# The Role of an Integrated Teaching of Philosophy and Religion in Values Education

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> *Only the individual can think, and thereby create new values for society, nay, even set up new moral standards to which the life of the community conforms. Without creative personalities able to think and judge independently, the upward development of society is as unthinkable as the development of the individual personality without the nourishing soil of the community.*
>
> Albert Einstein, 'Society and Personality' (1934)

> *It is essential that the student acquire an understanding of and a lively feeling for values. … It is also vital to a valuable education that independent critical thinking be developed in the young human being…*
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> *Albert Einstein, 'Education for Independent Thought'* (1952)[1]

What is the best way to teach values? This chapter begins by outlining three approaches towards teaching values. It is argued that each plays an important role in values education (§1). One of these is the chapter's focus. It is argued that an important component of values education is providing students with the best tools and methods available to enable them to form independent critical judgements about their beliefs. This can be achieved by providing an education in that area of philosophy often referred to as 'critical thinking', applied to those fields where the values and beliefs that underpin worldviews and influence the ways in which people live are most often acquired. One such field is religion. The chapter outlines a course and associated teaching methodology the author has co-designed for the integrated teaching of philosophy and religious studies to students in the final year of key stage three (§2). This course integrates an elementary study of critical thinking with a study of living religions, using the latter as the subject matter to which the concepts and methods of the former are applied. The chapter puts forward several pedagogical advantages of this approach, in general (§3) and for values education (§4).

## 1. Three approaches towards the teaching of values

Addressing the question of what constitutes the best way to teach values takes us to a perennial philosophical question addressed by Plato: 'Can virtue be taught?'. This is the guiding question of Plato's *Meno* and is also addressed in his *Protagoras*.[2] This chapter assumes that virtue can be taught but emphasizes how difficult it is and draws connections between the development of virtue and the teaching of values. These are perhaps best addressed through discussion not of the ideas of Plato but of Aristotle, at the core of whose moral philosophy are the questions of what constitutes the most virtuous life and how to reach it.

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[1] Albert Einstein, *Ideas and Opinions* (based on *Mein Weltbild*, edited by Carl Seelig, and other sources; new translations and revisions by Sonja Bargmann) (New York, NY: Crown Publishers, 1954). First quote, p. 14; second quote, pp. 66-67.

[2] Plato, *Meno* [*Μένων*, c. 380-385 BCE] and *Protagoras* [*Πρωταγόρας*, c. 380 BCE], translated by Adam Beresford and introduced by Lesley Brown (London: Penguin Classics, 2005).

In his *Nicomachean Ethics* and *Eudemian Ethics*, Aristotle offers a conception of the good life – '*eudaimonia*', meaning, roughly, human flourishing – centred around the aim of cultivating a virtuous character.[3] This requires rigorous practice, such that virtuous practices become habits. Through habituation, virtues can become character traits. As virtues come to constitute part of one's character, one becomes a virtuous person. To be a tolerant person, for instance, one must rigorously practise being tolerant, through a variety of contexts over many years, learning from those whose characters manifest excellent examples of tolerance. Through such practice, tolerance becomes a habit; through habituation, tolerance can become a character trait and one thereby becomes a tolerant person.

Values are distinct from virtues; but the two are intimately connected. Virtues are not always a manifestation of values; someone could come across as polite, for instance, without endorsing the value of politeness. But values are often manifest as virtues; and, for the truly virtuous person, their virtues reflect or are a manifestation of their values. A person is, therefore, more able to develop virtues with the corresponding or underlying values in place.

The ultimate objective of values education is to improve a person's character such that they become virtuous (or more so) and their virtues reflect important values. When we educate students about values we are not aiming to simply teach them about values and their importance, but to inculcate values within them. Through inculcation, values education aims to cultivate virtuous persons. The teaching of values is, therefore, closely related to the teaching of virtue.

