

Examiners' Report

June 2018

GCE Religious Studies 9RS0 02

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Introduction

The first A level paper of the new specification was bound to be challenging for centres and candidates but in general, the performance on the Religion and Ethics paper was sound. Candidates tackled topics which were familiar from the legacy specification and showed the same fondness for Utilitarianism and medical ethics over and above Ethical Language. The challenge of the new anthology had largely been met with candidates responding positively to the new Question 3a extract, and in many cases, centres had equipped their students with the tools to make links between Ethics and the other areas of study in Question 4.

Only Question 2 drew a significant number of blanks suggesting that Ethical Language may not have had sufficient focus in some centres. Medical ethics has benefitted candidates from featuring on the A level paper (rather than an AS legacy option) and in many cases, candidates were equipped to write informed answers on sexual ethics and to make links with other areas of study.

Candidates appeared to manage time in the examination although some wrote far more than necessary on Question 1 and Question 2, often running in to several pages of extra paper. In most cases candidates had already provided sufficient response to gain full marks so the extra time and effort may have impacted negatively on other answers. Battles with timings were most likely to come home to roost by Question 4 with a number of candidates failing to write at either the length or breadth justified by a 30 mark synoptic question.

Whilst candidates were able to make good use of scholars with regard to Utilitarianism and Ethical Language, they were more pushed to do so in their answers on medical and sexual ethics. Biblical and other religious references were often skimpy and simplistic.

Overall, candidates and their teachers are to be commended for their hard work and application. Candidates clearly did not panic in the exam, and in most cases, their knowledge was used effectively.

Question 1

Generally this was well done with clear explanation of the aspects of Utilitarianism. Many candidates could have filled two sides easily. Most of them listed the different types of Utilitarianism, the more interesting approaches attempted some kind of evaluation.

Most students were able to give an outline of rule or act Utilitarianism, citing the key thinkers and concepts. Some were able to give more insight by explaining how the concepts were practised and what the results of key moral practices were. The focus tended to be on Act Utilitarianism, mentioning Jeremy Bentham, the principle of utility and the hedonic calculus. Better responses demonstrated Mill's qualitative approach to measuring pleasure as opposed to Bentham's quantitative approach and covered Rule Utilitarianism, higher and lower pleasures, and strong and weak rule. Preference Utilitarianism was also included in many of the stronger answers as well as ideal utilitarianism (Moore); negative utilitarianism (Popper). Some responses incorrectly attributed the hedonic calculus to Mill. There were some very good responses that also set utilitarianism in its historical and cultural context.

Some excellent candidates wrote far too much for this question. There are only 8 marks available for Q1; no need to write three pages. Some candidates could have used better terminology in their essay but it appears as though that is how they were taught e.g. 'spreading happiness' could have said 'maximising happiness'. Some candidates had not noted this was just an AO1 question, and included strengths and weaknesses in their answer.

1 Explore the role of Utilitarianism in moral decision making.

Jeremy Bentham proposed Act Utilitarianism, noting that through nature, it has "placed humans under two sovereign masters: pleasure and pain." There that promote the most happiness is seen to be morally good and he has done this ~~through~~ through the hedonic calculus that quantifies the amount of pleasure gives a situation. Mill proposed the idea of Rule Utilitarianism and make a distinction between higher and lower pleasures. Higher pleasures are things such as intellect which Mill found most valuable, lower pleasures such as drinking, eating etc. aren't good and there who follow it has an inferiority of character, stating "it is better to be a man dissatisfied than a pig satisfied" and provides a way on how we should act in our moral decision making. Singer & R.M. Hare proposed the idea of preference Utilitarianism where it's easier to quantify preference than pleasure. This is beneficial in the moral decision making as shown through practical use of democracy where it's easier to identify the 'most preference' (don't need experience to know if it's good or bad). Lastly, there are ideas of Negative Utilitarianism where we should avoid things that create the most evil as the consequence doesn't provide the greater good.



A classic response worthy of the full marks available. The candidate has included a range of scholarly detail and responded to the demand of the question without applying simplistic or unlikely case study material.



Use the 8 marks wisely by including as much scholarly detail as possible. The candidate has squeezed as much onto the available space as possible without over writing.

1 Explore the role of Utilitarianism in moral decision making.

Utilitarianism was a theory created by Jeremy Bentham then later developed by John Stuart Mill. Bentham "It was essentially the 'greatest good for the greatest number'; ^{therefore} pleasing the majority is what you should base your decisions on. Bentham was a hedonist that thought "we want to 'seek pleasure and avoid pain' therefore ~~our~~ ^{our} actions should be motivated by pleasure. The hedonic calculus helps to calculate ~~no~~ what would be the most pleasurable thing, taking into account the factors of how long the pleasure will last, likelihood chance it will occur, ~~how~~ whether there will be happiness after and so on. It is a teleological theory as it focusses on the end result and relates to the situation. However Mill adapted this saying that not all pleasures are equal, so he established between higher and lower pleasures. The higher pleasures in life are things that stimulate the mind, like literature and art, lower pleasures are basic needs like food and drink. It is (Total for Question 1 = 8 marks) the higher ones we should follow.



Another strong answer but you see how it just falls short of full marks as it is slightly less well organised, feels more rushed and less structured and detailed. The right approach, nevertheless, achieving 7 marks.



Practise 8 mark answers on all the specification topics so they are ready to roll out in the examination. Time is of the essence and it is foolish to throw away a single mark of an 8 mark question by failure to have an organised response at your fingertips. The trigger word 'explore' makes clear that you do not have to evaluate.

