Full AQA Specification for Both Exams

Please note that there are some topics in both papers that are not taught at Beverley High. These topics have been omitted for simplicity’s sake.

Simplified view

***Paper 1A:***

1. Buddhist Beliefs
2. Buddhist Practices
3. Christian Beliefs
4. Christian Practices

***Paper 2A:***

Theme C – Existence of God & Revelation

Theme D – Peace & Conflict

Theme E – Crime & Punishment

Theme F – Human Rights & Social Justice

The information below is the direct text of the AQA specification with irrelevant content omitted.

*Paper 1A*

3.1 Component 1: The study of religions: beliefs, teachings and practices

3.1.1 Buddhism

Students should study the beliefs, teachings and practices of Buddhism specified below and their basis in Buddhist sources of wisdom and authority. They should be able to refer to scripture and/ or sacred texts where appropriate. Some texts are prescribed for study in the content set out below and questions may be set on them. Students may refer to any relevant text in their answers. Students should study the influence of the beliefs, teachings and practices studied on individuals, communities and societies.

Common and divergent views within Buddhism in the way beliefs and teachings are understood and expressed should be included throughout. Students may refer to a range of Buddhist perspectives in their answers, for example, Theravada, Mahayana, Zen and Pure Land. They must study the specific differences identified below.

**3.1.1.1 Beliefs and teachings**

**The Dhamma (Dharma)**

• The concept of Dhamma (Dharma).

• The concept of dependent arising (paticcasamupada).

• The Three Marks of Existence:

• impermanence (anicca)

• no fixed self (anatta)

• unsatisfactoriness of life, suffering (dukkha).

• The human personality, in the Theravada and Mahayana traditions:

• Theravada: the Five Aggregates (skandhas) of form, sensation, perception, mental formations, consciousness

• Mahayana: sunyata, the possibility of attaining Buddhahood and Buddha-nature.

• Human destiny:

• Different ideals in Theravada and Mahayana traditions: Arhat (a ‘perfected person’) and Bodhisattva ideals

• Buddhahood and the Pure Land.

**3.1.1.2 The Buddha and the Four Noble Truths**

• The Buddha’s life and its significance:

• the birth of the Buddha and his life of luxury

• the Four Sights: illness, old age, death, holy man (Jataka 075)

• the Buddha’s ascetic life

• the Buddha’s Enlightenment.

• The Four Noble Truths:

1 suffering (dukkha) including different types of suffering

2 the causes of suffering (samudaya); the Three Poisons, ignorance, greed and hate

3 the end of craving (tanha), interpretations of nibbana (nirvana) and Enlightenment

4 the Eightfold Path (magga) to nibbana/nirvana; the path as the Threefold Way: ethics (sila),meditation (samadhi) and wisdom (panna). Dhammapada 190 –191.

**3.1.1.3 Practices**

**Worship and festivals**

• The nature, use and importance of Buddhist places of worship including temples, shrines, monasteries (viharas), halls for meditation or learning (gompas) and their key features including Buddha rupa, artefacts and offerings.

• Puja, the significance and role of puja/devotional ritual in the home and in the temple, including chanting, both as a devotional practice and as an aid to mental concentration, mantra recitation, use of malas.

• Meditation, the different aims, significance and methods of meditation:

• Samatha (concentration and tranquillity) including mindfulness of breathing

• Vipassana (insight) including zazen

• the visualisation of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas.

• The practice and significance of different ceremonies and rituals associated with death and mourning in Theravada communities and in Japan and Tibet.

• Festivals and retreats and their importance to Buddhists in Great Britain today, including the celebrations, origins and significance of:

• Wesak

• Parinirvana Day.

**Buddhist ethics**

• Ethical teaching:

• kamma (karma) and rebirth

• compassion (karuna)

• loving kindness (metta).

• The five moral precepts:

• do not take life

• do not take what is not given

• do not misuse the senses

• do not speak falsehoods

• do not take intoxicants that cloud the mind.

• The six perfections in the Mahayanan tradition:

• generosity

• morality

• patience

• energy

• meditation

• wisdom, including how the individual develops these perfections within themselves.

