

Year 2 A level Religious Studies - Component 3: Religion and Ethics

Support for centres with AO2: some suggestions for teaching

NB the nature of this information is for developing AO2. What follows are NOT definitive answers – lines of argument are suggested in order to demonstrate the skills of AO2, but the WJEC/Eduqas strongly advises further development and for teachers and candidates to apply their own ideas and evaluation in response to the materials already provided.

For the skills of AO2 it is important to remember that what is being assessed are skills of evaluation and not simply knowledge and understanding of content. The six bullets for each Theme are listed beneath the AO1 content. They are NOT questions in themselves but rather indications of the areas of debate that may arise in a typical AO2 question statement. In addition, as AO1 material is studied the whole purpose of AO2 is to approach an understanding of the AO1 material in a critical and evaluative way that is very much a rigorous and academic discipline.

One of the most common features of a Principal Examiner's report is the regular comment that candidates just **present lists of views** in support of and/or challenging an argument often in response to a question expecting an evaluation. So, for instance, a typical mark scheme may list bullets of points to consider but to repeat them does not demonstrate AO2. How the points are **USED** and **DEVELOPED** by the teacher and candidate to form critical analysis and evaluation is crucial and transforms any suggested material into academic debate that mirrors the AO2 Band descriptors.

There is nothing wrong with preparing your considerations and reflections of a topic in response to the 'Issues for evaluation and analysis' section of the Specification; however, what is important is **making sure that there is some form of personal analysis or commentary throughout the answer** that can then be **used to form a reasonable conclusion**.

Evaluation and analysis skills present themselves as a constant dialogue between the voice of the evidence or the views that you are selecting, and that of your own voice, with the end result of you having the final word that states clearly your position [conclusion(s)].

Specification Theme 1: Ethical Thought

D: Meta-ethical approaches – Naturalism

Issue 1: Whether ethical and non-ethical statements are the same

AO2 Lines of Argument

- Ethical naturalism is empiricist in orientation and not autonomous, therefore ethical statements are not 'beyond' non-ethical statements.
- There are a variety of non-ethical ways to interpret ethical statements (Bradley, Hume, Mill, etc.) For instance, Mill sees ethical statements as, really, statements about pleasure or pain. These different ways at least agree that ethical and non-ethical statements are the same.
- We may feel, deeply, that a moral sentiment is 'real', absolute and provable like any claim about the 'objective world'; this viewpoint reflects not only Naturalism but also moral viewpoints based on religion/revelation.
- Contrary to ethical Naturalism, ethical statements are 'a priori' matters of truth; one could appeal to Divine Command Theory, revelation or even deistic morality.
- Hume's 'is-ought problem' can be used to show that Naturalism is wrong – you cannot derive a value from a fact. Therefore ethical statements are not the same as non-ethical statements.
- Moore showed that 'good' is indefinable, contrary to the claims of Naturalist ethical theories (the naturalistic fallacy & the open question argument).

Key questions that may arise could be:

1. Is empiricism (or, logical positivism) all that there is to our knowledge of the world?
2. Does the fact that there are different naturalist theories weaken this meta-ethical view?
3. Does the fact that we 'feel' an ethical viewpoint is prove-able or objective mean that it really is?
4. Is it true that you cannot derive values from facts?
5. If good is indefinable, as Moore says, why then do so many still persist in offering definitions of this term?

Possible conclusions to some arguments put forward could be:

1. Ethical and non-ethical statements are the same, as maintained by ethical naturalism.
2. Ethical and non-ethical statements are entirely different matters; ethics is a 'given' through our intuition.
3. Ethical statement and non-ethical statements are not the same, but they are related: science can confirm the validity of ethical absolutes.

Specification Theme 1: Ethical Thought

E: Meta-ethical approaches – Naturalism

Issue 2: The extent to which ethical statements are not objective

AO2 Lines of argument

- Hume can be used to show that value statements are different from facts – they do not have meaning.
- If morality were objective why are there so many arguments about morality? Differences between moral systems could be cited.
- There's no way for a person to distinguish between something actually being right and it merely seeming right to that person.
- Naturalism makes morality objective and this has the strength of raising morality above personal opinion. Through Naturalism you can arrive at absolutes (such as murder is wrong) and this matches a common sense view of ethics.
- Naturalism entails scientific testing of degrees of morality (i.e. Utilitarianism). This reflects a modern world view and our need to test statements
- There are common elements of morality that cross gender, culture, language and geography – this is proof not only that a particular Naturalistic ethical theory is founded in objectivity, but that morality – in general – is as well.

Key questions that may arise could be:

1. In terms of Moore's claim for objectivity based on intuitionism, what prevents this from simply being Moore's own subjectivity?
2. Do statements of value really not have any factual meaning?
3. Does the reality of so many different ethical systems really mean that ethics is relative? Can't there be 'more' or 'less' true ethical approaches?
4. If something is common sense and/or true across cultures (don't commit murder), does that really mean it is objective and absolute?
5. Can scientific testing really establish what should constitute moral behaviour?

Possible conclusions to some arguments put forward could be:

1. Ethical statements reflect objective and absolute truths.
2. Ethical statements are merely a sign of the times, products of human culture.
3. Some ethical statements/positions are objective, others are contingent and reflect the need for human interpretation and creativity.

Specification Theme 1: Ethical Thought

E: Meta-ethical approaches – Intuitionism

Issue 1: Whether moral terms are intuitive

AO2 Lines of argument

- Many people would say that they experience things as intuitively ‘right’ or ‘wrong’ – in other words as ‘objective features of the world’ or ‘facts’. Intuitionism supports this common experience of morality – even for those who do not believe in God.
- Many religions and philosophers and societies support the idea that the world is an ‘ordered’ place. This order is shown in the laws of nature, the laws of mathematics, the laws of ethics and the fact that there is a common sense of morality in many cultures. Intuitionism supports this view of the world by presenting moral terms as intuitive (un-derived and true apart from analysis).
- Approaching moral terms as intuitive avoids the naturalistic fallacy – definitions reduce or limit the ideas of ‘good’ and ‘bad’ (reference Moore here).
- If moral terms were intuitive, then we would expect morality to be uniform the world over – at least we would expect there to be uniformity (a common intuition) between those who consider and reflect seriously on morality. Anthropology can give examples where this is not the case! Psychologists and sociologists can demonstrate that what appears to be intuitive approaches to morality are really the result of conditioning from family, tribe and/or culture.
- Within just our own culture there are widely different views on specific ethical issues amongst those who have reflected deeply – are we to consider that these people are not listening to their intuition?
- There is no way to verify Intuitionism! There is no empirical evidence for it and there is no agreement on the origin of Intuitionism (God? Gut feelings? Genetics?). Even the Intuitionists disagree amongst themselves on what morality consists of!

Key questions that may arise could be:

1. Is our intuition really a trustworthy guide to ultimate truth? What about my intuition that there is a ghost in my closet?
2. Is there really one true order to the universe, or is that viewpoint merely an interpretation of reality?
3. Is there really no uniformity amongst the various moralities the world over?
4. Do people in our own culture really disagree on the most important aspects of morality?
5. Do you need to have empirical evidence to know if an action should be judged as moral or immoral?

Possible conclusions to some arguments put forward could be:

1. Moral terms are intuitive.
2. Moral terms come from testing our views over and over again in different situations.
3. Moral terms are both given by our intuition and develop in response to real life situations.

Specification Theme 1: Ethical Thought

E: Meta-ethical approaches – Intuitionism

Issue 2: The extent to which moral terms are just expressions of our emotions

AO2 Lines of argument

- Moral terms do not attempt to define what terms like 'right' or 'wrong' mean they are just moral agents' emotional response to situations (Ayer, emotivism, boo-hurrah theory).
- Viewing moral terms as expressions of emotion would explain the diversity of moral opinion that we see across cultures and within our own culture. An intuitionist response which seeks to explain these differences by positing that there are different intuitive abilities at work feels like a 'cop out'.
- We can measure emotions and even explore the biological foundations of emotions. There has been no similar claim when it comes to Intuitionism. Instead of empirical evidence for Intuitionism there are conflicting and unsubstantiated claims that intuitions come from God, the 'gut' or genetics.
- If moral terms were only expressions of emotions then there would be no point in real moral debate. The emotional responses people give are based on some inner belief or conscience – something more than feelings.
- Bradley would say moral terms express propositions, which can be seen as true or false by considering objective features of the world.
- Asserting moral statements as mere expressions of emotions is a way of defining moral terms. This leads us back to Moore's naturalistic fallacy and the rationality of not defining moral terms.

