Introduction to Religious Studies

OCR Religious Studies (Philosophy & Ethics) H573

What is Philosophy?

Literally, a love (philos) of wisdom or knowledge (sophia)
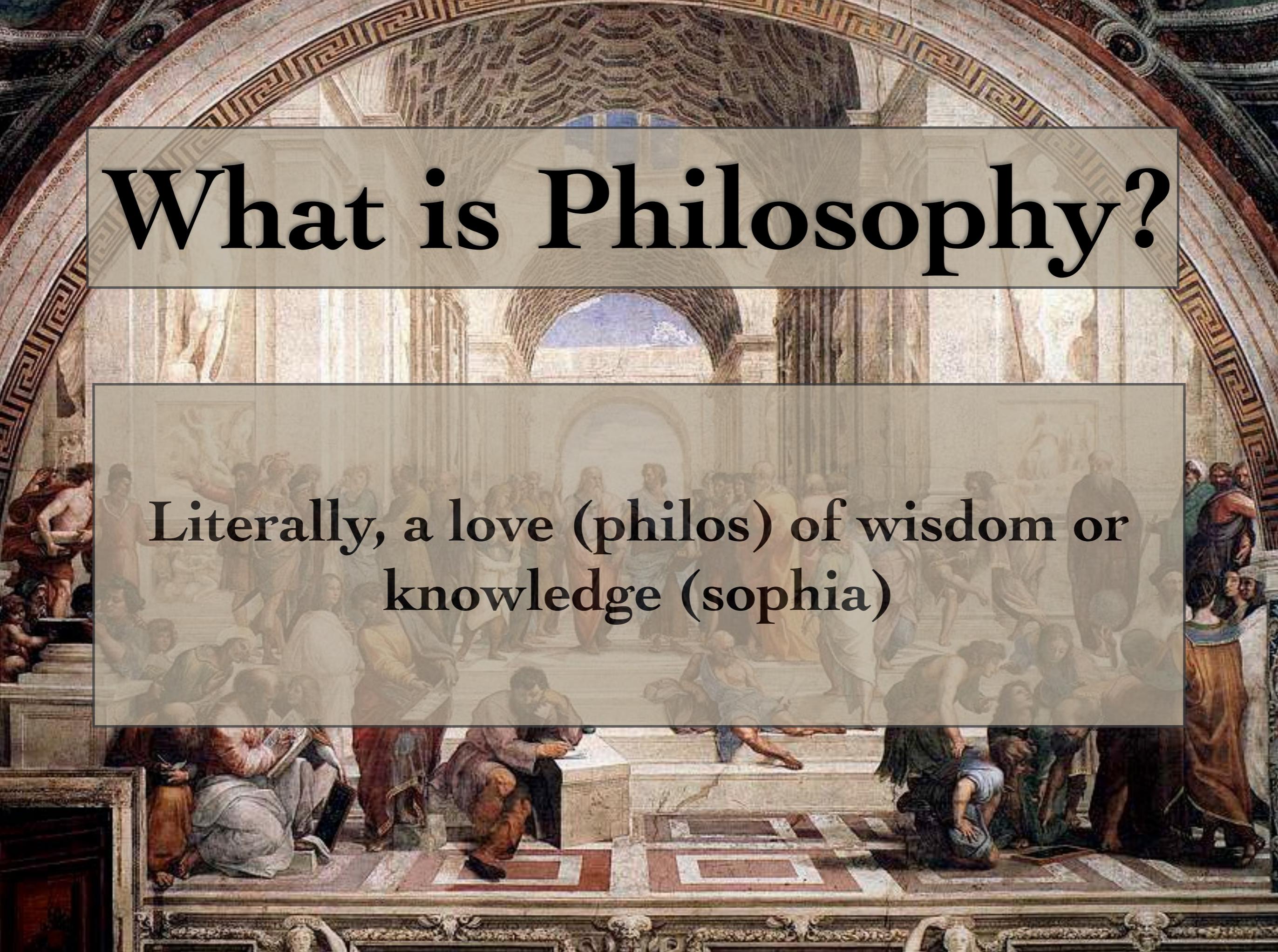
The Structure of Philosophy

