



ST ALBANS
SCHOOL

SIXTH FORM CURRICULUM INFORMATION 2018/2019

PREFACE

The Sixth Form at St Albans School provides a stimulating environment for purposeful academic study and personal development in preparation for university entry. We work on the assumption that our students have made an active choice to continue with their studies, and are following courses for which they have opted freely and for which they have a genuine motivation.

We see A Level study as the prelude to higher education, and a stage in the process not only of learning, but of learning how to learn. Expectations of self-discipline, self-motivation and self-organisation are correspondingly high, but not unrealistically so. We recognise that a sixteen-year-old GCSE student does not turn overnight into an embryonic undergraduate, but we wish our students to view the Sixth Form as the first two years of a five-year period that culminates in the gaining of a degree. A firm framework of monitoring, underpinned where necessary by disciplinary measures, ensures that students do not fall short of their potential for want of the study skills they have yet to learn.

We look to our Sixth Formers as leaders of the School, in partnership with the teaching staff, in helping to ensure the smooth running of a friendly, informal but disciplined community. All students have responsibility for exemplary leadership, and in many cases will have a pastoral role in supporting the work of tutors in the Lower and Middle Schools. Consequently, we demand high standards of our students in such matters as behaviour and dress, and above all in the maintenance of a school culture and ethos where achievement and the fulfilment of potential as well as commitment to the wider life of the School are both the expectation and the norm.


Jonathan Gillespie

Headmaster

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INTRODUCTION

St Albans School Sixth Form aims to provide the breadth of education essential for young adults to take up their places in higher education or the world beyond. It aims to provide a wide range of academic courses, whilst at the same time providing the range of skills and experience necessary for life in the twenty-first century.

Aims of the Sixth Form Curriculum

- To enable students to study subjects in depth through and beyond Advanced Level as a foundation for future courses in Higher Education.
- To encourage self-discipline in the organisation of both time and effort to enable students to maximise their academic potential.
- To provide an effective working environment which encourages a range of teaching and learning styles.
- To develop imaginative, enquiring and informed minds.
- To promote personal excellence in the pursuit of a wide range of sporting, recreational and cultural activities.
- To provide opportunities for self-expression and aesthetic appreciation.
- To develop moral and spiritual values and a respect for other cultures.
- To encourage students to assess and evaluate their own progression and development throughout their Sixth Form career.
- To provide a diagnostic assessment of skills and aptitudes related to further study and future careers.
- To enable students to adapt to the independent study skills expected at university.

In common with the curriculum in all sections of the School:

- To promote the students' intellectual, moral, physical, social and spiritual development and prepare them for future opportunities, responsibilities and experiences.

Organisation of the course

The Sixth Form curriculum at St Albans School is based upon four subjects taken in the Lower Sixth. In the great majority of cases, students will choose three subjects to study in the Upper Sixth to A Level.

Changes to A Levels

Since September 2017, all A Levels have been 'linear', with the final examinations testing students' knowledge and understanding of the whole of the course.

Please note that, in all subjects, circumstances may make a change of specification necessary or desirable, and the details given in this booklet are subject to change.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Q1 How many subjects will students study in the Upper Sixth?

A1 Selective universities require three A Levels. An Extended Project (see the end of this booklet) will make a candidate more attractive to a university. All our students embark on one, and our standard expectation is that students complete three A Levels and the Extended Project. In a few cases, a fourth A Level may also make a candidate more attractive to a university.

The most likely options for the Upper Sixth are therefore:

3 A Levels for the student's best subjects and an Extended Project;

4 A Levels for some students.

Q2 Should students start with four subjects which complement each other, or should contrasting subjects be chosen?

A2 If two or three of the subjects chosen are appropriate for the universities and courses for which a student wishes to apply, there will, in most cases, be relatively little general advantage or disadvantage to any particular choice of additional subject(s) and students should not feel any constraint in this regard. We shall encourage students to broaden their studies when we feel the student is capable of undertaking such a provision and where a complementary study is not expected by the universities of first choice. Students should be aware, however, that those who take Biology without Chemistry can struggle, as can those who take Physics without Mathematics.

Q3 When will students have external examinations?

A3 In the Summer Term (usually in June) of the Upper Sixth year only.

ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

Please note that throughout this booklet the term 'GCSE' should be taken to include IGCSE qualifications.

At St Albans School we aspire to maximise the potential of our students academically and to provide a broad educational experience in preparation for life beyond the School. As nearly all Albanians go on to higher education, particular attention is paid to gaining the necessary academic qualifications and to preparing students for taking responsibility for their own studies at university. Students entering the Sixth Form must show evidence of academic potential and a commitment to study. This will be reflected in their academic performance to date.

The School's minimum entry requirements are as follows:

- English and Mathematics GCSE must be passed at grade 6 or better (grade B or better if letter grades are awarded).
- In the subject to be studied at A Level, or in a closely related subject where the equivalent GCSE is not available, an 7/A grade or better must be achieved. Full details of the entry requirements for individual courses are given in the relevant entries in this booklet. In every case where grade 7 is specified, a grade A or above will be taken as equivalent.
- Students must achieve an average GCSE score of 6.6. Where letter grades are awarded, an A* will count as an 8, an A as 7, and so on.

Whilst it may be possible to study some subjects at Advanced Level without having taken them at GCSE, students intending to do so will be expected to show a similar level of ability and commitment in the GCSE subjects they have taken. In cases where the number of candidates opting for a particular subject exceeds the numbers it is possible to accommodate, preference will normally be given to those who have performed best at GCSE, irrespective of the usual minimum grade requirement for that subject.

All students will be expected to study four subjects in the Lower Sixth, with three of these being continued into the Upper Sixth. In addition, all will follow an Enrichment course in which they take study modules in General Studies and Critical Thinking, and embark on an Extended Project.

Students take internal examinations at the end of the Lower Sixth. They are expected to achieve good results, and permission to proceed to take the A Level in any subject is at the discretion of the Headmaster.

Parents and pupils should appreciate that the final decisions regarding admission to and continued attendance in the Sixth Form and the particular courses offered each year are all at the discretion of the Headmaster.

SCHEDULE OF PERIODS

L6

| | |
|-----------------------------|-----------|
| Four A Level subjects | 24 |
| Games | 2 |
| Friday afternoon activities | 2 |
| Enrichment programme | 1 |
| Study/Extension lessons | 1 |
| Total | 30 |

U6

| | |
|--|-----------|
| Three A Level subjects | 18 |
| Optional A Level course or AS in Further Maths | 6 |
| Games | 2 |
| Enrichment lecture | 1 |
| Study/UCAS | 1 |
| Extended Project | 1 |
| Academic Challenge Seminar | 1 |
| Total | 30 |

CHOOSING YOUR SUBJECTS

St Albans School prides itself on the flexibility of its timetable and most A Level combinations are possible. When making your choice, it is wise to consider the following questions:

- Which subjects do I enjoy?
- What options are available?
- If I choose a particular combination, which doors would be closed to me either in higher education or as a career?
- Are all subjects viewed equally?
- How is each course assessed? What proportion is coursework?

