

FOUNDATIONS FOR SUCCESS

Masterclass 2025/26

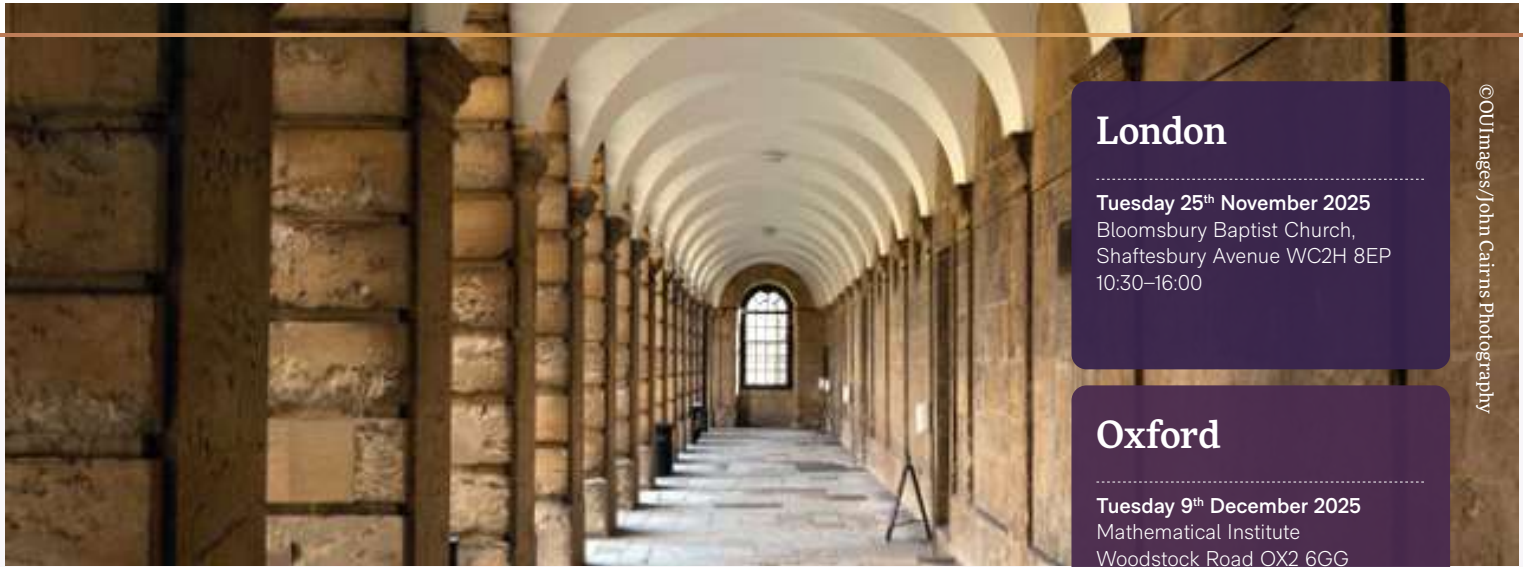
A Level Philosophy Ethics and Religion

BIG IDEAS FOR CURIOUS

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About



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London

Tuesday 25th November 2025

Bloomsbury Baptist Church,
Shaftesbury Avenue WC2H 8EP
10:30–16:00

Oxford

Tuesday 9th December 2025

Mathematical Institute
Woodstock Road OX2 6GG
09:50–15:15

Cambridge

Wednesday 14th January 2026

Lady Mitchell Hall
CB3 9DD
09:50–15:15

Welcome

This study day is designed to enrich your students' understanding, spark intellectual curiosity, and equip them with the tools to excel in A Level Philosophy, Ethics and Religion.

Led by some of the UK's most distinguished academics—including speakers from Oxford and Cambridge—this event offers your students the chance to engage with complex ideas in a clear, accessible, and challenging format. Held in prestigious venues in London, Oxford, and Cambridge, the day features university-style lectures tailored to meet the needs of A Level learners across all major specifications (AQA, OCR, Edexcel, and Eduqas).

More than just a day out, this is a carefully structured academic experience that complements classroom learning, promotes independent thinking, and has the potential to significantly raise attainment.

Your students will:

- Hear directly from world-class scholars
- Deepen their grasp of core curriculum topics
- Receive structured notes and resources to support their study
- Be inspired to engage in meaningful self-directed learning
- Connect with like-minded peers from schools across the country

Teachers consistently report that students return from these events more motivated, more confident, and better prepared for the demands of A Level study—and beyond.



What to expect

Each study day offers your students:

- **University-style lectures** from leading scholars with exceptional communication skills
- **Curriculum-aligned content** across ethics, philosophy of religion, and theology
- Opportunities to **debate, question, and develop independent thinking**
- **Structured notes and resources** to support classroom and exam preparation
- **Inspiration for deeper, self-directed learning** beyond the textbook

These events are designed to complement your teaching, reinforce key areas of the syllabus, and spark fresh enthusiasm for the subject. Students return to the classroom more confident, intellectually engaged, and better prepared for exam success.