Philosophy is guided by logic, it acts as a foundation on which we access knowledge, morality and reason.
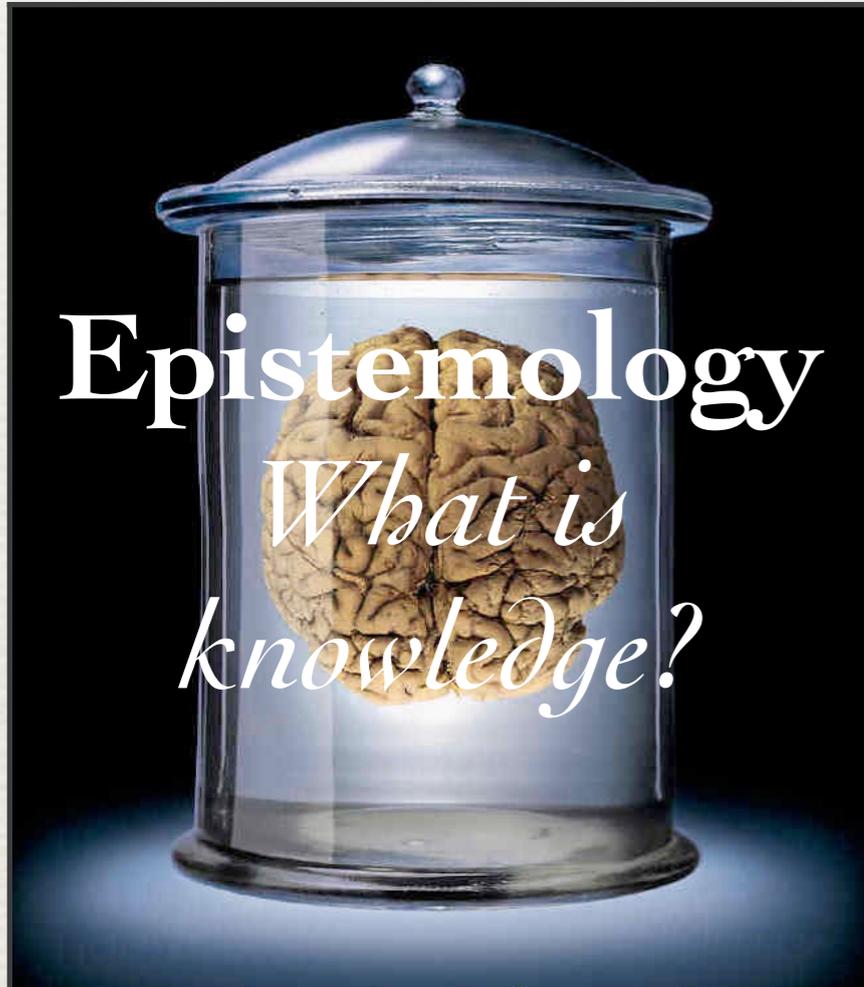
Epistemology