The order of these questions is very important as success at A Level will be very much more dependent on your own efforts and reading than it was at GCSE. As most of you will be studying A Levels as a passport to a university place it is worth remembering that you will need three passes at grade B at the very least for most courses and you will, as a rule, get the highest grades in the subjects that you enjoy most. If you opt for a subject that you do not enjoy, then you are unlikely to secure the grades required to gain a place at the more popular universities. As a general rule, there seems little doubt that Mathematics is the most universally desirable subject at A Level, opening the way to courses in business and management, the sciences and engineering and information technology. If you do Physics without Mathematics, even if you are also studying Design and Technology, it reduces quite dramatically your chances of securing a place to study Engineering. However, from your point of view as an individual, if you struggled with GCSE Mathematics you are unlikely in any case to get the grades in A Level Mathematics that you would need for such courses.

You should be aware of the links between subjects. For example, Mathematics is useful to support subjects such as Physics, Economics, Biology and Geography. Do not, however, be too narrow-minded, confining yourself to the traditional subject combinations, as the idea of linkage can be over-stressed, and students should seek advice before being persuaded of the 'need' to study a particular subject combination.

Which doors may be closed as a result of a particular subject combination?

For most of you it will be more than five years before you choose your first job, and even this may not prove to be your ultimate career. Greater flexibility in career development means that the majority of you will change your career direction several times during your working lives. The next five years will be important in terms of general development and you should beware of being too dogmatic about what you intend to do in the end. Nevertheless, it is sensible to ensure that your choice of A Levels keeps open as many opportunities as possible.

Universities are generally much more open-minded about subjects than they were and it is rare for them to be prescriptive in more than two subjects. A medical school, for example, will demand A Level Chemistry and probably a second science such as Biology but will welcome applicants with a language or humanities subject as their third A Level. Occasionally, individual institutions may be more prescriptive. Cambridge courses in engineering are highly theoretical and therefore more accessible to students with Mathematics, Further Mathematics and Physics, whilst potential architects will need Mathematics and Physics at Edinburgh, for example. Unusually, Cambridge medical students may still need two of Biology, Physics or Mathematics as well as Chemistry.

CHOOSING YOUR SUBJECTS

Beware of trying to show your commitment by choosing subjects which, because of an overlap of content or approach, could narrow your options later, for example all four subjects being in the Humanities (e.g. Economics, Geography, History and Politics). However, two subjects that are closely related may be studied (e.g. Mathematics and Further Mathematics, two modern languages), and indeed should be if you think that you will want to apply for degrees in these subject areas. You may already have some idea of what career you want to pursue or which degree you want to study at university. A word of caution is needed, however. There is no university Law department in the country that demands Law at A Level as an entry qualification nor Psychology department that demands that the subject be studied at A Level. Indeed, a number of admissions tutors are quite dismissive of the A Level in the subject, and candidates applying for Psychology courses at university are at a much greater advantage if they have done Mathematics rather than Psychology at A Level. You should not dismiss any subject at A Level with the question “What’s the use of studying subject x if all you can do with it is teach others?” Remember that, for most of you, your A Levels are the gateway to the next stage in your career and the highest possible grades are the target.

How is each course assessed?

Most assessment is by examination. However, a number of subjects including Design and Technology, Drama and Physical Education will have a project or practical instead of one of the examined modules. This clearly helps the more practically minded who work better over a period of time and it reduces the stress of the terminal examinations. Experience shows, however, that such projects are very time-consuming.

Students will not be short of advice in making their decisions. Your Morrisby Test will give strong pointers in both your profile and more obviously in the Careers Advisers’ Notes as to your potential for the different courses available. The Careers Department offers many online resources. It is worth remembering that subject teachers may have a vested interest in persuading you to study their subject at A Level. Many university departments now publish Entry Profiles on their websites showing not only the subjects and grades they seek but the additional skills or attributes they are looking for in potential students. These can be accessed through www.ucas.ac.uk.

ART

Examining Board: Edexcel

Entrance requirements: Grade 7 or above in Art at GCSE. Candidates who have not studied Art at GCSE will be considered but applications must be supported by a portfolio of recent practical work.

Depth of Study

Through following this Advanced Level specification, it is expected that students will achieve in-depth knowledge, understanding and skills in art and design that will aid their progression to foundation and degree-related study in this area.

Drawing is an essential skill for studying art and design and forms a core element of the course alongside the application of critical and contextual knowledge to express and justify ideas.

Course Aims

- To develop a student's ability to appreciate the visual world and respond in a personal and creative way.
- To develop the skills necessary to interpret and convey ideas using art, craft and design.
- To develop a knowledge and understanding of art and design in history and contemporary society.

Course Content and Assessment

Component 1 Personal Investigation (Coursework) - 60% of total A Level mark

Students work from a given starting point through to a personal outcome. As well as creating visual supporting studies, students are also required to produce a written personal study of 1,000 words (minimum). This theme needs to be concise and based on the candidate's personal interests.

Element 2 Externally Set Assignment - 40% of total A Level mark

Working from a question paper, students produce preparatory studies and sketches which will enable them ultimately to produce a completed piece of work under exam conditions. Students have approximately six weeks for preparatory studies and a controlled time period of 15 hours for the final examination.

Disciplines

Students will develop integrated knowledge, skills and understanding of the following:

Painting and drawing

- properties of colour, such as hue, tint, saturation, tone and colour perception
- the potential for exploring combinations of materials, such as combining drawn and painted elements, collage, found objects, including inert materials to add textures and impart meaning

Printmaking

- print qualities and how they result from different printmaking tools, materials and processes
- printing processes such as intaglio and relief printing

Sculpture

- producing forms in three dimensions, utilising volume, space, materials and movement.

Release date of question paper: 1st February

A Level students are expected to show commitment to the subject and attend the regular out of school sessions that are organized by the Department. Additional visits are made to European art capitals such as Paris, Madrid or Barcelona. Work completed on these visits can be incorporated into pupils' Exam Portfolios.

All work is internally marked and externally moderated.

BIOLOGY

Examining board: CIE International A Level

Entrance requirements: Internal: Grade 7 or above in Biology and Chemistry at IGCSE.

External: Grade 7 or above in Biology and Chemistry or Additional Science.

Why choose Biology?

The Biology course provides a natural progression from GCSE Science and has the following aims:

- To stimulate students and give them a lasting interest, so that they find studying Biology an enjoyable and satisfying experience.
- To be a suitable preparation for biological studies in higher educational establishments and for professional courses which require students to have a knowledge of Biology.
- To sustain and develop an interest in the study of living organisms and a respect for them.
- To develop abilities and skills which enable effective, efficient and safe practice.
- To provide well-designed studies of experimental and practical biological science.
- To develop skills of enquiry and scientific attitudes such as concern for accuracy and objectivity, initiative, inventiveness and integrity.
- To stimulate interest in, and care for, the local and global environment.
- To provide a worthwhile educational experience whether or not students go on to study science beyond this level.

By the end of the course students will see that Biology is not to be studied in isolation, but relates, in a wider sense, to the needs of people and other organisms. In addition, they will be able to link together the “big ideas” in Biology to gain an overall appreciation of the subject.