Key questions that may arise could be:

1. Is it true that our strong feelings of approval or disapproval are the only force behind our ethical statements?
2. Is it really true that different intuitive abilities are the reason for moral disagreements?
3. Are there really 'objective features of the world' or is every observation really an interpretation?
4. Do common ethical approaches across cultures really point to an objective morality?
5. Isn't truth or falsity in the eye of the beholder?

Possible conclusions to some arguments put forward could be:

1. Moral terms are expressions of emotions
2. Moral terms are not at all the expressions of emotion, they are objective and absolute features in the world.
3. Moral terms may have both an emotional pole and an objective pole – it is difficult or impossible to untangle one from the other.

Specification Theme 1: Ethical Thought

F: Meta-ethical approaches – Emotivism

Issue 1: Whether one of Naturalism, Intuitionism or Emotivism is superior to the other theories

AO2 Lines of argument

- Emotivism, like Naturalism, does not ask us to simply believe that morality exists/is a given (as does Intuitionism). It appeals to our scientific minds. However, rather than saying (with naturalists) that morality can be measured or observed in the natural world, Emotivism has a robust presentation of morality as a social and psychological creation.
- It's egalitarian! All moral expressions can be explained by this theory, from 'thou shalt not kill' (as a 'boo!' to killing) to 'be nice and help everyone' ('hurrah' for nice people!). Even the seemingly emotionless moral idea that 'principles should rule over feelings' can itself be seen as a creation of an emotional society!
- Emotivism saves you from pointless conversations! It advises you that you can discuss matters of fact (i.e. what happens when for a foetus in the abortion process.); but warns you from thinking you can have a discussion of moral values (rightness/wrongness of abortion) since these are merely expressions of emotion.
- Naturalism may be seen as superior as it encourages moral discussion and debate. After all, if Emotivism were true, there would be no point to moral discussions. This runs counter to the instincts of many who feel that these discussions are valid.
- Intuitionism has the virtue of corresponding with the sense that many of us have that certain actions are just 'right and good' or 'wrong and bad' – Emotivism reduces a moral statement to the same level as all other statements that do not come from a source that is logically verifiable; moral statements are therefore at the same level as statement used in advertising, bribes and blackmail. An Intuitionist would say that this can't possibly be the case!
- Intuitionism and Rationalism can be seen as superior to Emotivism because if, as Emotivism demands, moral statements are nothing more than a creation of family/culture/society, why are people able to 'stand outside' of their culture/family/society and challenge it morally? Therefore, there must be a basis for morality other than human emotion.

Key questions that may arise could be:

1. Is it really true that moral discussions really have no point?
2. If societies create morality how does one account for people in those societies challenging moral norms?
3. Are moral statements really at the same level as statements used in advertising and other forms of persuasion?
4. Are there not certain activities that are simply 'bad' or 'wrong' or, alternatively, 'good' or 'right'?
5. Can't we prove that there are moral absolutes by looking at common moral themes shared by societies across the world?

Possible conclusions to some arguments put forward could be:

1. Naturalism (or Emotivism, or Intuitionism) is superior to the other theories.
2. Since there is no way, ultimately, to prove what is the source of our morality, judging that one of these meta-ethical positions is superior is not possible.
3. Since there is no proof that there is an objective or absolute source of morality, then Naturalism or Emotivism has to be superior to the other theories.

Specification Theme 1: Ethical Thought

F: Meta-ethical approaches – Emotivism

Issue 2: The extent to which the different meta-ethical theories encourage moral debate

AO2 Lines of argument

- Emotivism definitely discourages moral debate, as the only debate you can have is about facts (defined via logical positivism), not the moral positions that are based on emotions rather than facts.
- Intuitionism, especially as expressed by H. A. Pritchard, discourages moral discussion as it says morality is known intuitively. There can never be an explanation of why we should act morally – we always know that we ought to do.
- For those who follow absolutist and objective approaches to ethics (i.e. Intuitionism, Divine Command theory, etc.), there is no point of having dialogue with the natural and social sciences. This is because added insights cannot change one's moral stance.
- The various approaches that align with Naturalist ethics can certainly encourage debate since they encourage observation and measurement – you can debate the validity of the observations and the measurements (i.e. is activity X causing more pleasure than pain?)
- Emotivism has encouraged much debate about morality as it is so extremely reductive! It provokes discussion about the essence of ethics as few other approaches can.
- Even Intuitionists have had to debate issues - i.e. how one handles numerous moral intuitions at the same time.

Key questions that may arise could be:

1. Is it really true that the only meaningful discussion one can have is about facts rather than values?
2. Does Intuitionism with its insistence on morality as a 'given' really discourage any ethical discussion?
3. If the social sciences can inform our ethical choices, doesn't this mean that ethics is not objective and absolute?
4. Is it not possible to speak of measurements of pain and pleasure in terms of the results of moral decisions?
5. Does Emotivism really end all discussion since it reduces morality to emotional expression?

Possible conclusions to some arguments put forward could be:

1. Meta-ethical approaches do encourage moral debate – though some of these encourage more debate than others.
2. None of the Meta-ethical approaches actually encourages debate: Emotivism rules it out, Intuitionism prevents any discussion on the source of morals, and in Naturalism there are only calculations and no real debate about morality.
3. There will always be debates regardless of these theories. Since these are 'meta' ethical approaches rather than normative ethical theories, their intention is not to focus on debating particular issues but outlining a general approach to ethics. We will still have to discuss particular moral decisions.

Specification Theme 2: Deontological Ethics

D: John Finnis' Development of Natural Law

Issue 1: Whether Finnis' Natural Law is acceptable in contemporary society

AO2 Lines of argument

- Many people feel that there must be a 'higher law' that can be appealed to – that human law is not the final authority. Finnis' Natural Moral Law approach supports this (and fights against a legal 'positivist' view that law is merely the creation of powerful people).
- Finnis' Natural Law does clearly prevent us from performing morally wrong actions because it does set out some acts that are always bad. This gives us clear guidance.
- Finnis' basic goods are largely positive and encouraging of individuals to make something of their lives rather than to sit back and mindlessly follow restrictive preventative rules. Rather than a list of 'don'ts' Finnis encourages action, purpose and enjoyment of life. This is attractive for a modern, productive society.
- Finnis says we must never go against a basic good. However, there are some very complex situations that people face – perhaps a utilitarian viewpoint is more reasonable (something that Finnis would reject).
- How can we know that the basic goods are 'basic' and not merely instrumental? After all, Finnis says that knowledge is a basic good, but perhaps he only knows this from having benefitted instrumentally from his knowledge!
- Even though Finnis defines religion in an open way (reflection on the ordering of the cosmos), it seems that one has to believe in some kind of God to embrace this theory. If so, this would not appeal to an increasing segment of our society who reject all religion would find no reason to relate to it and thus no desire to trust and then follow its principles.

Key questions that may arise could be:

1. Do we face problems in contemporary society to which the basic goods do not apply?
2. What kind of things do we value in contemporary society?
3. Is the list of basic goods complete or are there more?
4. Many people in modern life do not believe in God, can they still use the theory?
5. Would modern society have an argument for prioritising some goods over others?

Possible conclusions to some arguments put forward could be:

1. Finnis' Natural Law is very acceptable to society because society values play, friendship and aesthetic experience as well as the more traditional values of life and knowledge. This is very much in line with the universal declaration of human rights.
2. Finnis' Natural Law is unacceptable to contemporary society for the simple reason that one of the basic goods is religion. New Atheism rejects the need for religion in society and argues that it is dangerous.
3. There are features of Finnis' Natural Law that might be acceptable, but it may need moderation. There will always be extreme circumstances whereby a value should be prioritised over others in order to preserve a person's well-being.

