

BIOLOGY

Specification: OCR Biology A (A level H420)

Introduction

Students will increase their knowledge and understanding of Biology, developing their enjoyment of and interest in the subject. They will become more aware of scientific methods and advances in technology and this will be set in 'how science works' contexts that students will find interesting and challenging and will stimulate enthusiasm.

Year 12

Module 1 – Development of practical skills
Module 2 – Foundations in Biology
Module 3 – Exchange and transport
Module 4 – Biodiversity, evolution and disease

Year 13

As AS Level plus:
Module 1 – Development of practical skills
Module 5 – Communications, Homeostasis and energy
Module 6 – Genetics, evolution and ecosystems

A Level Assessment

At the end of the second year, there is a non-exam assessment of 12 practical activities, either pass or fail.

Paper 1 – Biological Processes (modules 1, 2, 3 and 5)
2 hours 15 minutes, 100 marks, 37% of A Level.

Paper 2 – Biological Diversity (modules 1, 2, 4 and 6)
2 hours 15 minutes, 100 marks, 37% of A Level.

Paper 3 – Unified Biology (all modules)
1 hour 30 minutes, 70 marks, 26% of A Level.

Personal Qualities

An ability to work hard, to be able to work independently and to undertake extra reading from a wide range of sources are required.

Practical work is assessed and so the ability to plan, implement and analyse evidence, drawing conclusions and evaluating evidence and procedures, is essential.

Financial Commitment

Trips to an outdoor education centre or a few days out in Sutton Park to conduct fieldwork may be needed. These will involve expenses. It would also be beneficial to subscribe to one of the scientific magazines such as Biological Sciences Review.

Special Demands on Time

It may be that students are required to attend fieldtrips or workshops.

Recommended Links with other subjects

The subject combines well with Chemistry, Physics, Maths, Geography and Psychology. A Level Chemistry particularly supports Biology. Please note that many medical schools prefer candidates to have studied A Level Biology.

After A Levels

Biology is a rapidly expanding field. Many opportunities exist in Biomedics, Biomathematics, Biographics, Biophysics, Genetics and Microbiology as well as the more traditional careers of Medicine, Dentistry, Pharmacology, Nursing, Ecology, Zoology, Biochemistry and so on. It is also a good preparation for non-vocational careers where having an analytical mind and the ability to evaluate are required.



CHEMISTRY

Specification: AQA Chemistry

Introduction

A Level Chemistry goes into much more detail than GCSE. It attempts to answer the big question 'what is the world made of?' and it is the search for this answer that makes this subject so fascinating. From investigating how one substance can be changed drastically into another, to researching a new wonder drug to save millions of lives, the opportunities that Chemistry provides are endless.

Topics covered

A Level Chemistry is studied over two years, with exams at the end of the second year.

Year 12

Physical Chemistry

Including atomic structure, amount of substance, bonding, energetics, kinetics, equilibrium and Le Chateliers principle.

Inorganic Chemistry

Including periodicity, Group 2 the alkaline earth metals and Group 7 the halogens.

Organic Chemistry

Including introduction to organic chemistry, alkanes, halogen alkanes, alkenes, alcohols and organic analysis.

Year 13

Physical Chemistry

Including thermodynamics, rate equations, the equilibrium constant, electrode potentials and electrochemical cells.

Inorganic Chemistry Including properties of Period 3 elements and their oxides, transition metals and reactions of ions in aqueous solution.

Organic Chemistry

Including optical isomerism, aldehydes and ketones, carboxylic acids and derivatives, aromatic chemistry, amines, amino acids, proteins and DNA, organic synthesis and NMR spectroscopy.

A Level Assessment

Paper 1 - Inorganic chemistry with relevant physical chemistry. 2 hour written exam worth 105 marks (35% of A Level).

Paper 2 - Organic chemistry with relevant physical chemistry. 2 hour written exam worth 105 marks (35% A Level).

Paper 3 - All practical skills and all content can be examined. 2 hour written exam worth 90 marks (30% of A Level).

Personal Qualities

The key to success is to enjoy Chemistry and to actively participate in lessons. Students should be adaptable, capable of self study, intellectually curious, enjoy practical work and prepared to ask and answer questions.

Special Demands on Time

After each lesson, students will be required to review the work and any problems will need to be addressed. They will need to be pro-active in asking for help in study periods.

Recommended Links with Other Subjects

Physics, Mathematics, Biology.

After A Levels

Chemistry is a subject which has almost limitless applications in Science, and Chemistry A Level is valued by all universities.



COMPUTER SCIENCE

Specification: OCR Computer Science (H446)

Introduction

“At its heart lies the notion of computational thinking: a mode of thought that goes well beyond software and hardware, and that provides a framework within which to reason about systems and problems”

Computer Science is a practical subject where learners can apply the academic principles learned in the classroom to real world systems. It is an intensely creative subject that combines invention and excitement, and can look at the natural world through a digital prism. OCR A Level in Computer Science will value computational thinking, helping students to develop the skills to solve problems, design systems and understand the power and limits of human and machine intelligence.

Students will develop an ability to analyse, critically evaluate and make decisions. The project approach is a vital component of ‘post-school’ life and is of particular relevance to Further Education, Higher Education and the workplace. Each student will be able to tailor their project to fit their individual needs, choices and aspirations.