Question 2

In most cases, this question was either done exceptionally well or exceptionally badly and indeed in many cases not attempted at all. Candidates either knew about emotivism or did not and if they did not know about the work of A J Ayer they invariably struggled to construct an answer of any real substance. When this was the case, good answers were able to relate the theory to the Verification Principle, and purposeful use was made of Stevenson, Moore, and MacIntyre.

Most answers which used the right material gave an outline of the ways in which language directs people to reveal their emotions and how far such words or language use reflect an objective world and the relevance of language to the individual, community or organisation. Candidates were able to describe emotivism as a means of understanding 'meaningless' statements and fewer than expected made direct referral to it as the 'boo hurrah' theory. Successful responses on this material tended to be more sophisticated and some candidates had good knowledge of the social background at the time and were able to make links with the wider work of logical positivists. By way of evaluation, candidates often argued that ethical language is prescriptive and essentially entailed the giving of commands. Some used intuitionism to further illustrate the nature of ethical language and made reference to the work of G.E. Moore. Another approach by candidates was to take naturalism as an illustration that 'good' refers to something existing that can be determined.

Candidates who were at a loss, if they attempted this question at all, focussed on the phrase 'essentially emotive' and attempted to link ethical theories such as Situation Ethics, or made much of the notion that when we speak of ethical concepts we are dealing with emotional concepts. However without links to the relevant scholarship this generic approach could score very little.

In one sense, it is accurate to view language as emotive. Logical Positivism states that if a statement cannot be proven either synthetically or analytically then it is meaningless, this can be applied to moral statements. Therefore, if morality is void of naturalism and cognitivism then it can be seen as an expression of emotion instead. A. J Ayer proposed the theory that ~~language~~ moral language is simply emotive; he claimed that when humans state that something is bad, such as 'murder is bad' then they are only saying 'I do not like murder'. He also claimed that moral statements have a persuasive quality; people only express moral statements to try to convince people or receive validation from others. This can be seen as proof of language essentially being emotive as in childhood people are constantly aiming for approval and praise through language, therefore moral language would be no different.

However, if through another angle, it is agreeable to instead view ethical language as prescriptive as the essentially component ~~of~~ of ethical language. R. M Hare theorised this, while he did agree that language was emotive, he believed that ethical language was not merely based upon emotivism alone. He believed that moral statements act as imperatives in order ~~to command~~ for the moral agent to command others how to think

and believe. For example, stating that 'murder is wrong' is simply stating ~~that~~ 'do not murder'. This can be proven to be the essentials of ethical language as, especially in the modern day, politicians and other leaders can be seen to use this kind of ethical language in order to deter criminals and terrorists from doing certain crimes.

Another way in which ethical language can be seen as something other than emotive is through Intuitionism. Intuitionism is cognitive, meaning that ethical statements do, in fact, have meaning other than simply being an expression of opinion or emotion. G.E. Moore claims that ethical ~~st~~ statements and terms do have value, ~~good~~ ~~is~~ good does refer to a real thing, ~~but~~ it cannot be defined or equated to anything else as ~~the~~ naturalistic theories, such as Utilitarianism, claim. Good is a simple concept, such as yellow, that cannot be defined, when asked 'what is good?' the answer should simply be 'good is good'. This is due to good and evil being intuitive; humans are able to ~~ask~~ ~~ask~~ them through reason in order to make moral decisions. This can be ~~seen~~ ^{seen} as ethical language ~~ethnically~~ being ~~prescriptive~~ intuitive as it explains why people come to different moral conclusions without logical contradictions and how ~~some people view morality as something they 'just-know'~~ it is a popular view that morality comes in the form of a conscience.



It is easy to see how this answer achieves full marks. The candidate has not over written, but has managed to include a wide range of relevant scholarly detail and has assessed the question posed by reference to other approaches to ethical language than emotivism.



Many candidates had clearly not learned this topic and were unable to offer anything relevant at all. Please ensure that you cover the full range of specification material in your revision.

Meta-ethics is an ethical theory that looks at ethical language. Meta-ethicists argue other theories like Utilitarianism are useless because they define good in different ways. In meta-ethics, there are two types of theories; cognitive and non-cognitive. Cognitive theories argue there are moral facts so moral statements can be proven ~~truth~~ true or false. Non-cognitive theories argue moral statements are not truth apt but are some other kind of statement.

The first cognitive theory is naturalism. Naturalists argue that moral terms such as good refer to something existing in the real world such as pleasure or what God commands. Utilitarianism and Divine Command Theory are naturalistic approaches. Naturalists would argue ethical language is not emotive because 'its fact and can be proven' ^{through} science or our senses.

Intuitionism is the ^{cognitive} second theory and is a counter argument to naturalism. G.E. Moore claims "good" cannot be defined or reduced to any other word, just like the colour yellow. He believes in naturalistic fallacy which is the linguistic issue of reducing good to any other term. He would argue ethical language is not emotive because it is fact, but it is something that can't be seen or proven, we ~~have~~ know it through our intuition.

Emotivism is a ^{non-}cognitive theory which means ethical

language is not truth apt. Ethicists would argue moral statements express an emotion but are not fact, for example "abortion is wrong", is really someone expressing their negative view of abortion. This is also known as the "boo" "hurr" argument. This is because the statement "boo abortion" can't be proven true or false, but still expresses someone's dislike of abortion.

Prescriptivists would argue that moral statements are non-cognitive as well, but argue they're conveying a command. For example, "abortion is wrong" is a statement trying to influence you to not have an abortion.

To conclude, Emotivists would argue that ethical language is essentially emotive but prescriptivists, naturalists and intuitionists would argue ethical language is not emotive so therefore the statement is wrong.