What is knowledge?
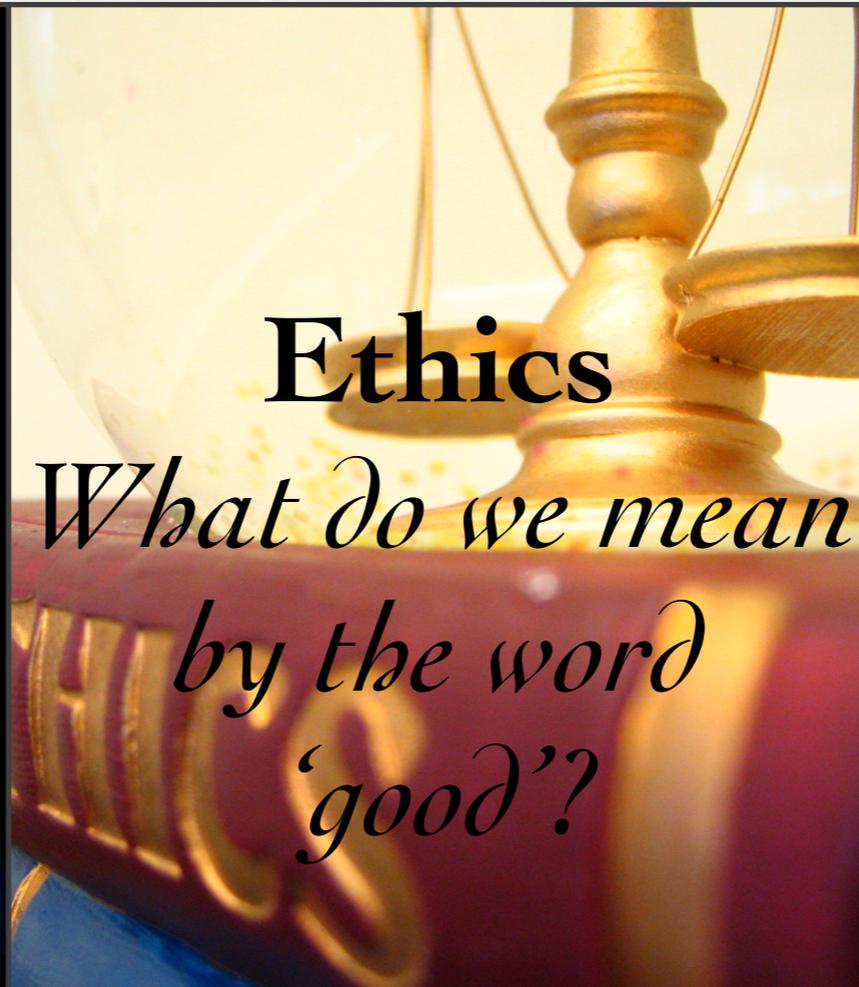
Ethics
What do we mean by the word 'good'?
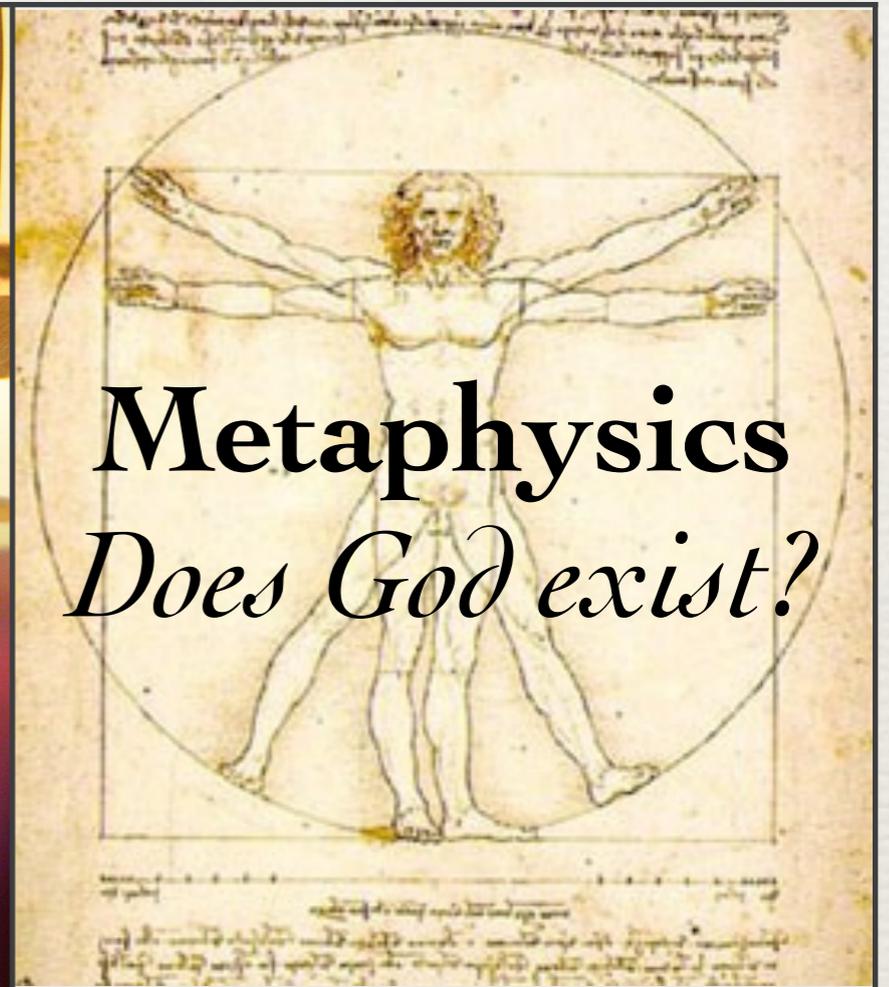
Metaphysics
Does God exist?

