

Year
12

Philosophy - A Level

The AQA A level course is an introduction to philosophical thinking about four big questions: What can we know? How should we live? Does God exist? What am I?

Topic 1: Epistemology



What is knowledge

Exploring definitions of knowledge, including the tripartite view, challenges from Gettier, and responses such as infallibilism, reliabilism and virtue epistemology.

ANALYSING



Precision

The ability to work effectively within the rules of a domain



Perception

As part of this topic, students will explore how much knowledge can we gain through our senses and questioning how open the connection is between our mental images of the physical world and the physical world itself. We investigate direct realist, indirect realist and idealist approaches and encounter philosophers such as Locke, Russell and Berkeley.

Reason

Exploring how much knowledge can be gained without any experience of the world. We study arguments that we are born with innate knowledge, encountering philosophers such as Plato and Leibniz.

Abstraction

The ability to move from concrete to abstract very quickly

We also examine Descartes' Intuition-Deduction Thesis, in which Descartes seeks to establish knowledge, including his famous "I think, therefore I am" argument, using reason alone.

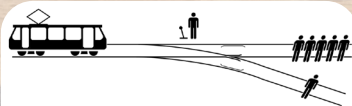


"Cogito, ergo sum"

"I think, therefore I am"

Scepticism

This topic synoptically links the Epistemology topics together, exploring the extent to which scepticism means we know very little and the use of scepticism as a tool philosophers use to check how good their arguments are. Here we encounter philosophers such as Hume and Descartes.



Moral Theory: Utilitarianism

We study and critically evaluate different version of a utilitarian approach to moral decision making, including those from Bentham, Mill and Singer.

Topic 2: Moral Philosophy

Connection finding

The ability to use connections from past experiences to seek possible generalisations

RIGHT →
← **WRONG**

Moral Theory: Kantian Ethics

In this topic, we will study and critically evaluate a Kantian approach to moral decision making, including making comparative and contrasting links to utilitarianism.

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Moral Theory: Aristotelean Virtue Ethics

We study and critically evaluate Aristotle's approach to moral decision making, also comparing this with modern virtue ethicists such as Foot, Anscombe and McIntyre.



Intellectual confidence

The ability to articulate personal views based on evidence

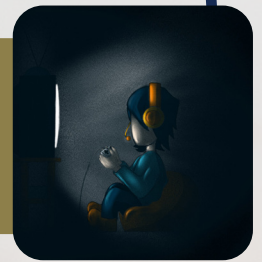


EMPATHETIC

Collaborative - students will take on a variety of roles and be able to evaluate their own ideas and contributions

Applied Ethics

We apply and critically evaluate each of the moral theories in relation to four areas of applied ethics: Stealing, Lying, Eating Animals and Simulated Killing.



Meta-Ethics

In this topic, we explore what we are doing when we use moral words and the extent to which they are intended in a cognitivist or non-cognitivist sense, and refer to an objective reality or a subjective opinion.

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Topic 3: Metaphysics of God

Nature and Attributes of God

Exploring traditional philosophical concepts and paradoxes on the nature of God which suggest incoherence within the concept.



Arguments for and against the Existence of God

- Ontological Argument
- Teleological Argument
- Cosmological Argument
- Problem of Evil



In this topic we encounter philosophers such as Anselm, Descartes, Malcolm, Paley, Hume, Swinburne, Aquinas, Leibniz, Hick and Mackie.

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ANALYSING



Critical and logical thinking

The ability to deduct, hypothesise, reason, seek supporting evidence

Philosophy - A Level



Religious Language

Exploring what we are doing when we use religious language; whether it is possible to talk meaningfully about God and if we can't the problem this poses for faith.

Seeing alternative perspectives

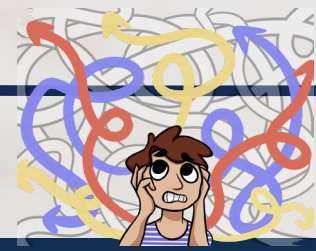
The ability to take on views of others and deal with complexity and ambiguity



Topic 4: Metaphysics of Mind

Dualism

In this topic, we explore Descartes' arguments which suggest our mind is made up of an entirely different and non-physical substance and modern dualist arguments that our mind has a set of unique properties. We critically evaluate this view, for example by exploring the philosophical zombies argument, the problem of interactionism and epiphenomenalism.



Physicalism

Studying theories such as behaviourism, mind-brain identity and eliminative materialism, which deny the special status of the mind reducing it either to a category error or a physical property.

Functionalism

For our final topic, we explore theories which suggest the mind is simply a functional, processing device, and so we consider issues surrounding the possibility of Artificial Intelligence and the Turing Test.



AGILE

Pupils will be open minded and enquiring



A level exams

At the end of Year 13, pupils are assessed with two written exams:

1. Epistemology and Moral Philosophy
2. Metaphysics of God and Metaphysics of Mind

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