

Religious Studies

Advanced GCE

Unit **G581**: Philosophy of Religion

Mark Scheme for January 2013

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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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Annotations

Annotation	Meaning
	Level 1 – to be used at the end of each part of the response in the margin
	Level 2 – to be used at the end of each part of the response in the margin
	Level 3 – to be used at the end of each part of the response in the margin
	Level 4 – to be used at the end of each part of the response in the margin
	Level 5 – to be used at the end of each part of the response in the margin
	Highlighting a section of the response that is irrelevant to the awarding of the mark
	Point has been seen and noted eg where part of an answer is at the end of the script

Subject Specific Marking Instructions**Handling unexpected answers**

If you are not sure how to apply the mark scheme to an answer, you should contact your Team Leader.

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.

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.

Question	Indicative Content	Marks	Guidance
1	<p>AO1 Candidates may begin by explaining that the <i>Via Negativa</i> is also known as the apophatic way, a term which suggests a collapse of language in the face of the Infinite. A number are likely to describe the work of the early sixth century philosopher, Pseudo-Dionysius (Dionysius the Areopagite) who made a distinction between ‘cataphatic’ (<i>via positiva</i>) and ‘apophatic’ (<i>via negativa</i>) theology. They may explain that in the former, we contemplate God as he is in relation to the world, using the divine names like ‘The Good’, ‘Light of the World’, ‘Life’ and so on. These do give us real knowledge of God, but it is provisional knowledge, for God lies far beyond those names. If God is Light, he is far beyond that feeble attempt to capture him. The knowledge of God lies beyond the world – to move to the apophatic way, the <i>via negativa</i> is to move beyond – to ‘the divine darkness’ which lies beyond any concept. Some may explain that the <i>via negativa</i> was adopted by the medieval Jewish philosopher Moses Maimonides, and that St Thomas Aquinas had a profound knowledge of Maimonides’ work, but saw the <i>via negativa</i> as a prelude to understanding God.</p> <p>Some may explain that a key worry for many theologians is that to strip God of his descriptions, because our descriptions are based on finite experience, is to lose the essential link between God and the world. Christian orthodoxy insists on God’s involvement in the world, in a God who so loved the world that he gave his only son for its sake. The opposition to Gnostic heresies such as Manichaeism rested precisely on the insistence that matter was of God and in no sense a denial of God.</p> <p>Others may explore more modern Christian thinkers, notably G.K. Chesterton and Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, who spoke of the ‘divinisation of matter’, insisting on finding God in and through the earth, through the material, which was all part of his divine plan of salvation. They feared that the <i>via negativa</i> placed God too far beyond human life and the human world.</p> <p>Those candidates who would argue that there are better ways of talking about God than the <i>via negativa</i> may make use of other attempts to speak about God that they have studied, provided they use them as a comparison to the <i>via negativa</i> and not just reject the <i>via negativa</i> in the first sentence before going on to explore the area of religious language on which they hoped there would be a question.</p> <p>AO2 In their evaluation candidates are free to compare the success or otherwise of this</p>	35	

Question	Indicative Content	Marks	Guidance
	<p>approach to religious language as compared with symbol or analogy or myth or whichever method they feel may be more or less successful. Others may look to the Vienna Circle to assess whether the issue in the question has any more meaning than other attempts to talk about God, though they should avoid just making it a response solely about the verification principle.</p> <p>Some may take a more balanced approach and suggest that we may need both <i>via negativa</i> and <i>via positiva</i>, the former standing as a constant reminder not to anthropomorphise God, the latter perhaps, that if we are to say something rather than nothing, that utterance needs some content, however tentative, to express anything at all.</p>		
2	<p>AO1 Candidates may begin by explaining that James is approaching this area through his interest in human psychology. Some may point out that James is not necessarily trying to prove that religious experiences are necessarily real or indicative of a God. He does not discount the possibility that such experiences may be the result of delusion, drunkenness or some other error. He clearly believes that one cannot fix a belief or draw a conclusion unless other possibilities have been explored. In 'The Varieties of Religious Experience', James argues, as have many philosophers, that the interpretation of religious experiences is affected by what he described as 'over-beliefs', by which he meant our conceptual frameworks. His way of putting this was to say that prophets of all the different religions come with their visions, voices, rapture, and other experiences, supposed by each to authenticate his own peculiar faith.</p> <p>Many candidates will explain what they remember as PINT and describe what James means by the characteristics which demonstrate genuine religious experience. Many are likely to say:</p> <p>Passivity: those affected feel as if their own will is in abeyance, as if in the grip of a higher power.</p> <p>Ineffability: the experience is beyond the ability of words to describe. James says the mystical state of mind is 'negative' in that it knows no words can begin to describe the nature of the experience.</p> <p>Noetic quality: the experience is like a state of knowledge, but it is a type of knowledge beyond any normal experience.</p>	35	<p>It is important to note the precise wording of the question. Candidates should reach considered judgements about James' aims and conclusions. This is not a question on whether religious experiences prove the existence of God – James does not argue that this is so. Candidates are invited to take a much wider view of 'The Varieties of Religious Experience.'</p>

