### A level Philosophy (PHIL 7172)

### Awarding Body: AQA

### What is Philosophy? Why should I take it?

Philosophy, along with Maths, is a subject that teaches students a form of thought rather than just the application of it. A student may leave a Philosophy lesson without any new knowledge but with skills instead. The philosopher is more adept at argument and at understanding concepts. The purpose of Philosophy is to teach students how to find truth.

Philosophy provides a useful background to a variety of further education courses and career choices, including Law, Journalism, Politics and Medicine. More importantly however, it gives students essential skills that are applicable in all areas of life. Students are taught to think clearly and argue cogently; they become adept at spotting fallacies and constructing effective counter-arguments; and they have a better understanding of questions which humans have thought about for thousands of years.

### What would I learn?

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| Year 1:  Moral Philosophy  Normative ethical theories  Applied ethics  Meta-ethics  Year 2:  Metaphysics of God  Concept and nature of ‘God’  Arguments relating to the existence of God  Religious Language | Epistemology  What is knowledge?  Perception as a source of knowledge  Reason as a source of knowledge  The limits of knowledge  Metaphysics of Mind  What do we mean by ‘mind’?  Dualist theories  Physicalist theories  Functionalism |

### How would I learn?

For Philosophy to flourish, there needs to be a friendly but critical atmosphere in a classroom. As a result there is lots of discussion and debate. Students must be willing to challenge the arguments or others and defend their own. It is also encouraged for students to produce presentations working in groups and to produce written work on a frequent basis. Lastly, it is expected that students should read around the topics studied and read commentaries as well as the work of philosophers in the original form.

### How would I be assessed?

There are two exams, each are 3 hours long. They are long because AQA do not want to assess your ability to work quickly, but rather how good a philosopher you are. Each exam is worth 50% of the A level and there is 100 marks available in each. There is a mixture of short questions and extended essay-style questions. Students are expected to have high levels of literacy but to be concise and use subject specific terminology. There are two assessment objective which are:

AO1: *To demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the core concepts and methods of philosophy, including through the use of philosophical analysis.*

AO2: *Analyse and evaluate philosophical arguments to form reasoned judgements.*

### What entrance criteria?

Whilst an A in GCSE Religious Studies is helpful, it is not a requirement. What is more pertinent is an A in both English Literature and Maths. These are a better indication of an aptitude for Philosophy. It should be noted that Philosophy is *not* like Religious Studies at GCSE and ‘Ofqual’ do not consider the two to be cognates.