

Religious Studies

Advanced GCE

Unit **G581**: Philosophy of Religion

Mark Scheme for January 2011

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This mark scheme is published as an aid to teachers and students, to indicate the requirements of the examination. It shows the basis on which marks were awarded by Examiners. It does not indicate the details of the discussions which took place at an Examiners' meeting before marking commenced.

All Examiners are instructed that alternative correct answers and unexpected approaches in candidates' scripts must be given marks that fairly reflect the relevant knowledge and skills demonstrated.

Mark schemes should be read in conjunction with the published question papers and the Report on the Examination.

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A2 Preamble and Instructions to Examiners

The purpose of a marking scheme is to ‘... enable examiners to mark in a standardised manner’ [CoP 1999 25.xiv]. It must ‘allow credit to be allocated for what candidates know, understand and can do’ [xv] and be ‘clear and designed to be easily and consistently applied’ [x].

The **Religious Studies Subject Criteria** [1999] define ‘what candidates know, understand and can do’ in terms of two Assessment Objectives, weighted for the OCR Religious Studies specification as indicated:

All candidates must be required to meet the following assessment objectives.

At A level, candidates are required to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding, and their ability to sustain a critical line of argument in greater depth and over a wider range of content than at AS level.

Knowledge, understanding and skills are closely linked. Specifications should require that candidates demonstrate the following assessment objectives in the context of the content and skills prescribed.

- AO1:** Select and demonstrate clearly relevant knowledge and understanding through the use of evidence, examples and correct language and terminology appropriate to the course of study.
- AO2:** Sustain a critical line of argument and justify a point of view.

The requirement to assess candidates’ quality of written communication will be met through both assessment objectives.

In order to ensure the marking scheme can be ‘easily and consistently applied’, and to ‘enable examiners to mark in a standardised manner’, it defines Levels of Response by which candidates’ answers are assessed. This ensures that comparable standards are applied across the various units as well as within the team of examiners marking a particular unit. Levels of Response are defined according to the two Assessment Objectives. In A2, candidates answer a single question but are reminded by a rubric of the need to address both Objectives in their answers. Progression from Advanced Subsidiary to A2 is provided, in part, by assessing their ability to construct a coherent essay, and this is an important part of the Key Skill of Communication which ‘must contribute to the assessment of Religious Studies at AS and A level’.

Positive awarding: it is a fundamental principle of OCR’s assessment in Religious Studies at Advanced Subsidiary/Advanced GCE that candidates are rewarded for what they ‘know, understand and can do’ and to this end examiners are required to assess every answer by the Levels according to the extent to which it addresses a reasonable interpretation of the question. In the marking scheme each question is provided with a brief outline of the likely content and/or lines of argument of a ‘standard’ answer, but this is by no means prescriptive or exhaustive. Examiners are required to have subject knowledge to a high level and the outlines do not attempt to duplicate this.

Examiners must **not** attempt to reward answers according to the extent to which they match the structure of the outline, or mention the points it contains. The specification is designed to allow teachers to approach the content of modules in a variety of ways from any of a number of perspectives, and candidates’ answers must be assessed in the light of this flexibility of approach. It is quite possible for an excellent and valid answer to contain knowledge and arguments which do not appear in the outline; each answer must be assessed on its own merits according to the Levels of Response.

Practical application of the Marking Scheme

General administrative information and instructions are issued separately by OCR.

Apart from preliminary marking for standardisation purposes, which must be carried out in pencil, the first marking of a script should be in red ink. There should be a clear indication on every page that it has been read by the examiner, and the total mark for the question must be ringed and written in the margin at the end of the script; at A2 the two sub-marks for the AOs must be written here as well. Half-marks may not be used.

To avoid giving the impression of point-marking, ticks should not be used within an answer. Examiners should follow the separate instructions about annotation of scripts; remember that the marks awarded make the assigned Levels of Response completely explicit.

Key Skill of Communication: this is assessed at both Advanced Subsidiary and A2 as an integral part of the marking scheme. The principle of positive awarding applies here as well: candidates should be rewarded for good written communication, but marks may not be deducted for inadequate written communication; the quality of communication is integral to the quality of the answer in making its meaning clear. The Key Skill requirements in Communication at Level 3 include the following evidence requirements for documents about complex subjects, which can act as a basis for assessing the Communications skills in an examination answer:

- Select and use a form and style of writing that is appropriate to your purpose and complex subject matter.
- Organise relevant information clearly and coherently, using specialist vocabulary when appropriate.
- Ensure your text is legible and your spelling, grammar and punctuation are accurate, so your meaning is clear.