Logic *Critical Thinking*

Philosophical logic.

- Often we ask ourselves 'What should we do' or 'what does this mean', rather than the great question of 'why'?

- Philosophy uses logic to consider these problems of 'why'.

Some examples of philosophical questions - Can you try to reason an answer for any of these.

Why do we choose to ignore harsh truths?

What is the goal of humanity and why are we obsessed with finding it?

Why do we not trust is all religious experiences?

Is free-will just an illusion? Why?

Why do bad things happen to good people?

Is our understanding of God paradoxical? How?

The OCR Syllabus
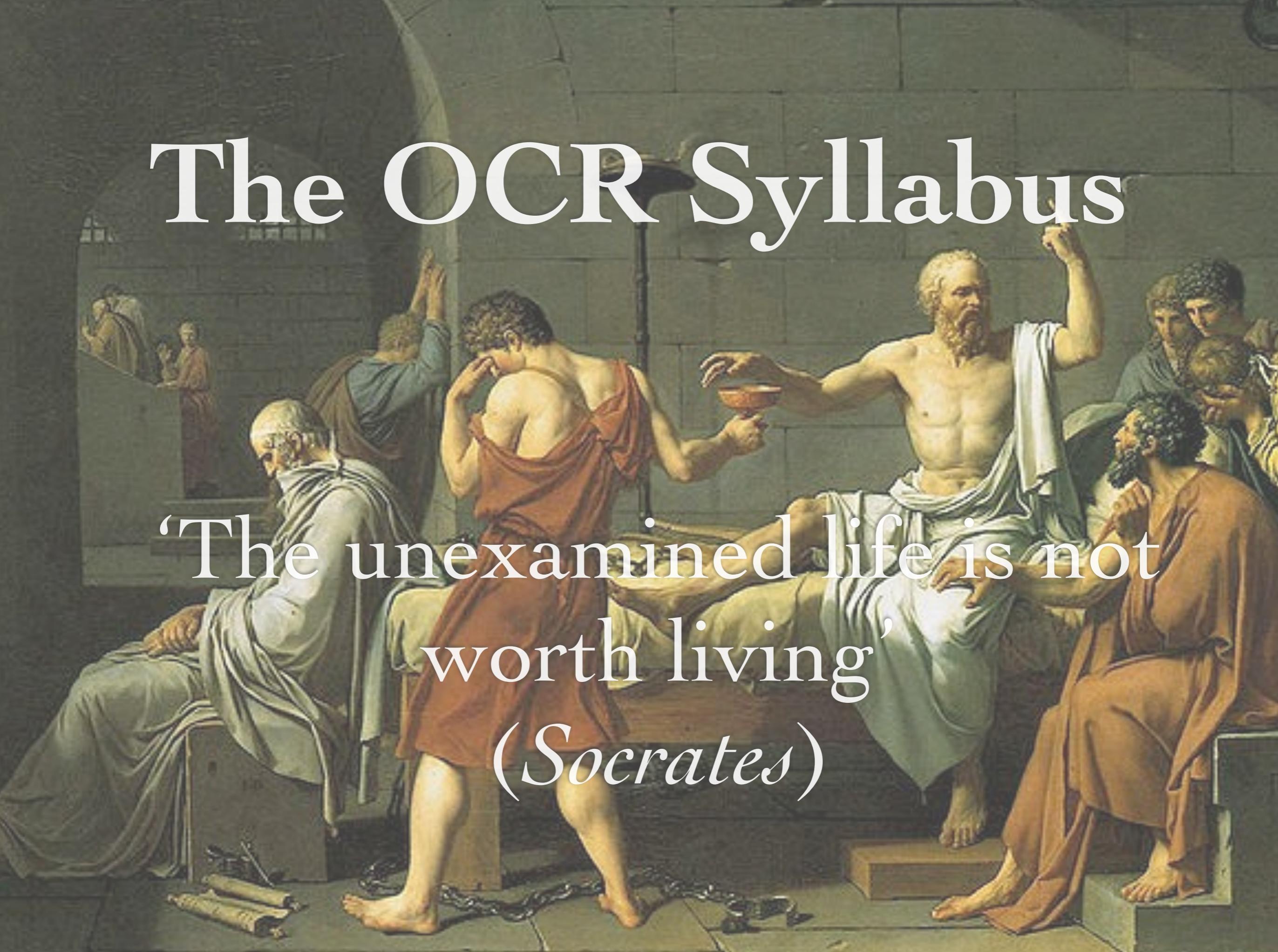
'The unexamined life is not worth living' (*Socrates*)