OCR A level Computer Science

Assessment

(01) Computing Principles (40%)

(02) Algorithms and Problem solving(40%)

(03) Programming Project (20%)

Paper 1

Computer systems component (01) contains the majority of the content of the specification and is assessed in a written paper recalling knowledge and understanding.

Paper 2

Algorithms and programming component (02) relate principally to problem solving skills needed by learners to apply the knowledge and understanding encountered in Component 01.

Programming project

Programming project component (03) is a practical portfolio-based assessment with a task that is chosen by the teacher or learner and is produced in an appropriate programming language of the learner’s or teacher’s choice.

Personal Qualities

If you enjoy using computers and you want to know more about how they work and how they can be used, you should probably think about studying Computer Science.

The A Level in Computer Science is varied, interesting and challenging. You will need to have a logical mind and be good at mathematics because computing involves programming which is logical and sometimes frustrating when there is not an obvious answer.

You will need to enjoy working by yourself, be prepared to contribute to class discussions, and work with other people in designing computer solutions.

Special Demands on Time

Computer Science is an area which is constantly changing and students need to be flexible and aware of these changes. A considerable amount of independent research will be required to solve programming problems. Recommended links with other subjects Computer Science complements A Level Physics and A Level Mathematics.

After A Levels

There are numerous Computer Science and Information Systems Courses and most students, after university, will go on to work in any career where the understanding of technology is needed.

DRAMA

Specification: OCR Drama and Theatre H059-H459 (A Level)

Introduction

Students must complete four components, one from each component group, to be awarded the OCR A Level in Drama and Theatre. Students participate in two performance components as either a performer or a designer (lighting, sound, set or costume). One of these is a performance from a text, the other a devised performance based on and influenced by their research into the work of others.

A Level Drama & Theatre (2 year course)

Component group 1: Practitioners in practice (40% of the qualification) Students explore practically the work of theatre practitioners and use the skills gained to explore text and create devised theatre. They are required to practically explore two practitioners and an extract from a performance text, and perform a devised piece of drama or theatre for an audience. They can be assessed in this unit as a performer or a designer. In support of their performance they must produce a portfolio that documents their journey through the devising process.

Component 2: Exploring and performing texts (20% of the qualification) Students explore one performance text in its entirety and perform part of the text, applying the relevant skills to communicate the meaning in a performance text to an audience.

This component is assessed by a visiting examiner.

Component 3: Analysing performance (written Examination 20% of the qualification) Students explore practically two performance texts on a chosen theme, and analyse and evaluate live theatre.

- Section A: students study two different performing texts on a given theme and develop knowledge and understanding of how extracts can be rehearsed and interpreted in performance
- Section B: students analyse and evaluate a live theatre performance.

Component 4: Deconstructing texts for performance (written examination 20% of the qualification)

Students will interpret and explore practically a performance text (The Crucible) considering how to create, develop and direct a performance for an audience.

Personal Qualities

Students need to be prepared to perform in class and in front of a live audience. They must enjoy collaborating with others when creating new theatre. Students will be required to carry out independent research around key practitioners and also enjoy going to the theatre.

Special Demands on Time

Students will be expected to attend key rehearsals when preparing their practical performances. Homework and independent research will also be set weekly for students to create their portfolios and other key pieces of work.

Recommended Links with other Subjects

Any other subject

After A Levels

Drama and Theatre may be studied post-18 in a variety of ways. If students are aiming for drama school A Level Drama and Theatre is incredibly useful, and it is good preparation for Drama at university, and for creative writing courses. However, Drama is still a very useful A Level for those who wish to study other subjects at degree level.

For those who would like to consider a career in Drama possible options include performing, directing, lighting design, set Designer, costume design, theatre critic, playwright, drama therapy, TV presenter and arts administration.



ECONOMICS

Specification: Edexcel Economics B [9EB0]

Introduction

This course enables students to think like an economist by understanding the application of economic concepts and theories through critical consideration of current business and real-world economic issues.

Students will gain an insight into different contexts which will help them to understand the key issues and to think critically when analysing business situations.

Year 12

Theme 1: Markets, consumers and firms

- Scarcity, choice and potential conflicts
- Enterprise, business and the economy
- Introducing the market
- The role of credit in the economy
- Market failure and government intervention
- Revenue, costs, profits and cash

Theme 2: The wider economic environment

- Business growth and competitive advantage
- Firms, consumers and elasticities of demand
- Productive efficiency
- Life in a global economy
- The economic cycle
- Introduction to macroeconomic policy

Year 13 - Theme 1 & Theme 2 of Y12 content plus:

Theme 3: The global economy

- Globalisation
- Economic factors in business expansion
- Impact of globalisation on global companies
- Impact of globalisation on local and national economies
- Global labour markets
- Inequality and redistribution

Theme 4: Making markets work

- Competition and market power
- Market power and market failure
- Market failure across the economy
- Macroeconomic policies and impact on firms and individuals
- risk and the financial sector

Assessment

Paper 1: Markets and how they work

- Each question is set in a context across Themes 1 and 3
- 2 hour written exam
- 100 marks in total, 35% of A Level weighting

Paper 2: Competing in the global market

- Each question is set in a context from Themes 2 and 4
- 2 hour written exam
- 100 marks in total, 35% of A Level weighting

Paper 3: The economic environment and business

- Each question is set in a context, drawing on topics from across Themes 1, 2, 3 and 4
- 2 hour written exam
- 100 marks in total, 30% of A level weighting

Personal Qualities

Students must have a general interest in the national and international economic world as well as a logical mind and an independent mind-set to challenge economic concepts.