Another excellent answer, scoring 11 marks, which would have benefitted from a specific reference to A J Ayer's work with Emotivism.



This answer shows that the candidate knows exactly what the question is asking. There is no substitute for full learning and revision to be able to tackle anything on the paper. Questions will always be set on the specification content, and if it is well learned, candidates are able to do well.

Question 3 (a)

The majority of candidates were aware that they needed to focus on the extract, although some meandered into generalised material about Euthanasia. Most candidates picked out the three aspects of the necessity for medical judgements, the danger of the problem of regulation and the role of the doctor, although not all appreciated the conflict of interest in the doctor's principal aim of saving life.

Many were able to develop a sustained focus on the role of the doctor and the issue of euthanasia. Some weaker answers showed a lack of understanding of the requirement to 'clarify' and just gave a regurgitation of the extract itself. It was pleasing to see that stronger responses gave a coherent and concise discussion utilising a wide range of relevant issues arising from euthanasia. Most answers attempted a review of what euthanasia was, what types exist, where and who the stakeholders are in making decisions about an ill person, and what weight each person's view had in determining the outcome. Some went as far as arguing that there were real issues in allowing the third party to take full weight in such decisions and why it was not both morally and legally permissible. Some went as far as suggesting that doctors are not God or should abide by state law and not the ethics medical committees reflect. Some talked a lot about the comfort of the patient and how this was important.

Many candidates displayed excellent understanding of the different types of euthanasia. Some weaker answers showed a lack of understanding of the basic requirement indicated by the key word in the question of 'clarify' and just gave a regurgitation of the extract itself. It was pleasing to see that top drawer responses organised the material offered with a recognition of what the term 'clarify' demanded from them by giving coherent and concise discussion utilising a wide range of relevant issues arising from euthanasia.

Candidates took different approaches, all of which are valid. Some progressed sentence by sentence, drawing out the meaning and implications of the concepts addressed. Some candidates took this too far, in that it became a critique of the text and what the author was attempting to convey, rather than an assessment of any real issues. Another approach was for candidates to begin with an assessment of euthanasia and incorporate evidence from the extract to illustrate their arguments in relation to the issues raised. These tended to be more 'typical' medical ethics answers referring to SOL and naturalism, and often incorporating situation ethics in counterargument. There were some high quality responses on the role of the doctor and conflicts with the Hippocratic Oath. Some candidates also used Kant to argue against using doctors as a means to an end. Most students commented in some form on the slippery slope, though fewer candidates referred to it directly, instead incorporating it with reference to the need for regulation and recognition as medical practice.

There was confusion from some candidates as to what a 'third party' was, not realising that it was a reference to a doctor and interestingly few candidates demonstrated any extra knowledge surrounding the passage to indicate they were particularly familiar with it.

3 (a) Clarify the ideas illustrated in this passage about euthanasia.

You must refer to the passage in your response.

(10)

The passage is taken from 'Issues of life and death'.

In the passage above it states 'should a doctor kill his patients in some circumstances?'. A doctor has authority over his patients, a doctor chooses and knows what is healthy for a patient so therefore yes he can if he has the patient's consent and close family relatives. However, from a religious perspective it isn't justified as God can only give or take life, so therefore under no circumstance can a doctor take a life.

One of the 10 commandments is to

preserve life, so by ~~killing~~ using euthanasia you aren't preserving life.

In the passage it also states 'principle agent'. Does that mean people with higher status or even social class can ~~give~~ or take life away. So why when someone commits murder isn't seen as euthanasia. I mean someone can easily say 'he was ill so I took his life'.

Regardless of any 'principle agent' taking life is wrong in any sense.

But what if your family member was terminally ill and just couldn't take it any more what if her quality of life ~~wasn't~~ didn't even have any quality and she was already in so much pain, then would you consider euthanasia.

much as so the topic can just go back and forth and stating whether its right or wrong may never be resolved.

Religion will always play a part in any situation.

maybe ~~is~~ its dependent religion is dependent on morality maybe not.

It also states that it's 'part of medical practice'; since when is it seen that taking a life is a medical practice? Do the doctors not feel any guilt when they commit this.

However, easily argued the doctor is doing what's best for the patient and therefore should be praised.

If they are turning off the machine can't you just say from a religious perspective Islam that it's the path that God chose the individual to take so therefore we should just respect the decision that's been made and just go. However, some Muslims would say that no, God can only give or take life so there isn't a way of allowing euthanasia to occur.

Euthanasia, isn't a way of committing murder but instead it's more about making the individual's life a good quality of life rather than a bad quality of life. If a good quality of life is that the patient isn't in any more pain then it's the best option.



The candidate has taken the essence of the extract to develop a discussion of the problems of authorising euthanasia. This is a legitimate response to the text which scored 9, but could have been full marks had it made further specific reference to the passage.



There are many legitimate ways of handling the extract question, but it is essential that you refer to the passage set.

3 (a) Clarify the ideas illustrated in this passage about euthanasia.

You must refer to the passage in your response.

