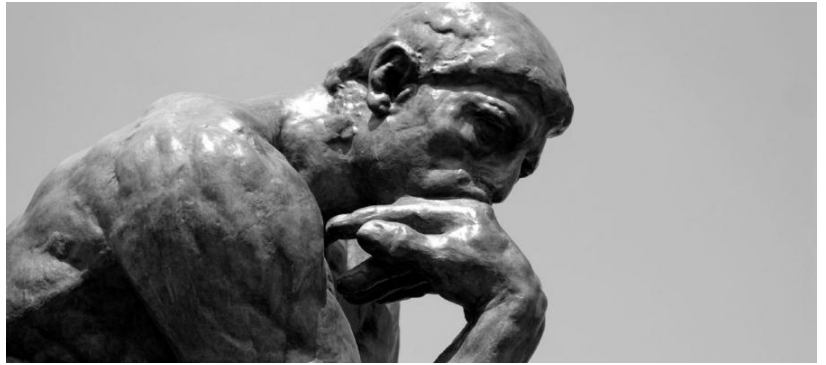


# **A-Level Religious Education**

*(Philosophy, Ethics & Study of Religion: Christianity)*



There are three parts (exam papers) for the A Level Religious Education course: →

Philosophy of Religion → Religion & Ethics → Study of Religion: Christianity.

To help get you off to a flying start in Year 12, please complete the following tasks. When completing the tasks, you are expected to include some independent research & to actually read the information you find.

Do not copy from the internet/book (unless it is a definition) – you will not develop understanding – and do not rely on Wikipedia – use it as a starting point, but look elsewhere too (suggested websites & books at the end).

## Task – Philosopher's Timeline

Create a 'Philosophers Timeline'.

You will study each of these philosophers listed below (and others) throughout the course in relation to one or more areas.

For each philosopher listed below you should include the following:

→ Birth & death dates and background (brief)

→ Early influence (who influenced them)

→ Key/main beliefs & teachings and what area(s) of study they are related to & how (if possible)

NB: be aware that some of the philosophers listed may fall into more than one area of study

|                    |                     |                  |
|--------------------|---------------------|------------------|
| Bertrand Russell   | St. Augustine       | William Paley    |
| Aristotle Irenaeus | John Hick           | Plato            |
| Immanuel Kant      | St. Thomas Aquinas  | Jeremy Bentham   |
| J. Ayer            | Richard Swinburne   | Joseph Fletcher  |
| St. Anselm         | David Hume          | F. C. Coplestone |
| William Barclay    | John Stuart Mill    | Richard Dawkins  |
| Peter Singer       | Immanuel Kant       | Rene Descartes   |
| Alistair McGrath   | Dietrich Bonhoeffer | Charles Darwin   |
| J Moltmann         | Peter Vardy         | Paul Tillich     |
| Karl Barth         | G. E. Moore         | J Mackie         |
| Karl Rahner        | L Wittgenstein      | Socrates         |
| William James      | Rudolph Otto        | Jean-Paul Sartre |

### Introduction to Philosophical Thought

Plato and Aristotle were philosophers from Ancient Greece who have had a profound influence on the development of Christian doctrine, Christian philosophy and Christian ethics, as well as on other world religion and philosophies. They explore ideas about how we can gain true knowledge and about the nature of wisdom. They consider questions about God and about whether there might be another reality beyond the physical world.

Plato was convinced that this world is only an imitation of another, much greater reality. In his view, this world is constantly changing and cannot, therefore, be the object of true knowledge; he thought that there must be another realm where things are eternal and unchanging, a world beyond this one, which he understood to be the realm of the forms. He thought that we could gain knowledge of this world primarily through the use of our reason, and is therefore known as a rationalist.

Aristotle, in contrast, believed that the physical world around us can give us a great deal of information. He was fascinated by science and thought that sense experience was the primary way to gain knowledge. Aristotle is therefore known as an empiricist.

The thinking of Plato and Aristotle have influenced most western thought systems and religions even the way you see and experience the world now.



Plato – pointing upwards truth is beyond this world

Aristotle- pointing to the world, truth is observable in the world.

## **Plato and Aristotle**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rh0fxJkvL44>

Who was Socrates?

How was he influential?

What does it mean to say that Plato was an idealist?

How does Aristotle differ to Plato?



Whose thinking do you currently agree with more?

***Plato or Aristotle? Can you explain and develop your ideas?***

Why do you think empirical knowledge is valued so highly in our world nowadays? Do you think this will always be the case?



# Introduction to Ethics : Responding to the world around us – Who should be saved?

Read the following article on the Guardian:

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2020/mar/14/coronavirus-outbreak-older-people-doctors-treatment-ethics>



The article discusses some of the dilemmas Drs have faced in fighting COVID-19. A lack of resources in hospitals has meant that some doctors are faced with having to choose who to give treatment to. In some cases, doctors are having to decide whether to take ventilators away from people who they think won't survive, to give to those who they think will survive.

Read the article and respond to the questions below

- 1) What problems with resources are hospitals across the world facing?
- 2) Summarise the ethical concept of utilitarianism
- 3) How is the situation in Italy being compared to utilitarianism?
- 4) What are your thoughts regarding the decisions made in Italy – should the UK do the same?

## Introduction to Philosophy work Week 2

### *Is it reasonable to believe in God?*

Firstly

#### Research Christopher Hitchens

Who is he?