Special Demands on Time

Economics is a theoretical and analytical subject which will require students to be regular readers of the economic and business sections of quality newspapers: The Economist and the Financial Times. Intellectual television programmes such as BBC News, Panorama, Dispatches and BBC Question Time enhance understanding.

Recommended Links with other Subjects

Mathematics, Politics and Philosophy, History, Computing, Physics and Psychology are excellent subjects to study alongside Economics.

After A Levels

Economics can be studied as a single honours degree or in combination with a wide range of other subjects such as Economics and Geography, Economics and Law and Economics and Management.

A degree in economics can be used in many areas, including public policy and the world of finance by predicting the impact of investments, policy decisions, industry trends and demographics.



ENGLISH LITERATURE

Specification: AQA English Literature draft 7717

Introduction

Do you enjoy reading a range of literature? Are you keen to discuss your opinions on what you have read? Can you comment on the effects of the techniques different writers use?

In A Level English Literature students will study plays, modern novels and poetry, exploring how stories are told and how tragedy and crime is portrayed. You will be discussing, researching, presenting, writing and evaluating aspects of literary texts. Above all, you should choose this course if you love reading.

Paper 1 – Literary Genres: Tragedy

Paper 2 – Texts and Genres: Crime

A Level Assessment

Paper 1 - Literary Genres

Aspects of tragedy.

Studying three texts: Shakespeare, drama and pre-1900 poetry.

A written exam of 2 ½ hours .

40% of A Level.

Paper 2 – Texts and Genres

Elements of crime writing.

Studying three texts: one post 20th Century novel, a collection of poetry and pre-1900 literature.

A written exam of 3 hours.

40% of A Level.

Non exam assessment – Theory and Independence

A study of two texts: poetry and prose, informed by a study of the Critical Anthology.

Two essays - individual tasks chosen by each student.

20% of A Level.

Personal Qualities

To be a committed reader and to enjoy close study of texts both in discussion and written work; highly motivated; well organised – able to meet deadlines.

Financial Commitment

At least one theatre visit and/or university study day per year.

Special Demands on Time

There is an expectation for students to read set texts and other material to develop understanding and analytical skills. There is coursework to complete.

Recommended Links With Other Subjects:

English Literature has clear links with all arts and humanities subjects such as History, as well as Psychology and Sociology. It also shows your breadth of skills when paired with a science or mathematics course.

After A Levels

A level English Literature is an excellent entry subject for a wide range of degrees requiring reading, writing and communication skills. It can lead to a single honours degree in English (all universities) or linked to other subjects in combined/joint honours degrees. It is a facilitating subject which is favoured by many academic courses



FINE ART

Specification: AQA 7202/C, 7272/X

Introduction

Each student is given the opportunity to develop their skills in a variety of media and to increase their knowledge and understanding of Art Practise and History. The latter encourages students to relate theoretical knowledge to their own practical work. This is important when they are researching and carrying out their Personal Investigation (component 1).

Students will follow the Fine Art endorsement. The course will explore the use of drawing for different purposes, using a variety of methods and media on a variety of scales. For a small number of students there is the option to follow a Graphic Communications Pathway.

Year 12

The year is comprised of a range of workshops to develop skills and techniques. Each workshop will include preparatory studies image collection experimentation with different materials, processes and techniques, link to critical/ contextual reference, development of ideas and realise intentions through the production of a final outcome. The work will provide a basis on which to build the A level personal investigation.

AS Assessment

Ongoing progress against the Assessment objectives.

Year 13

Students should produce practical and critical/contextual work in one or more areas of study, for example, drawing, painting, mixed-media, sculpture, ceramics, installation printmaking, moving image (video, film, animation) and photography.

Component 1: Personal Investigation - A personal investigation in which students develop work in response to an idea, issue, concept or theme of their choosing leading to a finished piece, supported by a written element of 1000-3000 words. This is internally set and marked and moderated by AQA.

Component 2 – An externally set assignment in which preparatory work leads to a finished piece or pieces. This is internally marked and moderated by AQA. Supervised time 15 hours.

A Level Assessment

Component 1 – 60% of A Level.

Component 2 – 40% of A Level.

Personal Qualities

Ability to work on self-imposed tasks. The student should be well motivated, able to organise herself and have a genuine and active interest in Fine Art and also the history of art. A good standard of English is needed for the personal investigation.

Financial Commitment

Some expense is likely for visits to workshops at various art institutions. It would also be advisable for students to have good quality art materials at home for homework purposes.

Special Demands on time

Time will be needed during the summer breaks between Years 11 and 12 and 12 and 13 for reading, visits to Galleries/Exhibitions and research.

Recommended Links with Other Subjects

Any other Arts or Humanities subjects, Physics, Maths.