Specification Theme 2: Deontological Ethics

D: John Finnis' Development of Natural Law

Issue 2: Whether Finnis provides a basis for moral decision making for believers and/or non-believers

AO2 Lines of argument

- Finnis' natural law is steeped in history and can be dated back to Aristotle through Aquinas. This gives it a firm basis for moral decision making because it has stood the test of time.
- Whilst Finnis' Natural law does have reference to religion and God within it, and so would be attractive to religious believers, everything else within it can be said to be universally desirable by human beings whether they are religious or not. E.g. play, friendship, beauty and understanding.
- Practical reason can be proven to have benefits to one's own physical and emotional health – as well as to society. This aspect of his theory could appeal in a secular world that values empiricism.
- Finnis does make the claim that the need for religion is self-evident, yet this is an assumption which non-believers might object to since it is based on faith rather than evidence. Non-believers may point out that they feel no need at all to seek God.
- Finnis' theory relies upon too many principles that cannot be proven and so a non-believer might mistrust them. For example, that the 'basic goods' are basic or given or that a simple explanation is always preferable to a complex one. Philosophically these assumptions are questionable.
- Finnis' Natural law takes us down a road which is inconsistent with what many, religious or non-religious alike, might now feel is unacceptable and inconsistent with morality. For example, Finnis objects to same gender coupling and reserves marriage only for a man and a woman.

Key questions that may arise could be:

1. What do believers require to make moral decisions?
2. How does decision making differ between believers and non-believers?
3. Do both groups have anything in common, as is suggested by the notion of 'basic goods'?
4. What makes a decision moral?
5. Is the universe 'ordered' as Finnis thinks it is?

Possible conclusions to some arguments put forward could be:

1. Finnis' approach does not provide a good enough basis for moral decision making for believers because there is a lack of emphasis upon the religious aspect of life (scripture and God's authority) that is fundamental for a believer.
2. Finnis' approach is suitable for all because it appeals to something both groups have in common and that is the authority of practical reason. It emphasises common values and allows the individual to reason about how best to put them in place.
3. Finnis' approach strikes a balance for believers between individual faith and scriptural guidelines. Finnis encourages individuality but with the clear restrictions of the basic goods that can be supported by the values in scripture without relying solely upon it.

Specification Theme 2: Deontological Ethics

E: Bernard Hoose's Proportionalism

Issue 2: The extent to which Hoose's proportionalism promotes immoral behaviour.

AO2 Lines of argument

- The Roman Catholic Church has felt that Proportionalism promotes immoral behaviour on the basis that it does not condemn any act as intrinsically bad (but as pre-moral or ontic evil).
- There is little guidance by Proportionalists as how to weigh up the value of an act in relation to its disvalue. This could be very subjective and therefore could make it easy to perform acts that others would deem to be immoral, with no concrete way to judge who is correct.
- Many Catholics believe that God has given the Magisterium the role of guiding people's moral choices (not just spiritual influence). Proportionalists deny this thus replace the authority of the church with godless Utilitarianism (according to the Magisterium!).
- According to Proportionalism an immoral act is one which carries brings more ontic evil into the world than it takes away. It promotes only those acts that are proportionally valuable and so does not promote immoral behaviour.
- Proportionalism and Hoose still advocate that people should, in general, follow deontological laws like Natural Law. This theory merely gives the opportunity for moral agents to make a choice between two bad options in an extreme situation.
- Hoose's Proportionalism shows more compassion than a strict adherence to Natural Law would allow. This is more in line with the kind of morality that Jesus advocated where law was for the benefit of humankind rather than the other way around.

Key questions that may arise could be:

1. Aren't there some actions (like rape) that are wrong actions without exception?
2. Is a proportional decision one that is reached objectively or does it come down to personal preference?
3. Don't we sometimes need other people (like the Magisterium) to tell us how to act?
4. Does the occasional laying aside of principles make one unprincipled?
5. Is it ever acceptable to perform an action with bad motives

Possible conclusions to some arguments put forward could be:

1. Hoose's Proportionalism does promote immoral behaviour by separating the act from the intention of the agent. If some acts are morally bad, as demonstrated through Natural Law, then they are bad regardless of the circumstance or intention.
2. Hoose's Proportionalism does not promote immoral behaviour, instead it prevents immoral behaviour. Rules support people in behaving well, but if following a rule causes more harm than good, Proportionalism allows a person to break that rule for the greater good.
3. This is a dangerous theory. On the one hand, it is not promoting immorality to insist on exceptions to principles; however, Hoose's theory could open the door for not challenging intentions but instead focusing on actions.

Specification Theme 2: Deontological Ethics

E: Bernard Hoose's Proportionalism

Issue 3: Whether Hoose provides a basis for moral decision making for believers and/or non-believers

AO2 Lines of argument

- Hoose provides a basis for moral decision making for believers by claiming that Proportionalism can be seen in the life of Jesus: Jesus advocated following law but, allowed exceptions in the extreme situations like hunger or to save the life of the woman accused of adultery.
- Hoose gives autonomy to the moral agent by allowing them to weigh up the value or disvalue of an act proportionally for themselves rather than being ruled mindlessly by laws. This would be attractive to anyone in the modern world whether believer or not.
- Hoose's Proportionalism respects Natural Law which would be attractive to believers who desire a traditional approach. It also takes into account a range of influencing factors such as intention, situation and outcome (as well as holding the law in high regard). This might be attractive to believers and non-believers alike because it appears to be more logical than simple obedience.
- Many religious believers would reject Proportionalism (e.g. Roman Catholics) on the basis that it does not allow for any act to be intrinsically right or wrong. The Bible seems to condemn some acts absolutely and Hoose seems to place human intellect above the need for obedience to God.
- Non-believers might reject Proportionalism on the basis that it still places to high a regard for law in its theory and such laws based on revelation from God (who does not exist) is irrelevant to them. If there were to accept any kind of deontological law, it would have to be based upon reason rather than any deity.
- Proportionalism seems like a weak fusion of Natural Law and Situation Ethics. The lack of commitment to a method or system that is clearly laid out (as by both Aquinas and Fletcher) is an inefficient compromise that combines the weaknesses of both theories rather than the strengths.

Key questions that may arise could be:

1. To what extent do we see Jesus setting a Proportionalist example in scripture?
2. Could an atheist make use of this theory and it still make sense?
3. What use could this theory be to people of other religions?
4. Could Proportionalism lead people to perform acts that the Bible condemns?
5. If you do not believe in any divine authority, can you use a deontological theory at all?

Possible conclusions to some arguments put forward could be:

1. Proportionalism involves reasoning around values and disvalues; therefore, it is a suitable basis for all human beings, whether they believe in God or not.
2. Hoose's theory would not be attractive to a religious believer because it places human reasoning above God, Her commands and God's ordained community (the Magisterium).
3. Hoose's theory would not be a suitable basis for an atheist because of its roots in Natural Law, a religious theory, and because of its deontological nature.

Specification Theme 2: Deontological Ethics

E: Bernard Hoose's Proportionalism

Issue 4: The Strengths and Weaknesses of Hoose's Proportionalism

AO2 Lines of argument

- Hoose's Proportionalism gives clear authority to the law, emphasising that in ordinary situations these laws are inviolable and so moral behaviour is easy to govern and judge.
- It has a tradition and history behind it since St. Aquinas had attempted to recognise the need for flexibility but hadn't consistently achieved it. Hoose develops that which Aquinas had begun.
- Proportionalism combines the strengths of situation ethics (focus on love and unique situations) without promoting complete relativism – there are abiding principles (Natural Law). It is therefore a unique modern fusion of ideas for contemporary Catholics.
- By not condemning any one action as being intrinsically immoral, Hoose makes it theoretically possible for someone to perform any act, however heinous, if the circumstances were extreme enough. Many people would argue that child abuse or rape are always wrong no matter what the situation.
- Proportionalism is impractical for society. A society needs a rigid set of principles that are applied to all people in order for it to function properly. Anything less could result in anarchy where each individual can bend their interpretation of the severity of their situation to suit their own desires.
- Proportionalism is just not as clear as deontological Natural law on the one hand or a relativist approach like situation ethics on the other hand. It seems to be between these two without offering a clear method for determining whether or not an action is proportional.

