

Welcome to the wonderful world of A Level Religious Studies

For your information, we study AQA Religious Studies and here is a link to the syllabus if you wish to explore this further. Our choice of religion is Buddhism as well as Philosophy of Religion and Ethics. <https://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/religious-studies/as-and-a-level>

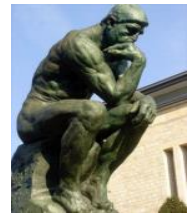
Here are some things we hope you might enjoy. Remember all are optional and not required for you to start the A level course.

We are providing activities that you may choose to do that explore some of life's big questions and issues. There are different options depending on the way you wish to engage with the material; sadly, all rely on a computer. However, just sitting in the garden and listening to the birds will lead you to think about life's big questions. Here is a picture of a philosopher hard at work, notice he has no laptop!

Visual learners might like:

A video series on YouTube called Crash Course Philosophy.

Watch - What is Philosophy?



https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1A_CAkYt3GY&list=PL8dPuuaLjXtNgK6MZucdYldNkMybYIHKR&t=0s. The presenter speaks quickly so you may need to pause or replay the video to really process what he is saying. Alternatively look at the transcript or subtitles.

Auditory learners might like:

This podcast with the atheist philosopher Professor Stephen Law as he challenges the religious believers' argument that God is good.

<https://thepanpsycast.com/panpsycast2/2017/8/3/evil-god>

You enjoy a game or a quiz:

There are a number of options on the website <https://www.philosophersmag.com/>

Do you wish to take a Philosophy Health Test? Thirty multiple-choice questions might make you think about your own process of reasoning.

<http://www.philosophyexperiments.com/health/Default.aspx>

Interesting Ethical Issues

There are a list of films and documentaries that you may find interesting to watch. Films and programmes are an interesting resource for exploring ethical issues as they raise questions about our moral conduct and responses to various situations.

The film *Gattaca*, starring Uma Thurman and Ethan Hawke, is set in the future where genetic testing is embedded in society and leads to discrimination. Here is a link to the film on YouTube - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tzG3I7nMEks>

When you have watched the film consider these questions. If you have watched the film with members of your family or friends, you could have a discussion about the issues raised.

1. When Jerome's parents went to a genetics centre for a second child, the geneticist stated "I have taken the liberty of eradicating any potentially prejudicial conditions - premature baldness, myopia, alcoholism and addictive susceptibility, propensity for violence and obesity." The father then asks "We were wondering if we should leave some things to chance." To this the geneticist responds, "You want to give your child the best possible start. Believe me, we have enough imperfection built-in already. Your child doesn't need any additional burdens." Would it be irresponsible for the father to want to leave something to chance?
2. In an outtake to the movie, the geneticist states that for an extra \$5,000 he could give the embryo enhanced musical or mathematical skills – essentially splicing in a gene that was not present on the parents' original DNA. Would musical or mathematical skill be more like physical abilities, which are pretty rigid, or more like moral qualities (proneness to pity or violence) which are less rigid?
3. Vincent states in the movie that "it's illegal to discriminate – 'genoism' it's called – but no one takes the laws seriously." This is in fact one of the standard criticisms of genetic profiling: if we have genetic data on people, then employers or insurance companies will use that data to minimize financial risk. Assuming that this will be true, would the benefits of genetic profiling still outweigh the disbenefits?
4. Consider this dialogue regarding the rigorous testing of *Gattaca* personnel. Director Josef: "we have to ensure that people are meeting their

potential.” Investigator: “Not exceeding it?” Director Josef: “No one exceeds his potential.” Investigator: “If he did?” Director Josef: “It means that we did not accurately gauge his potential in the first place.” This dialogue exhibits a common criticism that determinism is unfalsifiable – that is, an advocate of determinism would not admit that any test could even theoretically count against determinism. Is this a valid criticism of Director Josef’s specific position?