After A Levels

The course directly supports progression to further and higher education in Art and Design and related subjects, as well as providing all students with a platform to inspire a lifelong interest in, and enjoyment of, Art and Design. Some students progress on to a one-year foundation course. This is the main route to an Arts related degree. For those wishing to enter Art courses after A Level, help will be given to prepare a portfolio of work. Career related opportunities include: Teaching, Graphic Design, Architecture, Fashion, Interior Design, Furniture Design, Ceramics, Web Design, Illustration, Gallery Curator, Art Restoration and Jewellery.



FRENCH

Specification: AQA French 7652

Introduction

Why study French? There are 51 French-speaking states and it is the only language other than English spoken on five continents. French and English are the only official working languages of many international organisations, including the European Council, Red Cross, United Nations, UNESCO and NATO. The French economy is one of the strongest in the world. They are also leaders in aerospace, medical genetics and in medical research. This is aside from the international companies which have French-speaking roots – like L'Oréal and Nestlé! Having an A Level in French therefore makes candidates highly marketable at university level and beyond, regardless of the planned career choice.

The course offered by the French Department will build on the knowledge acquired at GCSE Level. The skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing will be further developed through the study of a range of topic areas. The language used will be increasingly accurate, complex and varied.

A Level Assessment

Paper 1: Listening, Reading and Writing (50% of marks)
Paper 2: Writing (20% of marks)
Paper 3: Speaking (30% of marks)

Personal Qualities

Success in French at this level requires a commitment to consistent work throughout the course. A genuine interest in French language and culture are recommended, together with a good grasp of grammar and the ability to be motivated and work well outside of lessons.

Assessment during the course will be by weekly assignments and internal assessments. Students must prepare for these effectively and take the results as a serious indicator of their likely performance in the final examination.

Financial Commitment

The purchase of the AQA Year 1 and Year 2 textbooks, a bi-lingual dictionary and a subscription to a French magazine are recommended. Participation in a Work Experience placement in France in Year 12 is advisable. Revision guides and CDs for self-study may be purchased.

Special Demands on Time

It is expected that students will spend about five hours each week working on the subject outside of lesson time (self-study and homework).

Recommended Links with Other Subjects

Due to the range of topics studied in French, it is suitable for combination with any subject in school and subsequently.

After A Levels

A Level French is a highly regarded and marketable qualification whether proceeding on to higher education or work. Successful candidates will be well-prepared to use the language for practical communication in all levels of commerce and industry. The qualification provides a good foundation for further language studies in higher education (degree level or equivalent), either in language courses or for translating/ interpreting/ teaching.



FURTHER MATHEMATICS

Introduction

Students should consider doing this course if Mathematics is a subject they particularly enjoy and if they are considering studying Mathematics, or another subject with a high mathematical content such as Physics or Engineering, at degree level. Former students who have selected this option testify to the value of Further Mathematics and the advantage they felt it gave them in the early stages of their degree courses.

What will I study?

The new A-level in Further Mathematics will consist of the study of pure mathematics including further study of Algebra, Geometry and Calculus alongside more advanced applied mathematics possibly consisting of mechanics, statistics and decision.

Assessment and Examination

This consists of four examination papers each 1 ½ hours in length. There is no coursework element.

All other information is the same as for single Mathematics.



GEOGRAPHY

Specification: AQA A-level Geography (7037)

Introduction

Geography enables students to acquire and apply knowledge and understanding of physical and human processes. A Level Geography explicitly engages with the relationship of human populations to each other over space and time and their relationship with their physical environment at a variety of scales from the local to the global. Students will see how decisions are made about the use and management of resources and environments and appreciate the effects of people's values and attitudes on important issues such as natural resources, the future of cities, impacts of climate change and sustainable development.

Students will acquire and learn to apply a range of useful and transferable skills necessary for both the pursuit of geography and the world of work. A qualification in A Level Geography will enable students to keep their options open and will equally support most further education courses. Many of the topics covered relate closely with work in a range of other subjects and would complement a number of other Sixth Form courses.

Component 1: Physical Geography – 40%

Water & carbon cycles

Hazards – Tectonics, wildfires, tropical storms

Coastal systems & landscapes

Component 2: Human Geography – 40%

Global systems & governance

Changing places

Resource security

Component 3: Independent Fieldwork Project Investigation – 20%

Students complete an individual investigation which must include data collected in the field. It must be based on a question or issue defined and developed by the student relating to any part of the specification content.(3-4,000 words)

A Level Assessment

The full A Level is assessed through 80% examination and a 20% teacher-assessed independent investigation.

Fieldwork

A course requirement to undertake four days of fieldwork in physical and human geography.

Personal Qualities

Well organised; good time management; self-motivated; ability to work independently or in a group; a lively interest in observing and explaining the world; ability to handle information and data in a variety of forms; ability to express ideas clearly and concisely in written form or develop points in essays; a willingness to participate in discussions.

Financial Commitment

Three day residential fieldtrip to Lulworth, Dorset in the May of Year 12.

Special Demands on Time

Regular assignments throughout the course involving responding to past examination questions; research and following up references; group work preparing presentations and writing up fieldwork investigations; devoting time to reading.

Recommended Links with Other Subjects

Geography supports the Arts, Sciences and Social Sciences, in particular Mathematics, Biology, Business Studies, History and English Language.

After A Levels

Geography can lead to careers in: Planning; Marketing; Transportation; Meteorology; Personnel; Finance; Information Technology; Media; Teaching; Recreation; Leisure and Tourism; Research etc.