Key questions that may arise could be:

1. What characteristics do people require in a 'strong' ethical theory? (e.g. fair / consistent / flexible, etc.)
2. What kinds of things would worry people about a 'weak' ethical theory? (e.g. impractical / vague etc.)
3. Does Proportionalism take the best ideas from both situation ethics and natural law?
4. Is it practical for everyone regardless of education or context to engage in proportional thinking/calculations?
5. Are absolute rules really absolute if we are allowed to break them?

Possible conclusions to some arguments put forward could be:

1. Hoose's proportionalism is a strong moral theory because it seems to be fair in the way it treats people, by recognising that it is much harder to obey a command not to kill if your own life is being threatened by an attacker.
2. Proportionalism is a weak moral theory because it claims to be deontological and value some rules as absolute, but in the next breath it allows exceptions.
3. Hoose's proportionalism has several important strengths as it is compassionate, reasonable and intends to promote good moral behaviour. But it has a powerful weakness in how unspecific 'exceptional circumstances' are meaning that almost anything could be considered exceptional.

Specification Theme 2: Deontological Ethics

D: John Finnis' Development of Natural Law

E: Bernard Hoose's Proportionalism

F: Finnis' Natural Law and Hoose's Proportionalism: application of the theory

Issue 5: The Effectiveness of Finnis' Natural Law in dealing with ethical issues [example used here is immigration]:

AO2 Lines of argument

- Finnis' natural law provides a clear support for those who are fighting for immigrants who will not otherwise have the basic goods. It can support this struggle by appealing to a higher law (against egoism and group bias) which cries out against inhumanity and works on behalf of those who need shelter and safety.
- The eighth principle of practical reason is that we should 'foster good in the community'; if we interpret 'community' broadly as the human race then there is a clear basis for working on behalf of immigration.
- However 'Community' can be interpreted narrowly as a family, tribe or nation and therefore this principle can be used in a clear way to resist some forms (or all forms!) of immigration.
- There is a conflict between the value of friendliness and being practically reasonable with resources, time and commitments. This can lead to conflicting interpretations of applying Finnis to immigration; therefore, it is not a helpful theory.
- A truly deontological theory would demand that we behave in an ethical way consistently; yet, as can be seen from conflicts in the above points (how to interpret 'community'), Finnis' Natural Law approach can lead to vastly different actions in terms of this issue.

Key questions that may arise could be:

1. Do we really need to appeal to a 'higher law' to combat group bias?
2. How should we interpret the word 'community' when Finnis says, 'Foster good in the community?'
3. Is Finnis' approach simply too 'general' to lead to any agreement on specific moral decisions?
4. What should we do if the basic good of the individual comes into direct conflict with the basic good of the society?
5. Does saying 'no' to open borders | refugees | immigrants | (etc.) | promote or detract from the basic goods/principles of practical reasonableness?

Possible conclusions to some arguments put forward could be:

1. Finnis' Natural law is effective when dealing with the problems of immigration because it looks at the big picture for everyone concerned as well as looking at the rights of the individual. It is a practical theory that can be applied to a society and enforced without confusion.
2. Natural law is not effective when dealing with immigration because it is inevitable that the goods of some will conflict with the good of others and there is no way to decide between.
3. Natural Law can offer guidance regarding the best way to approach immigration, but it is not wholly effective because the term 'community' can be interpreted either broadly or narrowly.

Issue 5: The Effectiveness of Hoose' Proportionalism in dealing with ethical issues [example used here is immigration]:

AO2 Lines of argument

- It is effective to engage in the process of weighing up whether an action brings more or less ontic evil into the world as this ensures that we are aware of the context of our actions.
- Proportionalism is effective against a dehumanizing absolutist approach to the law. Even if it necessary for there to be immigration laws, Proportionalism means that exceptions can be made.
- Hoose's proportionalism is effective in preventing a purely emotive response to a contentious issue. By categorising the need for immigration itself as an ontic or premoral evil, Hoose allows us to take a practical approach to weighing up the advantages and disadvantages before making a decision.
- Proportionalism is simply impractical as countries need absolutes to function. A circumstantial approach requires an enormous and costly amount of administration to weigh up each case separately.
- Proportionalism isn't actually a method in that it offers no clear set of principles to make a calculation of proportion. It is more of a 'mindset'; thus one could use it with conflicting results on any moral issue.
- Proportionalism can't be effective as it is too subjective. Different individuals will give different weight to the issues. Some may think the disvalue of the strain on the job market with more competition for work cannot outweigh the value for the country of having more a more diverse skill set available. Others will argue the opposite.

Key questions that may arise could be:

1. If thousands of people wish to flee a war zone, how to we weigh this proportionally against the strain on a society that could be asked to support them?
2. What kind of circumstances would be considered 'not exceptional' (and therefore NOT require proportional thinking)?
3. Are decisions about immigration based, essentially, on emotion?
4. What kind of 'value' could people bring to a society that they wish to move to (in other words, beyond purely utilitarian considerations of pain and pleasure)?
5. Which precepts or goods can support the idea of allowing 'no borders'?
6. Does 'keeping people out' add 'disvalue' and a relative increase in ontic evil to a culture or are there times when doing so creates a 'value' and a relative decrease in ontic evil?

Possible conclusions to some arguments put forward could be:

1. Hoose's Proportionalism is extremely effective with immigration because it is the kind of system that we already employ. It is necessary for us to have some kinds of laws regarding immigration, simply to control the quantity of people that we can accommodate, yet there are some circumstances when we assess whether to breach these laws when someone's life is threatened if they remain in their country of origin.
2. Proportionalism is not effective in dealing with immigration because it could be argued that every single person is an exception and therefore it is impractical to apply Proportionalism. Either we need strict laws, or open borders so that we can treat people fairly.
3. Hoose is partially effective. It is compassionate certainly, but it is difficult to see where the line is to be drawn between a proportionate and disproportionate reason to move countries and it could still see some people in need being turned away.

Issue 5: The effectiveness of Finnis' Natural Law in dealing with ethical issues [example used here is Capital Punishment]

AO2 Lines of argument

- Finnis' Natural law is effective because it prevents inhumanity even to those who have committed serious crimes – the basic goods apply to all. A mob mentality may want capital punishment, but Finnis would have us pause and consider that all humans deserve basic goods.
- Finnis' approach is effective because it offers the clear perspective of 'the common good' – the majority are protected from harm by the minority. It might be in the interest of the common good to make use of capital punishment and Natural Law would seem to allow this.
- Finnis' Natural law could be considered effective because leaves room for debate and the use of the human mind in communal decision making (the principles of practical reason).
- Finnis' Natural Law is ineffective in dealing with capital punishment because it gives no clear guidance on whether or not it is acceptable, and we may interpret his basic goods and requirements of practical reason to come to any number of conclusions.
- If Finnis' approach is used to justify ceasing capital punishment, then this may be considered an ineffective response to those victims of crime who need closure. Some crimes are sufficiently damaging that it is unreasonable of Natural Law to protect the sanctity of life of the individual over and above the need for retribution on behalf of victims.
- It is ineffective in giving us any method of dealing with a criminal at all since the basic goods of friendliness and sociability mean that we should treat everyone in the way we would like to be treated ourselves.

Key questions that may arise could be:

1. Does Finnis' approach prevent a 'mob mentality' to capital punishment?
2. Does 'common good' lead towards accepting or rejecting capital punishment? Or, is it too vague an idea?
3. What should we do when to uphold the basic good of one person (the prisoner) means violating the basic good of another (the victim's family who needs closure)?
4. Are the basic goods compatible with ANY kind of punishment?
5. Does Finnis' approach provide any clarity on this issue?

Possible conclusions to some arguments put forward could be:

1. Finnis' Natural Law is effective when dealing with capital punishment because it avoids an overly emotional, instinctive reaction which might be expected when a crime has been committed and people feel violated (practical reason).
2. Finnis' approach is ineffective because it leads in the direction of viewing punishment in general as violating one's basic goods. This would lead to too soft an approach to those who have committed crimes.
3. Finnis' Natural Law approach is both clear and unclear on this issue. On the one hand, it points us away from capital punishment (basic goods apply to prisoners as well as everyone else). On the other hand, it encourages reasoning on this issue that could lead to a justification of capital punishment.