An important lesson we can learn from Aristotle is that teaching values requires far more than classroom lessons. To develop a character possessive of any value, a student is likely to need to practise activities indicative of the values to be learned, across various contexts over a long time. It helps significantly if the student is a participant in a culture embodying these values. The best environment to acquire the values to be learned and develop the virtues often reflective of such values includes people whose characters and ways of life manifest those values and virtues. Such conditions are among those that provide an environment in which one can become habituated into the virtues that make them a virtuous person.

To successfully teach values, in the sense that students do not merely understand them but they respect them and their characters reflect them, a school must, therefore, do much more than teach about values in lessons. Values have to be embedded within a school's culture. Values need to be reflected in and intertwined within school activities, including teaching practices, assemblies, events, clubs and interpersonal attitudes among and between the staff and student cohorts. Values, when successfully embedded in school life, help with students' character development and can help them to flourish, in the Aristotelian sense.

That is the approach towards teaching values most likely to achieve the objective of cultivating virtuous persons. It is also the most difficult to achieve, because it requires the support of the school's entire culture: its ethos, environment, activities, and the encouragement of staff and students. Various efforts are made by schools to achieve this. For instance, through the embedment of values education in a school's 'Social, Moral, Spiritual and Cultural' programme; through the 'Core Values' many schools endorse; and through annual values some schools focus on promoting. These are some of the ways that help to achieve this first and most important approach towards the teaching of values.

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[3] Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* [*Ηθιϰά Νιϰομάχεια*, c. 350 BCE], translated by W. D. Ross, revised by J. O. Urmson, in *The Complete Works of Aristotle*, the Revised Oxford Translation, Vol. 2, edited by Jonathan Barnes (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984). Aristotle, *Eudemian Ethics* [*Ηθιϰά Εὐδήμεια*], edited and translated by Anthony Kenny (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

The second approach towards teaching values I will discuss is the more straightforward approach of classroom teaching about values. The major limitation facing this is that the teaching of values is not straightforward. That values require practice and the development of skills does not make values a pedagogically unique field; all disciplines require practice and the development of skills. What makes values a distinctive pedagogical category is that values are things in which one believes, manifested through one's character and way of life, often taking the form of fundamental principles which guide one's conduct and in which one's worldview is rooted. Values education therefore requires a more holistic pedagogy, central to which is the first approach towards teaching values. This takes values education far beyond the classroom.

What we might call 'explicit' values education in schools – i.e., where the subject matter of a lesson is values and the primary lesson objective is to understand a particular value – often takes place within tutor group lessons. Such lessons face major limitations towards cultivating virtues, such as: little time; no homework requirements; few means of assessing the extent to which values have been learned; the teacher often not having specific expertise in values education; and the lessons often functioning as part of a mixed programme of various topics the tutor is required to teach over the year. It is extremely unlikely that explicit values education, if taken as the only or predominant approach towards teaching values, can fulfil what we might call the 'Aristotelian objective' of cultivating virtuous persons. By contrast, I would argue that the first approach can fulfil the Aristotelian objective, even if it is the only approach taken towards teaching values. In other words, values can be taught and virtues can be cultivated without explicit values education.

Notwithstanding the limitations of explicit values education, this is an important part of values education. It is of the utmost importance to teach students what, for example, democracy is and why it matters, and to engage in discussion about its strengths and weaknesses. But this approach towards values education plays a supporting role to the first way of teaching values, since the ultimate aim is to cultivate virtuous persons.

The third approach towards teaching values I will discuss brings us to the focus of this chapter. An important component of not only a good values education but a good education in general is developing the skillset to make rational, independent critical judgements about values and beliefs. This is an area where philosophy plays an important role. Axiology is part of philosophy's subject matter; and the field of philosophy sometimes referred to as 'critical thinking' can be used to provide students with this skillset.

## 2. The integrated teaching of philosophy and religion

School departments offering an education in both philosophy and religious studies have to decide to what extent, if any, the two subjects are to be taught in an integrated manner. This chapter argues that there are pedagogical advantages to adopting an integrated approach towards their teaching, where the subjects are taught in tandem such that this complements students' learning about and engagement with each discipline, while care is taken to avoid conflation between them.