(10)

Euthanasia is ending a person's life based on their suffering & has been debated in medical & religious practices for ages. People struggle to decide if this is something that should be legalised as morality dictates that murder is wrong in all circumstances however as a ^{follows of} situation ethics may say, is it right to let a person suffer if they may die anyway & wish to? There are different kinds of euthanasia, assisted euthanasia, voluntary euthanasia, involuntary euthanasia. The euthanasia that most people think of when talking about it is when a patient is terminally ill & suffering & would prefer to die. However people fail to think about other situations that would be allowed by euthanasia for example what if a person is ill, but not desperately

terminal, and wishes to die anyway because of the pain they are suffering. Doctors make an oath to never harm & only heal & they would have to break this oath if euthanasia were allowed. This may lead some people to fight for the right of assisted suicide. A follower of situation ethics may have a family member who is in pain & wants to die & may take it upon themselves to ^{help them} end their lives because it is the most loving thing in that situation. ~~However~~ ~~if this were the case~~ this would make it a moral issue however if this were the case then society would erupt into chaos as said in the passage "without regulation, society would permit killing or murder, & whatever moral code one adopts would be regarded as untenable". This shows that it is a medical issue which would insinuate the the answer to the question asked in the last line of the passage, "should a doctor kill his patients in some circumstances?" is no for the reason stated above. ~~if not~~ ^{if not} reason. However this seems quite cruel & a solution to the fact that it would cause chaos is that ~~with~~ ^{if} its legalised it should have stipulations/conditions & side laws. for example with ~~murder~~ ^{killing} you can be charged with murder, manslaughter or self-defence. In the same way there should be ~~limitations~~ ^{limitations} to ~~when~~ ^{when} a doctor can administer euthanasia. A restriction could be that the patient is terminally ill for example. This

would allow the answer of the question to be yes.

Another solution could be to change the question in the sense that, for doctors not to break their oaths, other ~~specialists~~^{people} could be trained as specialists in euthanasia. This would make them a different kind of doctor that can take a different oath which would make euthanasia moral.



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Examiner Comments

Another clear response to the extract which enables the candidate to explore the issue of euthanasia based on the passage and their wider learning. This response achieved 10 marks.

Candidates were able to do well on this question by approaching it from different angles. This extract begged the question of the slippery slope, which most candidates in some way reflected in their answers.

Question 3 (b)

The majority of candidates approached this question confidently, but that confidence did not necessarily lead to well-focussed answers. There was much sound argument about the issues surrounding both sanctity and quality of life. As expected, candidates took two main approaches, the first to include value of life within sanctity of life and the second to equate value of life with quality of life. Some candidates used value of life to justify the sanctity of life for non-religious people. Most candidates were able to apply these approaches to at least one issue in medical ethics. Candidates scoring highly tended to show breadth of knowledge in accordance with the mark scheme stipulation of 'wide range' of knowledge as opposed to answering in depth on any particular issue, suggesting a good awareness of time and an understanding of the task given.

Candidates utilised a range of issues for their investigation of how the concepts enable decisions to be made regarding the nature of life. Some veered towards discussions about family life and sexual lifestyles, which meant there were limited discussions regarding the value and sanctity of life in connection with life and death. Some candidates talked exclusively about the rights of the mother and baby in cases of abortion but most did offer a range of medical cases to evaluate how far different approaches were successful in helping with making moral decisions. Stronger answers included reference to PGD and fertility technology and those who used a specific case study made good use of their material although interestingly the best answers were those that focused on fewer issues but made clearer reference to sanctity, value and quality of life..

As anticipated sanctity of life discussions mostly referred to Roman Catholic Church teachings and natural moral law although candidates' knowledge of biblical text was often limited to a small number of well-known references. There were also a few responses that focussed on Islam and with reference to Christianity most candidates were able to also account for the views of several denominations. The doctrine of double effect was frequently mentioned with reference to abortion and euthanasia for religious believers but only a small number of candidates distinguished between sanctity of life and weak sanctity of life. Some candidates chose to focus on philosophers in their responses, often Kant, using the principle of universalisability to argue that ending of life can't be justified. Palliative care was frequently mentioned as an alternative to euthanasia.

Some candidates appeared to think that links or influences were required in this question, as they were appearing in this answer as well as or rather than in answers to Question 4. However, this did not necessarily detract and candidates often used the New Testament and teachings of Jesus to argue for abortion, euthanasia and against sanctity of life across a range of issues. There were some well-developed responses on IVF linking the desire for a family with Natural Moral Law, arguing that in the modern world this best fits the principles and linking to the benefits gained to future generations from embryo research reducing suffering on a larger scale. Most responses considered the role Situation Ethics could play in providing guidance linked with New Testament teaching. Quality of life arguments for abortion focussed on feminism and the rights to the mother, some referring to JJ Thompson or to Glover's life worth living. There were frequent discussions of personhood referring to Singer and others.

(b) Analyse the issues raised for medical ethics by the concepts of the sanctity and value of life.

(20)

Plan

SOL	VOL	4x PEE one hand 4x PEE other hand
→ all life is sacred?	- peter singer	
→ when does life begin?	- Jonathan Glover?	life worth living
→ Judith Jarvis Thompson		

One argument which is made regarding the concepts of sanctity of life is 'when does life begin?'. This is an issue often raised ~~to~~ within medical ethics as it means ~~to~~ deciding when is the right time for someone to have an abortion. This could be seen as a difficult issue due to its ~~clash~~ ^{clash} with religious teachings. For example the belief in the Bible that 'you knitted me together perfectly in my mother's womb', suggests all life is sacred and ~~so~~ should therefore be valued. ~~However, it is also argued that~~ This insinuates the idea that life begins at conception. This fundamental principle upholds the sanctity of life, suggesting that abortion and other medical issues ~~should not be~~ such as euthanasia should not be allowed as life is sacred.

Conversely, Judith ~~the~~ ~~Jarvis~~ Jarvis Thompson argues for the opposite. Her argument derives from the idea that the value of

the mother's life is greater than that of the child, whose life is not of as high importance! She uses the analogy of waking up and being stuck to a violinist for 9 months. This could be seen as unfair as the value of the mother's life is much greater than that of the child as the mother has autonomy and free will, meaning she should not feel pressured in to looking after a child which is solely dependant on her. Therefore, Thompson has a disregard for the ~~sanctity~~ sanctity of life argument and puts the mother's value of life as more significant.

