

## Pre-entry Preparation and Requirements and Recommendations

Welcome to Religion, Philosophy and Ethics at Comberton Sixth Form.

We follow the OCR A-level examination and will be studying for papers in Philosophy, Ethics and Developments in Christian Thought. This allows for a synoptic approach across these topics, with each aspect of the course reinforcing knowledge and understanding of benefit to every paper studied.

### Requirements for September

- 3 x A4 folder (with dividers) – one for Philosophy, one for Ethics, one for Developments in Christian Thought.
- Lined paper – please ensure you always bring paper to every lesson.
- The core textbook for the first year of the course: Wilkinson, M., Wilcockson, M., Campbell, H., OCR A Level Religious Studies for A Level Year 1. (*Although there are copies available to borrow from the Library, it is very helpful for you to have your own copy, which you can highlight and annotate*).

### Preparation Activities

To prepare for the course, we strongly recommend that you keep up to date with current ethical issues, debates and events around the world.

We suggest that you read a broadsheet newspaper or relevant online publications on a regular basis and look out for philosophical and ethical discussion programmes covering a broad range of ethical and philosophical themes. You might like to try podcasts like 'The Moral Maze' on Radio 4, or Radio 2's 'What makes us human?' series, in which some very interesting people have shared their thoughts.

Specific useful preparatory reading:

- Peter Vardy, *'The Puzzle of Ethics'* (ISBN 9780006281443)
- Peter Vardy, *'The Puzzle of God'* (ISBN 9780006281436)
- Alister McGrath, *'Theology: The Basics'* (ISBN 9780470656754)

### Specific Tasks

- 1) There is obviously a significant focus currently in the news on the coronavirus pandemic and there are lots of different ethical questions raised by this. Make a list of all the related ethical questions that you can think of and see if you can find articles to support different responses.

In particular:

- St Augustine argued that human nature is fundamentally flawed. Can you find articles identifying examples of behaviours people have demonstrated during the crisis that indicate Augustine was right and that that human nature is inherently selfish?
- St Thomas Aquinas argued that humans have an inbuilt capacity to do good and avoid evil. Can you find articles identifying examples of behaviours demonstrated during the crisis that indicate Aquinas was right and that human nature is inherently selfless?

Write a summary of your findings. Which view do you find strongest and why? We will discuss these ideas in September, so please bring them with you to your first Religion, Philosophy and Ethics lesson.

Example:

bbc.co.uk

9:19

### Chinese specialists help Italy fight the virus



A team of specialist Chinese doctors is in Italy to help the country in its fight against the virus, Ansa news agency reports.

They brought with them equipment including ventilators, respirators and masks.

They include the vice-president of the Chinese Red Cross and a professor of cardiopulmonary resuscitation, both part of the team of intensive care specialists, pediatricians and nurses who treated coronavirus patients in China.

- 2) Use the attached article included as a stimulus for a research task on the ethical issue of 'Euthanasia'. This is topic we will cover during our A-level course.

#### Read John Keown's article, 'Against Voluntary Euthanasia.'

- Explain what you consider to be the strongest aspects of Keown's argument against decriminalising Voluntary Euthanasia?
- Explain what you consider to be the weakest aspects of Keown's argument?
- What broader articles and case study examples can you find that support Keown's argument against decriminalising Euthanasia? Can you find examples of perspectives from a variety of countries across the globe?
- What broader articles and case study examples can you find that disagree with Keown's argument? Can you find examples of perspectives from a variety of countries across the globe?
- On the basis the specified reading and your broader research, would you support the decriminalising of Voluntary Euthanasia? Explain your position in detail, giving full justification for your position.

Please bring this work with you to your first Religion, Philosophy and Ethics lesson for your teacher to review.

If you have any queries about your course preparation or about any aspects of the course, please contact Hannah Powell (Head of A-Level RPE) [hpowell@combertonvc.org](mailto:hpowell@combertonvc.org)

I look forward to seeing you in September!