Trying to find such an approach has led to my colleague, Elizabeth Munro, and I, within the Department of Religion and Philosophy at Queen Anne's School, designing a course for students in their final year of key stage three – i.e., year nine of secondary education, where students are typically aged between thirteen and fourteen years old – which is structured upon what we call the 'integrated teaching of philosophy and religion'. This course combines critical thinking with a study of Christianity and Islam. It is a development of a critical thinking course taught to all year nine students at Queen Anne's since 2014, combined with the previous year nine course in religion and philosophy. Each of these courses has been extensively amended for this hybrid course. We plan to continue the development of this course and pilot it in the future.

Within this course, students receive three lessons per week, one of which is part of an elementary course in critical thinking. The remaining two lessons each week consist of a study of Christianity over one term and Islam over another. (In the third term, students complete an independent project over several weeks, applying their learning to a topic they choose from a set of assigned topics, before moving into a GCSE transition timetable.) The subject matter for applying the concepts and methods learned in critical thinking draws upon, as much as possible, what is studied in the concomitant religion lessons.

Critical thinking is the elementary study of arguments and reasoning, fundamentally concerned with the way arguments are structured and produced. It aims to develop skills in extracting, analysing, constructing and evaluating arguments. It involves studying, *inter alia*, the following areas, all of which are part of our integrated course and most of which were part of the former critical thinking course taught at Queen Anne's:

- the distinction between arguments, rants, explanations, and information;
- the structure of an argument, its constituent parts and their roles (premises, conclusions and intermediate conclusions);
- extracting an argument using indicator words and phrases to identify premises (e.g. 'because', 'as', 'since') and conclusions (e.g., 'so', 'therefore', 'hence');
- joint and independent reasoning;
- evaluating arguments by identifying several informal fallacies, including slippery slope, straw man, *ad hominem*, *ad hominem tu quoque*, false dilemma, sunk cost and gambler's; appeals to tradition, popularity, authority, and emotion; and identifying uses of loaded language in arguments;
- necessary and sufficient conditions;
- the concepts of consistency and inconsistency, and a contradiction;
- identifying assumptions and enthymemes;
- assessing the credibility of sources in terms of whether the evidence in question is reliable;
- developing and responding to arguments, by counterarguing and constructing counterexamples, and through the use of a *reductio ad absurdum*;
- argument mapping.

Critical thinking is sometimes referred to by other names, such as 'thinking and reasoning skills'. Most or all of the above would be among the areas of a course in informal logic. There is debate over the distinction between informal logic and critical thinking.[4] I call the philosophy side of this course 'critical thinking' rather than 'informal logic' because the course is very elementary. While all of the above could be included in a course on informal logic, this course does not include areas that typically constitute essential elements of a course in informal logic such as the distinction between inductive, abductive and deductive arguments, and evaluating deductive arguments using the concepts of validity and soundness. These are among several areas I have found too demanding to teach to classes of mixed ability students in year nine in a course where they are only taught critical thinking for one forty-minute period a week. I have, however, included these areas in introductory classes on informal logic I have taught to A Level philosophy students in their first year of A Level study; and they have generally been able to grasp the concepts and distinctions competently. I see no reason why such areas could not, in principle, be included within a course of the kind I have taught to students in their final year of key stage three, but more lesson time would be needed and the informal logic exercises would need to be designed at several differentiated levels, pitched much lower than those I have taught to A Level students. In some cases, such areas would best function as extension tasks rather than as part of the course.

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[4] For a useful overview of the similarities and differences between informal logic and critical thinking, and a discussion of the purpose of a course in either of these within education (beyond the function of a course in logic as a staple part of a university education in philosophy), see Jan Sobocan, 'Teaching Informal Logic and Critical Thinking', *Ontario Society for the Study of Argumentation*, 5, 2003.