Philosophy of Religion	1. Ancient philosophical influences (Plato/ Aristotle and Soul, Mind, Body) 2. The Existence of God (arguments for and against the existence of God) 3. God and the World (Religious Experience, The problem of evil) 4. Theological and Philosophical developments (the attributes of God) 5. Religious Language: Negative, Analogical and Symbolic 6. Religious Language: Twentieth Century Perspectives (Verification, Falsification, Wittgenstein)
Ethics	1. Normative ethical theories: Aquinas/Kant/Fletcher/Utilitarianism 2. The application of ethical theory to two contemporary issues of importance 3. Ethical language and thought 4. Debates surrounding the significant idea of conscience 5. Sexual ethics and the influence on ethical thought of developments in religious beliefs.
Developments in Christian Thought	1. Augustine & Human Nature/Death and the Afterlife 2. Reveal and Natural Theology/The Person of Jesus 3. Christian Moral Principles/Christian Moral Action-Dietrich Bonhoeffer 4. Religious Pluralism (Christianity & World Faiths)-in theology and society 5. Gender and Society/Theology 6. Challenge of Secularism/Marx & Liberation Theology.

Assessment

- In Year 13 there will be 3 papers (one on each of the areas of the syllabus) of 2 hours each.

- Each paper will have 4 questions each worth 40 marks.

- You will need to answer 3 of the 4.

CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING THOUGHT EXPERIMENTS

(Related to Ethics-Utilitarianism)

The Standard Trolley problem

The Trolley Problem (Trolleyology)

You must assume that a Trolley is hurtling uncontrollably towards 5 people. There is no way to prevent this from happening, other than by pulling a switch causing it to go down a track and kill only one. What do you do?

