaknesses that counteract the strengths.

Natural Law is a deontological, absolutist and objective theory. This means that it doesn't change according to situations or circumstance and its rules are fixed. St. Thomas Aquinas was a priest who was heavily influenced by Aristotle's ideas, that this world and everything in it is real, important, and has a purpose. Aquinas believed that humanity isn't truly bad and everyone has four cardinal virtues naturally given to them by God. These virtues are justice, temperance, prudence and courage.

Absolutism is a key feature in Natural Law and despite being so important in the structure of the theory, it's one of the biggest weaknesses in the theory too. The strength of absolutism is that everybody is treated equally in situations. This means that nobody can receive unfair judgement for things they do. This also means that everybody, no matter race, religion, ethnicity or anything that makes them different will experience different hardships in judgement. The weakness of this is that everyone is different and they do things for reasons that may not be understood by everybody. Absolutism is outdated because it doesn't cater towards disability or culture. It is a weakness because humanity isn't one-size-fits-all, every person is different and changing, whereas absolutism is absolute and stays the same, and this is why absolutism is more of a weakness than a strength.

Another example of a strength in Natural Law is that it combines religious belief and secular reasoning. This theory allows people who aren't religious to believe in Natural Law and still lead purposeful lives without having to convert to religion. The weakness to counteract this strength is that it receives criticism from other theories, for example Darwin's Evolution Theory. That theory says that humans evolved from other animals, and since other animals don't display the cardinal virtues, they (the cardinal virtues) can't be natural, they must be taught. This shows that since Evolution has scientific proof confirming it, Natural Law must be incorrect, and therefore this weakness outweighs the strength.

A third strength of Natural Law is that it appeals to human instinct. Aquinas believed that humanity isn't all bad, or good, just imperfect. He believed humans are more capable of committing good deeds naturally than bad deeds. This shows optimism and hope for humankind and its instincts. The weakness to this belief is that he may have been too optimistic and naïve, as he overlooked wrong-doing as 'misjudgements', meaning that he believed humans always had good intentions. This is a weakness since humans do evil deeds with evil intentions, for example, a rapist or a serial killer. This idea was too optimistic to apply to humanity and that's why the weakness outweighs the strength.

To conclude, the biggest example of a strength of Natural Law being outweighed by its weakness is absolutism. This is because despite being the clearest feature of Natural Law, it's too rigid to apply to all of humanity for all of time.

A solid introduction with a statement of where the conclusion will end up. It is not always necessary to be as decisive at the start – it is important in limited time to get into the meat of the argument quickly.

Useful background, but candidate needs to be careful not to spend too long on this. One might expect to see more specific knowledge of Natural Law at this point.

There is, of course, an assumption in the idea that absolutism is outdated because it doesn't cater towards culture. The argument about absolutism is quite simply put. It also does not show awareness of the suggestion that the secondary rules in Natural Law arguably make the theory relativist.

Despite this, the candidate is showing analytical skills – the examiner's mind is drawn to the bullet point in Level 3 for AO2 'partially successful analysis and evaluation'.

Potentially a debatable statement, but the examiner keeps an open mind as they read on.

There is potential for further analysis and development of this point.

The concluding sentence is rather sweeping.

There is some broad understanding of Natural Law shown in the first part of this paragraph, but it needs development.

Awareness shown of the idea of intention.

Candidate A (cont)

Examiner commentary

The conclusion comes as something of a surprise as key elements of Natural Law do not seem to have been discussed, such as primary and secondary precepts. It would also have been useful to the candidate to think about how Natural Law comes into play in a specific ethical situation. The specification links euthanasia to Natural Law, but any example would be credited.

As such, the strengths and weaknesses are rather general ones and so the understanding of these strengths and weaknesses (AO1) is under-developed.

The mark it would get depends each summer on the whole process of standardisation, which considers the big picture of the year's scripts. However, for AO1, the level 2 descriptors seem to be met and the third bullet point in level 3 'some accurate knowledge ... which might however be lacking in depth or breadth' seems to be fulfilled, so at the time of writing the essay seems to edge into level 3.

For AO2, the candidate does stick to the question and analyses, if rather simplistically at times. However, in this case, they seem to fulfil all the criteria required for level 3 and might achieve a mark at the top end of this level.

The candidate has been more successful at AO2 because the structure of the essay as a whole is argument-driven and so it is difficult not to credit evaluation. The analysis is broad – 'not fully justified'.

Assess the view that Fletcher's Situation Ethics gives no useful guidance for making moral decisions.

[30]

Candidate B

Situation Ethics was discovered by Joseph Fletcher in the 1960s after evaluating legalism and Antinomianism. Legalism is the belief where fixed moral law must always be obeyed. Antinomianism means that there is no fixed moral principle. Both are the opposite of each other. In this essay I will be discussing the strengths and criticisms of this theory that will prove this Ethics theory as a useless guidance for making moral decisions.

For Fletcher the most significant belief for the Christians should be that, they see all the commandments in the light of love. He says that we should obey and base our decisions on one single rule – the rule of agape. Agape is an unconditional love which is not just an emotion but that which includes an element of sacrifice "It is not the unbelieving who invite damnation but the unloving" we can see by this quote how strict Fletcher is with his idea that, the rule of agape is always good and right regardless of the circumstances or the situation.

Fletcher created six fundamental principles to be used as guides help the situation. These are called the six propositions and they are: "Only one 'thing' is intrinsically good: namely love, and nothing else," "the ruling norm of Christian decision is love: nothing else," "love and justice are the same, for justice is love distributed, nothing else," "Love wills the neighbour's good whether we like him or not," "Only the end justifies the means: nothing else," and the last proposition is "Love's decisions are made situationally not prescriptively." By looking at all of these propositions it is clear that Fletcher's moral theory differs from the Christian Ethics.