The critical thinking lessons in our integrated course cover those areas outlined above. Our teaching materials use a combination of materials from the former course in critical thinking taught at Queen Anne's, which was based upon areas of the OCR Level 2 Award in Thinking and Reasoning Skills,[5] with teaching materials from informal logic and critical thinking courses I have taught to first- and second-year undergraduates at the University of Reading, and to students at Queen Anne's taking the AQA A Level in philosophy (my A Level logic materials are also amended versions of my teaching materials for undergraduates). These materials have, obviously, been amended significantly to be suitably pitched to year nine students with several levels of differentiation.

A course in critical thinking needs subject matter to use for applying the skills learned. This subject matter could come from anywhere. It is pedagogically beneficial to show how the skills learned can be applied to arguments found in the media, to illustrate how such skills can be applied usefully in everyday life and to train students to be more critically engaged with what they encounter in the media. It is also often easier to generate enthusiasm for and engagement with critical thinking when students are shown how the skills it teaches can be applied to what they encounter in their day-to-day lives. That is an important and effective way of teaching critical thinking, in terms of applying learning to real life and eliciting student engagement. In this course, however, the primary subject matter comes from living religions.

Here are three examples to illustrate our integrated approach. Over several weeks during the term on Islam, students are introduced to key Islamic theologians, including al-Ghazālī (Abū Hāmid Muhammad ibn Muhammad al-Ghazālī) and Averroes (Ibn Rushd). Among the topics covered in the religion lessons over those weeks are the roles and significance in Islamic scholastic theology ('Kalām') of al-Ghazālī and Averroes, such as al-Ghazālī's contributions to Sufism and Averroes' historical significance in the perception of Islam in the medieval Christian West. Among the topics covered during the philosophy lessons over those same weeks are a philosophical analysis of the Kalām cosmological argument as it was proposed by al-Ghazālī,[6] and the 'omnipotence paradox' facing God's purported omnipotence, as it was addressed by Averroes. Philosophical analysis includes examining the structure of the arguments and learning about the concepts employed, such as those of a paradox, a contradiction, a self-contradiction and an infinite regress. Students consolidate their understanding of concepts such as the divine attributes, including omnipotence and divine perfection.

A second example is some of the major contributions to Christian theology and the philosophy of religion of St Augustine of Hippo, covered over several weeks of the term on Christianity. During the religion lessons, students learn about Augustine's contributions to three Christian doctrines, by reference to Augustine's *City of God*: the church and sacraments; grace; and the Trinity.[7] They learn about the concept of confession, both in

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[5] For the course specification, see <https://www.ocr.org.uk/Images/80819-specification.pdf>.

[6] This has been popularized in contemporary philosophy of religion through the work of William Lane Craig. See Craig's *The Kalām Cosmological Argument* (London: Macmillan Press, 1979); on al-Ghazālī therein, see pp. 42-50.

[7] St Augustine of Hippo, *Concerning the City of God against the Pagans* [*De Civitate Dei contra Paganos*, c. 426-7], translated by Henry Bettenson with a new introduction by G. R. Evans (London: Penguin Books, 2003).

Christian practices and in the history of Christianity, by reference to Augustine's *Confessions*.[8] They study Augustine's attempt to reconcile a literal interpretation of Genesis with the evil in the world, in his theodicy arguing that evil is the privation of good.

In the concomitant philosophy lessons, students engage in a philosophical analysis of the problem of evil, learning about the concepts of consistency and inconsistency, specifically through the context of the inconsistency argued to arise between the divine attributes of omnipotence, omniscience, and supreme goodness, on the one hand, and the existence of evil, on the other.[9] Students learn about the distinction between moral evil and natural evil. They develop their skills in counterarguing by studying responses to Augustine's theodicy.