Whether your learners are aiming for top grades, considering further study, or simply benefit from hearing complex ideas explained with clarity and insight, this is a day that will stretch their thinking and raise their aspirations.

London Programme

10:20

Introduction and Welcome

Euthanasia

10:30–11:20

Julie Arliss

Euthanasia raises some of the most pressing questions in modern ethics. This session introduces students to the key concepts of sanctity of life and quality of life, exploring their religious roots — that human beings are made in the image of God — and their secular counterparts, which argue that value depends on attributes such as rationality or consciousness. Students will examine voluntary euthanasia, where life is ended at a patient's request, and non-voluntary euthanasia, where decisions are made on behalf of those unable to consent, such as in cases of persistent vegetative state. Learners will also consider how Natural Law and Situation Ethics apply, and whether the idea of sanctity of life still has meaning in twenty-first-century medical ethics. Is there a moral difference between actively ending life and allowing death by non-intervention? Do individuals have complete autonomy over decisions about their own lives? Scholarly perspectives and sources of wisdom will frame discussion, encouraging students to engage critically with one of the most challenging issues in applied ethics.

The Professors

11:20–12:10

Dr. Ralph Weir

God Science and Suffering: Is Faith Still Rational?

This session offers a compelling exploration of some of the most significant challenges to religious belief in the modern world. Students will be encouraged to think critically about whether belief in God remains intellectually credible in the face of suffering, injustice, and natural disasters. We will also consider whether developments in cosmology, biology, and neuroscience have displaced the need for religious explanations altogether.

While drawing on classic arguments from Natural Theology, the session will place fresh emphasis on their relevance — or irrelevance — within today's scientific and philosophical landscape.

Designed to stretch and inspire A Level students, this talk will develop their evaluative and analytical skills and invite them to engage deeply with key debates at the heart of the Philosophy of Religion specification.

12:10–12:30

Break

Religious Experience

12:30–13:20

Prof. Liam Gearon

An unforgettable **A Level Religious Studies Enrichment Talk** with **Professor Liam Gearon from the University of Oxford**. In this inspiring session on *Religious Experience*, students will grapple with visions, mystical encounters, and Otto's idea of the *numinous*, before testing the challenges of science and philosophy against faith. From Swinburne's principles of credulity and testimony to Hume on miracles and Wittgenstein on religious language, Professor Gearon will lead students through the key debates that shape the specification—while sparking fresh curiosity and critical thinking. Perfect for deepening subject knowledge, sharpening exam skills, and giving your students a taste of university-level discussion.

13:20–14:10

Lunch



London Programme

On Autonomy and Heteronomy: Feminism and Christianity

14:10–15:00

Prof. Daphne Hampson

Central to feminism has been the concept of **autonomy**, that one is true to oneself and does not bow to (usually male) authority. Feminists speak of inter-relatedness between those who are 'centred' selves. They want to demolish hierarchical relationships that involve **heteronomy** (allowing the other be the law to one / doing what they say). Now Christianity may well be said to be inherently heteronomous. Christians believe in a transcendent God who is other than the self and (if God is to be God) both all-powerful and to be obeyed. Further they believe in a particular revelation (one of its kind) in history which, given its uniqueness and thus interruptive nature, means that reference must constantly be made to it as in some sense authoritative. In the case of Catholicism moreover, the Church is a source of authority. For one who believes in human autonomy this must create a dilemma. It may be that the only way to possess a spirituality that is easily at one with the need to be oneself is to abandon Christian belief and to think about that which is God in a different way.

The Big Debate

15:00–15:45

Sexual Ethics: Is Consent Enough?

Is consent the whole story? Ethical theories don't hand us ready-made answers, but they do give us methods for thinking these issues through. This interactive debate invites students to contribute their own ideas, test the tools of ethical reasoning, and decide together whether consent really settles the question.



Oxford Programme

09:50

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10:00–10:50

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The Professors

10:50–11:40

Prof. Alister McGrath

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Bookings & Admin



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BOOKINGS

Bookings are made online on behalf of pupils by their teacher here:

ethiqa.org/conferences/a-level-rs-2025

These events fill quickly but we appreciate that some schools need time to organise their students. We are keen to help.

- If you need more time
- If your group is smaller than 5
- If you are studying online & do not have a teacher

Please get in touch with Tony: headoffice@academy-ltd.com.

ARRIVAL AND REGISTRATION

Oxford and Cambridge arrival from 9:30.

The programme begins promptly at 9:50 and concludes at 15:15.

London arrival from 9:45.

The programme begins promptly at 10:30 and concludes at 16:00

STUDY DAY FEES

Student £38.50 (£35 for early bird online ticket sales before 7 October T&C apply)

Staff £38.50 1 free place with every 12 students (£35 for early bird online ticket sales before 7 October T&C apply)

Unaccompanied teachers attending for PD £220

Please bring your own refreshments.