3.1.2 Christianity

Students should be aware that Christianity is one of the diverse religious traditions and beliefs in Great Britain today and that the main religious tradition in Great Britain is Christianity.

Students should study the beliefs, teachings and practices of Christianity specified below and their basis in Christian sources of wisdom and authority. They should be able to refer to scripture and/ or sacred texts where appropriate. Some texts are prescribed for study in the content set out below and questions may be set on them. Students may refer to any relevant text in their answers. Students should study the influence of the beliefs, teachings and practices studied on individuals, communities and societies.

Common and divergent views within Christianity in the way beliefs and teachings are understood and expressed should be included throughout. Students may refer to a range of different Christian perspectives in their answers including Catholic, Orthodox and Protestant. They must study the specific differences identified below.

**3.1.2.1 Beliefs and teachings**

**Key beliefs**

• The nature of God:

• God as omnipotent, loving and just, and the problem of evil and suffering

• the oneness of God and the Trinity: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

• Different Christian beliefs about creation including the role of Word and Spirit (John 1:1–3 and Genesis 1:1–3).

• Different Christian beliefs about the afterlife and their importance, including: resurrection and life after death; judgement, heaven and hell.

**Jesus Christ and salvation**

• Beliefs and teachings about:

• the incarnation and Jesus as the Son of God

• the crucifixion, resurrection and ascension

• sin, including original sin

• the means of salvation, including law, grace and Spirit

• the role of Christ in salvation including the idea of atonement.

**3.1.2.2 Practices**

**Worship and festivals**

• Different forms of worship and their significance:

• liturgical, non-liturgical and informal, including the use of the Bible

• private worship.

• Prayer and its significance, including the Lord’s Prayer, set prayers and informal prayer.

• The role and meaning of the sacraments:

• the meaning of sacrament

• the sacrament of baptism and its significance for Christians; infant and believers’ baptism; different beliefs about infant baptism

• the sacrament of eucharist (Holy Communion) and its significance for Christians, including different ways in which it is celebrated and different interpretations of its meaning.

• The role and importance of pilgrimage and celebrations including:

• two contrasting examples of Christian pilgrimage: Lourdes and Iona

• the celebrations of Christmas and Easter, including their importance for Christians in Great Britain today.

**The role of the church in the local and worldwide community**

• The role of the Church in the local community, including food banks and street pastors.

• The place of mission, evangelism and Church growth.

• The importance of the worldwide Church including:

• working for reconciliation

• how Christian churches respond to persecution

• the work of one of the following: Catholic Agency For Overseas Development (CAFOD), Christian Aid, Tearfund.

*Paper 2A*

3.2 Component 2: Thematic studies

Students should study a total of four themes from Component 2.

3.2.1 Religious, philosophical and ethical studies

Students should be aware of different religious perspectives on the issues studied within and/or between religious and non-religious beliefs such as atheism and humanism.

Students will be expected to show their understanding of religion through the application of teachings from religion and beliefs. They will also be expected to make specific references to sources of wisdom and authority including scripture and/or sacred texts. They may refer to any relevant religious text such as the Pali Canon, the sermons of the Buddha, the Bible and the Catechism of the Catholic Church.

**3.2.1.3 Theme C: The existence of God and revelation**

Students should study religious teachings, and religious and philosophical arguments, relating to the issues that follow, and their impact and influence in the modern world. They should be aware of contrasting perspectives in contemporary British society on all of these issues.

They must be able to explain contrasting beliefs on the following three issues with reference to the main religious tradition in Britain (Christianity) and non-religious beliefs such as atheism and humanism:

• Visions.

• Miracles.

• Nature as general revelation.

**Philosophical arguments for and against the existence of God**

• The Design argument, including its strengths and weaknesses.

• The First Cause argument, including its strengths and weaknesses.

• The argument from miracles, including its strengths and weaknesses, and one example of a miracle.

• Evil and suffering as an argument against the existence of God.

• Arguments based on science against the existence of God.

**The nature of the divine and revelation**

• Special revelation as a source of knowledge about the divine (God, gods or ultimate reality) including visions and one example of a vision.

