

LEVEL 6

LEFEL 6

DATE OF EXAM
25 JANUARY 2019

CYFNOD ARHOLIADAU
25 IONAWR 2019

MODULE CODE: HPRS6003
Atheism and non-Belief

TIME: 6 HOURS

ANSWER TWO QUESTIONS

1. **EITHER:** Several news stories on Atheism have appeared in recent years. With reference to at least two of these, outline what they tell us about Atheism and whether consideration of these makes a useful contribution to wider discussions about religion.

OR: The 2016 Commission on Religious Education in England and Wales stated that Religious Education in schools should be overhauled to reflect the changing nature of belief and practice. Do you think that the recommendation to include 'worldviews' in the curriculum is an appropriate one?

2. **EITHER:** Atheism has been used and understood in different ways in different historical periods. Focusing on both the pre-Christian and the early Christian period, outline the nature of atheistic belief and any similarities and differences between the two periods.

OR: Account for the relatively recent emergence of Atheism as a developed belief system and why the Enlightenment provided the ideal foundation for this.

OR: Baggini (2003, 7) argues that atheism is not the default belief of a non-theist but a set of beliefs in its own right. Analyse this statement, the idea that theism is not necessary to atheism and that some form of atheism actually predated theism.

3. With reference to two arguments for the existence of God, critically examine the evidence that has been put forward by Theists and how Atheists might refute it.

4. Outline the significance of New Atheism. To what extent do the 'New Atheists' accurately reflect contemporary Atheistic belief?
5. 'No religion' is arguably the 'new religion'. For the first time, more people in England and Wales are identifying as being of no religion than they are of being Christian. With reference to data from the Censuses of England and Wales (2001 and 2011) suggest reasons for this development.
6. **EITHER:** With its non-theistic nature and focus on practice rather than belief, Buddhism is commonly described as an atheistic religion. Is this an accurate description and does it advance our understanding of the faith and its followers or hinder it?

OR: Raelianism (or Raelism) and LaVeyan Satanism are often description as atheistic new religious movements (NRMs). Evaluate the characteristics of ONE of these NRMs and assess whether or not this description is accurate.
7. "The prospect of an atheist spirituality ... provide[s] nonbelievers with a 'sacred' narrative that squares with their naturalism while legitimating peak experiences" (Walters, 2010, 176). Is the notion of 'atheist spirituality' simply an oxymoron or can such a philosophy really be discerned?

Diwedd/End