



A-LEVEL

RELIGIOUS STUDIES

7062/2D: Study of religion and dialogues: Islam
Report on the Examination

7062
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General comments

There were many very successful papers with a broad range of examples used. Many students handled the command word 'Examine' very well, unpacking their knowledge to include a broad range of relevant points. Not all of AO2 was as well-handled with some answers including two viewpoints without relating both to the question.

Question 1

Part 01.1

Many students did not seem to be clear as to exactly what secularisation means. Those who followed the specification and discussed militant atheism, replacement of religion as a source of moral truth and relegation of religion to the private sphere tended to achieve higher levels. Others focused on materialism and social media and produced very good answers. Some answers became restricted to the issue of the hijab in France or the legal requirement for all genders to be taught the same curriculum in the UK. These answers tended to be less effective. Some discussed the challenges of secularisation in Saudi Arabia, ignoring the fact that Saudi Arabia is not a secular state. Some answers failed to answer the question and tried to explain why Islam was not challenged by secularisation.

Part 01.2

Those students who had not understood secularisation in 1.1 also struggled with this question. More effective answers pointed to the increased growth of Islam in the West as evidence of a strong defence; others focused on the Qur'an as a defence, or Shariah law. Some answers missed the point and gave less effective answers that assumed that secularisation meant ceasing to be a Muslim. Those who had said that Islam was not challenged by secularisation in 1.1 found it difficult to give a balanced argument in 1.2. The most effective answers analysed the strength of the Qur'an as a defence.

Question 2

Part 02.1

There were some good answers to this question, which compared a mosque in the UK today with the mosques in Medina at the time of the Prophet. Some more effective answers stated that anywhere that Muslims pray is a mosque and then contrasted this with a formal mosque in today's UK. The main example used was the London Central Mosque and students showed a good understanding with their use of detail. Less effective answers became a list of the many activities in a mosque, without exploring either 'changing' or 'role'.

Part 02.2

This produced some of the most successful answers in part A and most students offered two supported views on the topic. Most answers contrasted the Qur'anic quotation that non-Muslims will be among the losers after death with the Medinan constitution which stated that all faiths must be treated equally. There were well informed debates about the differing attitudes to people of the book (Jews, Christians) and others. Some answers became tangled up in differing attitudes of Sunni, Shi'a and Sufi to each other, rather than to other faiths. Some used the idea of there being no compulsion in religion, but did not always use it to relate to the statement, leading to them almost answering a question 'Everyone should be a Muslim'.

Question 3

This question was much more popular than Question 4, but in general was not as well answered. Whilst there were some excellent answers which used Qur'anic quotations as an effective counter-argument, many responses did not answer the question. There were a significant number of students whose answers seemed to address a question about why Muslims believe in God rather than the question on the paper. There were long descriptions of the classical arguments not always related to the question. Most answers used Paley's design argument as the main evidence, while more effective answers also added the Kalam argument. References to the Ontological argument were not always related to the question. Answers which applied well informed knowledge to the specific question were very successful.

Question 4

This was more well answered than Question 3. Most answers to this question were excellent, although one or two were not clear that they understood the difference between cognitive and non-cognitive language and at least one paper mixed them up. Interestingly, most answers argued for the statement using Ayre, Wittgenstein, Hick and Flew as support. There were excellent answers which explored Muslim texts in detail, showing how verification principles and bliks could be applied to the question.

Question 5

This question was equally popular to Question 6 and there was a lot of overlap between the examples used, with many referenced in Question 5 being based on genetic engineering. In general, Question 5 was more successfully answered. Most answers to this question were very effective and examined the extent to which Muslim ethics were character-based (Virtue Ethics) or deontological and/or teleological. There was a wide range of conclusions as to exactly how to categorise Muslim Ethics with a surprising number of answers concluding in favour of the statement. The main evidence used was the need for Muslims to follow the example of the Prophet Muhammad, in other words to copy his character. More effective answers used the idea of judgement and heaven to argue that Muslim ethics were teleological or the Qur'an and Shariah law to argue that Muslim ethics were deontological. Some answers argued for and against character-based without full evaluation of each position.

Question 6

The most successful answers looked at genetic engineering in a wide range of contexts. However, very few answers considered genetic modification of crops. Most answers became a simple contrast of genetic engineering to remove genetic diseases and designer babies, with most saying that the first is acceptable to both Virtue Ethics and Islam while the second is not acceptable. Some answers were mainly about either Virtue Ethics or Islam rather than both, although those that considered the two separately were credited equally to those who integrated their answers.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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