Belief System?

Famous articles/books/podcasts?  
(read some if you can!)

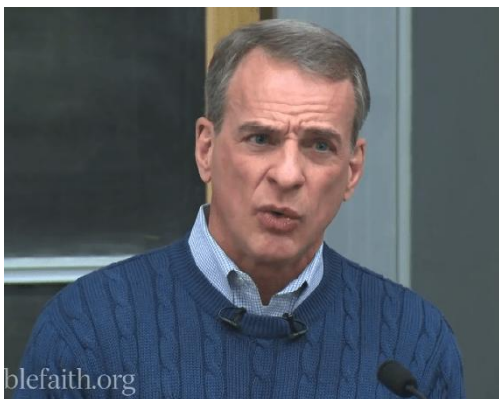


#### Research William Lane Craig

Who is he?

Belief System?

Famous articles/books/podcasts?  
(read some if you can!)







Watch this debate of two of the most famous scholars of our time debate the ultimate question of does God exist?

It's long but really interesting- you can stop and start it as you will!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OtYm41hb48o>

Summarise William Lane Craig's initial argument  
(13- 33 mins approximately)

Summarise Christopher Hitchens' initial argument  
(33- 53 mins approximately)

***Which arguments did you find particularly strong/convincing?***

***Which arguments did you were weak? Why?***

***Who in your opinion won the debate? Why? How can you justify this?***

# WHAT DO WE MEAN BY “EVIL”?

By Rollo Romig

July 25, 2012

In the hours after the mass shooting in Aurora, Colorado, last week, one word cut through the partisan responses to the massacre, and that word was “evil.” “Such evil is senseless, beyond reason,” President Obama said. Mitt Romney spoke of the lives “shattered in a few



moments—a few moments of evil.” John Boehner described the killer’s

<https://www.newyorker.com/books/page-turner/what-do-we-mean-by-evil>

Read this article in the New Yorker

## **Answer these questions**

*Consider at least two viewpoints for each question*

1. Is the concept of evil subjective?
2. Has the concept of evil changed over time?
3. Is evil necessary in this world?
4. Does evil disprove the idea of God?

## **Developments in Christian Thought**

The first chapter of this unit is called *Augustine's Teaching on Human Nature*; one of the main questions you will analyse is whether humans are naturally evil or naturally good. You will need to know what St Augustine believed about this question and be able to use other examples and evidence to discuss this question.

### **1. Are humans naturally good or naturally evil?**

**Watch, read and make notes on the video / articles from the bbc** (Hint: A good way to make your notes would be create a table with three columns or three subheadings which should be 1. Humans are naturally evil. 2. Humans are naturally good. 3. This does not say humans are either naturally evil or naturally good.) **You should complete the work in the box below:**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W72vC48kWyo>

<https://www.bbc.com/future/article/20130114-are-we-naturally-good-or-bad>

### **2. Case Study: Are humans naturally good or naturally evil?**

Psychological experiments like the Milgram experiment and the Stamford prison experiment could be used to help explain why people do bad things.

Evidence from the Milgram experiment suggests that rather than being naturally rebellious people are actually predisposed to do as they are told by authority figures. They will obey orders even when it involves harming others and even when it goes against their own initial moral instincts.

The data from the Stanford Prison Experiment could suggest that some people are inclined to abuse power and authority and to harm others if they can. Around a third of those given the role of guards in the original experiment appeared to enjoy harming the prisoners. A further third of the guards were actively kindly towards the prisoners. The remaining third played by the rules and neither deliberately harmed prisoners nor went out of their way to be kind.

- Watch the trailer from the Stanford Prison Experiment <https://www.prisonexp.org/>
- Read the story <https://www.prisonexp.org/the-story>
- Make notes on whether these studies show humans are naturally good, naturally evil or whether there is not enough evidence to say either way

### **3. Why did St Augustine believe that we were created perfect but that our human nature has become corrupt?**

You will write a short paragraph in the box below explaining why Augustine believed that we were created perfect but that our human has become corrupt. Use the following resources:

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aLu1OtPR8NA> this presentation presents background on Augustine and his theology and philosophy. You do not need the textbook pages which are mentioned. If you need further reading on this please search or email me
- <https://peped.org/philosophicalinvestigations/handout-augustine-on-the-will-sin-and-grace/> find the section with the subheading *Evil is a Privation – a lack of good* – this is the most important section in answering this question. If you have time, read more or all of the article
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n3u4kYuSTHA>
- <https://peped.org/philosophicalinvestigations/key-quotes-augustine/> these quotations give Augustine's point of view
- Extension: Genesis 1 and Genesis 3; Genesis 1 emphasises the goodness of creation and Genesis 3 is about the Fall

### **4. Extension:**

- <https://peped.org/philosophicalinvestigations/key-quotes-augustine/> these quotations give Augustine's point of view
- On how to "read" Genesis <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UVsbVAVSssc>
- Good explanation and detailed answer on Original Sin [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-eBS26l\\_pAg](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-eBS26l_pAg)
- Search <https://peped.org/philosophicalinvestigations/christian-thought/augustine/>

### **5. "Human Nature is completely good"**

Task: **Write a response to the statement, attempting to convince me of your argument.** You can argue strongly for one side, or take a more balanced argument saying strengths and weaknesses of each. Use evidence and examples from the resources you have read, watched and researched. Your own ideas and response are welcome and please be original.