**Theme 1: Arguments for the existence of God – inductive, AS**

**A. Inductive arguments – cosmological**

* Inductive proofs
* the concept of ‘a posteriori’.
* Cosmological argument: St Thomas Aquinas’ first Three Ways
  1. motion or change
  2. cause and effect
  3. contingency and necessity
* The Kalam cosmological argument with reference to William Lane Craig (rejection of actual infinities and concept of personal creator)

**B. Inductive arguments – teleological**

* St Thomas Aquinas’ Fifth Way - concept of governance
* archer and arrow analogy
* William Paley’s watchmaker - analogy of complex design
* F. R. Tennant’s anthropic and aesthetic arguments - universe specifically designed for intelligent human life

**C. Challenges to inductive arguments**

* David Hume - empirical objections and critique of causes (cosmological)
* David Hume - problems with analogies
* rejection of traditional theistic claims: designer not necessarily God of classical theism;
* apprentice god;
* plurality of gods;
* absent god (teleological).
* Alternative scientific explanations including Big Bang theory and Charles Darwin’s theory of evolution by natural selection.

**Issues for analysis and evaluation will be drawn from any aspect of the content above, such as:**

* Whether inductive arguments for God’s existence are persuasive.
* The extent to which the Kalam cosmological argument is convincing.
* The effectiveness of the cosmological/teleological argument for God’s existence.
* Whether cosmological/teleological arguments for God’s existence are persuasive in the 21st Century.
* The effectiveness of the challenges to the cosmological/teleological argument for God’s existence.
* Whether scientific explanations are more persuasive than philosophical explanations for the universe’s existence.

**Theme 1: Arguments for the existence of God – deductive, AS**

**D. Deductive arguments - origins of the ontological argument**

* Deductive proofs;
* the concept of ‘a priori’.
* St Anselm - God as the greatest possible being (Proslogion 2).
* St Anselm - God has necessary existence (Proslogion 3).

**E. Deductive arguments - developments of the ontological argument**

* Rene Descartes - concept of God as supremely perfect being;
* analogies of triangles and mountains/valleys.
* Norman Malcolm - God as unlimited being:
* God's existence as necessary rather than just possible.

**F. Challenges to the ontological argument**

* Gaunilo, his reply to St Anselm;
* his rejection of the idea of a greatest possible being that can be thought of as having separate existence outside of our minds;
* his analogy of the idea of the greatest island as a ridicule of St Anselm's logic.
* Immanuel Kant’s objection - existence is not a determining predicate: it cannot be a property that an object can either possess or lack.

**Issues for analysis and evaluation will be drawn from any aspect of the content above, such as**

* The extent to which ‘a priori’ arguments for God’s existence are persuasive.
* The extent to which different religious views on the nature of God impact on arguments for the existence of God.
* The effectiveness of the ontological argument for God’s existence.
* Whether the ontological argument is more persuasive than the cosmological/teleological arguments for God’s existence.
* The effectiveness of the challenges to the ontological argument for God’s existence.
* The extent to which objections to the ontological argument are persuasive.

**Theme 2: Challenges to religious belief - the problem of evil and suffering, AS**

**A. The problem of evil and suffering**

* The types of evil: moral (caused by free will agents) and natural (caused by nature).
* The logical problem of evil: classical (Epicurus) - the problem of suffering.
* J. L. Mackie’s modern development - the nature of the problem of evil (inconsistent triad).
* William Rowe (intense human and animal suffering) and Gregory S. Paul (premature deaths).

**B. Religious responses to the problem of evil (i)**

**Augustinian type theodicy**

* Evil as a consequence of sin
* evil as a privation
* the fall of human beings and creation
* the Cross overcomes evil, soul-deciding
* challenges to Augustinian type theodicies: validity of accounts in Genesis, Chapters 2 and 3
* scientific error - biological impossibility of human descent from a single pair (therefore invalidating the ‘inheritance of Adam’s sin)
* moral contradictions of omnibenevolent God and existence of Hell
* contradiction of perfect order becoming chaotic - geological and biological evidence suggests the contrary.

**C. Religious responses to the problem of evil (ii)**

**Irenaean type theodicy**

* Vale of soul-making
* human beings created imperfect
* epistemic distance
* second-order goods
* eschatological justification
* challenges to Irenaean type theodicies: concept of universal salvation unjust
* evil and suffering should not be used as a tool by an omnibenevolent God
* immensity of suffering and unequal distribution of evil and suffering.

**Issues for analysis and evaluation will be drawn from any aspect of the content above, such as**

* The extent to which the classical form of the problem of evil is a problem.
* The degree to which modern problem of evil arguments are effective in proving God's nonexistence.
* Whether Augustinian type theodicies are relevant in the 21st Century.
* The extent to which Augustine’s theodicy succeeds as a defence of the God of Classical Theism.
* Whether Irenaean type theodicies are credible in the 21st Century.
* The extent to which Irenaeus’s theodicy succeeds as a defence of the God of Classical Theism.

**Theme 3: Religious Experience, AS**

**A. The nature of religious experience with particular reference to:**

**Visions**

* Sensory
* Intellectual
* Dreams

**Conversion**

* individual/communal
* sudden/gradual

**Mysticism**

* Transcendent
* Ecstatic
* Unitive

**Prayer**

* types and stages of prayer according to Teresa of Avila.

**B. Mystical experience**

* William James’ four characteristics of mystical experience:

1. Ineffable
2. Noetic
3. Transient
4. Passive

* Rudolf Otto – the concept of the numinous
* mysterium tremendum
* the human predisposition for religious experience.

**C. Challenges to the objectivity and authenticity of religious experience**

* With reference to Caroline Franks Davis (description-related; subject-related and object-related challenges).
* Claims of religious experience rejected on grounds of misunderstanding
* Claims delusional - possibly related to substance misuse, fantastical claims contrary to everyday experiences
* Challenges: individual experiences valid even if non-verifiable
* Claims could be genuine - integrity of individual
* one-off experiences can still be valid even if never repeated

**Issues for analysis and evaluation will be drawn from any aspect of the content above, such as**

* The impact of religious experiences upon religious belief and practice.
* Whether different types of religious experience can be accepted as equally valid in communicating religious teachings and beliefs.
* The adequacy of James’ four characteristics in defining mystical experience.
* The adequacy of Otto’s definition of ‘numinous’.
* The extent to which the challenges to religious experience are valid.
* The persuasiveness of Franks-Davis’s different challenges.