Issue 5: The effectiveness of Hoose's Proportionalism in dealing with ethical issues [example used here is Capital Punishment]

AO2 Lines of argument

- Proportionalism is effective because it recognises that no answer will ever be perfect (there is always ontic evil) but tries to create a solution where ontic evil is lessened.
- Hoose's Proportionalism is effective because rather than prescribing a complicated formula to this issue, it urges us to pay attention to the fact that often what is proportionate is very clear to us.
- Hoose's Proportionalism is effective because moves us to consider not only how capital punishment could bring pain or pleasure into the world but also for how it can produce values or disvalues – this is a broader perspective than Utilitarianism.
- Hoose's Proportionalism is not effective because it is irrational. Once a deontological system has decided that life is to be preserved or is sacred, it is illogical to then start producing exceptions to this rule. Either the theory is deontological, or it is not. There is no middle path.
- Hoose's approach is not effective because we would never really know if ontic evil is increased or reduced – we simply don't have that kind of knowledge!
- If we have a sense of clarity about a proportionate act without having to do a calculation, what is to prevent that clarity from being merely selfish interest? Proportionalism could be seen therefore as, essentially, Egoism!

Key questions that may arise could be:

1. What values or disvalues are created for a society that permits capital punishment?
2. What could be considered exceptional circumstances - and therefore give a proportional reason for capital punishment to be allowed?
3. Who or what must be taken into consideration when making the proportional decision to allow capital punishment?
4. When considering punishment for a crime, is there ever a situation which would be considered 'not exceptional'?
5. Can one picture a situation where an act of capital punishment reduces the amount of ontic evil in the world compared to not committing an act of capital punishment?

Possible conclusions to some arguments put forward could be:

- Hoose's Proportionalism is effective when dealing with the issue of capital punishment because it begins with principles (such as the value life for those who have committed murder), but recognises that there could be exceptions where capital punishment is the better path to reduce ontic evil.
- Hoose is not effective in dealing with the issue of capital punishment because every situation is exceptional when it comes to crime and punishment. If this is the case Proportionalism loses its identity as a partially deontological theory and become completely teleological with no basis in absolute law.
- Hoose's approach is limited to personal morality and does not provide a solid legal or political basis for society. This is because it is inconceivable that everyone, together, would ever come to the same 'proportional' decision.

Specification Theme 2: Deontological Ethics

D: John Finnis' Development of Natural Law

E: Bernard Hoose's Proportionalism

Issue 6: The extent to which Finnis' Natural Law is a better ethic than Hoose's Proportionalism or vice versa

AO2 Lines of argument

- Finnis is more consistent in his application of deontological laws which means that all people are treated the same regardless of their cultural origin or their perceived crime. This protects people from prejudice and ensures justice for all.
- Hoose's proportionalism appears to value fixed laws but actually disregards them when it suits him. This is more complex and thus time consuming and costly to administer and, thus, is less practical.
- Hoose does not place as much importance upon the good of society as Finnis does. He is more concerned with individuals and their circumstances. Sometimes it is necessary to consider the greater good or majority and Finnis ensures that the common good is always protected.
- Hoose recognises that Natural Law is limited if it doesn't recognise that some situations call for a different response. Since society is constantly throwing up different and varied dilemmas, Hoose gives us the chance to respond to them more appropriately instead of just applying a 'best fit' law that might not be adequate.
- Hoose recognises the need for Natural Law, yet also recognises that sometimes the blind application of Natural Law can result in more evil overall.
- Finnis does not give us a solution regarding what to do if an act brings about a conflict between basic goods, whereas Hoose allows us to take the least damaging option. In real life, outside the arm-chair, people sometimes have to do things that go against basic goods just to survive. Hoose takes this into account.

Key questions that may arise could be:

1. What are the features of a good or best ethical theory? (e.g. fairness / clarity / consistency)
2. How is Proportionalism different from Finnis' Natural Law approach?
3. Which of these theories is more 'deontological'? Which of them is more 'circumstantial'?
4. Do either of the theories give the individual more independence or more restrictions?
5. In a situation where there are only bad actions possible - would either of these theories help? (e.g. a family hiding from an axe murderer has a new-born baby who is sick and won't stop crying - what are the options? Can the theories help?)

Possible conclusions to some arguments put forward could be:

1. Finnis' Natural Law is a better ethic than Proportionalism because it keeps clear rules about what is acceptable whilst allowing the individual to make use of their own reasoning capacity to choose between different good options. It avoids the pitfall of the Proportionalism which finds itself weighing up each action according to circumstances that meet the vague criteria of being 'exceptional'.
2. Proportionalism is clearly a better ethic than Natural Law because it begins with Natural Law but allows more scope for compassion in situations that cannot be legislated for or even predicted.
3. Natural Law and Proportionalism are both equally valuable as ethical theories, because both value the principles of Natural Law and both allow for the use of individual reason. Even Finnis' approach could be seen to deal with exceptions through the principle of double effect.

Specification Theme 4: Determinism and Free will - Determinism

A: Religious concepts of predestination, with reference to the teachings of St Augustine and John Calvin

Issue 1: A consideration of whether religious believers should accept predestination

AO2 Lines of argument

- Given that God's attributes are omnipotence and omniscience, the only possibility is that God already knows and has ordained our future for us. To suggest otherwise implies that we have power or knowledge that God does not.
- Our ability to reason properly about such matters has been damaged by the fall. As Calvin pointed out, if we contest God's absolute superiority, or try and work out where we are destined to end up, we risk reasoning poorly. We are better to have faith in God's control over the situation and so should just accept predestination.
- To suggest we have free will is contrary to scripture, because St. Paul states: "For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son" Romans 8:29. This demonstrates that God has already chosen who will be saved and he knows our ultimate outcome.
- If we accept predestination, then the problem of evil is caused directly by God! To explain how evil exists in a world created by an omnipotent and omnibenevolent God, we need to see that our free will has been the main factor. To suggest otherwise, means that God is the author of evil.
- To suggest that our actions are unimportant for our salvation goes against scripture; "You, my brothers and sisters, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the flesh; rather, serve one another humbly in love". Galatians 5:13 Moral exhortations such as this imply that our actions are important, and it is possible to choose differently.
- If as Augustine states, God chooses only a few for salvation regardless of our lives here on earth, this suggests an impersonal God who damns or saves us regardless of anything we desire. Christianity, however, teaches a God who responds to us in love through prayer and faith.

Key questions that may arise could be:

1. Can we coherently believe in free will and predestination at the same time?
2. Is there anything in Augustine or Calvin's teaching which appears to go against scripture?
3. If we accept predestination, does it matter how I behave now?
4. Does the Love of God rule out God deciding human fates prior to human decisions?
5. How important is it that God is omnipotent?

Possible conclusions to some arguments put forward could be:

1. It is vital that humanity accept God's power over all things if there is to be any consistency in the Christian faith.
2. To accept predestination means that God is not omnibenevolent, personal and compassionate. Such teaching devalues God's creative work and renders our lives on earth as futile.
3. It does not matter whether a religious believer accepts predestination or not. If God has predestined us, then he has done so regardless of our faith in this concept.

Specification Theme 4: Determinism and Free will - Determinism

A: Religious concepts of predestination, with reference to the teachings of St Augustine and John Calvin

Issue 2: The extent to which God predestines humanity

AO2 Lines of argument

- God must predestine us fully, because his theistic qualities require that he have full power and knowledge from the moment he has conceived of us. If there were any area of the existence of humanity, over which God did not have full control, then he would not be God.
- It is vital that God has predestined us fully because humanity cannot be trusted to be responsible for our own destiny. As 'massa peccati' after the fall, we have demonstrated that we are incapable of any good action without God's direction.
- It is logical to believe that there was once free will because we were created in God's image (Genesis 1:27) and then turned away, but now it makes more sense to say that we are predestined because it is the only way God can save us from our mistake.
- Predestination is really only God's foreknowledge. It makes sense to say that the transcendent God knows what we will choose for ourselves. Hence, we are predestined, but we are also free.
- Predestination cannot be true at all if we are to accept that God is loving. A loving God would not condemn anyone to eternal damnation unless it was what they freely chose for themselves with the full knowledge of what they were choosing.
- Predestination in any form makes human life futile. A central part of human existence for Christians is that they pray and have a relationship with God. This requires the ability for humans to choose and to change. Predestination of any kind makes this impossible.