~~The~~ Thompson's argument can be seen as adjacent to the argument by Peter Singer. Singer argues for the idea of 'personhood'. This means quality and value to life is regarded higher than ~~that~~ the sanctity of life. This means life has value if it has 'personhood': rationality and consciousness. ~~There~~ There is a difference between being a 'person' and simply a 'potential human being.' This could be seen as a positive approach to medical ethics as, like Thompson, it puts the 'life of someone who has personhood' over that without. This could be argued as positive as it means that it would not be seen as 'intrinsically wrong' ~~to allow someone with~~ for someone to commit euthanasia if they are completely paralysed or brain-dead as they are unable to communicate and rationalise. Therefore, Singer argues one should consider personhood

rather than the sanctity of life.

However, one may argue that this belittles human life greatly as, under this argument, an adult chimpanzee has more rights than that of a fetus. This could be seen as wrong as it treats human life as less important than that of animal which, medically, could be seen as wrong. Thus, it could be argued that one must also consider the value of life and, in turn, the importance of each potential life. This is an idea which was dominating dominated in the past, where Britain was more of a religious country and adopted Christian teachings. This argument, however, is still adopted by many philosophers.

Some people would argue for the sanctity of ~~not~~ life and regard all forms of abortion wrong as it would be seen as 'murder.' Therefore, they would argue that abortion is intrinsically wrong as every life is important and begins at the point of conception. This is a highly debated argument between medical experts who are divided in 'where life begins.' The view that life begins at conception insinuates that those who have an abortion, no matter how early, are ~~going~~ committing a grave sin.

This is particularly true according to religious teaching such as ~~that~~ 'Thou should not kill.' As this is one of the Ten Commandments, it may be taken

~~the~~ literally by some people who therefore believe abortion is wrong in all circumstances and, thus, regard all life as sacred.

An issue ~~with~~ this argument is that it fails to recognise the value of the mother's life and the consequences ~~a~~ a child may have for her. By stating abortion is wrong in all circumstances, experts fail to look at the background and fundamental factors of each situation. For example, the mother may have been raped or sexually abused, meaning she will not be sane if she has the child. In this instance, it ~~is~~ could be argued the sanctity of life argument is unsuccessful as it ~~is~~ is more important to consider the life of the mother rather than that of the child.

This argument is also supported by Jonathon Glover who does not believe that murder is always intrinsically wrong. Thus, argues that the rejection of the sanctity of life argument is ~~firmly~~ permissible. He argues that we should, instead, consider if the life is 'worth living.' Therefore, we should ~~not~~ value the 'length of life' as well as the rationality and consciousness of each individual. This could be seen as a better approach to medical ethics as if a life is not 'worth ~~the~~ living' it is less sacred to that of ~~someones~~ someone who is. This would, therefore,

allow euthanasia to be permissible as ~~the~~ same life is not worth living. ~~This~~ This also exemplifies the idea that everyone has autonomy and the right to decide that their life no longer has value to it.

A fundamental issue with this argument, however, is that it might result in the 'Slippery Slope.' This ~~also~~ means that, if allowed, many people may believe that their life is not 'worth living' and commit euthanasia despite not being in the right frame of mind. This could be seen as a ~~serious~~ ~~is~~ serious issue for medical experts who do not want people to abuse their right to end their life and do so without considering the consequences.



A lovely, long, detailed and scholarly response to this question, scoring full marks. The candidate is well prepared and able to draw on a range of effectively applied material.



Ensure that you have scholarly material at hand when dealing with issues of medical ethics, so that your answers are not common sense or anecdotal. You have to show that you have taken a high level course in Religious Studies.

(b) Analyse the issues raised for medical ethics by the concepts of the sanctity and value of life.

(20)

The first medical issue raised is the beginning of life. New scientific advances such as embryo research or IVF have brought new moral dilemmas.

When a couple cannot conceive naturally they may turn to ~~to~~ medical help for In Vitro Fertilisation but some Catholics would argue conceiving of a child in an unnatural way is an "abomination" and a grave sin, especially when either the sperm or the egg are donated from a third party. Catholics would argue it is God's will for you to have a child or not and IVF is essentially "playing God".

However, it could also be argued that God gave us the scientific ability to create life and we should therefore use it. Some Christians would ^{also} argue the teaching "be fruitful and increase in number" shows God wants us to have children and IVF is assisting with that.

Another ethical issue with IVF is embryo research. An embryo is a fertilised egg and during the process of IVF 8 eggs are fertilised to better the chances of pregnancy. Often the eggs that are not used in IVF are used for embryo research up until 14 days. This is a moral issue for Catholics because some believe life starts at conception (as soon as the egg meets the sperm), so embryo research is essentially scientific experiments on people. In addition, the discarding of embryos would be seen as winning life or even murder to Catholics which is why they

would not support IVF. Arguments such as life starts at conception would also be reasons for the Catholic approach to abortion as wrong.

~~Secular believers such as~~ ^{medical} Abortion is the extermination of life and is legal until 24 weeks in the UK. The mother must have 2 doctors opinions and will only be accepted for abortion if the mother's or child's physical or mental health is ~~at~~ at risk. Catholics would argue abortion is wrong because only God can give or take life. It is His will for you to have a pregnancy. In addition, the teaching "God made man in his own image" implies ~~the~~ ending life is essentially murdering God.

