



---

# Scheme of work

Religious Studies – Thematic studies

Religious, philosophical and ethical studies in the modern world: Theme B - Religion and life

---

To help teachers plan a course of study for the new GCSE Religious Studies A specification (8062), a possible scheme of work is provided below. This is purely illustrative of one way in which this course might be delivered and it is not intended to be in any way prescriptive. Teachers will need to develop schemes which suit the arrangements and time allocations of their own schools and colleges. Provided the specification content is covered, teachers can adopt any approach they wish.

## **Assumed coverage**

This scheme of work is based on 120 guided learning hours for the full GCSE.

Each of the themes studied should be covered in approximately 15 hours.

Teach alongside: the two religions studied for Component 1 and the other three thematic studies from Component 2.

The origins of the universe and life					
Lesson Number	Topic title	Subject specific detail	Guidance	Learning activity	Resources
Lesson 1	The origins and value of the universe – scientific theories	The relationship between scientific views, such as the Big Bang theory, and religious views.	Students will be able to outline a scientific theory of the origin of the universe eg Big Bang theory and explain the evidence that supports it.	<p>Students might be asked to complete a timeline of the universe according to the Big Bang theory, and then be required to explain two key pieces of evidence for the theory – the Red Shift and Cosmic Microwave Background Radiation (CMBR).</p> <p><b>Differentiation and extension</b> Those more able at science could assist those less able to understand the key details of the theory. The less able should concentrate on knowing an outline of the Big Bang theory rather than the evidence for it. The higher ability students may wish to investigate other scientific theories about the origins of the universe.</p>	<p>Video or information sheet on the timeline of the universe according to the Big Bang model.</p> <p>Suitable textbook on the evidence for the Big Bang theory – possible opportunity to collaborate with the Science department.</p>

Lesson Number	Topic title	Subject specific detail	Guidance	Learning activity	Resources
Lesson 2	The origins and value of human life	The relationship between scientific views, such as evolution, and religious views.	Students will be able to outline a scientific theory of the origins of life eg the theory of evolution and explain the evidence that supports it.	<p>Students might be given a list of key terms in the theory of evolution, eg natural selection, survival of the fittest, variation, struggle, mutation. They can then seek to understand these terms in such a way that they can write an explanation of the theory of evolution using and defining all of the terms correctly.</p> <p><b>Differentiation and extension:</b> Those more able at science could assist those less able to understand the key details of the theory and the evidence.</p>	<p>Textbook information on the theory of evolution – maybe work with Biology teachers.</p> <p>Video explanations of the examples that provide evidence for evolution – Darwin’s Finches, peppered moths.</p>

Lesson Number	Topic title	Subject specific detail	Guidance	Learning activity	Resources
Lesson 3	<p>The origins and value of the universe</p> <p>The origins and value of human life</p>	<p>Religious teachings about the origins of the universe.</p> <p>Religious teachings about the origins of human life.</p>	<p>Students will know the details of religious teachings about the origins of the universe and human life.</p> <p>Students will understand the reason why religious people might accept these teachings.</p>	<p>Students might read scriptural or traditional teachings about the origins of the world and of human life, in order to know these stories in detail, focussing on key events.</p> <p>Students could then find out why religious people might accept these teachings; why do they have authority?</p> <p><b>Differentiation and extension</b>            More able could be given teachings/scripture and be required to summarise it themselves.            Less able could be given teachings and an outline structure of the story to complete key details.</p>	<p>Scriptures or traditional accounts of the origins of the universe eg Genesis accounts.</p> <p>A suitable textbook.</p>