**BOOKINGS AND PAYMENTS ARE
COMPLETED ONLINE AT:
ETHIQA.ORG**

How to book

Bookings are completed online at EthIQa.org where you have the choice to pay online or request an invoice.

Full terms and conditions may be found here:

thrivingminds.org/legal/terms-of-use

Please inform us of access requirements. Academy Learning reserves the right to make alterations to the programme.

Speakers



Julie Arliss — A Farmington Scholar at Harris Manchester College, Oxford, Julie Arliss is a highly accomplished teacher and author. Julie Arliss is a well-known international educator of gifted students with a gift for making the complex simple, and the simple complex. She is committed to the provision of world-class extension activities for these students, to extend their reach well beyond the curriculum to new areas of knowledge. She is on the examining team for Cambridge International Examinations and founder of Academy Learning.



Professor James Orr — Professor James Orr left corporate law ten years ago to become a student again and has recently secured a lectureship at Cambridge University. Formerly McDonald Postdoctoral Fellow at Christ Church, Oxford, Professor Orr holds a PhD and MPhil from St. John's College, Cambridge, and a Double First in Literae Humaniores from Balliol College, Oxford. His publications and policy papers cover many fields including 'The Discarded Mind' 'Created Equal' and 'Being and Eternity'. An impressive polymathic mind keen to inspire curious young minds in the search for knowledge.



Professor Daphne Hampson — Daphne Hampson is a systematic theologian, professor emerita of the University of St Andrews where she held a chair in Post-Christian Thought and in her retirement an Associate of the Department of Theology and Religion at the University of Oxford. Writing on the challenge of feminism to Christianity, she is the author of *Theology and Feminism* (1990), *After Christianity* (1996, 2002), and the editor of *Swallowing a Fishbone? A new book is entitled Religion as Gender Politics*. Otherwise, she has specialised in the Lutheran tradition and is the author of *Christian Contradictions: The Structures of Lutheran and Catholic Thought* (2001) and *Kierkegaard: Exposition & Critique* (2013).



Professor Liam Gearon — (PhD, FHEA, FRSA, Docent) is a world-leading scholar at the University of Oxford, where he is Associate Professor in the Department of Education and Senior Research Fellow at Harris Manchester College. He also holds Professorial and Visiting appointments internationally, including in Finland, Australia, Ireland, and South Africa. Author or editor of more than thirty academic books and nearly one hundred articles, he is co-editor of *The Oxford Handbook of Religion and Education* (Oxford University Press, 2025). His research has shaped school curricula, teacher training, and policy worldwide. Professor Gearon is also an outstanding and inspiring speaker, renowned for bringing complex ideas to life with clarity and passion. His work with teachers, schools, and students has had lasting impact, making him one of the most engaging voices in contemporary education.



Professor Alister McGrath — Professor Alister McGrath holds three doctorates from the University of Oxford; a doctoral degree in molecular biophysics, A Doctor of Divinity degree in theology and a Doctor of Letters degree in intellectual history.

He is best known for his work examining the relationship between science and religion, and, as a former atheist, his opposition to New Atheism and antireligion. Among his best known books are *The Dawkins Delusion? Dawkins' God: Genes, Memes and the Meaning of Life*. He is the former principal of Wycliffe Hall and most recently held the Andreas Idreos Professorship of Science and Religion at Oxford. He is currently developing a series of accessible video presentations which are available free of charge on his website.



Dr. Ralph Weir — is Lecturer in Philosophy at the University of Lincoln and Associate Member of the Faculty of Theology and Religion at the University of Oxford. He is the author of *The Mind-Body Problem and Metaphysics* (Routledge, 2023) and has published widely on consciousness, metaphysics, and the philosophy of mind. As a founding organiser of the Humane Philosophy Project, Ralph has been at the forefront of international dialogue on the relationship between science, philosophy, and religion. His work explores how metaphysical perspectives shape our understanding of consciousness, reality, and the place of science within broader human knowledge. A dynamic and engaging speaker, Ralph brings fresh insight into the dialogue between science and religion, making complex ideas accessible and inspiring for teachers and students alike.



“I found the conference to be very interesting and enriching – both for the content and philosophy as a whole. It rejuvenated our passion for philosophy and I am so grateful I had the opportunity to attend. Thank you very much!”

“I enjoyed how the speakers were so enthusiastic about their subjects and came up with interactive analogies that people could relate to.”

The calibre and quality of speakers is exceptional and the content challenging and inspirational. It enabled my students to think philosophically beyond the classroom. The notes are also brilliant and a great resource for the students' independent, extended learning.



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SNAPCHAT
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Social Media Sharing Guide

We encourage our guests to discuss and document their participation in our events on social media. To help you with this, we have prepared this short guide.

1. **Take some photographs** at the event.
2. **Write a post** about your involvement; you may want to highlight:
 - A lecture you enjoyed
 - A meaningful discussion
 - Something you learned

Don't forget to:

- Use the **#AcademyLearning** hashtag.
- Referring to the handles on the right, tag Academy Learning in your feed posts and stories.
- Tag your school/department.

Our Handles



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