Key questions that may arise could be:

1. Are there any scientific errors in Augustine's theology?
2. Is there any logical way that we can be both predestined and free at the same time?
3. If God knows what we will do but does not control it, does this compromise his omnipotence?
4. What difference does it make that the Bible teaches both free will and predestination?
5. Is there any way that we can be a little bit predestined?

Possible conclusions to some arguments put forward could be:

1. We must be completely predestined by God in terms of our actions on earth now, and our ultimate destination after death.
2. We cannot be predestined by God at all if he is going to judge us on the last day. To have a system of judgement, reward and punishment, requires that humanity make their good and bad choices independently of divine interference.
3. It is possible that any theology that includes predestination, can also retain a concept of free will. Augustine's theology maintained that we began free and then fell into our second nature of predestination. Scripture maintains both are true.

Specification Theme 4: Determinism and Free will - Determinism

B: Concepts of determinism

Issue 3: The extent to which philosophical, scientific and /or psychological determinism illustrate that humanity has no free will

AO2 Lines of argument

- We are strongly affected by events in our lives; thus, we cannot escape determinism. Pavlov's experiments were the tip of the iceberg and now we can look to modern animal training, child rearing and psychological treatment techniques to see that we are conditioned not free.
- The information that science now has on our genetic predispositions, coupled with conditioning from society, means that we must be determined. Genes are responsible for every element of us (both physical and mental). There are even genes for certain illnesses as well as behaviours such as a tendency to be violent.
- If there are external causes that influence our lives, then we cannot be considered free. Universal causality is the premise of many religious arguments; for example, the cosmological and teleological arguments and so it makes sense to argue that we are no exception.
- Scientific determinism is not proven beyond a doubt. Whilst we know that genes are a powerful indicator over behaviour, they can be overridden by some life experiences. This means that whilst causality still operates, it is not set in stone. Provided a person is not constrained by their genes, there is no reason not to call them free.
- Locke's sleeping man analogy is flawed, Locke has us believe that we are locked into the room without our knowledge. However in the analogy, the man could have got up and tried the door, thus discovering he is locked in. Thus, in the analogy, the man did have a free will. Maybe we do too.
- We experience being free to make our own decisions. No theory of determinism can explain the human experience of knowing the choices available to us, deliberating and then choosing one over another. The feeling of freedom is overwhelming evidence that we are free. The Principle of Credulity from Swinburne states that if it seems as if we are free, then we probably are.

Key questions that may arise could be:

1. Science works on the assumption that every effect has a cause. All successful scientific experimentation has been based on this truth.
2. Psychological determinism is demonstrated repeatedly in our approach to animal training, child rearing and crime.
3. The religious arguments for the existence of God work upon the assumption that there is a cause and effect for every event.
4. The debate focuses on contrasting free will with determinism, but it is possible that there is no contrast.
5. Caused behaviour may not be the same as forced behaviour.
6. Human experience is that we are free, not determined.

Possible conclusions to some arguments put forward could be:

1. Is one Hard Determinist approach more convincing than any of the others?
2. If psychological determinism is right, then is there any point in punishing people for crimes?
3. Can the conclusions of science override my experience of being free?
4. Do determinist philosophers make choices?
5. Does it matter how I behave?

Specification Theme 4: Determinism and Free will - Determinism

B: Concepts of determinism

Issue 4: Strengths and weaknesses of Hard and/or Soft Determinism

AO2 Lines of argument

- Hard Determinism has a very strong case because it is based upon empirical evidence which has been through the process of constant testing and experimentation.
- Psychological determinism is part and parcel of the way we treat each other. For example, our legal system depends upon the idea that we can deter people from committing crimes or rehabilitate offenders. If this is the case, then determinism has a powerful argument.
- Soft Determinism/compatibilism is convincing. We need determinism to be free, says Ayer, because it is rational to understand that we must be part of a chain of causality so that we are the cause of whatever it is we are to be blamed or praised for.
- Soft determinism has the weakness of being part of a game of semantics. As soft determinists are prepared to alter the definition of free will in order to make sure that we have it, they are not really participating in the argument properly.
- Scientific determinism fails because of the work of quantum physics which demonstrates some randomness in the universe at a quantum level. If this is the case then not everything is caused, which means that there is a chance we might be free.
- Philosophical determinists like Locke seem confused as to their own position. He claims we cannot be free because we cannot act differently, however, he also says we can be called free if we are not constrained. If Locke does not have a clear position, then his argument may be weak.

Key questions that may arise could be:

1. Is soft determinism or libertarianism more successful than hard determinism?
2. What is it that makes an argument strong or convincing?
3. Does human society need to assume determinism in order to function?
4. Is human experience adequate to offer as a challenge to determinism?
5. Is a redefinition of terms a cop-out when it comes to this debate?

Possible conclusions to some arguments put forward could be:

1. The biggest strength of hard determinism is the wealth of supporting evidence from so many areas of study. It is hard to refute such evidence since most disciplines are in agreement and there are no obvious logical inconsistencies.
2. The biggest strength of soft determinism is that it combines the wealth of evidence from science and psychology in support of causation, with the understanding and experience of choice that humanity shares. This is also the most practical solution because it allows us to punish and reward in a way that is logically consistent with both the concept of free will and the concept of causation.
3. Determinism ultimately fails because it relies too heavily on the assumption that cause and effect operate without exception. Science has begun to demonstrate that this is not the case through quantum physics and if there is one exception to the rule, then the rule is insufficient.

Specification Theme 4: Determinism and Free will - Determinism

Issue 5: Whether moral responsibility is an illusion

AO2 Lines of argument

- There can be no real moral responsibility for a person's actions if we are causally determined by so many factors such as genes, society and other external events. Moral responsibility requires us not to be forced to act in any way.
- If God has predestined us, then there is no way we can be held morally responsible for the actions we perform. This is the case because of original sin where we are the product of the sin of others. It is also the case for our individual sin which has been ordained by God before our birth.
- Moral responsibility is illusory if God or events cause our lives. This illusion conditions us so that we will be encouraged to behave in ways that are useful to society.
- Either an event is caused, or it is uncaused. Moral responsibility requires causation because otherwise acts couldn't be considered the agents 'fault', they would be uncaused and therefore random.
- Moral responsibility is the result of actions that we perform that are unconstrained. It cannot be illusory since there are options available that we can choose from, and it is the moral agent that chooses between the options.
- No action occurs on its own without wider consequences. Original sin is the source of moral responsibility. Even if we are predestined as a result of it, the original sin was free and humanity involves moral responsibility as a consequence.

Key questions that may arise could be:

1. What is the difference between moral responsibility and responsibility in law?
2. If moral responsibility is an illusion, could it still be valuable?
3. What purpose does reward or punishment serve?
4. Is the common feeling of personal responsibility enough to count against it being illusory?
5. What consequences could there be if we find that moral responsibility is an illusion?

Possible conclusions to some arguments put forward could be:

1. Moral responsibility must be completely illusory if we are to acknowledge that we are determined to act by other factors. It makes no sense to praise or blame a tree for its tendency to sway in the wind. Equally, it makes no sense to praise or blame a human for responding to external stimuli when that person could do nothing else.
2. Moral responsibility is a reality regardless of whether we are free or determined. Either way, we must be the cause of an act to be considered responsible for it. To suggest it is an illusion is an immature attempt to shift the blame or the decision making on to others - much as Adam and Eve did in the Garden of Eden when they blamed the serpent for their own mistakes.
3. If moral responsibility is an illusion, it is a necessary illusion. Without it we are immobilised and can make no decisions to act at all. It is necessary for humanity to believe we are responsible so that we can make informed, careful decisions about our behaviour. If we believe moral responsibility to be an illusion, it no longer matters how we behave and so we have no reason to decide one thing or another.