HISTORY

Specification: OCR History

Introduction

The History A Level requires students to study a combination of British, European and World History across a time span of at least two hundred years.

The aim of the seventeenth century course is to understand the concept of kingship and government by studying a period when monarchs had almost complete control over parliament and the people.

The European History course focuses on Russia. The study of late nineteenth and twentieth century Russia enables students to study the changes in the way Russia was run and how these changes helped to drive international relations.

The World History element will focus on the USA and the struggle of citizens in the US to gain equality before the law. Students will be able to study the factors which encouraged and discouraged change during this period.

Year 12

Unit 1: Y108 British History - The early Stuarts and the origins of the Civil War 1603-60.

Enquiry topic: The execution of Charles and the Interregnum 1646-1660. Source based paper worth 25%.

Unit 2: Non- British History - Y219 Russia 1894-1941 Knowledge and Understanding worth 15%.

Unit 3: Y319 Thematic - Civil Rights in the USA, 1865-1992.

Knowledge, understanding and sources worth 40%.

Year 13

During Year 13 students will continue studying the three above units but time will also be set aside for the completion of Unit 4.

Unit 4: Y100 - Independent Investigation.

Coursework 3000-4000 words. Students choose a title of their choice within a range of areas agreed by their teacher. It is worth 20%.

A Level Assessment

Students will sit examinations in Y108, Y219 and Y319 in the summer of Year 13. Unit 100 will be completed during Year 13.

Personal Qualities

A love of reading and a good command of English are essential, together with a willingness to participate in discussion.

Financial Commitment

Opportunities may arise for students to attend study days in Birmingham costing around £20 plus transport.

Recommended Links with Other Subjects

The subject combines well with all subjects but goes particularly well with English, Religious Studies, Geography, Languages, Art and Business Studies.

After A Levels

This is an interesting and enjoyable way to develop analytical and communication skills. History is a suitable background for a wide range of careers including law and journalism. Many of our students plan to study sciences at university and opt for History as they recognise the importance of being able to prepare good essays at degree level. Staff and students work hard to achieve consistently good results, and many of our students have progressed to study History at highly reputable universities.



MATHEMATICS

Specification: Edexcel

Introduction

Why study Mathematics? The whole development of Western civilisation - its commerce, its technology, and more recently its social organisation - is rooted in mathematics and in the reliability and power of its methods of analysis. This dependence on mathematics has accelerated dramatically in the last 50 years. During the Second World War mathematics was indispensable in code breaking, ballistics and planning large operations. Mathematics now controls large parts of day-to-day life. For example the development of the internet and all the associated activities depend on mathematics. Digital music and online shopping would be impossible without mathematics.

It is therefore not surprising that Mathematics A Levels are amongst the most marketable and that a Mathematics degree is amongst the most sought after and most flexible of university courses, leading to a wide choice of careers.

What will I study?

The new A-level in Mathematics will consist of the study of pure mathematics including Algebra, Geometry and Calculus alongside applied mathematics consisting of mechanics and statistics.

Assessment and Examination

Three examination papers each 2 hours in length. There is no coursework element.

Personal Qualities

Success in Mathematics at this level requires a commitment to consistent work throughout the course. Written assignments will be set each week and, due to the hierarchical nature of the subject, it is essential that these are completed and understood. If difficulties occur, the staff of the department are always willing to offer extra help and advice.

It is also necessary to be well organised and motivated to learn new techniques and methods. Most problems require the use of new knowledge, which can only be acquired by putting in appropriate time and effort. When one has acquired the knowledge and skills, many problems are relatively and sometimes surprisingly easy.

Financial Commitment

Students must provide their own calculator, details of approved calculators will be provided once the course has started. It is recommended that students consider purchasing their own copy of the textbook.

Special Demands on Time

None other than regular weekly practice and revision. It is expected that students will spend about five hours each week working on the subject outside of lesson time.

Recommended Links with Other Subjects

Mathematics is of help to studies in Physics, Chemistry, Biology, Geography and Business Studies in school and in the future.

After A Levels

A Level Mathematics is a highly regarded and marketable qualification whether proceeding on to higher education or work. It is of value in Higher Education courses or careers in Mathematics, Statistics, Engineering, Computing, Physics, Chemistry, Biology, Economics, Finance, Business Management, Medicine, Teaching, Architecture and Psychology.



Media Studies

Media Studies

Exam board: EDUQAS

Specification: A Level - A680QS

Introduction

As a GCE Media Studies student, you will analyse how media products use language and representations to create meaning. You will learn about the media industry and how it affects how media products are made. You will investigate media audiences, exploring who watches, reads and consumes the products and considering how different people might respond to products differently, and why. You will study many different media forms, such as:

Television Online Media Video Games
Film Marketing Magazines Newspapers
Social and Participatory Media Music Video
Radio Advertising and Marketing

A Level Media Studies (2 year course)

You will explore and apply critical perspectives including those of world-renowned media and cultural theorists, and will examine how social, historical, political and economic contexts affect media production. You will also be able to apply what you have learned through the production of your own media texts, exploring and creating media forms such as music videos, magazines, television, websites and film marketing.

How will I be assessed?

Assessment will comprise of a mixture of examined and non-examined assessment.