Spur

1. Out-of-control trolley hurtling towards five people on the track, who face certain death

2. You are nearby and, by pressing a switch, could divert the trolley onto a spur saving five lives

3. Only one person is killed if the trolley is diverted onto the spur
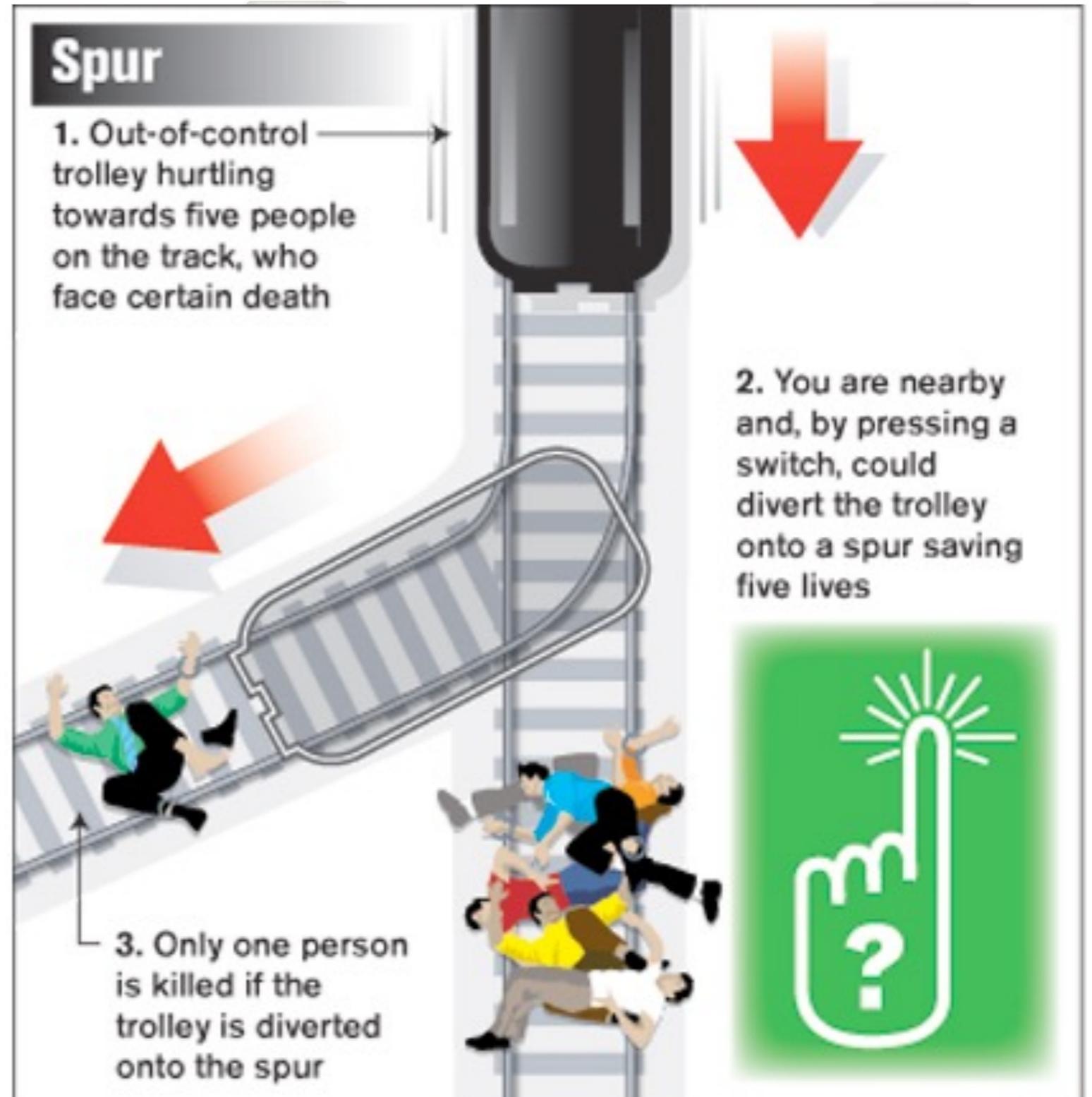
Principle of Utility.

* Within Utilitarianism, they live by the principle of utility.

* This claims that what is good is the greatest happiness for the greatest number.

* This would mean that with the limited information available we can assume it is better to press the switch and save the 5.

The extension to Trolley problem - Would you kill the fat man?

The Fat Man Variation

Lets change the situation. This time you are stood on a footbridge with a person large enough to derail the trolley if pushed onto it. This will kill him but save the five.

What do you do?

Fat Man

1. The same out-of-control trolley is about to kill five people

2. You are on a footbridge overlooking the track, next to a fat man. If you push him over, his bulk will stop the trolley

