



A Level Philosophy (PHIL 7172)

Awarding Body: AQA

What is Philosophy? Why should I take it?

Philosophy, along with Maths, is a subject that teaches students a method of thought rather than just the application of it. The purpose of Philosophy is to teach students how to find truth through the application of critical thinking skills. A student may leave a Philosophy lesson without any new knowledge but they will be more adept at argument and at understanding complex concepts.

Philosophy provides a useful background to a variety of further education courses and career choices including Law, Journalism, Politics and Medicine. More importantly however, it gives students essential skills that are applicable in all areas of life. Students are taught to think clearly and argue cogently; they become adept at spotting fallacies and constructing effective counter-arguments; and they have a better understanding of potent questions which humans have thought about for thousands of years.

What will I learn?

Year 1:

Epistemology

What is knowledge?
Perception as a source of knowledge
Reason as a source of knowledge
The limits of knowledge

Moral Philosophy

Normative ethical theories
Applied ethics
Meta-ethics

Year 2:

Metaphysics of Mind

What do we mean by 'mind'?
Dualist theories
Physicalist theories
Functionalism

Metaphysics of God

Concept and nature of 'God'
Arguments on the existence of God
Religious Language

How will I learn?

For Philosophy to flourish, there needs to be a friendly but critical atmosphere in a classroom. As a result there is lots of discussion and debate. Students must be willing to challenge the arguments of others and defend their own. It is also encouraged for students to produce presentations working in groups and to produce written work on a frequent basis. Lastly, it is expected that students should read around the topics studied and read commentaries as well as the work of philosophers in the original form.

How will I be assessed?

There are two exams, each are 3 hours long. They are long because AQA do not want to assess your ability to work quickly, but rather how good a philosopher you are. Each exam is worth 50% of the A level and there is 100 marks available in each. There is a mixture of short questions and extended essay-style questions. Students are expected to have high levels of literacy but to be concise and use subject specific terminology.

There are two assessment objective which are:

AO1: *To demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the core concepts and methods of philosophy, including through the use of philosophical analysis.*

AO2: *Analyse and evaluate philosophical arguments to form reasoned judgements.*

What is the entrance criteria?

It should be noted that Philosophy is *not* like Religious Studies at GCSE and 'Ofqual' do not consider the two to be cognates so, whilst a level 7 in GCSE Religious Studies is helpful, it is **not** a requirement. What **is** a recommendation, is a level 7 or above in English Literature. This is a better indication of an aptitude for Philosophy.