Lesson Number	Topic title	Subject specific detail	Guidance	Learning activity	Resources
Lesson 4	<p>The origins and value of the universe</p> <p>The origins and value of human life</p>	<p>Religious teachings about the origins of the universe and the origins of life, including different interpretations.</p> <p>The relationship between scientific views and religious views.</p>	<p>Students will understand the reasons why the scientific and religious teachings might be considered incompatible, including reasons why the scientific views might be considered more persuasive and also why the religious beliefs might outweigh the scientific.</p>	<p>By comparing the religious and scientific teachings, students might identify problems in trying to accept both accounts – are there any points that contradict? eg, timescales, order of events. Why might someone consider scientific evidence more persuasive than religious belief and vice versa? What kind of interpretation of these teachings would lead to a rejection of the scientific and acceptance of the religious?</p> <p><b>Differentiation and extension</b> Leading questions could be useful to focus the thinking of lower ability, while a more open approach might be appropriate for higher ability.</p>	<p>Explanations from prominent thinkers on the incompatibility of science and religion in these matters eg, Richard Dawkins; creationists.</p> <p>A suitable textbook.</p>

Lesson Number	Topic title	Subject specific detail	Guidance	Learning activity	Resources
Lesson 5	<p>The origins and value of the universe</p> <p>The origins and value of human life</p>	<p>Religious teachings about the origins of the universe and the origins of life, including different interpretations.</p> <p>The relationship between scientific views and religious views.</p>	<p>Students will understand the reasons why the scientific and religious teachings might be considered compatible.</p> <p>By the end of this lesson, students should know and understand the different accounts of creation and their interpretations and be able to apply these to the issues to come.</p>	<p>Students could explore how different, non-literal interpretations of the scripture might lead some religious people to accept both the scientific and religious views together. By reading different accounts from the history of religion of how scriptures and traditional teachings can be interpreted (the role of metaphor, symbolism, allegory; the importance of historical context, etc.) students can see that the two accounts might be asking different questions and approaching the issue from different angles.</p> <p><b>Differentiation and extension</b> More able students might be given more general work on the interpretation of scripture and required to apply these to teachings about creation, in light of scientific evidence.</p> <p>This might be an excellent chance to try a range of 4 mark explanation questions as well as a 12 mark evaluation question.</p>	<p>Accounts of thinkers who have sought to view the scientific theories and religious teachings as compatible, or at least as not incompatible.</p> <p>Explanations of the context and various forms of language found in scriptures and traditional teachings.</p> <p>A suitable textbook.</p>

Lesson Number	Topic title	Subject specific detail	Guidance	Learning activity	Resources
Lesson 6	The origins and value of the universe	Religious teachings about the value of the world and the duty of human beings to protect it, including stewardship, dominion, responsibility and awe and wonder.	<p>Students will understand a variety of religious teachings about the duty to protect the planet, building on their knowledge of creation accounts.</p> <p>Students will be able to explain the meaning of key terms eg, stewardship, dominion, responsibility, awe and wonder.</p>	<p>Using the religious accounts of creation that they already know, students could closely focus on particular teachings that concern the role and place of humans in respect of the rest of the world. Additional teachings that expand on these can also be used. Particular attention might be applied to understanding how the same teaching can be interpreted in different ways, for example how one teaching can be used to support the idea of stewardship while a different interpretation can be used to support the idea of dominion. This lesson could be kept on a more conceptual level with application to specific issues to follow.</p> <p><b>Differentiation and extension</b> Higher ability students might make greater use of primary texts, such as teachings of religious leaders. When looking at different interpretations of the same teaching, lower ability students might use a card sort to identify the different interpretations.</p>	<p>Accounts of creation already used plus religious teachings that build and expand on these on the theme of humans and their role and place in the world – teachings from religious leaders are likely to be very useful here.</p> <p>Teachings that consider the importance of future generations will be very useful here, such as the Golden Rule.</p> <p>A suitable textbook.</p>

Lesson Number	Topic title	Subject specific detail	Guidance	Learning activity	Resources
Lesson 7	The origins and value of the universe	Religious teachings, beliefs and attitudes about the use and abuse of the environment, including the use of natural resources, pollution.	Students will be able to apply their knowledge and understanding of religious teachings about the origins and value of the world, including the role and place of humans in the world, to various environmental issues.	<p>Students could begin with a reminder of key teachings covered in previous lessons. Perhaps using a market place activity, students could then consider a number of specific environmental issues eg, fossil and renewable fuels, habitat management and apply these teachings to these issues.</p> <p>Examples of religious people who are active in these areas would be very useful. Students could describe the work of these people and explain their motivation with reference to the teachings already studied.</p> <p><b>Differentiation and extension</b> Lower ability students could be given more guidance in application of these teachings by being given a range of possible answers and having to identify the one that best applies the teachings.</p>	Information sheets on a small number of environmental issues, for example, on fossil fuels. This might include information about how we use power as a society, the problems caused by fossil fuels and the difficulties in replacing them with other sources.