Course Content – Lower Sixth Biology

The course includes a number of topics:

- Cell structure
- Enzymes
- Cell and nuclear division
- Transport
- Infectious disease
- Biodiversity and conservation
- Biological molecules
- Cell membranes and transport
- Nucleic acids and protein synthesis
- Gas exchange and smoking
- Immunity

Course Content – Upper Sixth Biology

- Energy and respiration
- Homeostasis
- Inherited change
- Gene technology
- Photosynthesis
- Control and co-ordination
- Selection and evolution

Assessment

The course is assessed over five papers:

Paper 1 is a one-hour multiple choice examination making up 15.5% of the total mark; the material examined is only from the Lower Sixth.

Paper 2 is based on structured questions and short written answers (1 hour 15 min) and makes up 23% of the total mark; again, this is only on material studied in Lower Sixth.

Paper 3, which is an advanced practical skills examination, makes up 11.5% of the mark.

Paper 4, a two-hour structured question examination making up 38.5% of the total A Level mark.

Paper 5, an examination that tests planning, analysis and evaluation skills (1 hour 15 min), makes up 11.5% of the total A Level mark.

The full specification and associated materials can be viewed at:

<http://www.cie.org.uk/programmes-and-qualifications/cambridge-international-as-and-a-level-biology-9700/>

CHEMISTRY

Examining Board: AQA

Entrance requirements: Internal: Grade 7 or above in Chemistry at IGCSE.

External: Grade 7 or above in Chemistry or Additional Science.

In our ever changing world people are living longer, and consuming more. As a result there is a huge demand to provide solutions to the energy crisis, develop drugs to combat diseases such as AIDS, cancer and Alzheimer's, and to create more environmentally responsible industries to provide us with the everyday resources that we all rely on. Chemistry is vital to addressing these issues and if the chance to take on these challenges appeals to you, an A Level in Chemistry is the first step.

Why choose Chemistry?

Chemistry is an essential qualification for a large number of careers as well as being an excellent subject to study alongside any other A Level. Whether you are looking for a career in Applied Chemistry, Chemical Engineering, Medicine, Dentistry, Pharmacy, Biochemistry, Biotechnology or Environmental Science you will need to start with Chemistry.

From Chemistry you will also develop a range of transferable skills including problem solving, application of knowledge and analysis.

What you will gain from the course

- You will develop greater knowledge and understanding of Chemistry.
- You will debate and gain increased understanding of the relevance of Chemistry to contemporary issues.
- You will build upon the concepts of How Science Works that were introduced at GCSE to become critical analysts.
- You will enhance your practical skills by carrying out advanced organic synthesis.

Course Content and Assessment

Three written papers.

Paper 1: Topics covering Physical and Inorganic Chemistry as well as any relevant practical skills

Duration: 2 hrs

Marks available: 105 (marks from short and long answer questions)

Paper 2: Topics covering Physical and Inorganic Chemistry as well as any relevant practical skills

Duration: 2 hrs

Marks available: 105 (marks from short and long answer questions)

Paper 3: Synoptic paper covering all aspects of the course

Duration: 2 hrs

Marks available: 90 (40 marks on practical techniques and data analysis, 20 marks testing understanding across the specification, 30 marks from multiple choice questions)

Students will also need to complete a minimum of 12 practicals which will be assessed internally.

Key Topics: Atomic Structure, Bonding, Amount of Substance, Energetics, Kinetics, Equilibria, RedOx, Halogens, Alkaline Earth Metals, Alkanes, Alkenes, Alcohols, Haloalkanes, Periodicity, Thermodynamics, Rate Equations, Electrode Potentials, Acids and Bases, Transition Metals, Spectroscopic Analysis, Carbonyls, Aromatic Chemistry, Amines.

CLASSICAL CIVILISATION

Examining Board: OCR

Entrance requirements: Grade 7 or above in Classical Civilisation, History or Ancient History if taken at GCSE, or in English.

Why choose Classical Civilisation A Level?

The course has been designed to provide learners with a broad, coherent and rewarding study of the literature and culture of the classical world. It offers students the opportunity to study elements of the literature, visual/material culture and thought of the classical world whilst acquiring an understanding of their social, historical and cultural contexts.

Aims of the course

- To acquire a sophisticated level of knowledge and understanding of the literature and culture of the ancient world through studying a diverse range of material and making connections and comparisons between them.
- To understand classical literature, thought and material culture in its context; including how issues and values relevant to the society in which they were created are reflected in ancient sources and materials.
- To further develop skills of critical analysis and evaluation and apply these to the range of source materials studied, using a range of appropriate evidence to formulate coherent arguments with substantiated evidence based judgements.
- To acquire a sound basis for further study of the classical world.

Course content and Assessment

There are three papers:

1. *The World of the Hero* – a study of Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey* and Virgil's *Aeneid* assessed by a 140-minute exam worth 100 marks, 40% of the course.
2. *Culture and the Arts: Greek Theatre* – a study of Greek Theatre and Drama, reading the plays of Aeschylus, Sophocles, Euripides and Aristophanes assessed by a 105 minute exam worth 75 marks, 30% of the course.
3. *Belief and Ideas: Love and Relationships* – a study of relationships in the ancient world based on the poetry of Sappho and Ovid's *Ars Amatoria* assessed by a 105-minute exam worth 75 marks, 30% of the course.

There is no coursework.

NB The only compulsory paper is the World of the Hero and the others are selected from a range of options which may be subject to change.

COMPUTER SCIENCE

Examining Board: AQA

Entrance requirements: Internal: Grade 7 or above in Computer Science at IGCSE.

External: Grade 7 or above in Computer Science at IGCSE or GCSE with programming assessment.

What is Computer Science?

Computer Science is a discipline which requires thinking both in abstract and in concrete terms. On a higher level, it is concerned with problem solving: modelling and analysing problems, designing solutions, and implementing them. Problem solving requires precision, creativity, and careful reasoning.

In A Level Computer Science, students learn the principles of computation and algorithms, computer programming, machine data representation, computer systems (hardware and software), computer organisation and architecture, communications and networking, databases and the consequences of using computing.

What subjects combine well with Computer Science?

Computer Science has strong connections to many other disciplines: Mathematics, Further Mathematics, Physics, and Economics combine well with Computer Science.

Students who wish to study for a Computer Science degree should combine it with A Level Mathematics as this is a pre-requisite at many universities.

What can Computer Science lead to?

A good grade in Computer Science at A Level is valued by universities and employers since it requires the development of analytical thinking and problem-solving skills. This course also lays an appropriate foundation for further study of Computer Science, Engineering, Physics or related subjects in higher education.

Many problems in the sciences, engineering, health care, business and other areas can be solved effectively with computers, but finding a solution requires both computer science expertise and knowledge of the particular application domain. Thus, computer scientists often become proficient in other subjects.

Course Content and Assessment

Three written papers.

Paper 1: On-screen programming examination

Duration: 2 hours 30 minutes

Marks available: 40% of A Level

Paper 2: Topics covering fundamentals of programming, data representation, architecture and databases (topics 14 – 21)

Duration: 2 hours 30 minutes

Marks available: 40% of A Level

Non-exam assessment

Practical problem-solving task.

Marks available: 20% of A Level

DESIGN & TECHNOLOGY: PRODUCT DESIGN

Examination Board: AQA

Entrance Requirements: Grade 7 or above in GCSE Design & Technology.