• Enlightenment as a source of knowledge about the divine.

• General revelation: nature and scripture as a way of understanding the divine.

• Different ideas about the divine that come from these sources:

• omnipotent and omniscient

• personal and impersonal

• immanent and transcendent.

• The value of general and special revelation and enlightenment as sources of knowledge about the divine, including:

• the problems of different ideas about the divine arising from these experiences

• alternative explanations for the experiences, and the possibility that the people who claimed to have them were lying or mistaken.

**3.2.1.4 Theme D: Religion, peace and conflict**

Students should study religious teachings, and religious, philosophical and ethical arguments, relating to the issues that follow, and their impact and influence in the modern world. They should be aware of contrasting perspectives in contemporary British society on all of these issues.

They must be able to explain contrasting beliefs on the following three issues with reference to the main religious tradition in Britain (Christianity) and one or more other religious traditions:

• Violence.

• Weapons of mass destruction.

• Pacifism.

**Religion, violence, terrorism and war**

• The meaning and significance of:

• peace

• justice

• forgiveness

• reconciliation.

• Violence, including violent protest.

• Terrorism.

• Reasons for war, including greed, self-defence and retaliation.

• The just war theory, including the criteria for a just war.

• Holy war.

• Pacifism.

**Religion and belief in 21st century conflict**

• Religion and belief as a cause of war and violence in the contemporary world.

• Nuclear weapons, including nuclear deterrence.

• The use of weapons of mass destruction.

• Religion and peace-making in the contemporary world including the work of individuals influenced by religious teaching.

• Religious responses to the victims of war including the work of one present day religious organisation.

**3.2.1.5 Theme E: Religion, crime and punishment**

Students should study religious teachings, and religious, philosophical and ethical arguments, relating to the issues that follow, and their impact and influence in the modern world. They should be aware of contrasting perspectives in contemporary British society on all of these issues.

They must be able to explain contrasting beliefs on the following three issues with reference to the main religious tradition in Britain (Christianity) and one or more other religious traditions:

• Corporal punishment.

• Death penalty.

• Forgiveness.

**Religion, crime and the causes of crime**

• Good and evil intentions and actions, including whether it can ever be good to cause suffering.

• Reasons for crime, including:

• poverty and upbringing

• mental illness and addiction

• greed and hate

• opposition to an unjust law.

• Views about people who break the law for these reasons.

• Views about different types of crime, including hate crimes, theft and murder.

**Religion and punishment**

• The aims of punishment, including:

• retribution

• deterrence

• reformation.

• The treatment of criminals, including:

• prison

• corporal punishment

• community service.

• Forgiveness.

• The death penalty.

• Ethical arguments related to the death penalty, including those based on the principle of utility and sanctity of life.

**3.2.1.6 Theme F: Religion, human rights and social justice**

Students should study religious teachings, and religious, philosophical and ethical arguments, relating to the issues that follow, and their impact and influence in the modern world. They should be aware of contrasting perspectives in contemporary British society on all of these issues.

They must be able to explain contrasting beliefs on the following three issues with reference to the main religious tradition in Britain (Christianity) and one or more other religious traditions:

• Status of women in religion.

• The uses of wealth.

• Freedom of religious expression.

**Human rights**

• Prejudice and discrimination in religion and belief, including the status and treatment within religion of women and homosexuals.

• Issues of equality, freedom of religion and belief including freedom of religious expression.

• Human rights and the responsibilities that come with rights, including the responsibility to respect the rights of others.

• Social justice.

• Racial prejudice and discrimination.

• Ethical arguments related to racial discrimination (including positive discrimination), including those based on the ideals of equality and justice.

**Wealth and poverty**

• Wealth, including:

• the right attitude to wealth

• the uses of wealth.

• The responsibilities of wealth, including the duty to tackle poverty and its causes.

• Exploitation of the poor including issues relating to:

• fair pay

• excessive interest on loans

• people-trafficking.

• The responsibilities of those living in poverty to help themselves overcome the difficulties they face.

• Charity, including issues related to giving money to the poor.