Lesson Number	Topic title	Subject specific detail	Guidance	Learning activity	Resources
Lesson 8	The origins and value of the universe	Religious teachings about the use and abuse of animals, including animal experimentation and the use of animals for food.	Students will be able to apply their knowledge and understanding of the main religious tradition in Britain (Christianity) and one or more other religious tradition to the issue of animal experimentation and also from at least one religious tradition to the use and abuse of animals and the use of animals for food.	<p>Students could begin with a recap of key teachings already studied that might be relevant to the issue of the use and abuse of animals.</p> <p>Students can then apply these teachings to the use of animals mentioned, working out what the different teachings might say, with a particular focus on how the teachings are interpreted in contemporary British society.</p> <p>By studying Christian teachings and at least one other religious tradition, students should be able to explain contrasting religious views on animal experimentation.</p> <p>This would be a good opportunity for students to work on an evaluation question.</p> <p><b>Differentiation and extension</b> Answering a range of 5 mark explanation questions will help students to develop the skills required in applying teachings to issues.</p>	<p>Religious teachings on contrasting views concerning the use of animals from Christianity and at least one other faith.</p> <p>Examples of religious people who have been active this area would also be helpful.</p> <p>A suitable textbook.</p> <p>Exam question and marking criteria (including levels of response).</p>

Lesson Number	Topic title	Subject specific detail	Guidance	Learning activity	Resources
Lesson 9	The origins and value of human life	The concepts of sanctity of life and the quality of life.	Students should be able to explain the concepts of sanctity and quality of life, and be able to differentiate between the two, recognising where they may come into conflict with each other.	<p>Students could begin by recapping key teachings they already know about the value of human life.</p> <p>Teachers could then teach the concepts of the sanctity of life and quality of life, along with any supporting religious teachings, recognising the absolute and relative nature of these terms.</p> <p>Students could debate which is the more important of these concepts, making sure that they consider both what help and what difficulties the use of such concepts might bring eg, the sanctity of life is clear, but inflexible while the quality of life is flexible, but can lack clarity.</p> <p><b>Differentiation and extension</b> Higher ability students could be given scenarios in which the sanctity and quality of life might apply and be asked to consider the strengths and weakness of these approaches.</p>	<p>Religious teachings on the sanctity and quality of life.</p> <p>Realistic scenarios in which the debate is significant. These might focus on abortion and euthanasia as the issue to come.</p>

Lesson Number	Topic title	Subject specific detail	Guidance	Learning activity	Resources
Lesson 10	The origins and value of human life	Religious teachings, beliefs and attitudes about abortion, including situations when the mother's life is at risk.	Students should know and understand various religious teachings on the issue of abortion and how they apply to the different circumstances in which abortion might be considered in contemporary Britain.	<p>Students could explore with the teacher what is meant by abortion, including the situations in which abortion might be considered eg, risk to the health of the unborn baby, risk to the health/life of the mother.</p> <p>Students could learn about specific religious teachings on abortion, building on what they already know from previous lessons. The emphasis could be on the absolute and relative nature of these teachings and how they are applied to the scenarios discussed earlier in the lesson.</p> <p><b>Differentiation and extension:</b> For lower ability students, teachers could emphasise the most important of the teachings, but require them to show how these might apply to the different situations. Higher ability students could consider evaluating points when applying the teachings to situations.</p>	<p>Religious teachings on abortion, notably those that build on key teachings already studied. Ensure that these teachings cover the diversity of views within the religion and reflect the sanctity vs quality debate.</p> <p>A suitable textbook.</p>