Question	Indicative Content	Marks	Guidance
	<p>Transiency: the experiences themselves only last a brief time, possibly as little as half an hour, but the effects are life-changing.</p> <p>They may refer to the use that James makes of the fruits of experiences in judgements about their authenticity.</p> <p>AO2 Some candidates in their evaluation may explore the ambiguous nature of any conclusions which James draws from this seminal research. For example they may evaluate the critique James makes of the alleged visions of St Teresa of Avila. They may assess the way that he, along with other commentators, questioned the extent to which her visions were psychologically driven and possibly the result of sexual frustration resulting from her vow of chastity.</p> <p>Others may evaluate the extent to which these experiences are interpreted by James to have great authority over the lives of those who experience them, often bringing about significant conversion of their lifestyles.</p> <p>Some may consider James' methods and presuppositions as both psychologist and pragmatist, pondering how his evidence is based on personal testimonies.</p>		
3	<p>AO1 Candidates may begin with a working definition of what omnibenevolence might mean. They may, for example, explain that the concept has its roots in two different but related ideas about God: one being that God is perfect and the other that God is believed to be morally good. These beliefs may lead religious philosophers to the understanding that God must be in possession of perfect goodness.</p> <p>Others may take the approach that any philosophers who have accepted that God is logically necessary, such as Anselm or Descartes, also implicitly hold that if he were not morally perfect, that is, if God were merely a great being but nevertheless of finite benevolence, then the nature of His existence would be limited and not 'that than which nothing greater can be thought', because it would be possible to think of a being of greater benevolence.</p> <p>Some may mention any of the other problems raised by attaching this concept to God: the problem of evil, the problems with religious language or even the Jewish understanding of God which some may remember from their AS studies.</p>	35	<p>This question permits a variety of legitimate approaches and arguments. The response however must focus on omnibenevolence. Other attributes, such as omniscience, bear on the issue of omnibenevolence but it is from that perspective that they should be considered.</p>

Question	Indicative Content	Marks	Guidance
	<p>If candidates go down the religious language route it is important that they assess the problems for this concept and not just fit in an 'all I know about religious language' response. Similarly if they raise the problem of evil they should do it in the context of the belief about this concept and not just trot out a theodicy they remember from AS.</p> <p>AO2 The evaluation in this question is going to depend very much on the way they have chosen to address the question. Some may take a holistic approach, outlining a range of issues surrounding our understanding of this concept and be in a position to compare and contrast their relative importance for philosophers. Others may just take one issue such as the problem of evil and write a more in depth response from that one perspective.</p> <p>The same may be true for the philosophers they chose to use in their answers; some may have enough depth on one or two for a full response, others may use a larger number of scholars to argue a wider range of issues. Some may only produce a list of scholars with little development, which would be a lower level of response.</p>		
4	<p>AO1 A significant number of candidates are likely to take a religious approach to this question, whether that is in terms of reincarnation or resurrection, and we should expect that most will make some use of John Hick's thought experiment. Some may point out that Christian philosophers from their earliest writings have argued in support of the Apostles' Creed that Christians believe in 'the resurrection of the body and life everlasting.'</p> <p>One of the first issues for those who accept this belief is what exactly do Christians expect these bodies to be like. Some may recognise the problem of whether Christians believe that somehow they will magically receive their old bodies back in some 'improved' immortal form or whether the soul of the person is all that survives until it is united with an entirely new body. Many will recognise that the monist/dualist debate is at the heart to the embodied existence after death issue and use it as the foundation of their response.</p> <p>In assessing answers which use Hick's Replica Theory, examiners should not worry too much about where candidates think John Smith is disappearing and reappearing and assess the extent to which candidates understand the thought experiment as laid out.</p> <p>Many will be aware that Hick himself did not think his experiment was successful.</p>	35	Candidates who achieve the higher levels are likely focus on the concept of incoherence and not simply the possibility of embodied life after death.

Question	Indicative Content	Marks	Guidance
	<p>Other candidates may take the approach of hard materialism and use scientific writers such as Richard Dawkins to agree with the sentiment in the question. Some may be able to outline what Dawkins understands by soul one and soul two; however they should relate his or others' writing back to the issue in the question and not just write out what they say.</p> <p>AO2 Candidates' approach to the evaluation of this issue will depend very much on the issues they raise about the question. It is important however that at some point they address the philosophical issue of the coherence or otherwise of this belief. Those who take a more scientific approach may for example assess the atheistic scientific argument that there is no empirical evidence for there being an embodied life after death.</p> <p>Others may assess the value or coherence of arguments put forward by those who believe in out-of-body experiences, using examples of those who have allegedly died briefly on operating tables and the similarities of many of their accounts. They should be careful, though, to keep the focus of their critique on 'embodied' existence. While disembodied existence – or other views - could be relevant to the argument by way of comparison, the question does not require any such reflection.</p>		

APPENDIX 1 – A2 LEVELS OF RESPONSE

Level	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. <p style="text-align: right;"><i>L1</i></p>	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. <p style="text-align: right;"><i>L1</i></p>
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. <p style="text-align: right;"><i>L2</i></p>	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. <p style="text-align: right;"><i>L2</i></p>
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. <p style="text-align: right;"><i>L3</i></p>	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. <p style="text-align: right;"><i>L3</i></p>
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. <p style="text-align: right;"><i>L4</i></p>	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. <p style="text-align: right;"><i>L4</i></p>
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. <p style="text-align: right;"><i>L5</i></p>	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. <p style="text-align: right;"><i>L5</i></p>
Communication: answer is well constructed and organised; easily understood; spelling, punctuation and grammar very good				

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