Secular believers such as Richard Dawkins would argue an embryo is not yet a person and abortion and IVF and research on embryos is therefore acceptable. After the embryo is a person (at which stage is debateable) it would be immoral. Dawkins argues an embryo is not a person until it can feel pain. He argues murder is only wrong because people want to live and an embryo cannot want to live so it is therefore not immoral to have an abortion.

Secular believers would also argue that an abortion could be the better of 2 evils. If a mother has an unwanted pregnancy she is likely to neglect the child which is wrong and unfair. Secular believers may also argue religion is outdated and is therefore useless as an approach in today's society.

The second major medical issue is end of life. This concerns

euthanasia. Euthanasia is the ending of a life suffering from a terminal illness, in which the individual is unable to kill themselves. There are two kinds of Euthanasia: active and passive. Active euthanasia is an action which will end the life such as injecting them with an overdose of morphine. The second is passive euthanasia and this is where you stop doing an action that preserves life for example turning off a life support machine. Active euthanasia is illegal in today's society.

The Act and Omission doctrine argues doing an action to cause death is worse than not doing something that will save a life. The punishment for euthanasia is a prison sentence for murder.

Most Christians would argue against euthanasia because of one of the very first commandments, "thou shall not murder". However, Christians argue life is sacred - God values human life more than any other species and this evident through teachings like dominion. We should therefore value human life and should not kill. On the other hand, some Christians also believe in quality of life which is how valuable a life is based on consciousness, pain, freedom, mobility etc. For example, a person in a coma doesn't have a good quality of life and ^{some} Christians may therefore argue euthanasia for that reason is acceptable.

On the other hand, Cecily Saunders argues

euthanasia should never be considered. Instead of ending a life of suffering, we should end the suffering. He argues society today is advanced enough to provide medication that will ensure the terminally ill are comfortable until death. Cicely Saunders opened the first hospice which provides end of life care for the patient and their family.

To conclude, due to sanctity of life, most Christians would be against medical ~~ethics~~ treatments such as abortion, embryo research or euthanasia.



Another super full marks response, showing how a range of relevant material can be applied with equal success to this question. The candidate is not dependent on generic assertions, but has learned high level material well.



Get your timing right. This answer is notionally allowed 30 minutes of writing, so it needs to be extensive, but you must practise regularly so you are fit for the pressure of the examination.

Question 4

Many candidates clearly understood the requirements of the question and were able to use a range of argument and evidence to evaluate the topic and where there was an explicit reference to the question made, candidates most often argued that sexual ethics would not be helped by religious teaching.

A range of topics were used, but religious debates about homosexuality were pre-eminent. Candidates also considered contraception, marriage and divorce, adultery, pre-marital sexual relationships and promiscuity. Less persuasively, some candidates referred to biblical parenting, abortion and fertility treatment, which may arguably be relevant to a discussion of sexual ethics, but tended to involve overlap with issues discussed in Question 3(b). It would help candidates to be made aware of the different ethical issues involved to enable them to target their case material most effectively.

The best answers were organised and logical, following through either by issue or by philosophical approaches. Those who were pressed for time often gave muddled responses. There were a few with very definite opinions, more like sermons and a tendency to generalise - 'all Christians believe' - or to work on the assumption that Roman Catholic teaching represented that of all Christians. Jack Dominian was used frequently to demonstrate the progression of religious attitudes. The more recent actions of Pope Francis were also used to show change within religious teaching based on evidence from the modern world. Similarly this teaching was the basis for discussions on sex before marriage and there was some confusion, as on the AS paper, that sex before marriage is adultery. There were several references to religious groups aimed at teens to promote celibacy such as Silver Ring Thing. Homosexuality and adultery were most frequently linked to the Old Testament and to the work of the Westboro Baptist Church. Many candidates were able to comprehensively explore the differing views of Christian denominations on the issue of homosexuality, most considering celibacy and familiar principles such as 'love thy neighbour'. Candidates arguing against religion being helpful highlighted the changes in societal opinion and the changes in the law that reflect this, showing church teaching to be out of date, whilst others argued the contrary, citing Inclusive Church and the recent appointment of openly gay senior church leaders, such as Reverend Joe Hawes.

The most frequent link made was with NT studies, but links were also made to Islam, Buddhism and some philosophical concepts. Poorer responses failed to deliver on this aspect of the question and struggled with applying both religious and ethical approaches. Some did not even refer to any of the relevant ethical theories but only offered simplistic understanding of limited religious views. Some interesting answers referred to Philosophy by suggesting that if the existence of God was not proved then religious attitudes to sex were invalid. The weakest answers lacked any kind of scholarly content and relied on anecdote.

4 Evaluate the view that issues in sexual ethics are not helped by appealing to religious teaching.

Aquinas
sex pleasure
Augustine

In your response to this question, you must include how developments in Religion and Ethics have been influenced by **one** of the following:

- Philosophy of Religion
- New Testament Studies
- Study of Religion.

(30)

Sexual Ethics covers a range of issues concerning our actions involving topics like marriage, contraception, promiscuity and homosexuality. In contrast to a burgeoning liberal society, religious attitudes to sexual ethics remains fundamental in that it's objective moral standpoint, derived from the revealed Biblical scriptures, is used as a basis of judgement.

Roman Catholic Christians exacerbate the view of purity in action where our morality is restricted by the fundamental principles of, for example, marriage. The church actively instructs a preference over celibacy, influenced by Pythagorean and stoics. Ideally, it is seen as preferable than to 'commit sins or ^{risk}sexuality and 'damnation'. Such denotations are made clear by the divine command theory, which states 'thou shall not commit adultery'. As Christianity is a universally active, major world religion it makes

sense, pathologically, to appeal to a historical point of view - segregate to our liberal view, which holds our opinions on sexuality as biased. Looking at the deeprooted influences of religion, most nonetheless derive from a patriarchal society, and lacks adaptiveness to a modern society led by feminism and liberality. The early influences of Augustine exacerbate the purposeful function of sex in marriage, and encourages celibacy of the clergy. This is evidently reflected in the unitive function of marriage, where procreation and fidelity is promoted; Any sexual activity outside marriage is therefore immoral.