5. The moral message of the movie is that we can rise above our genetic predispositions, with specific emphasis on our pre determined physical abilities. The movie’s message also applies to our ability to overcome pre-determined behavioural traits – an issue more typically involved in the philosophical debate about determinism. The prime example of this in the movie was the revelation that the Director Josef committed the murder, even though his genetic profile indicated that he was completely non-violent. Which is a better “refutation” of determinism: Vincent living past 30, or Director Josef committing a murder?
6. Near the close of the movie, Vincent explains to his brother how he was able to beat him in the swimming contest: “You wanted to know how I did it. That's how I did it, Anton. I never saved anything for the swim back.” Now that we know the secret, is there anything about Vincent’s actions in the movie that really refute determinism?
7. The original screenplay concludes with the following coda: “In a few short years, scientists will have completed the Human Genome Project, the mapping of all the genes that make up a human being. After 4 billion years of evolution by the slow and clumsy method of natural selection, we have now evolved to the point where we can direct our own evolution. If only we had acquired this knowledge sooner, the following people would never have been born:” It continues listing famous people and their illnesses, such as Hawking who has Lou Gehrig's Disease. A version of this coda was in fact filmed, but deleted from the final movie. How would this argument differ from the following: couples should have as many children as physically possible since limiting births would mean that we wouldn’t bring into existence valuable people?

Film and Documentary Resources

This is a list of RS and Ethics related films and documentaries. I have organised them according to topic and some of these are particularly hard to view so approach with caution.

War

Hotel Rwanda — *Paul Rusesabagina (Don Cheadle), a Hutu, manages the Hôtel des Mille Collines and lives a happy life with his Tutsi wife (Sophie Okonedo) and their three children. But when Hutu military forces initiate a campaign of ethnic cleansing against the Tutsi minority, Paul is compelled to allow refugees to take shelter in his hotel. As the U.N. pulls out, Paul must struggle alone to protect the Tutsi refugees in the face of the escalating violence later known as the Rwandan genocide.*

Shooting Dogs - *In 1994 Rwanda, simmering tensions between Hutus and Tutsis boil over into full scale genocide. Two men, a priest named Father Christopher (John Hurt) and British schoolteacher Joe Connor (Hugh Dancy), get caught up in the conflict and stay behind to help those who seek shelter at the Ecole Technique Officielle.*

Lord of War - *The 20-year arms dealing career of Queens, N.Y., outcast Yuri Orlov (Nicolas Cage) serves as a window onto the end of the Cold War and the emergence of worldwide terrorism. He finds himself reassuring his more ethically challenged younger brother, Vitaly (Jared Leto), while adeptly sidestepping the pursuit of federal agent Jack Lawrence (Ethan Hawke). The globetrotting arms dealer also pursues the woman of his dreams, supermodel Ava Fontaine (Bridget Moynahan).*

The Hurt Locker - *The film follows an Iraq War Explosive Ordnance Disposal team who are targeted by insurgents, and shows their psychological reactions to the stress of combat, which is intolerable to some and addictive to others.*

Empire of the Sun - *Jamie Graham (Christian Bale), a privileged English boy, is living in Shanghai when the Japanese invade and force all foreigners into prison camps. Jamie is captured with an American sailor named Basie (John Malkovich), who looks out for him while they are in the camp together. Even though he is separated from his parents and in a hostile environment, Jamie maintains his dignity and youthful spirits, providing a beacon of hope for the others held captive with him.*

Saving Private Ryan - *Captain John Miller (Tom Hanks) takes his men behind enemy lines to find Private James Ryan, whose three brothers have been killed in combat. Surrounded by the brutal realities of war, while searching for Ryan, each man embarks upon a personal journey and discovers their own strength to triumph over an uncertain future with honour, decency and courage.*

The Pianist - *Wladyslaw Szpilman (Adrien Brody), a Polish Jewish radio station pianist, sees Warsaw change gradually as World War II begins. Szpilman is forced into the Warsaw Ghetto, but is later separated from his family during Operation Reinhard. From this time until the concentration camp prisoners are released, Szpilman hides in various locations among the ruins of Warsaw.*