A third example is some of the fundamental contributions to theology and philosophy by St Thomas Aquinas, covered over several weeks of the term on Christianity. During the religion lessons, students learn about Aquinas' significance in Christian theology and his contributions to our understanding of the nature of God. In the concomitant philosophy lessons, students engage in a philosophical analysis of the three fundamental divine attributes (omnipotence, omniscience and supreme goodness) and Aquinas' 'Third Way' of proving God's existence. In the lessons on Aquinas' Third Way, students are introduced to the concept of a *reductio ad absurdum* and how it can be used in an argument. Through this, their understanding of the concepts of a self-contradiction and omnipotence can be deepened, as can their understanding of the omnipotence paradox, by studying how Aquinas addressed these concepts and this paradox. Their understanding of the problem of evil, the concept of a theodicy and how to respond to the problem of evil by arguing that evil should be understood as an absence can be consolidated, by studying Aquinas' contributions to these and development of Augustinian ideas.

In all of the above examples, students' understanding of content can be explored more broadly, through everyday examples. For instance, the concept of an absurd conclusion can be taught using idiomatic expressions involving absurd conclusions, such as 'If that's true, pigs could fly'. From this, we can move to the concept of a *reductio*, where it is used to expose a self-contradiction; for example, in Aquinas' attempt to argue that God exists by employing a *reductio* as an argumentative strategy in his Third Way. But the general context is set by the topics studied in the religion lessons. Over the course, students are introduced to some philosophical ideas beyond critical thinking. For example, through the study of confession in Christianity they also consider connections between the act of confession and living an authentic life, free from self-deception (itself an important value to teach students).[10]

A key hermeneutic principle we aim to teach and emphasize throughout this course is one of the most fundamental principles not only of philosophy and theology, but of all academia: the principle of charity. When studying, in the philosophy lessons, the material learned in the religion lessons, students should be taught that they must gain an understanding of each distinctive theological and philosophical approach before applying methods of philosophical analysis learned in critical thinking to them, and must bear in mind the principle of charity throughout the process of philosophical analysis. Extracting 'arguments' from the writings of certain authors and assessing them in terms of whether, for instance, they potentially commit informal fallacies will, in some cases, be uncharitable to the spirit of the writings, the aims of the authors, and the principles of the traditions. Even with this caveat in place, the arguments and ideas studied in religion lessons can be used as a foundation for exploring philosophical concepts, tools and methods.

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[8] St Augustine of Hippo, *The Confessions of Saint Augustine* [*Confessiones*, c. 397-400], translated by John K. Ryan (New York, Image Books, 1960).

[9] Inconsistency can be illustrated between the divine attributes and the existence of evil without including omniscience. In his seminal paper on the problem of evil, 'Evil and Omnipotence', J. L. Mackie argued that we cannot consistently endorse the three propositions 'God is omnipotent; God is wholly good; and yet evil exists' (Mackie 1955, 200).

[10] On this connection, which touches upon Augustine, see Jonathan Beale, 'Wittgenstein's Confession', *The New York Times*, September 18, 2018: <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/09/18/opinion/wittgensteins-confession-philosophy.html>.

This course is pitched high for year nine students; one of our aims is to stretch and challenge as much as possible. To be sure, the material outlined above would be taught at a very elementary level and lesson materials would be staggered at several differentiated levels. Concepts such as that of a *reductio* are the among most difficult parts of the course. This course is designed for teaching at an academically selective independent school with small class sizes, where we are able to teach this course over three forty-minute periods per week over the course of a year. The course would need to be amended to be taught successfully in other contexts. The general framework could, I argue, be adapted for teaching in wider settings; but the content would need to be adjusted by, for example, including greater levels of differentiation. I would argue that this integrated approach could be extrapolated, *mutatis mutandis*, to key stages four and five, and to tertiary education. Given the course's pitch, if taught in key stage three it would be best placed in the final year of that key stage. This approach could be extrapolated to the study of other fields where the beliefs and values that underpin worldviews and influence the ways in which people live are most often learned or acquired, such as history and politics.

We will be able to provide feedback on this course once it is piloted. Since many of the materials are developed from existing courses we have taught to year nine students at Queen Anne's, we are confident that the course will be successful.