We can see, to an extent, the significance of religious attitudes to the debate of ^{the} issues of sexuality. Social media promotes marriage as a life 'goal' and an aspirational moment both genders should anticipate. Nevertheless, these religiously influenced views, according to feminists, promote women as subordinate to males, in that one should remain virtuous before marriage. Feminists criticise religious appeals due to its projection of cultural attitudes, which are now seen as declining against globalisation and social integration. In ancient Hebrew society, a set of double standards were enforced, in order to regulate women. Religious

attitudes further regulate and restrict female autonomy and empowerment, as we are taught to keep 'silent' in the church. Due to this gender inequality, divorce has now permitted equal access to both genders. One can be critical of religions contradicting teachings, where it promotes 'sexual regulation of females' and instills equality values by asserting that everyone is equal in the eyes of God. Such religious ambiguity constituted creates negligence of religious authority.

A Philosophical criticism of the feminist view comes from Paul Tillich's 'Symbolic' concept of religious language. The term 'purity' and virgin birth is used to control females sexual promiscuity, which is viewed as a negative contribution to sexual ethics. Tillich however argues it is a symbolic term, in which its source of origin remains relevant. Patriarchal traditions have weakened and females have active participations in the church. Ideally, it is a source of language that only points to something beyond itself, rather than a literal rule against females.

Jack Dominion nevertheless disregards all religious contributions to matters of sexuality and homosexuality. Sex, as a personal expression, confirms

the sexual identity of both partners, which is the only important aspect of sex. It does not require marriage or an intention to reproduce. Deriving from the Church of England perspective, 'the polyphony of love' is prioritised as it finds expression in the bodily union of the lovers. Although promiscuity is discouraged, e.g. One night stands, one should be able to exercise ~~the~~ ^{sex} freely from an absolutist function. This goes against ethical theories like Aquinas' Natural Moral Law, as it prevents the 'reproductive' precept of natural moral law. Sexual permissiveness, is a misuse of right reason, which dwells in the apparent goods of our actions. Feminists criticise religious contributions to homosexuality as there are evident, positive functions of it. For example, political lesbianism is the most efficient way to exercise female liberation from gender roles. 2 females living together and sexually united is a more comprehensive modern attitude that is widely accepted by most non-religious individuals in society.

Dominion's contribution is nevertheless rejected by mainstream churches such as the Catholic and Protestant Church. Protestants, as fundamental evangelists, deploy Biblical authority in religious attitudes towards

homosexuality. It defends the notion of heterosexuality as the norm 'set by God' from the very ^{first} moment of Creation. Adam and Eve, not Adam and Steve, is a primary piece of evidence for heterosexuality being the norm. Old Testament teachings contain revealed theology upon this matter, particularly highlighted in the story of 'Sodom and Gomorrah'. The punishment of sexual promiscuity and 'Godless behaviour' is punishable and thus verifies 'eternal damnation in hell'.

Kant's Moral Argument can be used to support and contradict homosexuality. Homosexuality may not be seen as an act contributing to the highest form of happiness, as those who commit this act wrongly postulate free will. Then again, who is to say sexuality is not an individual's highest form of happiness? Practical reason is still significant as we are acting in good will through the unitive purpose of love. However, according to the categorical imperative, one ~~should~~, who wishes that their maxim was a universal law, must ~~forsee~~ foresee and ~~enel~~ enel to heterosexuality - for if all were to be in homosexual relationships, then reproduction would not occur. Humanity is at risk of extinction.

Although the Catholic and Protestant churches are

different christian denominations, they agree upon core biblical teachings like "Leviticus' quote - "a man should not lie with a man the same way he does with a women". Even though protestants are rigid upon this concept, catholic christians are nevertheless taught to accept sexual orientation.

Recent news regarding pope Francis' response to the Chilean priest who tortured and abused homosexuals, requested pardon on behalf of the church. His reassertion of christian values held acceptance of homosexuality as he said "God loves you the way you are" and "God made you the way you are". Contemporary society has influenced pope dictations which seem rather tolerant, but also intolerant.

To say homosexuality is a grave moral disorder regarding backyard mongrels is problematic. It could potentially fuel religious hatred against gays and fags like the Westboro Baptist Church. Religion, arguably, only promotes further intolerance rather than tolerance.

Against a secular society, the migration of evangelist sect and christians has encouraged missionaries in reverse promoting intolerant views of gays. Fundamentalism will lead to a rise in new

atheism, which would discard religious views on sexual issues like divorce and abortion.

Whilst Christians go against sexuality outside marriage, divorce, contraception etc., the contractarian view creates a liberal dogma used as basis for acceptance.

The contractarian view summarises sexual acts as morally permissible if there is mutual agreement. According to the harm principle, if sexual acts consent both parties and cause no damage to any party, including 3rd party, then sexual issues are permitted. Therefore, if both individuals agree a divorce and start new affairs, then a lack of harm suggests acceptance of liberal attitudes.

It elucidates the importance of consenting adults who consist of mature autonomy to make sexual decisions. It denegates cases of rape, which violates the harm principle, and rejects youth promiscuity. This adolphie theory presents a better contribution to sexual issues that confides with our liberal attitudes in contemporary society. It further defers and discards the negative occurrence of sexual promiscuity as human autonomy is key.

in conclusion, religion clearly has a significant
standpoint in ~~religious~~ sexual attitudes, which
constantly projects the historical influences on ones
sexuality.