Why Choose A Level Design & Technology: Product Design?

This is a creative and thought-provoking course which gives students the practical skills, theoretical knowledge and confidence to succeed in a number of careers, especially the technical and creative industries.

Students will investigate historical, social, cultural, environmental and economic influences on design and technology, whilst having opportunities to put their learning into practice by producing prototypes of their choice. They will gain a real understanding of what it means to be a designer, alongside knowledge and skills sought by higher education and employers.

Aims of the Course

To encourage students to:

- be open to taking design risks, showing innovation and enterprise
- develop intellectual curiosity about the design and manufacture of products and systems, and their impact on society
- work collaboratively to develop and refine their ideas, responding to feedback
- gain an insight into the creative, engineering and manufacturing industries
- develop the capacity to think creatively, innovatively and critically
- develop knowledge and experience of real world contexts
- develop an in-depth knowledge and understanding of materials, components and processes
- be able to make informed design decisions
- be able to create and analyse a design concept and use a range of skills and knowledge from other subject areas, including maths and science, to inform decisions
- be able to work safely and skilfully to produce high-quality prototypes
- have a critical understanding of the wider influences on design and technology.

Course Content

The course requires students to engage in both practical and theoretical study. They will investigate the theoretical, technical principles needed to apply to the designing and making principles needed to create prototypes.

They must develop the ability to draw on and apply a range of skills and knowledge from a wide range of other subject areas to inform their decisions in design and application or development of technology.

Students must also demonstrate mathematical and scientific skills.

Assessment

Paper 1 – Technical Principles

2 hour written examination – 30% of total A Level (120 raw marks).

This paper will consist of questions exploring knowledge and understanding of compliant and resistant materials and processes, ranging from paper and board through fabrics to resistant materials. Students will also have to show an understanding of modern and smart materials. Modern and industrial commercial practices, digital design and manufacture and health and safety will also be explored.

Paper 2 – Designing and Making Principles

1.5 hour written examination – 20% of total A Level (80 raw marks).

Throughout this part of the assessment, students will be examined on their appreciation and application of design theory and the impact of technology on society. It will require the students to apply their knowledge and understanding to critically analyse and evaluate existing products.

Non- Examination Assessment (NEA) – Iterative Design Project

45 hours (approximately) of coursework – 50% of total A Level (100 raw marks).

This element of the course requires the students to undertake a substantial design and make a project centred on the iterative process of explore, create and evaluate. They will be required to identify a design opportunity or problem from a context of their choice and create a portfolio of evidence to demonstrate their competences.

DRAMA

Examining Board: AQA

Entrance requirements: Grade 7 or above in Drama at GCSE.

Do you want to be an actor? Do you want to be forward thinking and socially aware? If the answer to either is yes, the solution is the same: study drama. Through studying Drama and Theatre you will gain many invaluable skills, both theatrical and transferable. Skills that will expand your horizons and are respected and valued by Higher Education institutions. You will be inspired to become an independent theatre maker, learning through experience, with an emphasis on practical creativity alongside research and theoretical understanding. This challenging and rewarding course wants you to be creative, imaginative and committed. In return you will become confident, mature, flexible, adaptable and a fine student of the dramatic arts.

The A Level course is weighted 60% non-exam assessment and 40% written exam.

Assessment

Component 1: Drama and theatre

The study of two set texts, exploring both 'drama through the ages' and '20th and 21st century drama', as well as analysis and evaluation of the work of live theatre makers. This is assessed in an open book written exam (3 hours).

Component 2: Creating original drama

Performance of devised drama, influenced by the work and methodologies of a practitioner, for assessment. There is an accompanying working notebook which is also assessed.

Component 3: Making theatre

The practical exploration of three extracts, each taken from a different play. Extract 3, which has a practitioner influence applied to it, is performed for assessment. There is an accompanying reflective report which is also assessed.

Studying Drama and Theatre gives you the opportunity to study plays, go to the theatre and devise drama as a performer, designer or director. You will regularly go on theatre trips to London, work with visiting professionals, rehearse in your own time as a cast and be part of productions staged in New Place Gallery.

ECONOMICS

Examining Board: Edexcel

Entrance requirements: Grade 7 or above in both English Language and Maths at GCSE, and, if taken, a minimum of a 7 grade in Economics.

Economics provides an opportunity to study an academically challenging and ever-changing range of crucial issues in an objective and analytical manner.

Aims of the course

The specification is designed to support students in:

- developing an interest in, and enthusiasm for, the subject.
- appreciating the contribution of Economics to the understanding of the wider economic and social environment.
- developing an understanding of a range of concepts and an ability to use those concepts in a variety of different contexts.
- using an enquiring, critical and thoughtful approach to the study of economics and developing an ability to think as an economist.
- understanding that economic behaviour can be studied from a range of perspectives.
- developing analytical and quantitative skills, together with qualities and attitudes that will equip them for the challenges of the modern workplace.

Course Content

Theme 1 – Introduction to markets and market failure: this theme focuses on microeconomic concepts. Students will develop an understanding of: the nature of economics, how markets work, market failure and government intervention.

Theme 2 – The UK economy – performance and policies: this theme focuses on macroeconomic concepts. Students will develop an understanding of: measures of economic performance, aggregate demand and supply, national income, economic growth, macroeconomic objectives and government policy.

Theme 3 – Business behaviour and the labour market: this theme develops the microeconomic concepts introduced in Theme 1 and focuses on business economics. Students will develop an understanding of: business growth and objectives, revenues, costs and profit, market structures, the labour market and government intervention.

Theme 4 – A global perspective: this theme develops the macroeconomic concepts introduced in Theme 2 and applies these concepts in a global context. Students will develop an understanding of: international economics, poverty and inequality, emerging and developing economies, the financial sector and the role of the state in the macro economy.

Assessment

At the end of the Upper Sixth, students will sit three synoptic papers covering content studied over both years.

Paper 1 – Markets and business behaviour: 35% of the total A Level mark, paper 1 will assess microeconomics, drawing on themes 1 and 3. The paper comprises multiple choice, short answer, data response and extended open-response questions. Duration: 2 hours.

Paper 2 – The national and global economy: 35% of the total A Level mark, paper 2 will assess macroeconomics, drawing on themes 2 and 4. The paper comprises multiple choice, short answer, data response and extended open-response questions. Duration: 2 hours.

Paper 3 – Microeconomics and macroeconomics: 30% of the total A Level mark, paper 3 will assess content across all four themes. The paper comprises a data response question including an extended open-response question. Duration: 2 hours.

Economics combines well with a wide range of subjects to lead to university courses in areas such as Law, Accounting and Finance, Management, Politics, Modern Foreign Languages and, of course, Economics.

ENGLISH LITERATURE

Examining Board: Edexcel

Entrance requirements: Grade 7 or above in both English and English Literature at GCSE/IGCSE.

Aims of the course

- To develop students' interest in and enjoyment of literary studies, through reading and writing independently and critically across a range of genres and periods.
- To develop students as confident and reflective readers of a range of texts, who learn to express their responses effectively through speech and writing.
- To develop students' skills of close reading, particularly of unseen texts.
- To develop understanding of the importance of the social, historical and literary contexts in which texts were written, and to foster awareness of critical debate and theory.
- To develop the skills of textual comparison, both within and across boundaries of genre and period.