*

Synoptic skills and the ability to make connections: these are now assessed at A2 as specification, due to the removal of the Connections papers.

Levels of Response: the descriptions are cumulative, ie a description at one level builds on or improves the descriptions at lower levels. Not all the qualities listed in a level must be demonstrated in an answer for it to fall in that level (some of the qualities are alternatives and therefore mutually exclusive). There is no expectation that an answer will receive marks in the same level for the two AOs.

AS LEVELS OF RESPONSE

Band	Mark /21	AO1	Mark /14	AO2
0	0	absent/no relevant material	0	absent/no argument
1	1-5	almost completely ignores the question; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> little relevant material some concepts inaccurate shows little knowledge of technical terms a.c.i.q	1-3	very little argument or justification of viewpoint; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> little or no successful analysis views asserted with no justification v lit arg
Communication: often unclear or disorganised; can be difficult to understand; spelling, punctuation and grammar may be inadequate				
2	6-9	A basic attempt to address the question; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> knowledge limited and partially accurate limited understanding might address the general topic rather than the question directly selection often inappropriate limited use of technical terms b att	4-6	a basic attempt to sustain an argument and justify a viewpoint; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> some analysis, but not successful views asserted but little justification b att
Communication: some clarity and organisation; easy to follow in parts; spelling, punctuation and grammar may be inadequate				
3	10-13	satisfactory attempt to address the question; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> some accurate knowledge appropriate understanding some successful selection of material some accurate use of technical terms sat att	7-8	the argument is sustained and justified; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> some successful analysis which may be implicit views asserted but not fully justified sust/just
Communication: some clarity and organisation; easy to follow in parts; spelling, punctuation and grammar may be inadequate				
4	14-17	a good attempt to address the question; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> accurate knowledge good understanding good selection of material technical terms mostly accurate g att	9-11	a good attempt at using evidence to sustain an argument holistically; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> some successful and clear analysis some effective use of evidence views analysed and developed g att
Communication: generally clear and organised; can be understood as a whole; spelling, punctuation and grammar good				
5	18-21	A very good/excellent attempt to address the question showing understanding and engagement with the material; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> very high level of ability to select and deploy relevant information accurate use of technical terms vg/e att	12-14	A very good/excellent attempt which uses a range of evidence to sustain an argument holistically; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> comprehends the demands of the question uses a range of evidence shows understanding and critical analysis of different viewpoints vg/e att
Communication: answer is well constructed and organised; easily understood; spelling, punctuation and grammar very good				

1 To what extent can God reveal himself through sacred writings? [35]**AO1**

Some candidates may begin by exploring the extent to which scripture can be seen as 'the word of God'. Obviously they can use any of the scriptures they have studied, the key question is: are they the words of humanity or of a divinity?

Many candidates will use their knowledge of propositional and non-propositional views on faith and scripture. A propositional belief on the content of faith is a series of truths, or a set of propositions, revealed by God. Faith then is a matter of assent to those truths.

Non-propositional views, as the name implies, argue that the content of revelation is not a series of truths, or propositions, which God has taught humanity, but rather the self-revelation of God. God reveals himself and humanity responds in faith.

Some candidates may point out that the propositional approach can be seen as 'Belief that...such and such a proposition is true, whereas non-propositional faith is Belief in...'

Others may base their essay around liberal and fundamentalist approaches to scriptural exegesis.

Some candidates use writings from their own particular religious tradition.

AO2

In their evaluation candidates are likely to build on whichever approach they have taken when explaining what revelation through scripture is all about; if, for example, they have taken a direct approach through liberalist and fundamentalist approaches they may assess the extent to which those who believe that God speaks to us directly through scripture have any evidence or justification for this belief. They may then evaluate whether not a more liberal approach is any more or less successful.

If candidates approach the question through propositional and non-propositional approaches they may assess the extent to which these beliefs speak to faith but not a direct contact to a God.

2 Critically compare the use of myth with the use of analogy to express the human understanding of God. [35]**AO1**

Candidates are likely to begin by explaining what is meant by myth or analogy before assessing their various strengths and weaknesses. It is important, however that they address attempts to express the human understanding of God and not just write all they know about myth and analogy.