## 3. Pedagogical advantages of an integrated approach towards the teaching of philosophy and religion

This approach has at least three potential pedagogical advantages over a non-integrated approach towards the teaching of philosophy and religion. The first concerns a problem I would argue has become quite common in approaches towards the combined teaching of philosophy and religious studies in secondary education: the two disciplines sometimes become conflated and, consequently, students can become unclear about the distinctive nature, aims and value of each subject. This conflation has arguably been brought about or at least exacerbated by GCSE and A Level courses combining the subjects.[11] GCSE and A Level courses in religious studies nowadays almost always often involve several components in the philosophy of religion and ethics (at GCSE level, usually only applied ethics, at A Level, also sometimes in either or both normative ethics and metaethics). So, to a certain extent philosophy has to be taught alongside religious studies at key stages four and five, by virtue of the structure of the syllabi. While many, including myself, would argue that it is good that in recent years philosophy has gained, and it is good that it is continuing to gain, a more prominent place within British secondary education,[12] its inclusion within GCSE and A Level courses in religious studies and in key stage three courses taught by departments where their primary function is to teach religious studies has led to some conflation between the disciplines. Departments should do what they can to avoid such conflation, not only so students have a clear conception of the distinctive nature and aims of each subject, but so it is clear that each has its own intrinsic value, not requiring external support or validation of its value by appeal to another discipline. One of the aims of this integrated approach is to make clear the distinctive nature, aims and value of each subject. Philosophy and religious studies are taught in tandem and are integrated, but are nonetheless taught as different subjects, with the differences between each made clear from the outset and areas of crossover identified throughout. In this way, the course aims to show how the two subjects can be integrated without conflation.

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[11] For a discussion of this problem and others within the context of changes made to the AQA Philosophy A Level in 2015, see Charlie Duncan Saffrey, 'Philosophy is not religion. It must not be taught that way.' Especially pertinent is the following: 'Philosophy – the vibrant, engaging, and often controversial practice of subjecting all concepts and ideas to rigorous logical scrutiny – has struggled for many years to be properly understood as a discipline apart from religious studies'. *The Guardian*, 29 Jan 2014: <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2014/jan/29/philosophy-a-level-syllabus-religious-education>.

[12] This might increase significantly in the future, if a prospective GCSE in philosophy becomes accredited. For arguments that there should be a GCSE in philosophy, see John Taylor, 'What would be the benefit of a philosophy GCSE?', *Schools Week*, 18 January 2015: <https://schoolsweek.co.uk/what-would-be-the-benefit-of-a-philosophy-

Second, and in connection with the previous point, given that philosophy is part of GCSE and A Level courses in religious studies, receiving an education in this integrated course in key stage three can help to better prepare students for such courses, both in terms of content (since there are philosophical components in such courses) and delivery (to show how the subjects can be taught in an integrated manner).

Third, historically there is much overlap between philosophy and theology, and between philosophy and religious studies. There are few examples of two distinct subjects where there is such a degree of overlap (history and politics is one example). Distinguishing between, for example, Augustine the philosopher and the theologian would be extremely difficult, if not impossible; the same goes for Aquinas. So, a crossover between the two disciplines is inevitable if one wants to teach about such figures; and an education in the philosophy of religion in the Western philosophical tradition or in the history of Christian theology would be impoverished without some inclusion of Augustine and Aquinas.[13]

## 4. Benefits of an integrated approach for values education

This approach also has potential benefits for values education. It offers a means of teaching students how to critically assess which beliefs are, *inter alia*, ill-founded, inconsistent, or unethical. Most importantly, it teaches students how to do this independently. That is especially important when we are concerned with values. Values often take the form of principles that guide one's conduct and often play a constitutive role within worldviews. Many people have pernicious values. For example, an individual might acquire prejudicial beliefs as a result of upbringing or cultural surroundings, and such beliefs might play a fundamental role in their worldview. The most fruitful way to address pernicious or potentially pernicious beliefs is to equip a student with the skills to reach their own independent critical judgements about such beliefs. If a prejudicial belief is among those beliefs that are partly constitutive of a person's identity or worldview, teaching someone that the belief is prejudicial without at the same time equipping them with the skills to independently identify and critically evaluate why it is so is likely to be futile, if the ultimate aim is for them to see this for themselves and to no longer assent to the belief or to the form of prejudice underlying it. Logic and critical thinking offer perhaps the best skillset we can provide for individuals to independently critically assess which beliefs are rationally defensible.