The skills of A Level English – reading carefully, synthesising different viewpoints, writing and arguing fluently – are valued highly by many universities and employers. Those with these valuable attributes will be in demand in the media, politics, management and the law. Each set will have two teachers.

Course Content

A minimum of eight different texts (poetry, prose and drama) must be studied. These will include a Shakespeare play and another drama, at least two novels (one of which must have been written before 1900), a collection of poetry written after 2000, and another named poet or poetic movement. There will also be a response to unseen literature. A Level English contains a coursework element. All units will demand awareness of writers' choices, relevant contexts, and the views of other readers. All exams are open book.

Assessment

Component One: Drama – 2 hours 15 minutes

Students will study one Shakespeare play and one other drama from the genre of either tragedy or comedy – both texts may be selected from one or both of these categories. They will also study a selection of critical essays related to their selected Shakespeare play. Students will answer one of two questions on each text.

30% of total A Level mark

Component Two: Prose – 1 hour

Students will study 2 prose texts on a chosen theme. They will be required to answer one comparative essay question from a choice of two on their studied theme. It is Department policy that all students will study a third text for this unit. At least one of the texts discussed in the exam must have been written before 1900.

20% of total A Level mark

Component Three: Poetry and the unseen – 2 hours 15 minutes

Students will be required to complete one comparative analysis of an unseen poem to a named poem from the studied post-2000 anthology, from a choice of two. Students will also need to produce one essay from a choice of two on their studied poet or period.

30% of total A Level mark

Component Four: Coursework

Students must produce a comparative essay on two texts not studied for components 1, 2 or 3 (although texts named on the syllabus but not studied may be used). Students may write on texts linked by theme, period, movement or author, and may choose to write on any genre (including a mix of genres). The suggested word count is 2500-3000 words (including quotations, but not including footnotes or bibliographies). Texts not originally written in English are not acceptable. Coursework texts cannot count as one of the mandatory three pre-1900 texts for the course as a whole.

20% of total A Level mark

Coursework will need to be completed and internally assessed by the end of the Spring Term, and examinations will take place in the June session.

GEOGRAPHY

Examining Board: Cambridge International A Level

Entrance requirements: Grade 7 or above in Geography at GCSE, or in English Language.

Geography is changing fast! With issues such as global warming becoming hot topics in the media, together with concerns over globalisation and the potential exploitation of developing economies, the increasing risk from natural disasters and rise of new world economies, the subject has never been more relevant. The discipline sits alongside arts and science subjects, complementing both: a multidisciplinary subject in an evolving and challenging world.

Course content

Lower Sixth

The Lower Sixth course is designed to give students a broad foundation within the discipline, covering a range of topics that will give them sufficient breadth and depth of knowledge to understand and interpret issues affecting people and the natural environment.

Core Physical Geography: This covers the essential topics within Physical Geography, including:

- Hydrology and geomorphology (rivers)
- Atmosphere and weather
- Rocks and weathering.

Core Human Geography: This covers the essential topics within Human Geography, including:

- Population
- Migration
- Settlement and urbanisation

Upper Sixth

The Upper Sixth course gives students the opportunity to explore particular topics in more depth, often to an undergraduate standard. These include:

Advanced Physical Geography:

- Coastal environments
- Hazards

Advanced Human Geography:

- Global interdependence
- Economic transition

Assessment

There are four papers in the A Level examinations taken in May of the Upper Sixth. These are as follows:

Core Geography

Two written examinations (Papers 1 & 2) of 1 hour and 30 minutes in length, and worth 60 marks each (25% of the qualification). The examinations include data-response questions, short and open responses, including 8 and 15 mark extended writing questions.

Advanced Geography

Two written examinations (Papers 3 and 4) of 2 hours and 30 minutes in length and worth 60 marks each (25% of the qualification). The examinations consist of one structured question (10 marks) and a choice of essay questions (20 marks).

HISTORY

Examining Board: Edexcel

Entrance requirements: Grade 7 or above in History at GCSE if taken, or in English Language.

Aims of the course:

- To foster an awareness of the political, economic, social and cultural factors that have helped shape the modern world.
- To develop students' critical awareness of changing interpretations of past events.
- To prepare students intellectually for the challenges of higher education and beyond.

Course Content and Assessment

Edexcel Route D – Challenges to the authority of the state in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries

Paper 1: Britain 1785 – 1870: democracy, protest and reform (30%)

Paper 2: The Unification of Italy, 1830 – 1870 (20%)

Paper 3: A choice between:

- Lancastrians, Yorkists and Henry VII, 1399 – 1509
- Germany 1871 – 1990: united, divided and reunited (30%)

Paper 4: Coursework examining an associated controversy related to students' Paper 3 choice (20%)

In the Lower Sixth the course will concentrate on late 18th and 19th century history. The course studies the development of the modern world, chiefly in Britain and Europe. There will be consideration of the development of democracy in the United Kingdom 1785 – 1870 and examination of the process of unification in Italy 1830 – 1870.

In the Upper Sixth the students will be offered a choice of periods to study, one medieval and one modern. The former will see the students examine the intricacies of the Wars of the Roses and the latter will see the students look in depth at the development of the modern German state from unification to the end of the Cold War. An examination paper in the option chosen at A Level will be complemented by a piece of coursework based on an associated controversy.

Method of questioning

Examination questions include source-based responses and essay-style questions. The course provides an ideal opportunity to investigate and challenge assumptions. This will be pursued through a variety of methods including analytical writing, discussion, debate, seminar and whole-group work. The course will engage with such concepts as democracy, dictatorship, tyranny, liberty and morality, the understanding of which are essential to an awareness of the present.

LATIN and GREEK

Examining Board: OCR

Entrance requirements: Grade 7 or above in Latin or Classical Greek at GCSE

Aims of the courses:

- To develop students' sensitivity to language in general through the study of Latin or Greek, leading to a thorough understanding of its linguistic structures and vocabulary.
- To guide students towards a personal response to Latin or Greek literature and an appreciation of the style and effectiveness of several Latin or Greek authors.
- To enable students to consider the spiritual, moral and cultural issues that emerge from their reading.

Course content

The course covers three main elements: unprepared translation and comprehension from Latin or Greek; translation and appreciation of Latin or Greek literature; and translation into Latin or Greek.

Translation & comprehension: Based on the prose and verse of the 1st centuries BC and AD in Latin, and the 5th and 4th centuries BC in Greek.

Latin/Greek Literature: The Latin verse set texts are Virgil's *Aeneid XI*, selections from Horace's *Satires and Odes* or Ovid's *Amores*, and the prose set texts are Cicero's *Philippic II* or Tacitus' *Histories I* or Apuleius' *Metamorphoses*.

The Greek verse set texts are Homer's *Iliad 18* or Aristophanes' *Peace* or Euripides' *Medea* and the prose set texts are Herodotus' Book 7 or Plato's *Phaedo* or Xenophon's *Anabasis*.

Candidates will be expected to read more of each text in English and will be examined on this.

Assessment

Latin/Greek Unseen Translation 1 hour 45 minutes (33%): Translation of one prose passage (50 marks) and translation of one verse passage (45 marks) with scansion (5 marks).