Specification Theme 4: Determinism and Free will - Determinism

Issue 6: The extent to which pre-destination influences our understanding of God

AO2 Lines of argument

- Predestination means that we can maintain our belief in God as an all-powerful being who we can turn to for help and salvation.
- Predestination influences our understanding of God negatively as being the author of evil in the world and it challenges an understanding of her as a loving parent who cares for her creation.
- Predestination means that everything is certain, and prayer no longer matters. Therefore, Christians have no reason to communicate with God or develop a relationship with God.
- Prayer and our relationship with God is not affected by a belief in predestination, for we can enjoy prayer knowing that God has already because it is simply evidence of what God foresaw would happen all along. It may not affect God, but it is a sign that he has already chosen the believer for redemption.
- Predestination makes sense of the belief in miracles. This is because without predestination God is forced to stay distant from us to enable our free will. If he has predestined us anyway, there is no reason for God to stay distant and so he can intervene in the world to ensure his will is done.
- Predestination does not need to lead us to questioning God's nature as a loving parent. This is because God is beyond human understanding. Christians can therefore simply trust that god is perfect.

Key questions that may arise could be:

1. Why do believers pray to God; is this a sign of human freedom or not?
2. Are miracles signs of a God who wishes to predetermine our lives?
3. Is there a solution to the problem of evil that does not involve free will?
4. If we are predestined, what does this tell us about God's character?
5. Why is it important that God retains his Theistic qualities?

Possible conclusions to some arguments put forward could be:

1. The belief in predestination dictates the kind of God that a person believes in. If you accept predestination, you are saying that the God you worship is distant, authoritative and uncaring of individuality. If you believe that there is no predestination then you believe in a God that lacks authority, power and is more like a large human.
2. There is no real influence of predestination upon a believer's understanding of God. Whether you accept Calvin or Arminius, you still believe in that God who has both power and love. Predestination or free will may then influence how you rationalise those qualities, but it does not affect whether you believe God has them.
3. Belief in predestination only partially influences understanding God. There are many other aspects to God's character revealed in the Bible (and accepted by faith) other than the quality of predestining.

Specification Theme 4: Determinism and Free will – Free will

Issue 7: How convincing are religious views on free will

AO2 Lines of argument

- The Bible says we make choices! Both Pelagius and Arminius offer convincing arguments for free will on the basis that there is biblical evidence to support the idea that humanity is supposed to be free. For example: 2 Corinthians 9:7 says 'Since they hated knowledge and did not choose to fear the Lord.' Only belief in free choice can counter complacency!
- Reward/punishment only makes sense with choice! The Christian teaching about Heaven and Hell, as an eternal reward or punishment makes more sense if people have chosen God or rejected him freely rather than if God has marked people out independently from their will or actions. Otherwise we may ask what the purpose is of reward or punishment?
- Choice and not predestination is a better fit with a loving God! Pelagius and Arminius offer a view of God that is much more consistent with his classical characteristics of being omnibenevolent and just. Original sin and Augustinian or Calvinist doctrines of the elect make God the author of sin and allow him to be arbitrary or partisan in his delivery of punishment.
- Both Pelagius and Arminius could be accused of picking and choosing a Biblical basis – avoiding placing weight on the passages that suggest predestination.
- Both Pelagius and Arminius could be seen as rejecting God's omnipotence since they give the power for our ultimate end to humanity as well as God.
- The doctrine of double predestination claims to take the entirety of scripture seriously. This was recognised early in the Christian church with Augustine and, later by Calvin.

Key questions that may arise could be:

1. Does the Bible assume that we are free to make decisions?
2. Are the traditional attributes of God (omnipotence, etc.) more compatible with freewill or predestination?
3. What features do Pelagius and Arminius include in their theories that agree with scripture?
4. Is there anything in Pelagius / Arminius' views that goes against scripture or church teaching?
5. Is the idea of a 'loving God' more compatible with having to make free choices in a difficult world or with having those choices made for us?

Possible conclusions to some arguments put forward could be:

1. Pelagius has a convincing view of free will for human beings because his theory reflects the human experience of being free to choose, and directing our own lives, whilst at the same time allowing for God's authority to reward and punish people for their moral decisions.
2. Arminius is convincing in his views on free will because he allows for a form of predestination that is consistent with the Bible (foreknowledge), whilst accepting that punishment and reward require us to take responsibility for our actions and our own faith in this life.
3. Neither one of the religious views on free will are at all convincing because they emphasise human control and remove any real need for the central role of Christ in human salvation. God is relegated to the back seat, and this is unacceptable in Christian theology.

Specification Theme 4: Determinism and Free will – Free will

Issue 8: The extent to which an individual has free choice

AO2 Lines of argument

- Pelagius bases his position of free choice on the belief that humans are created innocent with the potential to do good or evil. This corresponds with our sense that babies are indeed innocent and that they are not born in an evil state. However, in a fallen world we are heavily influenced by the habits of others – and so it is easy to sin.
- For Arminius, humans do not have free will after the fall – they need God’s grace, which comes through faith. However, they are able to make choices in terms of developing their spiritual lives. Without this belief, we would be passive and not develop in holiness.
- Predestination was never accepted in any major, early creed of the church. This seems to indicate that, even though Christianity believes in the importance of Grace and Faith, that choice-making is a part of the Christian path.
- Pelagius has all people born innocent of sin. However, if we listen to modern scholarship we know that children learn from external influences. This means that the innocent child learns to sin from their surroundings. This means that they can never really be considered free to make their own choices.
- If God has chosen who to save us before the foundation of the world, it does not make sense to call our choices free.
- Scripture clearly states that we are predestined e.g. Romans 8:28-30 says ‘For those who he foreknew, he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his son.’ Therefore we must not have free choice.

Key questions that may arise could be:

1. Is Arminius right about free choice if God knows what we will do in advance?
2. Are infants truly innocent and undetermined?
3. What is the role of ‘Grace’ in the thinking of Pelagius and Arminius?
4. What do most Christian churches officially teach on this subject?
5. Do Pelagius / Arminius’ theories conform to our human experience?
6. Do Pelagius / Arminius’ theories conform to scripture?

Possible conclusions to some arguments put forward could be:

1. Human freedom of choice is supported by both Pelagius and Arminius and their appeal to Scripture and the plain sense of applying reward and punishment to only free human beings.
2. Human beings are not entirely free – both Pelagius and Arminius recognise the power for sin and the need for Grace and forgiveness. In the case of Arminius, the power of sin is such that we cannot come freely to God, though after receiving God’s grace we can make choices about how to best grow in holiness.
3. Belief in God’s omnipotence and omniscience is simply not compatible with freedom of choice. It is theologically compelling to see god as the creator of evil and therefore to see humans as passive and helpless in their sin and their salvation.

Specification Theme 4: Determinism and Free will - Determinism

Issue 9: The extent to which philosophical, scientific and/or psychological views on libertarianism inevitably lead people to accept libertarianism

AO2 Lines of argument

- Sartre's philosophical libertarianism inevitably leads people to accept libertarianism because our experience of being free to choose is overwhelming and to accept that we are determined, does feel like play acting or 'bad faith'.
- Sirigu has offered the first significant piece of scientific evidence to support free will. Until now all the evidence had been on the side of determinism. Her evidence is consistent with our human experience and so is compelling.
- Many psychological theories (and much of psychological practice) agrees with the insight of Rogers that we can reject our conditioning and grow into unique human beings.
- Sartre's philosophical libertarianism is not based on proof, but a kind of existentialist faith. Yet, there is plenty of evidence to support determinism.
- Sirigu's research only tells us where the event of choice takes place, it does not tell us that the choice we make is free. Just because she has not yet found a cause for why people choose A over B, does not mean there is no cause. The urge to act was still caused in Sirigu's experiments and so we may still be determined.
- Rogers offers no concrete explanation that has not already been challenged by determinism. Freud and others have already demonstrated that our conditioning is so complex and ingrained that we will not know when our actions are conditioned by social factors.