Some candidates may use this question to demonstrate that they know a great deal about religious language in general, however little or no credit can be given to responses which stray away from myth and analogy.

Some candidates may address myth not as simply a fictitious story but as a route to a much deeper meaning or reality. They may explain that few Christians today would consider Genesis as a literal truth but they would equally say that it points to truths about creation and God's part in it.

Others may begin by an analysis of the way St Thomas Aquinas and others use analogy as an important way of expressing ideas about God. They are likely to give good account of analogy of attribution and proportion.

AO2

Clearly we are not looking for a specific answer in the candidate's assessment of the issues involved in addressing the question. They do not even have to address whether or not one method has more strengths in helping believers understand the nature of God; they should be aiming to simply compare them in a critical manner.

Responses that concentrate solely on giving a generic account of verification and/or the meaning of religious language should not be credited at higher levels.

Good answers are likely to assess the issues involved in any attempts by human beings to understand God and in the process explore the strengths and weaknesses inherent in both myth and analogy.

3 'Resurrection is more likely to be true than reincarnation.' Discuss. [35]

AO1

Candidates may begin by explaining exactly what is meant by both resurrection and reincarnation. In the process they may find themselves exploring problems associated with mind and body identity. While the focus of the question is on the afterlife whether that is in some kind of heaven or back on earth in another body, it is reasonable for some candidates to discuss the implications for our understanding of the complex beings we are now.

Some candidates may focus directly on Christian teachings, explaining those parts of the New Testament or the Apostles Creed which shed light on religious beliefs about this kind of post mortem existence. Some may explore exactly what the Early Church Fathers who wrote the Apostles Creed meant by 'the resurrection of the body'.

Others may spend some time explaining what St. Thomas Aquinas meant by being resurrected in a glorified body. A number of candidates, may alternatively, explore the implications of John Hick's thought experiment more popularly known as his Replica Theory.

In terms of reincarnation, candidates may explain how these beliefs can be found in Hinduism. They may begin by describing the belief in transmigration of the soul which leads the concept of reincarnation, sometimes known as rebirth or palingenesis (to begin again). This may lead to an explanation of the need to see human beings as composed of two fundamental principles opposed to each other in their nature; the soul or *atman* and the material body or *sharira*.

AO2

Some candidates may notice that the question is not demanding a firm conclusion as to the success or otherwise of either resurrection or reincarnation when it comes to post mortem existence; they merely have to judge whether or not resurrection is the more likely of the two. In their assessment, the better responses are likely to assess what might count as evidence for the success of one belief over another. They may for example evaluate the coherence of these beliefs within other parts of faith systems of religious groups or against more scientific views of the possibility of life after death.

Some candidates may assess the value of alleged evidence of events such as out of body experiences or individuals believing that they remember past lives.

4 Evaluate Hume's claim that miracles are the least likely of events. [35]**AO1**

Many candidates will recognise a paraphrase of Hume's view on miracles in this question and may therefore begin their answers with an exploration of how he comes to his beliefs about miracles. This would naturally lead to a description of miracles as 'violations of nature', though many will point to other useful definitions depending on the direction of their evaluation.

Some candidates may be able to outline Hume's appeal to the principle of induction. Given 'the more instances, the more probable the conclusion'; Hume argues that this is the basis of science, and claims that it is highly rational to believe the highly probable, and highly irrational to believe the highly improbable. He can then argue that a miracle is by definition highly improbable, otherwise it was not a miracle, and thus not worthy of belief.

This may lead candidates to describe Hume's view that a wise man proportions his belief to the evidence and explain what Hume saw as the consequences for belief in miracles.

Others may compare these views with some of the writings of other philosophers such as Wiles and explore the reasons, from different perspectives, that scholars might argue that miracles are unlikely.

Alternatively some candidates may discuss the way some religions are founded on miracles, such as the resurrection of Jesus in the Christian faith and the belief of some religious people that miracles continue today.

AO2

Some candidates, as part of their evaluation, may use some of the arguments against these views on miracles put forward by philosophers such as Keith Ward. For example he would suggest that miracles have to be rare events otherwise there would be no such things as laws of nature as they would be continually broken.

Others may assess the extent to which Hume or others were successful in proving that miracles were unlikely events through an analysis for the value of their methods. They could for example look at the national lottery which anyone of us is very unlikely to win, however hundreds of people have already won the lottery and hundreds, it is easy to predict, will continue to win.

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