A wonderful response full of detail, scholarship, appropriate exemplars and citations, and achieving full marks.



To do well on this question it is essential to include scholarship and to keep exemplars tight and efficient. Generic answers including common sense or everyday knowledge will not be able to gain the same credit. Interesting links have been made with Philosophy.

4 Evaluate the view that issues in sexual ethics are not helped by appealing to religious teaching.

In your response to this question, you must include how developments in Religion and Ethics have been influenced by **one** of the following:

- Philosophy of Religion
- New Testament Studies
- Study of Religion.

(30)

The idea that sexual ethics are not helped by appealing to religious teaching could be considered valid to some degree as Jack Dominion argues that the Christian teaching of ~~marriage~~ celibacy before marriage is arguably outdated. He points out that puberty starts at around fourteen or fifteen therefore with the average marriage age being in the early thirties therefore is it really plausible that humans will remain celibate for that long? Therefore it is arguable to a large extent that issues in sexual ethics are not helped by appealing to religious teaching to a large extent due to the fact that by nature people are inclined to have sex.

On the other hand however issues in sexual ethics are helped by appealing to religious teachings to some extent as the Quaker practice teaches that you should not treat anyone as means

to an end; therefore you should not be with someone to satisfy your sexual urges. This therefore promotes respect that as humans we should have for one another thus to a ~~large~~^{some} extent issues in sexual ethics can be helped by appealing to religious teachings.

On the otherhand however issues in sexual ethics are not helped by appealing to religion as the Christian scholar St. Augustine stated that should a woman deny her husband sex she is forcing him to sin outside of the marriage. This is one of the most outdated arguments and to today's equal society would be considered insulting as in following this idea, it is a complete step in the opposite direction for mankind therefore issues in sexual ethics are not helped by appealing to religious teaching to a large degree.

However it could be argued that ~~in the New Testament~~ issues in sexual ethics are helped by appealing to religion to some extent as in the New Testament Jesus taught "Love thy neighbour". In doing this it promotes respect that you should have not just towards your sexual partner but towards other people's relationships regardless of ~~how they~~ sexual orientation or how they choose to live it.

With Jesus promoting respect and love it's arguable to some extent that issues in sexual ethics are helped by appealing to religious teaching.

On the otherhand it could be argued that sexual ethics are not helped by appealing to religious teaching as the Old Testament reads "If a man lies with another man how he does with a woman he has done what is detestable". This does not help the issue of homophobia as it simply promotes it and disregards people's feelings towards ~~another~~ others whether that be for a man or a woman. This idea can be considered backward to a large extent when discussing issues in sexual ethics therefore it is not helped by appealing to religious teachings.

Quakers however have a different outlook upon ~~sex~~ homosexuality and if there is love within the relationship they consider it no morally worse than a heterosexual relationship. ~~There~~ With this in mind it is fair to argue that religious teachings can ~~also~~ be helpful in terms of sexual ethics to some degree.

However in Genesis the passage reads "be fruitful and increase the number" therefore Catholics have interpreted that it is morally correct to procreate an "intrinsically evil" to prevent procreation by means of contraception. This however disregards modern day issues such as not being able to provide financially for the child therefore the kindest, morally right thing to do would be preventing procreation. With this in mind it's arguable to a large degree that issues in sexual ethics are not helped by appealing to religion.

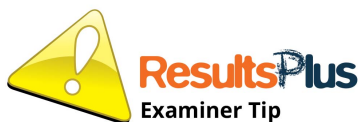
On the otherhand the ~~has~~ idea that sexual ethics are not helped by appealing to religion ~~to~~ could be invalid to some degree ^{although in the} as ~~many people do oppose homosexuality and abortion~~ despite the fact many people do oppose abortion and homosexuality. Jesus taught in the New Testament "if someone slaps you on the right cheek turn them your other". This infers that even if someone opposes you for your beliefs or actions or sexual orientation you should do the most loving thing in not reacting to their comments or actions. It is for this reason that to some extent sexual ethics are not helped by appealing to religion.

derogatory

Overall, certain passages, particularly of the New Testament can be open to interpretation when considering appealing to them in terms of issues in sexual ethics. However it is important to remember that the majority of religious teachings are hundreds if not thousands of years old therefore the teachings can no longer be interpreted in a ~~real~~ modern society as the values held then are deemed as ~~derogate~~ derogatory now. It is ~~the~~ for this reason that issues in sexual ethics are not helped by appealing to religious teachings.



This is also well answered, but less rooted in scholarship, thus failing to achieve the higher marks of the previous essay (this response was awarded 25 marks). Note that the candidate draws a clear conclusion and has made links to New Testament material.



Make your links really clear - you can even underline the area to which you are making the link.

Paper Summary

Based on their performance on this paper, centres and candidates are offered the following advice:

- Centres should ensure all the specification content is thoroughly covered.
- Candidates should practice writing to timed conditions as often as possible.
- Do not over write on the shorter answers – notably the 8 and 12 mark questions.
- Ensure that AO2 material is clearly evident in Questions 2, 3(b) and 4.
- Practice making links between areas of study in preparation for Question 4.
- Ensure familiarity with the anthology texts so candidates can show awareness of the connection between the extract set and the wider context of the text.

Grade Boundaries

Grade boundaries for this, and all other papers, can be found on the website on this link:

<http://www.edexcel.com/iwantto/Pages/grade-boundaries.aspx>

