

Religious Studies

Advanced GCE **2791**

Connections in Religious Studies (Routes A, AX, AY)

Mark Scheme for June 2010

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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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A2 Synoptic Units 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. *Weighting: 65% [A2]*

AO2: Sustain a critical line of argument and justify a point of view. *Weighting: 35% [A2]*

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.

Practical application of the Marking Scheme

General administrative information and instructions are issued separately by OCR.

Apart from preliminary marking for standardisation purposes, which must be carried out in pencil, the first marking of a script should be in red ink. There should be a clear indication on every page that it has been read by the examiner, and the total mark for the question must be ringed and written in the margin at the end of the script; at A2 the two sub-marks for the AOs must be written here as well. Half-marks may not be used.

To avoid giving the impression of point-marking, ticks should not be used within an answer.

Examiners should follow the separate instructions about annotation of scripts; remember that the marks awarded make the assigned Levels of Response completely explicit.

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 Assessment

Synoptic skills and the ability to make connections: this unit is explicitly focused on the assessment of these skills, but clearly they cannot be exercised without the deployment of comparable knowledge and understanding of the subject matter concerned. The Assessment Objectives still have the same relative weightings, but the assignment of the work to bands should pay particular attention to the skills under consideration. These questions are designed to be open-ended, and credit will be given for any reasonable interpretation of the question which makes connections between the different units studied. The Subject Criteria give the following definition of the synoptic assessment requirements in Religious Studies:

Synoptic assessment assesses the candidates' knowledge and understanding of the connections between elements of the area(s) of study selected. It involves the explicit drawing together of knowledge, understanding and skills learned in different elements of the A level course. It should also contribute to the assessment of the skill of relating such connections to specified aspects of human experience.

Levels of Response: the descriptions are cumulative, i.e. 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.

Levels of Response descriptors for Connections Units 2791 – 2795

The abbreviations marked in blue below may be used instead of writing out the full trigger line. Examiners may however choose to write out the full trigger line if they choose. Examiners should choose the comment that most reflects the reason for the awarding of the mark. This will usually be the trigger line, in some cases it may be another line from the levels of response. In these cases examiners should choose the appropriate comment and write it beside the final mark awarded.

Band	Mark / 39	AO1	Mark / 21	AO2
0	0	absent / no relevant material	0	absent / no argument
1	1-8	has a little knowledge of the topic (lk) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a little relevant material some accuracy no understanding of the connections Communication: often unclear or disorganised	1-4	states a point of view (pov) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> shows minimal or no analysis/justification does not address broader context Communication: often unclear or disorganised
2	9-15	has some knowledge of the topic and a little understanding of the question (sk/litu) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> some relevant material some concepts accurate little understanding of the connections shows a little knowledge of technical terms Communication: often unclear or disorganised	5-8	a little argument or justification of viewpoint (lit arg) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> some analysis, but not always successful very weak attempt to address broader context Communication: often unclear or disorganised
3	16-20	focuses on the general topic rather than directly on the question (gen top) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> knowledge limited and partially accurate limited understanding selection of material sometimes inappropriate limited understanding of the connections limited use of technical terms Communication: some clarity and organisation	9-11	an attempt to sustain an argument or justify a viewpoint (att sust/just) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> some analysis, but not always successful views asserted but not successfully justified limited understanding of broader context Communication: some clarity and organisation
4	21-25	a satisfactory attempt to address the question itself (sat att) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> some accurate knowledge appropriate understanding some successful selection of relevant material appropriate understanding of the connections some accurate use of technical terms Communication: some clarity and organisation	12-14	an argument is sustained and justified (sust/just) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> some successful analysis which may be implicit appropriate understanding of broader concept Communication: some clarity and organisation
5	26-30	a good attempt to address the question (g att) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> mostly accurate knowledge good understanding good understanding of the connections good selection of relevant material mostly accurate use of technical terms Communication: generally clear and organised	15-16	a good attempt at using evidence to sustain an argument (g att) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> some successful and clear analysis might put more than one point of view good understanding of the broader context Communication: generally clear and organised
6	31-34	a very good attempt to address the question (vg att) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> accurate knowledge very good understanding very good understanding of the connections substantial selection of relevant material accurate use of technical terms Communication: answer is well constructed and organised	17-18	a very good attempt at using different evidence to sustain an argument (vg att) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> successful and clear analysis considers more than one point of view very good understanding of the broader context Communication: answer is well constructed and organised
7	35-39	an excellent response to the question showing understanding and engagement with the material (exc rep) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> very high level of ability to select and deploy relevant information accurate use of technical terms excellent understanding of the connections Communication: answer is well constructed and organised	19-21	an excellent response which uses a range of evidence to sustain an argument (exc rep) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> comprehends the demands of the question shows understanding and critical analysis of different viewpoints excellent understanding of the broader context Communication: answer is well constructed and organised