Latin/Greek Prose Comprehension or Composition 1 hour 15 minutes (17%): comprehension questions on an unseen passage of prose Latin or translation of a continuous English passage into Latin or Greek (50 marks).

Prose Literature 2 hours (25%): Either one or two set texts from those listed above will be examined by comprehension, translation, essay and literary analysis questions (50 marks).

Verse Literature 2 hours (25%): Either one or two set texts from those listed above will be examined by comprehension, translation, essay and literary analysis questions (50 marks).

There is no coursework element in these courses.

MATHEMATICS

Examining Board: OCR (MEI Syllabus)

Entrance requirements:

- Internal: Grade 8 or 9 in IGCSE Mathematics, or Grade 7 with Grade C standard in the Fifth Form course (note: The Fifth Form course is AS standard, with corresponding grades).
- External: Grade 8 or 9 in GCSE/IGCSE Mathematics.

This course is particularly suited to those who need Mathematics to support their studies in subjects such as Science, Economics, Engineering, Architecture or Geography. Many university courses in these and similar areas will require A Level Mathematics.

Course content

- Pure Mathematics, which includes the methods and techniques needed to solve a variety of problems. The algebra and trigonometry studied at GCSE are developed further and new topics such as calculus and logarithms are introduced.
- The applications of Mathematics to the physical world (Mechanics).
- The applications of Mathematics to the analysis of data (Statistics).

Assessment

There will be three papers, all of which will be sat in the summer of the Upper Sixth: Pure Mathematics and Mechanics (2 hours), Pure Mathematics and Statistics (2 hours), Pure Mathematics and Comprehension (2 hours).

The Fifth Form course covers a substantial proportion of the content of the A Level Year One Mathematics course, including some aspects of Applied Mathematics, and this material is therefore assumed knowledge at the beginning of the Lower Sixth for those who have come from our own Fifth Form.

There is the opportunity in the Upper Sixth, for those who have dropped one of their four A Levels, to study AS Further Maths.

MATHEMATICS and FURTHER MATHEMATICS

(two A Levels)

Entrance requirements:

- **Internal:** Grade 8 or 9 in IGCSE Mathematics and Grade B standard in the Fifth Form course.
(Note: The Fifth Form course is AS standard, with corresponding grades.)
- **External:** Grade 8 or 9 in GCSE/IGCSE Mathematics.

Further Mathematics is a challenging course, which is highly regarded for entry to many leading universities. It is not only intended for those who want to study Mathematics at degree level; there are courses in Economics, Physics and Engineering, for example, for which a study of Further Mathematics would be extremely helpful, and would make the applicant more attractive. It should be pointed out that the choice of Mathematics and Further Mathematics is no more a narrow, restrictive option than would be the choice of, for example, two Science subjects or of two Languages for someone with interest and aptitude in either of those areas.

Course content

- Pure Mathematics, which includes the methods and techniques needed to solve a variety of problems.
- The applications of Mathematics to the physical world (Mechanics).
- The applications of Mathematics to the analysis of data (Statistics).

There is also the possibility to study some other areas of Mathematics: Modelling with Algorithms, Numerical Methods, Extra Pure and Further Pure with Technology. (These may not be taught if there is insufficient demand.)

In Further Mathematics the subject is developed in greater breadth and depth than is possible in the Mathematics course, and anyone with ability who finds Mathematics interesting in its own right should consider studying Further Mathematics.

- Students intending to study mathematics at universities such as Cambridge, Oxford and Warwick are prepared for the relevant entrance examinations.

MODERN LANGUAGES - FRENCH, GERMAN AND SPANISH

Examining Board: AQA – French and Spanish

Edexcel – German

Entrance requirements: Grade 7 or above in the relevant GCSE.

Course aims

To develop and build on the linguistic knowledge and skills acquired at GCSE and to use French/German/Spanish in a wide range of contexts.

To gain an insight into another culture and to reflect on various aspects of contemporary society.

To enhance employment prospects, facilitate foreign travel and experience the enjoyment of communicating using foreign languages.

AQA A Level – French and Spanish

The A Level examination is made up of 3 papers which are taken in the Summer term of the Upper Sixth.

Unit 1: Listening/ Reading/ Writing (2 hours 45 minutes)

Pupils answer questions on a range of audio passages and written texts in target language. They then are required to translate a passage of approximately 100 words into English and a passage of 100 words into French/Spanish.

Unit 2: Writing (2 hours)

Pupils write two essays in French/Spanish of at least 300 words on a set text and a film or two set texts.

Unit 3: Oral (21-23 minutes)

Pupils discuss an A Level sub-theme based on a stimulus card for approximately 5-6 minutes. Pupils have 5 minutes to prepare before the examination. Pupils then speak on a personal research topic for 11-13 minutes (2-minute presentation and 9-10-minute discussion).

Subject content for French

- The changing nature of the family
- The place of voluntary work
- Contemporary French music
- Teenagers, the right to vote and political commitment
- Politics and immigration
- Life for the marginalised
- The cyber-society
- A culture proud of its heritage
- Cinema
- Demonstrations and strikes
- Positive features of a diverse society
- How criminals are treated

Subject content for Spanish

- Traditional and modern values
- Equality of rights
- Spanish regional identity
- Immigration
- Racism
- Monarchies, republics and dictatorships
- Cyberspace
- Influence of role models
- Cultural heritage
- Integration
- Youth of today, citizens of tomorrow
- Social and political movements

MODERN LANGUAGES - FRENCH, GERMAN AND SPANISH (continued)

Edexcel A Level – German

The A Level examination is made up of three papers which are taken in the Summer term of the Upper Sixth.

Unit 1: Listening/ Reading/ Writing (2 hours)

Pupils answer questions on a range of audio passages and written texts in target language. They then are required to translate a passage of approximately 100 words into English.

Unit 2: Written Response to Works and Translation (2 hours 40 minutes)

Pupils translate a passage of approximately 100 words into German and write two essays in German of approximately 300-350 words on a set text and a film or two set texts.

Unit 3: Oral (21-23 minutes)

Pupils discuss a sub-theme based on a stimulus card for approximately 6-7 minutes. Pupils have 5 minutes to prepare before the examination. Pupils then speak on a personal research topic for 10-11 minutes (2-minute presentation and 8-9-minute discussion).

Subject Content for German

- Nature and the environment
- The world of work
- The media
- The positive impact of immigration
- The state and societal reaction to immigration
- The events of re-unification
- Education
- Music
- The role of festivals and traditions
- The demands of immigration and integration
- Society in the GDR pre-unification
- Germany since re-unification

MUSIC

Examining Board: Edexcel

Entrance requirements: Grade 7 or above in (I)GCSE Music, if taken, or Grade 6 on at least one instrument and Grade 5 Theory. If in doubt, consult the Director of Music or Head of Academic Music about your suitability to follow this course.

Aims of the course

- To enable students to extend their skills, knowledge and understanding of music and to take part in making music.
- To engage in and extend students' appreciation of the diverse and dynamic heritage of music, promoting spiritual and cultural development.
- To develop students' particular strengths and interests, encouraging lifelong learning and providing access to music-related and other careers.

Course Content

The course will enable students to develop an understanding of the organisation of sounds, the context of music, and musical styles and genres.