Lesson Number	Topic title	Subject specific detail	Guidance	Learning activity	Resources
Lesson 11	The origins and value of human life	Religious teachings, beliefs and attitudes about abortion, including situations where the mother's life is at risk.	Students should be able to debate the arguments surrounding abortion, using religious teachings in support of different points of view including the main religious tradition in Britain (Christianity) and one or more other religious traditions.	<p>Students could work in groups to write speeches arguing different sides of the abortion debate and then work with members of a different group. They could concentrate on being able to argue any side of the debate, including how to refute the points made by the opposition. The teacher might take a role of arguing from a different religion or a non-religious perspective with students required to counter these arguments from a different religious perspective.</p> <p>This could lead into a 12 mark evaluation question, with students required to argue and evaluate both sides of this debate.</p>	<p>An information sheet showing religious teachings from different faiths concerning the sanctity of life and showing compassion.</p> <p>A suitable textbook.</p> <p>Exam question and marking criteria.</p>

Lesson Number	Topic title	Subject specific detail	Guidance	Learning activity	Resources
Lesson 12	The origins and value of human life	Religious teachings, beliefs and attitudes about euthanasia.	Students should be able to explain the reasons why euthanasia might be considered in certain circumstances, as well as begin to consider the various ethical issues that arise from these circumstances.	<p>Students could begin by considering some of the cases that appear in the media where euthanasia is considered an option. They ought to be able to distinguish between active and passive euthanasia, using cases such as Diane Pretty and Tony Bland.</p> <p>From this they can begin to consider the ethical issues – is it right for someone to be able to make this decision? What about situations where someone can't make their decisions known? Is it right for someone to help someone else to die? Refer back to the debate between the sanctity and quality of life to help structure this task.</p>	<p>Case studies, such as Diane Pretty and Tony Bland.</p> <p>A suitable textbook.</p>

Lesson Number	Topic title	Subject specific detail	Guidance	Learning activity	Resources
Lesson 13	The origins and value of human life	Religious teachings, beliefs and attitudes about euthanasia.	Students should be able to apply their knowledge and understanding to the issues raised by euthanasia and then be able to understand further religious teachings on this issue including from the main religious tradition in Britain (Christianity) and one or more other religious traditions.	<p>Starting with the ethical questions raised in the previous lesson, students should apply what they already know to develop initial understandings of religious beliefs and attitudes on euthanasia. As they do this, they should consider the strengths and weaknesses of these positions, especially in the context of the sanctity vs quality of life debate.</p> <p>Now add in further religious teachings, requiring students to place these alongside the other teachings they have already used. Which do they support, which do they oppose?</p> <p>Based on this, a 12 mark evaluation question can be attempted, building on feedback from the previous attempt.</p> <p><b>Differentiation and extension</b> For higher ability, use primary texts when introducing the further teachings. For lower ability, use paraphrased teachings.</p>	<p>Relevant religious teachings, building on those already known about the value of human life, the sanctity and quality of life, along with further teachings, perhaps from religious leaders.</p> <p>A suitable textbook.</p> <p>Exam question and marking criteria.</p>

Lesson Number	Topic title	Subject specific detail	Guidance	Learning activity	Resources
Lesson 14	The origins and value of human life	Religious teachings, beliefs and attitudes about death and an afterlife.	Students should be able to understand beliefs and attitudes about death and an afterlife, relating these to religious teachings.	<p>Students could begin by discussing the question when is a person actually dead eg when the heart stops or the brain ceases to function. Is death the end or is there evidence of life after death? Consider issues like near death experiences, does a soul exist, ideas of resurrection and reincarnation. Look at what a religion says about an afterlife, considering issues like judgement or karma and where the 'new' life may take place.</p> <p><b>Differentiation and extension</b> Look at examples from a different faith about beliefs concerning life after death.</p>	<p>Video or account of Ian McCormack's claim of dying and coming back to life or similar story. Information sheet describing beliefs about an afterlife.</p> <p>A suitable textbook.</p>

Lesson Number	Topic title	Subject specific detail	Guidance	Learning activity	Resources
Lesson 15	<p>The origins and value of the universe</p> <p>The origins and value of human life</p>	Religious teachings, beliefs and attitudes about religion and life.	Students will complete an end of unit assessment.	Full end of unit assessment.	Assessment question(s) Marking criteria including levels of response.