Full Metal Jacket - *Stanley Kubrick's take on the Vietnam War follows smart-aleck Private Davis (Matthew Modine), quickly christened "Joker" by his foul-mouthed drill sergeant (R. Lee Ermey), and pudgy Private Lawrence (Vincent D'Onofrio), nicknamed "Gomer Pyle," as they endure the rigors of basic training. Though Pyle takes a frightening detour, Joker graduates to the Marine Corps and is sent to Vietnam as a journalist, covering -- and eventually participating in -- the bloody Battle of Huế.*

The War You Don't See — *This is a 2010 British documentary film written, produced and directed by John Pilger with Alan Lowery, which challenges the media for the role they played in the Iraq, Afghanistan, and Israel/Palestine conflicts.*

Abortion

Cider House Rules - A young man is taught medicine by the doctor at the orphanage where he was brought up. However, when he clashes with his mentor over the issue of abortion, he leaves the home and finds work on a cider farm. There he falls in love with another man's girlfriend but starts to re-evaluate his principles when one of the farm workers becomes pregnant by her own father

Vera Drake - In 1950s England, housekeeper Vera Drake (Imelda Staunton) is a kindly wife and mother who offers selfless devotion and unwavering care to her family, which includes her husband (Philip Davis) and two grown children (Alex Kelly, Daniel Mays). However, unknown to her friends and family, Drake provides abortions to local women with unwanted pregnancies.

Fast Times at Ridgemont High - A look at the lives and loves of a group of high school students. It's the final year of high school for Brad Hamilton who decides he should break up with his longtime girlfriend to play the field. He's at a loss however when she breaks up with him first. Jeff Spicoli continues to take delight in getting under the skin of his teacher, Mr. Hand. Others are looking for love, sex and just plain having a good time which, for the most part, they all seem to find though sometimes in unexpected places.

Four Months, Three Weeks and Two Days -The courage and friendship of two Romanian college students is tested when Gabita (Laura Vasiliu) discovers that she is pregnant by her boyfriend (Alex Potocean), and seeks an illegal abortion with the help of her classmate Otilia (Anamaria Marinca). Enlisting the services of the shady Mr. Bebe (Vlad Ivanov), the two girls find themselves in extremely tense and uncomfortable situations and must rely on their mutual support to get them through the ordeal.

Lake of Fire - An unflinching documentary shot in black and white, this film focuses on the heated topic of abortion. Directed by British-born filmmaker Tony Kaye, the production depicts the heated ongoing abortion debate in America, and features graphic footage of actual medical procedures. Presenting people on both pro-choice and pro-life sides of the issue, the documentary includes interviews with philosopher and political activist Noam Chomsky, anti-abortion activist Randall Terry and numerous others.

Brainwashing Stacey, Anti-Abortion Camp -Stacey Dooley travels to California to meet Survivors, one of America's most extreme anti-abortion groups. Learning alongside them in the classroom, before witnessing them preach their pro-life message to both the public and mothers-to be, can they persuade Stacey to join their controversial campaign?

Abortion on Trial – 50 years after the abortion act was passed, Anne Robinson brings together a group of people with conflicting views on the subject to ask if the law is fit for purpose.

Panorama, America's Abortion War – Hilary Andersson reports from Alabama, one of 12 US states attempting to overturn the constitutional right to abortion. She speaks to campaigners and politicians on both sides of the debate.

Young, British and Anti-abortion - Poppy Jay meets young, British people who are opposed to the abortion laws in the UK and are campaigning to stop people being able to access abortions in support of their pro-life beliefs.

Assisted Dying

A Short Stay In Switzerland - *Having recently witnessed the death of her husband from a neurological disease, Dr Anne Turner is diagnosed with a near-identical illness and determines to end her life once her condition has reached a critical point.*

Million Dollar Baby - *Frankie Dunn (Clint Eastwood) is a veteran Los Angeles boxing trainer who keeps almost everyone at arm's length, except his old friend and associate Eddie "Scrap Iron" Dupris (Morgan Freeman). When Maggie Fitzgerald (Hilary Swank) arrives in Frankie's gym seeking his expertise, he is reluctant to train the young woman, a transplant from working-class Missouri. Eventually, he relents, and the two form a close bond that will irrevocably change them both.*

