What do you particularly enjoy about studying Philosophy, Ethics & Religion?

I enjoy this course due to the variety of the course material. Not only do you get to explore a wide range of ethical theories and the writings of history’s greatest thinkers, but the study of Buddhism allows you to broaden your knowledge of religion beyond Western religions commonly taught at GCSE level. If you enjoy throwing yourself into a realm of new ideas and perspectives, like open-minded and engaging discussion and effectively communicating your point of view to others, there is little you won’t find enjoyable about this subject.

How much work is involved? (hours in lessons / outside of lessons)

Currently, four contact hours per week are timetabled. Outside of lessons, homework and assignments in the form of essay plans, essay writing and flipped learning (to assist your understanding in the course content) take up some of your time. The rest is independent learning such as further reading of papers, articles and chapters written by relevant thinkers.

If you studied the subject at GCSE how different is studying it at A Level?

The main difference is that the content opens up greatly at A-Level and allows you to study the philosophy and ethics in their own respective fields. GCSE introduces these topics only briefly eg in the context of Christianity. Studying Buddhism allows you to delve into religion with an Eastern context, differing significantly from GCSE as most students will study the Abrahamic religions with an extensively Western perspective. Furthermore, you will be able to critically evaluate philosophical and ethical arguments such as William Paley’s design argument.
How are you assessed and how regularly?

Main assessments typically take place at the end of each unit and are in the form of essays and/or essay plans. Within lessons, previous knowledge and understanding is revised through quick questions and Kahoots (everyone’s favourite) which allows you to clear up anything you’re not sure about before moving on to the next stage of content. There are also opportunities to write introductions or individual paragraphs to example questions, allowing you to receive instant feedback on your application of content to exam and keep your essay-writing skills refreshed and refined.

What support have you received?

Support in the Philosophy department is truly second to none. If ever you don’t understand something, be it as small as key terms or arguments or something more sizable, any member of the department will be happy and enthusiastic in helping you. Whether you feel comfortable addressing something in class, via email or a one-to-one, support and guidance is always available on your terms. I have received support inside and outside of lessons with both the course content as well as through substantial essay feedback. Furthermore, a Philosophy enrichment group is open to all; offered outside of lesson time, it gives you the opportunity to throw yourself into discussions with other likeminded students (and argue a little bit as well).

Have you received careers support and what are your future plans?

I have received careers support both inside and outside of the department. While Carmel has an amazing and dedicated department purely for careers advice, I have attended further careers sessions offered by the department. I plan on studying English at degree level to become a teacher and the writing and communication skills I have developed throughout the course are of infinite value to both my chosen degree and future career.