Component 1: Written examination:

2 hours 15 mins

35% of qualification

Component 2: Written examination:

2 hours 30 mins

35% of qualification

Component 3 Non-exam assessment:

Cross-Media Production

30% of qualification

What skills will I develop?

Media Studies will help you to develop valuable transferable skills such as critical thinking, analysis, research, planning, skills of enquiry and evaluation, practical skills, creativity, time management, essay writing skills and more. Your studies will complement and assist your learning in other subjects such as English Literature, Sociology, ICT and the Extended Project.

What personal qualities will be helpful?

You will need to be interested in a range of media and be ready to think analytically and critically. You should be prepared to watch, listen and participate in a range of platforms and keep up with current affairs and new products. You need to have some confidence in your technical ability as you will be using software to complete projects such as print advertising campaigns, and shooting/editing videos. You will be required to carry out independent research, and will need to understand and apply a range of theories and terminology in extended written responses. At times, the course material may be controversial and deal with difficult issues such as gender, identity, race and violence. You will need to be prepared to discuss, explore and respond to these issues with sensitivity and maturity.

Where might Media Studies take me?

Over a hundred UK universities offer courses in Media, Communications and Cultural Studies. A GCE in Media Studies helps you to progress to these, as well as other courses such as English and Social Sciences. There are many career opportunities in the media; it is an industry that is growing at an exponential rate. Studying Media at GCE and at degree level is a route into careers such as TV/film production, journalism, interactive media and digital marketing. It could help to provide you with skills to secure roles in technical production, special effects and web design. The global pandemic has resulted in significant changes in how we create and consume media, and how we connect and communicate. There has never been a more interesting time to become a Media Studies student.



MUSIC

Specification: Edexcel 9MU0 (A Level)

Introduction

Music A Level develops the three key skills of performance, composition and listening. There is a three unit assessment structure.

A Level Music (2 year course)

Component 1: Performing Music (30% of the qualification). A recorded performance of one or more pieces, performed as a recital, lasting for a minimum of eight minutes. The minimum expected standard of difficulty for music performed is Grade 7, with extra credit available for pieces of a higher difficulty.

Component 2 – Composing

 (30% of the qualification).

Total of two coursework compositions, one to a brief set by Pearson and one either free composition or also to a brief.

- One composition must be from either a list of briefs related to the areas of study, or a free composition, carrying 40 marks for this component. This composition must be at least 4 minutes in duration.
- The second must be from a list of briefs assessing compositional technique, carrying 20 marks for this component. This composition must be at least 2 minutes in duration, unless the brief specifies a longer minimum duration.
- Total time across both submissions must be a minimum of 6 minutes.

Component 3 – Appraising

 - (40% of the qualification):

This is assessed through a two hour examination.

Content overview:

- Knowledge and understanding of musical elements, contexts and language.
- Application of knowledge through the context of six areas of study, each with three set works. The areas of study are Vocal Music, Instrumental Music, Music for Film, Popular Music and Jazz, Fusions, New Directions. Also application of knowledge to unfamiliar pieces of Music.

A Level Assessment

- Component 1 – 8 minute recording at Grade 7 standard (30%)

- Component 2 – Total of two coursework compositions, one to a brief set by Pearson and one either free composition. (30%)
- Component 3 – written examination (40%)

Personal Qualities

Students need to be prepared to perform in class, in ensembles and in public concerts. Compositions and technical studies require independent work and imagination. Preparation for the Appraising component requires students to research and learn about musical styles through specific set works in a range of styles.

Special Demands on Time

Students are expected to attend their instrumental lessons on a weekly basis to prepare them for the performance examinations, and to practise regularly (ideally 20-30 minutes per day). Homework and independent research will also be set for composition and Musical Understanding examinations.

Recommended Links with Other Subjects

Any other subject.

After A Levels

Music may be studied post-18 in a variety of different ways. Courses that specialise in performance are available at music colleges; other courses with a more academic study of music are available at University. Students from previous years have gone on to study Music at Music College and University. However, Music is still a useful A Level for those who wish to study other subjects at degree level.

For those who would like to consider a career in Music possible options include performing, composing, teaching (classroom and instrumental), music therapy, music journalism, arts administration.



PHYSICS

Specification: Edexcel 9PH0

Introduction

Physics seeks to explain the entire universe, from the smallest sub-atomic particles to the largest galaxies! The course aims to stimulate students' interest in and enjoyment of Physics and how it explains the world around them.

The concepts studied will be applied to uses and applications that are engaging and reflect current areas of interest. Students will complete practical tasks which are integrated into the course, some of which will be assessed for the practical endorsement.

Year 12 Content

Students will cover key areas of Physics in Year 12 including: materials, mechanics, waves, light rays and particles, and electric circuits.

Year 13 Content

Students will extend their work by studying nuclear physics, further mechanics, gravity fields, particle physics, oscillations, electric fields, space, magnetic fields, and thermodynamics.

Assessment

At the end of the course, there are three written examinations. 9PH0/01 and 9PH0/02 are each worth 30% of the marks, and each include questions about the concepts studied in one half of the course. 9PH0/03 is worth 40% of the marks and it includes synoptic questions and questions about students' theoretical understanding of experimental methods. The practical endorsement is assessed in class practicals.

A Level Maths

Although it is not required for students to study Mathematics to A Level, experience shows that students who do study A Level Mathematics achieve over a grade better on average than students who do not.