Component 1: Performing Music 1 - 30% of total mark

Edexcel-assessed Recital (Recorded)

This examined unit involves the performance of a minimum of 8 minutes either as a solo (instrumentalist or singer) or in an ensemble, or improvising, or realising music using music technology. The recording must be made as part of a live recital around March of the Upper Sixth year.

Component 2: Composing - 30% of total mark

Edexcel-marked Portfolio

This coursework unit requires the composition of two pieces. One must either be to a brief set by Edexcel, based around the Six Areas of Study studied in Component 3; or simply a free composition. The other must demonstrate a compositional technique (e.g. Bach Chorales or Baroque Counterpoint). The composition must be a minimum of 4 minutes, the technique 1 minute; total time for both must be a minimum of 6 minutes.

Component 3: Appraising - 40% of total mark

Timed Examination Paper (2 hours)

This examined unit has two sections. Section A, Areas of study and dictation: Three questions related to set works; one short melody/rhythm completion exercise (aural test) – 50 marks. Section B, Extended response: Two essays: one linking an unfamiliar extract to set works – 20 marks; one evaluating musical elements, context and language of one set work, from a choice of three – 30 marks.

Set Works

Vocal Music

- J. S. Bach, Cantata, Ein Feste Burg
- Mozart, The Magic Flute
- Vaughan Williams, On Wenlock Edge

Instrumental Music

- Vivaldi, Concerto in D minor, Op. 3 No. 11
- Clara Wieck-Schumann, Piano Trio in G minor, Op. 17: movement 1
- Berlioz, Symphonie Fantastique

Music for Film

- Danny Elfman, Batman Returns
- Rachel Portman, The Duchess
- Bernard Herrmann, Psycho

Popular Music and Jazz

- Courtney Pine, Back in the Day
- Kate Bush, Hounds of Love
- Beatles, Revolver

Fusions

- Debussy, Estampes
- Familia Valera Miranda, Caña Quema
- Anoushka Shankar, Breathing Under Water

New Directions

- Cage, Three Dances for Two Prepared Pianos
- Kaija Saariaho, Petals for Violoncello
- Stravinsky, The Rite of Spring

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Examining Board: AQA

Entrance requirements: Grade 7 in English Language and Science at GCSE.

A proven interest and ability in Sport.

The study of Physical Education is the Sixth Form offers:

- A subject of interest to everyone.
- An enhanced appreciation of the Health and Fitness benefits of an active lifestyle.
- Answers to questions based on the application of Sport and Physical Education.

Course Content

Topic list

- Applied anatomy and physiology
- Skill acquisition
- Sport and society
- Exercise physiology
- Biomechanical movement
- Sport psychology
- Sport and society and the role of technology in physical activity and sport

Assessment

Written Paper 1: 2 hours (105 raw marks)

Weighting: 35% of A Level mark

Assessed by multiple choice, short answer and extended writing (35 marks per section)

- Section A: Applied Anatomy and Physiology
- Section B: Skill Acquisition
- Section C: Sport & Society

Written Paper 2: 2 hours (105 raw marks)

Weighting: 35% of A Level mark

Assessed by multiple choice, short answer and extended writing (35 marks per section)

- Section A: Exercise Physiology and Biomechanics
- Section B: Sport Psychology
- Section C: Sport & Society and Technology in Sport

Non-Exam Assessment

Internal assessment with external moderation: 90 raw marks

Weighting: 30% of total A Level mark

- Students assessed as a performer or coach in the full sided version of one activity.
- Plus: written/verbal analysis of performance

Among the many benefits, this specification is designed to allow candidates to:

- focus on a single physical activity throughout the course.
- experience and develop an interest in a variety of roles such as performer, official and leader/coach.
- build on their previous experience to enhance their knowledge and increase their understanding of the modern day sporting arena.
- evaluate and discuss current developments in sport such as the impact of new technology, sport-specific rehabilitation and use of ergogenic aids.

PHYSICS

Examining board: AQA

Entrance requirements: Internal: Grade 7 or above in Physics and Mathematics at GCSE. External: Grade 7 or above in Physics or Additional Science and Mathematics.

Both: Study of A Level Mathematics is usually also required.

Why Study Physics?

A Level Physics is a fascinating subject where students begin to really discover how the world works. We travel from the atomic nucleus to distant galaxies in our exploration of the fundamental laws of nature.

In addition, studying physics makes you numerate and practical and gives you excellent problem solving skills. As a result, physicists are very employable and are recruited not only in science and engineering, but are invaluable in the world of finance and commerce.

Physics will not only broaden your mind, but also your opportunities; this makes Physics a very attractive A Level and often over a third of the Sixth Form studies physics.

Course Content

First year of A Level

1. Measurements and their errors, including use of SI units and their prefixes, limitations of physical measurement, estimation of physical quantities
2. Particles and radiation, including constituents of the atom, particle interactions, collisions of electrons with atoms
3. Waves, including progressive waves, interference, diffraction
4. Mechanics and energy, including projectile motion, Newton's laws of motion
5. Electricity, including current/voltage characteristics, circuits, electromotive force and internal resistance

Second year of A Level

6. Further mechanics and thermal physics, including periodic motion, thermal energy transfer, molecular kinetic theory model
7. Fields, including Newton's law of gravitation, orbits of planets and satellites, magnetic flux density
8. Nuclear physics, including evidence for the nucleus, radioactive decay, nuclear instability
9. Turning points in physics, including discovery of the electron, Einstein's theory of special relativity

Practical skills are an essential part of studying a Physics course at this level. We will build on the development of the scientific skills learned at GCSE and there will be an emphasis on experiments throughout. Twelve practical activities across the two-year A Level are required by the exam board; these will be supplemented with many others.

POLITICS

Examining Board: AQA

Entrance requirements: Grade 7 or above in History at GCSE if taken, or in English Language

The course aims to foster understanding of:

- the nature of politics and political behaviour;
- this country's political structures and her constitution;
- political ideas and ideologies;
- the constitution and politics of the United States of America.

Course Content

- The Government of the UK: the nature of the constitution; the workings of Parliament; the functions of Cabinet and the Prime Minister; the judiciary and human rights; the devolved governmental areas of the UK.
- The Politics of the UK: The nature of democracy and political participation; the status of pressure groups; the workings of elections and referendums; assessments of voting behaviour; the political parties of the UK; representation through pressure groups.
- Political Ideologies: conservatism, liberalism and socialism and one other such as anarchism or nationalism
- The politics of the USA: the US Constitution; Congress; the Presidency; the Supreme Court; the political parties; elections and voting behaviour; representation through parties and pressure groups; civil rights.

Assessment

All three units will be examined through both short-answer questions testing detailed knowledge, and essay questions testing the ability to produce pieces of sustained argument on political issues. There is also an extract question which asks for an evaluative response to a political opinion.

There is no coursework.

RELIGIOUS STUDIES

Examining Board: Edexcel

Entrance requirements: Grade 7 or above in Religious Studies at GCSE if taken, or in History or English Language.

Aims of the course

- To provide students with the opportunity to examine issues of belief and behaviour that have shaped our society.
- To help students develop an interest in and enthusiasm for philosophy, theology, religion and ethics.
- To enable students to develop skills in logical thinking and argument.
- To encourage students to develop an enquiring, critical and empathetic approach to issues of faith and morals.