For Fletcher the good results is that which serves agape best. According to Fletcher's Situation Ethics, this theory fully depends on the four working principles, they are pragmatism, relativism, positivism and personalism. Fletcher believed that the best moral theories were relative as no two situations or people are the same. Pragmatism means that this theory is mostly based on your experience. Positivism is a value judgement made but by giving the first place to love. Personalism means that people are put before laws.

Furthermore, I would like to discuss the strengths and weaknesses of this theory to prove that Situation Ethics not useful in making moral decisions. Fletcher uses the example of 'Sacrificial Adultery' to show the most loving thing where a German woman asks the prison guard to impregnate her, in order to be released and be sent back to her family. From the Christian perspective this breaks one of the ten commandments, "Do not commit adultery". According to Fletcher this has to be the "most loving" thing to do even though it breaks one of God's commandments. For Fletcher keeping that woman in whilst her family is waiting for her, is wrong. He believes "love is the law", putting all other authorities aside focus on "LOVE". Therefore, the woman has done the right thing, in the opinion of Fletcher 'all moral decisions are hypothetical. They depend on what best serves love.'

The introduction shows useful context and a clear statement of the purposes of the essay. The candidate's firm stance is not necessary but can be helpful to the examiner.

There might have been the opportunity to analyse the material in this paragraph.

An examiner would not necessarily expect to see the six fundamental principles listed, but would be more interested to see what the candidate does with the issues that arise from them.

The candidate needs to develop this sentence, which is interesting but needs evidence to support the claim.

Three of the four working principles have been detailed, but no analysis is present.

Here the candidate seems to be moving on to AO2 material. It might have been good to integrate the two aspects of the essay

The example from Fletcher is interesting, but presented as AO1, not AO2, as the start of the paragraph might suggest.

Candidate B (cont)

Another example from Fletcher that consists us to do the most loving thing is, "An unmarried female patient with schizophrenia is raped by another patient and becomes pregnant." In this case Fletcher will do the most loving thing which is to allow the female to have an abortion since it was not her child. Why should she have to go through the pain of her illness as well as the fact that she doesn't have her child inside her stomach instead some unknown patients? But wouldn't it be the most loving thing to save the child? To give the child a life than kill it. We can see from here that Fletcher's idea of the most loving thing to do is a little confusing and hard to understand.

To conclude, I believe that Situation Ethics teaches that particular types of action don't have an inherent moral value – whether they are good or bad depends on the eventual result. So, this seems like Situation Ethics allows a person to carry out acts that are generally regarded as bad, for example killing or lying even if they lead to a sufficiently good result. Also, this theory is subjective which could get two people to disagree about what the most "loving thing" to do is. Overall, Fletcher seems to ignore the wider aspect of being a moral person.

The last two sentences of this paragraph give some simple analysis.

Examiner commentary

The essay concludes with some general weaknesses of Situation Ethics, with some analysis. There is a statement of the conclusion, rather than an argument that leads to it.

The mark it would get depends each summer on the whole process of standardisation, which considers the big picture of the year's scripts.

The overall knowledge and understanding of Situation Ethics is strong, but the first line of each of the levels at AO1 includes the phrase 'in response to the question'. It does not seem like the candidate's choice of and deployment of material is always put together successfully to answer the question. The overall feel of the essay for AO1 is at the bottom end of level 4 as the candidate begins to meet the criteria for some of the bullet points.

AO2 seems weaker. Analysis does not seem to have been the driving force behind the candidate's essay planning and where there is argument it is cursory. This seems to place the AO2 mark in level 2.



We'd like to know your view on the resources we produce. By clicking on the 'Like' or 'Dislike' button you can help us to ensure that our resources work for you. When the email template pops up please add additional comments if you wish and then just click 'Send'. Thank you.

Whether you already offer OCR qualifications, are new to OCR, or are considering switching from your current provider/awarding organisation, you can request more information by completing the Expression of Interest form which can be found here:

www.ocr.org.uk/expression-of-interest

OCR Resources: *the small print*

OCR's resources are provided to support the delivery of OCR qualifications, but in no way constitute an endorsed teaching method that is required by OCR. Whilst every effort is made to ensure the accuracy of the content, OCR cannot be held responsible for any errors or omissions within these resources. We update our resources on a regular basis, so please check the OCR website to ensure you have the most up to date version.

This resource may be freely copied and distributed, as long as the OCR logo and this small print remain intact and OCR is acknowledged as the originator of this work.

OCR acknowledges the use of the following content:
Square down and Square up: alexwhite/Shutterstock.com

Please get in touch if you want to discuss the accessibility of resources we offer to support delivery of our qualifications:
resources.feedback@ocr.org.uk

Looking for a resource?

There is now a quick and easy search tool to help find **free** resources for your qualification:

www.ocr.org.uk/i-want-to-find-resources/

www.ocr.org.uk/alevelreform

OCR Customer Contact Centre

General qualifications

Telephone 01223 553998

Facsimile 01223 552627

Email general.qualifications@ocr.org.uk

OCR is part of Cambridge Assessment, a department of the University of Cambridge. *For staff training purposes and as part of our quality assurance programme your call may be recorded or monitored.*

© **OCR 2017** Oxford Cambridge and RSA Examinations is a Company Limited by Guarantee. Registered in England. Registered office 1 Hills Road, Cambridge CB1 2EU. Registered company number 3484466. OCR is an exempt charity.