Personal Qualities

Students should enjoy experimental work and reading about current Physics discoveries and news. They should be able to think logically and to solve problems. We will make use of ICT skills in some lessons.

Special Demands on Time

Homework will usually involve problem-solving exercises, research and writing up experiments carried out in lessons. Students can choose to attend optional evening lectures organised by Birmingham University, and participate in schemes such as WISE (Women in Science and Engineering) which may take place during school holidays. We aim to run a major trip every two years so that all students have the opportunity to access this experience if they wish. In July 2019 this was a three day trip to CERN in Geneva. We expect to repeat this trip in July 2021.

Recommended Links with Other Subjects

Studying Mathematics with Physics will improve your grade. It is also an excellent combination for students interested in studying engineering, accountancy, astronomy and other physical sciences. Physics with Mathematics and Chemistry is a good combination for students wishing to study Materials Science and Atomic/Particle Physics courses. Physics and Biology is ideal for students wishing to study Sports Science.

After A Levels

Well-qualified physicists are highly sought after for their analytical skills in many jobs, including Banking, Accountancy, Management and Computing. Physics at university can now be studied as part of joint courses in Geology, Astronomy, Electronics, Chemistry, Maths and many other subjects.



PSYCHOLOGY

Specification: AQA Psychology (7182)

Introduction

This qualification offers an engaging and effective introduction to Psychology, which is the scientific study of the human brain and behaviour.

Students will learn the fundamentals of the subject and develop skills valued by universities and employers, including critical analysis, independent thinking and research skills. There are a range of topics covered in the course which are outlined below. There is a breadth of knowledge studied throughout the two year course, which includes studying infamous psychological experiments as well as the functioning of the brain and our memories amongst many other topics.

Research methods and skills are an important part of the course and although there is no coursework element, students are encouraged to carry out their own practical research and engage in scientific report writing.

Year 12

Year 12 students will study the following topics:

- Social influence
- Memory
- Attachment
- Psychopathology
- Approaches in Psychology
- Research methods part 1
- Biopsychology

These topics are found in Paper 1 and Paper 2 of the A level.

Year 13

Year 13 students will study the following topics:

- Research methods part 2
- Issues and debates in Psychology
- Gender
- Schizophrenia
- Forensic psychology

These topics are found in Paper 2 and Paper 3 of the A level. There will also be a significant period of revision time in Year 13 when all topics are covered.

A Level Assessment

There are three exam papers carrying equal weighting. Assessments employ a variety of types of question such as multiple choice, short answer and extended writing/essays, which target the skills of knowledge and understanding, application and evaluation. The longest essay question will be worth 16 marks and research methods knowledge is assessed across all three papers.

Personal Qualities

Most students will begin the course without having studied GCSE Psychology so it is important that you have done some research into what the subject entails. Although there are key skills required to be successful in psychology including a clear and coherent essay technique, maths skills and the ability to analyse effectively, a genuine interest and enthusiasm for studying human behaviour is key.

Financial Commitment

Students may need to pay travel expenses and fees for conferences and trips but these are not compulsory. The textbooks are provided in online format free of charge, but students are welcome to purchase a paper copy themselves.

Special Demands on Time

In addition to independent reading and learning activities, students will need to spend time gathering data for psychological exercises.

Recommended Links with Other Subjects

This subject goes well with Biology, Maths, English Language or Literature, Business Studies and Sociology.

After A Levels

Psychology is a popular study at degree level and gaining a BPS accredited undergraduate degree can lead to further study to qualify as a professional psychologist; this includes job roles in clinical, educational, health and forensic psychology. However due to the wide range of skills that the study of psychology encompasses, there are a wide range of linked careers including business management, teaching, marketing, nursing and many others.



RELIGIOUS STUDIES

Examination Board: AQA Religious Studies 7062

Introduction

If you are looking for an interesting, stimulating and challenging course, then Religious Studies is for you. The course requires you to investigate religious beliefs and explore the interplay between these beliefs and philosophical and ethical debates.

Throughout the course, you are encouraged to think critically and are taught how to structure logical and coherent arguments. There is an emphasis on class discussion and independent research work that helps to develop a wide range of transferable skills, such as communication, collating and interpreting information and problem solving. Religious Studies is an academic subject which is recognised by employers and universities as being of great value.

Students must study three components:

- 1) Philosophy of Religion
- 2) Ethics
- 3) Case Study into Christianity and Dialogues

In the Dialogues section, you have the opportunity to consider the dialogue between Christian belief and Philosophical/Ethical arguments.

In the Philosophy component, you will study ideas of Christian beliefs and Philosophical debates about the characteristics of God, arguments for the existence of God, evil and suffering, religious experience, religious language, miracles and death and the afterlife.

In the Ethics component, you will study religious pluralism, freewill, natural moral law, situation ethics, virtue ethics and how these concepts might be applied to contemporary moral issues including the rights of the embryo, cloning, designer babies, abortion, euthanasia, capital punishment and animal rights.

Assessment

Component 1: Philosophy of Religion and Ethics – a written examination of three hours.

Component 2: Study of Religion and Dialogues – a written examination of three hours.