- 1 'Morality comes from society, not from God.' Discuss. [60]

AO1

Candidates may use the views of Marx, Durkheim and Weber (perhaps also Freud), and show how morality may come from society. They may say that morality helps society cohere or may be used as a means of control.

They may discuss cultural relativism and how moral codes may change between and within societies.

Candidates may also consider non-cognitive approaches eg emotivism where morality is simply an expression of our emotions.

They may also consider the fact that we have a conscience and a sense of a divine moral law-giver, using the arguments of Kant and Newman.

They may consider Natural Law to suggest that there is a moral order in the universe which is above the way in which particular societies express their morality.

AO2

Candidates might discuss whether these views demonstrate that God has nothing to do with morality, or whether moral insights are common to all and so morality is from God.

They might argue that, even if moral codes are formed by societies for different purposes, this does not rule out the possibility of God as an absolute standard, judge etc.

Some candidates might point out that for the most part sociologists are concerned with the function of religion and morality for a society, rather than with the existence or otherwise of God.

Some candidates might discuss the genetic nature of our morality, or the fact that it is possible to be moral without God.

- 2 'An omniscient God is responsible for humanity's inclination to do evil acts.' Discuss. [60]

AO1

Candidates may discuss the reasons proposed for humanity's inclination to do evil acts from Augustine and Irenaeus, as well as more modern thinkers such as Hick. In so doing they might make the distinction between moral evil and natural evil.

They may discuss God's foreknowledge and an awareness of the distinction between God as eternal and God as everlasting. They may refer to the thinking of writers such as Aquinas and Swinburne. They might also explore the nature of omniscience.

They may consider the views of determinists that all actions depend on previous ones, or that we are genetically determined to act in certain ways. They may discuss the question of free will and responsibility.

AO2

Candidates might consider whether people have a natural innate inclination to do evil acts, or whether they are going against their created nature 'in the image of God' when they choose to do evil acts.

They may discuss free will and determinism and consider whether God is responsible for our evil acts if we were created with the capacity to choose to act in an evil way, but with free choice.

They might also consider whether God has foreknowledge of events or whether God exists in time and explore the nature of omniscience.

Candidates may also consider whether, if determinist views are true there can be any theodicy which satisfactorily explains our inclination to do evil acts.

- 3 'Neither ethical nor religious language is about facts.' Discuss. [60]

AO1

Candidates could show knowledge and understanding of cognitive interpretations of both religious and ethical language. They may refer to the work of relevant scholars of religious language and meta-ethics.

They could also show knowledge of alternative non-cognitive interpretations of religious and ethical language.

They are likely to demonstrate knowledge of different interpretations of both religious and ethical language, and also should be able to explain the views of those who support the verification and falsification principles, making reference to thinkers such as Flew and Ayer.

AO2

Candidates could discuss the concept of religious and ethical 'facts' and whether this is meaningful.

They might make a distinction between knowledge and belief in the context of both religion and ethics.

They could assess the strength of the claim in the question and might conclude that ethical language has a more factual basis than religious language or vice versa. They may claim that neither are about facts or that both are.

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