This point also applies to religious belief. Religious belief is, in most cases, a core part of a person's identity. If a religious outlook involves beliefs that are pernicious or potentially so, the most fruitful way to address such

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gcse/> and 'Philosophy needs to be given its proper place at the heart of UK education', *Times Educational Supplement*, 17 November 2016: <https://www.tes.com/news/philosophy-needs-be-given-its-proper-place-heart-uk-education>.

[13] This interdisciplinary relation is not symmetrical. It is more difficult to take a course in the study of religions that involves no recourse to philosophy than it is to take a course in philosophy that involves no recourse to religious studies. But that does not affect the point made.

beliefs is to equip the religious adherent with the skills to independently critically evaluate their beliefs. The integrated approach provides an education in this skillset, as well as equipping students with knowledge and understanding of living religions.

By aiming to provide this skillset, this approach towards the critical study of values and beliefs (not only religious beliefs, but any set of beliefs) can potentially help to achieve the fundamental aim of the British government's (controversial) 'Prevent Duty'. This is the duty placed upon schools and other specified authorities to have 'due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism'.[14] The 2015 'Revised *Prevent* Duty Guidance for England and Wales' outlines why, to achieve this aim, it is important to address issues concerning extremism and radicalization because, for example, 'Terrorist groups often draw on extremist ideology' and 'preventing people becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism requires challenge [*sic.*] to extremist ideas where they are used to legitimise terrorism'.[15] In accordance with the Prevent Duty, an aim of values education is to reduce the potential for radicalization and the development of extremist views among school students. To achieve this aim, students' resilience against radicalization needs to be developed and students need to be equipped with the skills to challenge extremist views. The integrated course has an important role to play in this process, by providing students with an effective set of tools and methods for independently critically assessing which beliefs are unethical or ill-founded.

'Extremism' is defined in the government's 2011 'Prevent Strategy' (of which the Prevent Duty is part) as 'vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs'.[16] These are the four 'fundamental British values' schools are required to promote in accordance with the Prevent Duty. The definition of these values as 'fundamental British values' has been among the most controversial parts of the Prevent Strategy. A tangential but important point I would like to make is that the naming of these values 'fundamental British values' is highly misleading and there is a better alternative available to the naming and description of such values, and more detailed guidance concerning their provision within school education, than that outlined in the Prevent Duty guidance.[17] This has been convincingly argued in recent work by Alison E. C. Struthers, who argues that the best resource we can draw upon to specify which values should be promoted in schools and how they should be understood is the guidance laid out in the United Nations' documentation on 'human rights education', such as the 2011 UN Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training,[18] where the values to be promoted through education are rooted in human rights. Following that declaration, the values we should promote in schools are what Struthers calls 'human rights values'.[19] The UN materials on human rights education offer a more detailed and consolidated resource for values education than the Prevent Duty guidance.

Article 2 (a) of the 2011 UN Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training states that:

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[14] HM Government 'Revised *Prevent* Duty Guidance: for England and Wales' (16 July 2015), p. 2, available online at: <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/445977/3799_Revised_Prevent_Duty_Guidance__England_Wales_V2-Interactive.pdf>.

[15] *Ibid.*, pp. 2-3.

[16] *Ibid.*, p. 2.

[17] See pp. 10-12 of the 'Revised *Prevent* Duty Guidance' for guidance concerning the Prevent Duty in schools and registered childcare providers.

[18] For the declaration, adopted by the UN General Assembly in 2011, see: <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Education/Training/Compilation/Pages/UnitedNationsDeclarationonHumanRightsEducationandTraining(2011).aspx>.

[19] See Alison E. C. Struthers, 'Teaching British Values in Our Schools: But Why not Human Rights Values?', *Social and Legal Studies*, Vol. 26 (1), 2017, pp. 89-110.