Personal Qualities

Students will need:

- A deep interest in religious beliefs and in philosophical/ethical debates;
- A willingness to listen to the views of others as well as give reasons for one's own conclusions;
- Skills of logical thinking and the ability to communicate ideas accurately in speech and in written work;
- A willingness to research and engage in wider reading around topics studied in class.

Links with other subjects

Religious Studies combines well with many other subjects such as History, Geography, English, Sociology and Psychology. For those students who wish to pursue a broad based study at Advanced Level, Religious Studies can successfully combine with Mathematics and Science subjects where similar skills of logical thinking and analysis are required.

After A Levels

Religious Studies forms an excellent foundation for a great variety of careers including Law, Teaching, Medicine, Business, Journalism, Marketing and many others.



SOCIOLOGY

Specification: AQA Sociology 7191 and 7192

Introduction

Sociology is the study of society, people and their behaviour. It examines the ways in which social structures and institutions shape our world and attempts to explain the different forces and influences that create the society in which we live.

Students will be equipped with the skills and foundations of Sociology. Throughout the two years they will study the sociological theories and perspectives that underpin the subject. They will use these to assess and debate the course topics as well as current affairs.

Sociological research methods are also taught across the two years so that students can appreciate the way in which sociological research is conducted and how research can have an impact on government policies and initiatives.

Throughout the course students will have ample opportunity to voice their opinions, debate and explore issues within modern day society.

Year 12

The following topics will be studied in Year 12:

- Education
- Families and Households
- Theory and Methods (part 1)

These topics are found in Paper 1 and Paper 2 of the A level.

Year 13

The following topics will be studied in Year 13:

- Media
- Crime and Deviance
- Theory and Methods (part 2)

These topics are found in Paper 2 and Paper 3 of the A level. There will also be a significant period of revision time in Year 13 when all topics are covered.

A Level Assessment

There are three exam papers carrying equal weighting that are all sat at the end of the second year. Assessments are mostly extended writing/essays in which students are required to demonstrate their knowledge as well as application, analysis and evaluation skills.

All three exams have a standard format which students will become accustomed to during their studies.

Personal Qualities

There is no requirement for students to have studied Sociology previously at GCSE, for most students this is a completely “new” subject and therefore it is important to do some research into what the subject entails prior to starting the course. Key skills will be taught throughout the course however a genuine interest and enthusiasm for studying, discovering and analysing society, current affairs and political issues is key.

Financial Commitment

Students will be provided access to a number of textbooks that are used throughout the course free of charge however students are welcome to purchase their own should they wish to do so. Although please be aware that no one textbook is used for the entire course.

Students may be required to pay for trips or conferences that are arranged however attendance to these would not be compulsory.

Special demands on time

Independent reading and learning is required. It will be important for students to keep up to date with current issues and affairs such as by reading newspapers or watching the news.

Recommended links with other subjects

Sociology combines well with many study areas. Psychology, English Literature and Language, Religious Studies, History, Business Studies are traditional partners, but it also is useful for those wanting Medical or Health-Care careers.

After A Levels

Skills and knowledge developed throughout this course are valued for many degree courses at university.

Typical career sectors for Sociology include: Social/Market Research, Media and Journalism, Law, Politics and Social Policy, Business, Health, Teaching and Education Policy.

Many universities offer Sociology degrees as well as combined courses whereby students can study Sociology alongside another subject such as Psychology, Criminology, English or Biology.



SPANISH

Specification: AQA A Level Spanish 7692 (linear)

Introduction

Why learn a language?

Travel

Even a little knowledge of the language can make a difference in attitude when you meet people from other countries. Speaking another language helps to break down barriers.

Work and business

It can help you give an added advantage in your career if you work for an international firm or a company with international customers or contacts.

Music, film, arts and culture

If you like literature, films or music from other countries, learning the language will help your appreciation and understanding.

Enjoyment!

Course overview

The course offered by the Spanish Department will build on the knowledge acquired at GCSE level. The skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing will be further developed through the study of a range of topic areas. The language used will be increasingly accurate, complex and varied.

A Level Assessment

Paper 1: Listening, Reading and Writing (50% of A Level)

Paper 2: Writing (20% of A Level)

Paper 3: Speaking (30% of marks)

Personal Qualities

Success in Spanish at this level requires a commitment to consistent work throughout the course. A genuine interest in the language and culture are recommended, together with a good grasp of grammar and the ability to be motivated and work well outside of lessons.

Assessment

Assessment during the course will be by weekly assignments and internal assessments. Students must prepare for these effectively and take the results as a serious indicator of their likely performance in the final examination.

Financial Commitment

The purchase of the AQA Year 1 and Year 2 textbooks, a bi-lingual dictionary and a subscription to a Spanish magazine are recommended. Participation in a Work Experience placement in the country of study in Year 12 is advisable. Revision guide and CDs for self-study may be purchased.

Special Demands on Time

It is expected that students will spend about five hours each week working on the subject outside of lesson time (self-study and homework).

Recommended Links with Other Subjects

Due to the range of topics studied in Spanish, they are suitable for combination with any subject in school and subsequently.

After A Levels

An A Level in Spanish is a highly regarded and marketable qualification whether proceeding on to higher education or work. Successful candidates will be well-prepared to use the language for practical communication in all levels of commerce and industry. The qualification provides a good foundation for further language studies in higher education (degree level or equivalent), either in language courses or for translating/ interpreting/ teaching.