3. Five lives would be saved, but the fat man will be killed
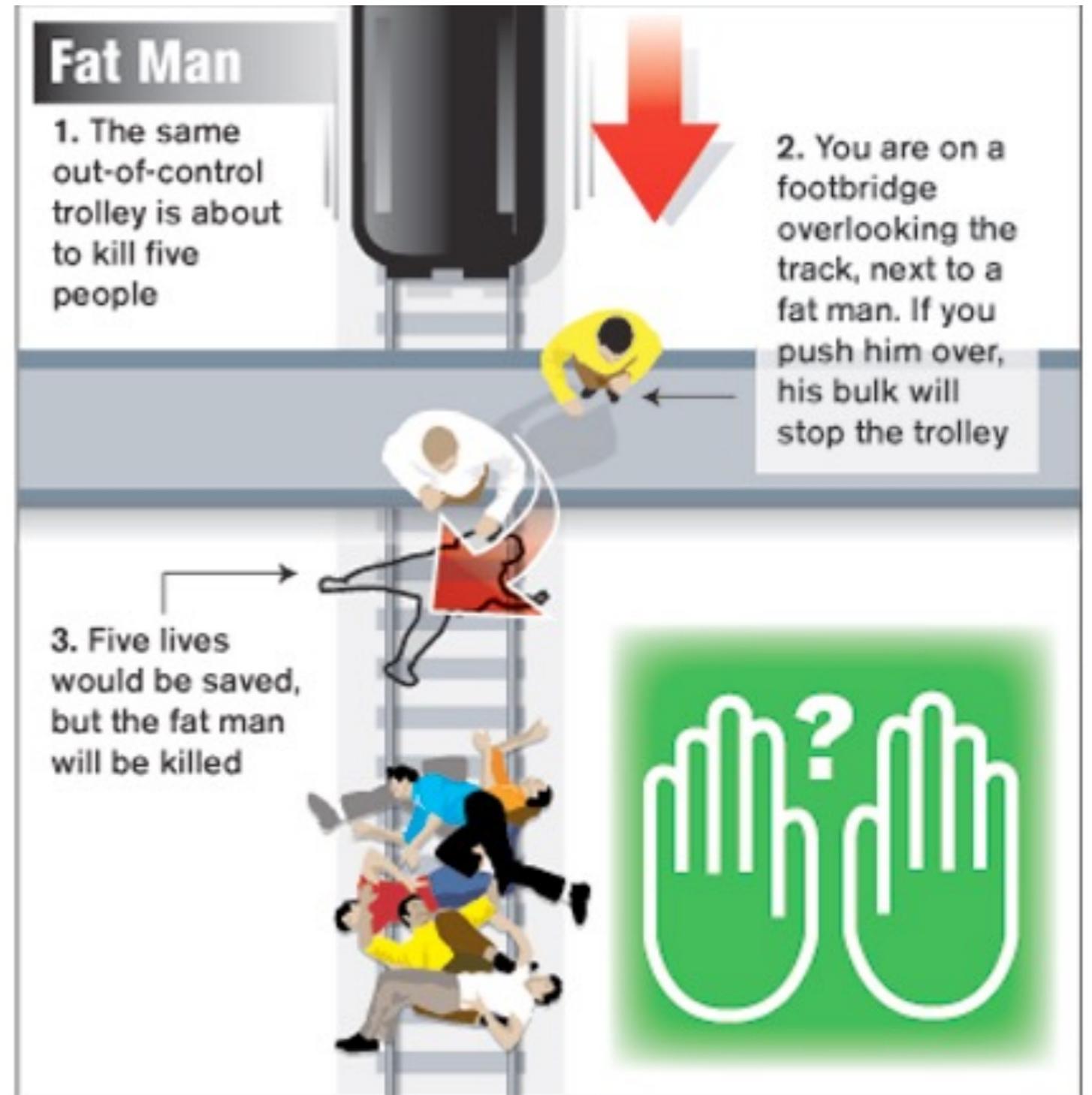
Are these two situations that different?
Is it simply the indifference of distance?

WHAT DID YOU DECIDE TO DO?

This is what you might have expected to do at GCSE

WHY DID YOU TAKE THAT DECISION?

This is what you are expected to do at A Level

Religious Studies Summer Home learning

Please complete the following essay style questions to return to each of your subject teachers next term. Each question should be at least a side and a half of A4 and should consider scholarly views other than your own as well as a clear argument with evaluative points and structure. You should include some research that you have done outside of your GCSE learning.

Philosophy
'The philosophy of Plato and Aristotle is no longer relevant to the modern world.' Discuss.

Ethics
Critically evaluate different ethical views on issues surrounding euthanasia.

Development into Christian Thought
Critically evaluate the view that there is no such thing as a fixed human nature.