> 2. Human rights education and training encompasses:
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> (a) Education about human rights, which includes providing knowledge and understanding of human rights norms and principles, the values that underpin them and the mechanisms for their protection.

All four values drawn under the rubric of 'fundamental British values' can be included among the values defined as those underpinning human rights norms and principles. The existing approach towards their promotion within education can be retained, insofar as the Prevent Duty aims to prevent radicalization and the development of extremist views.

Defining and describing the values to be promoted within schools as 'human rights values' rather than 'fundamental British values' would not amount merely to a trivial change in title to the values taught; it would re-define and re-describe the values as universal values rooted in human rights, which is a more accurate description of what such values are. Human rights values 'stem from', Struthers writes, 'notions of universality and common humanity' (Struthers 2017, 90). Understanding the values that we should promote in schools in this way and teaching them as part of a multinationally ratified programme would help to alleviate concerns regarding the susceptibility of 'fundamental British values' to subversive and discriminatory interpretation (see Struthers 2017, 90).

By potentially helping to achieve the fundamental aim of the Prevent Duty, the integrated course outlined above does not generate or exacerbate controversies raised by the Prevent Duty, as no claim is made about which values should be taught, what they should be called or how they should be understood. This course also does not face the limitations faced by explicit values education. There is not the same limitation on time; it is embedded and contextualized within a rigorous and structured course; and there are homework requirements. Since all students in year nine would take the course outlined, it could have a wider impact on school life. As suggested above, it could be extrapolated to other areas, such as an integrated study of history and politics, developing the collaborative approach into a broader curriculum. These are ways that this approach could support the first and most important approach towards teaching values, where values education is intertwined within all areas of school life.

Through this integrated method, students can also gain the critical skills to engage with religions in a way that is not excessively tolerant and helps to avoid endorsing an entirely relativistic view about truth or values. Among the skills critical thinking aims to teach is how to be objective in one's reasoning. This is developed by learning what constitutes a convincing argument and what makes effective reasoning. To successfully teach tolerance, for instance, we should teach where tolerance goes too far. To be tolerant of intolerance is not a virtue, but is, to draw upon Aristotle's doctrine of the mean, a vice of excess. Concerning relativism, while there might not be an objective fact of the matter about various areas of inquiry, including certain values, it is difficult to defend the view that all values are relative while teaching that there are certain values we should all endorse. If a student completes their school education endorsing value relativism, they should at least have the skills to reach this judgement independently, rather than receiving it from an education that treats the truth of all values as relative.

A difficultly facing values education is assessment. It is extremely difficult to assess through any typical means how much a student has developed a value, since values education concerns much more than developing knowledge or understanding; it concerns the development of character. Insofar as values are manifested as virtues, it is also extremely difficult to assess how virtuous a person has become through their education. We cannot measure and assess a student's progress in their development of values with the kind of accuracy that we can measure through methods of assessment such as test and coursework performances.

This pedagogical approach does not claim to provide a panacea for overcoming this limitation. It claims to potentially provide a means of measuring how well students have learned a set of philosophical concepts and a method, and applied them to arguments such that they demonstrate the ability to engage in independent critical assessments of arguments.

### Concluding Remarks

It has been argued that an important component of values education is providing students with the best tools and methods available to enable them to form independent critical judgements about their beliefs. This can be achieved by providing an education in critical thinking and applying it to those fields where the values and beliefs that underpin worldviews and influence the ways in which people live are most often acquired. To illustrate, the chapter has outlined a course the author has co-designed for students in their final year of key stage three which integrates a course in critical thinking with a study of living religions, using the latter as the subject matter to which the concepts and methods of the former are applied. This approach has the potential to yield several pedagogical advantages, some of which concern values education.

Teaching values is extremely difficult. Less difficult is equipping students with the conceptual tools and methods to independently critically assess their values and beliefs. Although less difficult, this is, arguably, no less important. It provides students with skills to make independent, rational, critical judgements about beliefs and values. This, I argue, is an important part of what we should aim to offer through values education.[20]

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