Course Content

The course involves a critical study of Philosophy of Religion, Religious Ethics and textual analysis. Pupils will sit three examinations at the end of the Upper Sixth. These will cover:

Paper 1: Philosophy of Religion

- A study of philosophical thought and argument structure.
- An examination of the traditional arguments for the existence of God, such as the arguments from design and causation.
- A survey of some of the challenges to religious belief, for example the problem of suffering and evil and scientific theories of origins of the universe and life.

Paper 2: Religious Ethics

- A survey of moral theories, such as Aquinas' Natural Law, Kant's Categorical Imperative, Bentham's Utilitarianism and Fletcher's Situation Ethics.
- An exploration of issues in applied ethics including medical ethics, e.g. abortion, euthanasia, genetic engineering and fertility treatment.
- A study of ethical responses to the issues surrounding war and peace.

Paper 3: New Testament Studies

- An exploration of social, historical and religious context.
- An analysis of scientific, ethical and historical challenges to sacred text.

Assessment

All units are assessed by a written exam of two hours. Each unit will be worth 33% of the total award.

Who should take this course?

This course will prove a useful preparation for many university courses and careers. It will be of particular interest to students thinking of reading Philosophy, Theology, Medicine, Psychology, one of the Social Sciences, Law, English or History. There are a number of university courses that offer joint honours with Philosophy, e.g. PPE, Philosophy and Psychology, Physics and Philosophy.

EXTENDED PROJECT (equivalent to half an A Level)

Examining Board: Edexcel

Course Aims

The main aim of the Extended Project Qualification (EPQ) is to help students develop skills of research, analysis, communication and argument, with the eventual goal that students should learn to develop and defend their own point of view via a project report and oral presentation. These skills are particularly valuable in preparation for university, and set apart gifted and talented students.

Course Structure

Building on Lower Sixth General Studies (q.v.) courses in Ethical Questions (Ecology / Psychology / Business Ethics / Medical Ethics / Legal Ethics) or Creative Arts (Printmaking / Creative Writing), or on prior knowledge gained at A or GCSE Level, students embark on an individual research project in the Lower Sixth in which they research the 'story' behind a question and, wherever possible, explore historical, ethical and philosophical aspects of that question in depth.

The outcomes of the research are to be completed by Easter of the Upper Sixth and are recorded through one of three routes: a dissertation, a performance or an artefact. All three routes require students to keep a reflective log of the development of their ideas and material progress, as well as a portfolio containing details of background research, evolution of the project, and reflective evaluation of the outcome. They complete the EPQ with a ten-minute oral presentation to a small group of students and two teacher-assessors. There is no written examination.

The EPQ is a 'Level 3 Project Qualification'. It is graded A*-E and is equivalent in size, status and UCAS points to half an A Level.

Development of Skills

The emphasis throughout is on the development of skills, rather than the learning of factual content. These skills are complex, sophisticated and novel for many students, so they are explicitly taught in Critical Thinking (q.v.) and several of the Ethical Questions courses. Taught EPQ lessons begin in February of the Lower Sixth and continue throughout the Upper Sixth, during which time these skills are revised.

The Extended Project Qualification

- is good extension and enrichment,
- stretches the most able,
- is an excellent preparation for university,
- encourages personal interest, enthusiasm, confidence, and
- teaches important skills of:
 - research,
 - independent learning and self-motivation,
 - thinking,
 - analysis, assimilation, synthesis and evaluation of information, constructive criticism,
 - constructing clear, well substantiated arguments,
 - lateral thinking, argument and debate,
 - project management and time management, and
 - presentation.

Full details of the EPQ are to be found on the Edexcel website at: <http://www.edexcel.com/quals/project/level3/Pages/default.aspx>.

CRITICAL THINKING - part of the Enrichment course

Critical Thinking is an integral part of all Sixth Formers' studies at St Albans School. It encourages and develops the thinking skills that are so much in demand in today's world, and has the immediate practical benefit of helping to prepare students for the various aptitude tests that many will be required to take when applying for university. Critical Thinking is predominantly a practical, skills-based discipline that aims to hone students' skills of argumentation – both an analytical approach to the arguments of others and also the production of reasoned arguments of their own. It draws on many of the same skills as General Studies (q.v.). In nine fifty-minute lessons, all Lower Sixth students will engage with information, opinion and argument from a range of contexts – the sciences, arts and humanities, social sciences – as well as topics of general interest and current affairs.

They will learn how to:

- recognise, interpret and criticise reasoned argument in its context,
- evaluate evidence and information,
- consider the credibility of different sources and authors,
- recognise bad thinking and counter it with a cogent response, and
- construct their own reasoned argument supported by evidence.

In the Upper Sixth, students have the opportunity to participate in a course in Problem Solving in the autumn or spring terms.

Weekly fifty-minute lessons will allow students to learn and practice:

- extracting relevant data,
- processing data,
- finding procedures for solving problems,
- searching for solutions,
- identifying similar data,
- suggesting hypotheses for variations,
- using spatial reasoning,
- identifying necessary and sufficient data,
- working with models, and
- making choices and decisions.

Following this course, students may choose to sit the optional AS qualification in Thinking Skills, offered by Cambridge International Examinations, which comprises two written papers. The second focuses on Critical Thinking skills, while the first is a multiple-choice paper in Problem Solving. The Critical Thinking paper contains three structured answer questions, which respectively require students to (i) evaluate evidence; (ii) use reasoning in a scientific context; and (iii) evaluate and present an argument.

The syllabus and structure of the taught course enable students to develop their logical and evaluative skills and encourage properly sceptical attitudes that underpin their other studies across the curriculum. These skills will help prepare them for the academic and intellectual demands of higher education, as well as future employment and wider life.

GENERAL STUDIES - part of the Enrichment course

General Studies is an important part of the Sixth Form Curriculum at St Albans School and is designed to broaden students' post-16 education by reinforcing and enhancing the subjects studied up to GCSE and being followed at A Level. General Studies encourages thinking across specialist subjects by assessing the cultural, scientific and social domains through the examination of culture, science and society. General Studies draws on many of the same skills as Critical Thinking (q.v.).

In the Lower Sixth, students choose one of seven nine-week courses covering Ethical Questions (ethics in Science, Medicine, Law, Psychology or Business) and Creative Arts (Printmaking or Creative Writing). Students are encouraged to select courses that both contrast with and complement their A Level subjects. Many of the courses are designed to act as a source of ideas that might develop into an Extended Project Qualification, further details of which may be found in this booklet (q.v.). A formal assessment is made at the end of each course and is included in the students' termly reports.

In the Upper Sixth, students attend a weekly Enrichment Lecture delivered by an outside speaker. Topics range from art history to current ethical and scientific debates, and interest groups debating the contemporary political issues. Recent contributors include high-profile figures from the media and journalism, a former diplomat, an ex-rugby international, a charity fundraiser and a former cabinet minister.

The General Studies course aims to broaden and deepen the intellectual horizons of students by developing their thinking skills, providing opportunities to discuss ideas outside the remit of their other A Level choices, and considering wider issues in the world today.

