

Welcome to A-Level Philosophy and Ethics. To prepare for our work you might want to begin to think about the question “Why should I be moral?” Is it to my advantage to be good? Would there be any reason to do good if it causes me harm? Try to think of situations where it isn’t easy to know what is good, or situations where, even when you know what is good, it is hard to act on that knowledge.

If you would like to do some reading I recommend Julian Baggini’s book *The Pig That Wants to be Eaten*. As you read it is important to spend some time thinking about the issues discussed. In addition, Simon Blackburn’s book *Think* is an excellent introductory text. If you are feeling ambitious you might try Descartes’ *Meditations*.

If you have a Netflix account you could watch *The Good Place*. Season 1 contains a great many of the ethical issues that we address during the first term. If you don’t have an account but know someone who does you could think about the moral issues involved in using their login.

A great many movies centre on philosophical issues; there are websites containing long lists of them. A couple of my favourites are *The Matrix* and *Blade Runner* (and *Blade Runner 2049*). If you are interested in the art of filmmaking you should watch Hitchcock’s film *Rope*. It addresses the morality question I raised above.

We will study a unit on Buddhist philosophy later in the year so it would be helpful if you could find out a little about the culture of places where Buddhism is practised such as Japan, Tibet, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Cambodia and Myanmar. There are lots of travel documentaries available on the various streaming platforms as well as on YouTube.

The most important thing you can do to prepare yourself is to THINK. Ask yourself questions about your view of the world, yourself, right and wrong, identity, what is real and what is true. I look forward to meeting you in September. If you wish to ask any questions before we begin your course please email me:

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