Key questions that may arise could be:

1. Is the evidence for freedom in daily life (repeating mistakes of the past; being held captive by our family-society conditioning) weaker or stronger than the evidence for determinism?
2. Does Sirigu or Roger's work conclusively prove that we are free?
3. What strengths or weaknesses are apparent in the idea that we are born a 'blank slate' and 'make ourselves'?
4. Does it take 'faith' to believe in Sartre's position?
5. What assumptions are made by libertarians?

Possible conclusions to some arguments put forward could be:

1. We must be free as this is proven from science, psychology and philosophy on libertarianism: we make our own free choices and that we ultimately take responsibility for what we do.
2. The evidence on human freedom from philosophy, science and psychology simply serves a desire we have to be called free when in fact all the strong evidence from these disciplines demonstrates overwhelmingly that we are caused. For example, nothing in Sirigu's research suggests that we are free, only that we can identify where decisions are made in the brain.
3. The fact that arguments can lead people to libertarianism does not mean that they are correct. After all, we can be attracted to ideas that have no correspondence to reality.

Specification Theme 4: Determinism and Free will - Determinism

Issue 10: The extent to which free moral agents should follow a normative ethic

AO2 Lines of argument

- Normative ethics are very useful if we have free will because they act as a moral guide for us as individuals who live within a society. If we are free, then our actions matter, and normative ethics show us the behaviour that will benefit us individually, socially or spiritually.
- Without a normative ethic it would be impossible to praise or blame people for their actions because we would have no standard by which to judge them.
- There is freedom within the limits of a normative system. There is a place in all normative ethics for thinking, calculating and considering. Within Natural Law, for example, one has to determine how human laws can best reflect the primary and secondary precepts. In Utilitarianism one needs to make calculations about pleasure and pain.
- If we are truly free beings, then following the rules of a normative ethic places a limit on our freedom and responsibility (it is acting in 'bad faith') – we need to 'make ourselves' freely without any system.
- Many deontological normative theories such as divine command theory or natural law require a rigid observance to rules that prevent us from acting freely. Rogers thinks that the best way to maturity is to break free of such ingrained restrictive habits and make decisions for ourselves.
- Some normative theories such as utilitarianism or situation ethics are completely subjective in nature since you can justify any decision (despite, for example, utilitarianism's claim to be scientific). We don't fully recognize this because we want them to be objective! They can offer no real guidance; we must figure out our own path.

Key questions that may arise could be:

1. What is the purpose of a normative ethic?
2. Do some normative ethical theories require more human choice and calculations than other theories?
3. Does our need for any 'system' mean that we prefer not to be free?
4. How will an ethical theory interfere with our free choices (if at all)?
5. Does choosing to follow an ethical system curtail our freedom – or make us more truly free?

Possible conclusions to some arguments put forward could be:

1. Normative ethics are vital for a free moral agent. It is impossible for us to take responsibility for our own actions unless we have some knowledge of what could be considered a good or bad act. Normative theories provide this information and then we are free to follow them or disregard them, but that decision is then our responsibility.
2. The moment we say that a free moral agent 'should' follow an ethic, is the moment we ask them to voluntarily give up the free will we have been arguing for. As Sartre pointed out, then we do so without guidance at all. This is the only way the responsibility can be completely our own.
3. Following a normative ethical theory can be compatible with human freedom. A choice to follow, or not, any system can show psychological maturity, though we cannot advocate that someone 'should' or 'should not' follow anything.

Specification Theme 4: Determinism and Free will - Determinism

Issue 11: The degree to which free will makes the use of prayer irrelevant

AO2 Lines of argument

- Free will does not mean that we do not need help in life! Theologians like Pelagius and Arminius argue that we need a relationship with God to know his will for us – prayer develops this relationship.
- Sin is still a powerful reality even though we have free will. Pelagius says that we need everything in our arsenal to overcome it – including asking God for help through prayer.
- Free will means that we can choose to sin (as well as to do good). Even theologians who are against predestination believe it is possible to become so stuck in sin that we lose our freedom of choice. Prayer helps us to obtain forgiveness and strength from God when we have freely chosen the wrong path. This is consistent with free will.
- We could argue that Rogers sees it as a mark of maturity if we can overcome our conditioning to achieve self-actualisation – prayer might help with this. Sirigu has identified the place in the brain where choices are made. If this is a mark of free will then it follows that the decision to pray is an exercise in free choice.
- If grace is ‘irresistible’ (as Calvin proclaimed) or, if holiness is unobtainable apart from predestination (as Augustine taught), then it follows that no amount of prayer can bring us grace; prayer is therefore useless.
- Prayer overrides free will: if God intervenes when we pray, then our free will is actually suspended. Prayer, then, is incompatible with free will. According to Sartre, we make our choices in abandonment and despair which means we cannot rely on God to guide us through prayer.
- Prayer cheapens our choices! If we are truly free to make both good and bad choices, it is necessary for us to live with the results of those choices. Any prayer to ask God to intervene in human affairs causes us to lose our freedom. If I am going to be forgiven every time I sin, do I ever really sin? After all, Rogers does not say we need prayer to achieve self-actualisation.

Key questions that may arise could be:

1. What roles does prayer play in a believer’s life?
2. Does having free will mean that we never need outside help?
3. Is prayer a way of avoiding responsibility?
4. Do Christians want God to override their free choices – is that why they pray?
5. If God is both completely free and omnipotent, is prayer useless?

Possible conclusions to some arguments put forward could be:

- Prayer is dangerous because it makes the believer passive and reveals a longing for ‘God’ to determine human life.
- Prayer is relevant because it is simply reaching out for another form of help as we make choices. If prayer is freely chosen it is a sign of maturity.
- Prayer is useless because free will is an illusion – an omnipotent, omniscient and predetermining God has decided our fates.

Specification Theme 4: Determinism and Free will - Determinism

Issue 12: The degree to which beliefs about free will can be reconciled with belief about predestination

AO2 Lines of argument

- The idea of foreknowledge can be invoked to explain the fact that Christianity calls us to make choices and yet there are verses which suggested that things are predetermined. That is, God could foresee our actions (thus they are predetermined in time) yet not be responsible for our performance of them. Hence, we are also free.
- Scripture gives evidence for both free will and determinism. Since scripture is God breathed, it would be a matter of faith to believe both, even if it doesn't seem clearly logical to us.
- Predestination is known only by God who is outside of time and space. In time and space, we experience making choices. Thus, both are real: we experience the latter, though the former is also true.
- If God has predestined humans, then there is no way logically that it makes sense to say we are free. No decision that we make could make any difference to our future. Any decision we make, ultimately is predetermined and thus illusory. Theological thought would say, too, that reward and punishment make no sense if our actions have been dictated. Modern thought, too, sees predestination as incompatible with free will: thinkers such as Rogers and Sirigu in different ways emphasise the power of choice and, by implication, do not believe in predestination.
- If God is omniscient AND omnipotent it is impossible for human beings to make a decision that he does not control and know about. A God with these qualities is by necessity one who has predetermined our behaviour and thus our eventual outcome. This is not consistent with any concept of us being tabula rasa (a blank slate, free of predetermined goals).
- Free will damages God's absolute authority. It suggests that we can change God's mind or affect God's actions in some way. God as supreme authority over all things must predetermine our behaviour because he is in control and so we cannot be free as well.

Key questions that may arise could be:

1. Does 'foreknowledge' need to entail predestination or can an omniscient God refrain from predetermining human life?
2. Could the Bible be giving mixed messages on this issue because the relationship between freewill and determinism is mystery or a paradox?
3. Are humans truly 'blank slates' when they are born?
4. What kind of God (in terms of character) is entailed by religious belief in Free will? What kind of God (in terms of character) is entailed by religious belief in determinism?
5. For Sartre these two themes appear to be incompatible. Is this the case with Rogers and Sirigu?

Possible conclusions to some arguments put forward could be:

1. Freewill and predestination are ultimately compatible from God's point of view which is outside of space and time. Inside space and time we experience free will – but this is not the end of the story.
2. Freewill and predestination are not compatible – research in psychology and physiology shows that we are capable of great freedom.
3. Ultimately it is a matter of faith as to which side of the question one comes down on – even if that faith has nothing to do with religion (as Sartre exemplifies).