The Sea Inside - *Ramón Sampedro (Javier Bardem) is a Spanish ship mechanic and part-time poet who is left a quadriplegic after a diving accident. This film tells the true story of Sampedro's 30-year battle for the legal right to end his own life. He develops close relationships with his long-term lawyer Julia (Belén Rueda) and his friend Rosa (Lola Dueñas), who tries to convince him that his life is worth living. Despite his situation, Ramon manages to inspire those around him to live life to the fullest.*

Paddleton - *Middle-aged Michael (Mark Duplass) receives a diagnosis of terminal stomach cancer and plans to get medication to end his life. This upsets his older neighbor Andy (Ray Romano), as they are each other's best (and only) friends and escape from their menial jobs.*

How to Die in Oregon - *In 1994 Oregon became the first state to legalize a terminally ill person's request to end his or her life with medication. At the time, only Belgium, Switzerland, and the Netherlands had legalized the practice. 'How to Die in Oregon' tell the stories of those most intimately involved with the practice today -- terminally ill Oregonians, their families, doctors, and friends -- as well as the passage of a similar law in Washington State.*

Louis Theroux, Altered States Choosing Death - *Louis Theroux spends time with those preparing to take a lethal but legally prescribed overdose and meets a controversial group educating others on how to end their lives.*

Endgame - *In the UK, euthanasia and assisted death is illegal. However, recent landmark cases have highlighted the issues surrounding assisted death and may be shifting public opinion in the direction of greater freedom. Yet it is one of the most challenging and complex debates of our time, with varied viewpoints presenting society with difficult questions, for which there are no easy answers. In a world of idealised autonomy, legislation providing for assisted dying in the UK might, if ethically acceptable, not be risky. But we do not live in that world and there are wider implications to this most complex of issues.*

Panorama, I Helped my Daughter to Die - *What drives a mother to help her child to die? For almost a year, Panorama follow the Kay Gilderdale as she faced a possible life sentence over her part in the death of her daughter Lynn. She talks about the night she helped her bedridden daughter to take her own life and explores whether the law in the UK should be changed.*

Better Off Dead? - *Liz Carr debates why she opposes the Assisted Dying bill. She travels to Canada to explore how their assisted suicide bill works in practice and then returns to the UK to discuss the changes with Lord Falconer and Melanie Reid.*

Capital Punishment

Dead Man Walking - As death row inmate Matthew Poncelet (Sean Penn) nears his execution date, he calls upon Sister Helen Prejean (Susan Sarandon) to help him with one last appeal, maintaining that he is innocent of the murders of a young couple. Poncelet begins to form a bond with Prejean, and she visits both his family and the relatives of the victims, hoping to learn more about the case. As things begin to look bleak for Poncelet, Prejean does all that she can to comfort and console the hardened convict.

The Green Mile - Paul Edgecomb (Tom Hanks) walked the mile with a variety of cons. He had never encountered someone like John Coffey (Michael Clarke Duncan), a massive black man convicted of brutally killing a pair of young sisters. Coffey had the size and strength to kill anyone, but not the demeanour. Beyond his simple, naive nature and a deathly fear of the dark, Coffey seemed to possess a prodigious, supernatural gift. Paul began to question whether Coffey was truly guilty of murdering the two girls.

The Life of David Gale - David Gale (Kevin Spacey) is a man who has tried hard to live by his principles but in a bizarre twist of fate, this devoted father, popular professor and respected death penalty opponent finds himself on Death Row for the rape and murder of fellow activist Constance Hallaway (Laura Linney). With only three days before his scheduled execution, Gale agrees to give reporter Bitsey Bloom (Kate Winslet) the exclusive interview she's been chasing.

Aileen: Life and Death of a Serial Killer - A documentary looks at Aileen Wuornos convicted of killing 7 men while working as a prostitute in Florida. This is actually the second Wuornos documentary made by this group the first being *Aileen Wuornos: The Selling of a Serial Killer* (1992). With her execution now on the horizon Nick Broomfield returns to Florida to complete the story. Her argument has always been that the killings were in self-defense but she eventually pleaded no contest or guilty to most of the murders.

Life and Death Row - *Life and Death Row* is a BBC documentary television series telling the story of capital punishment through the eyes of young people whose lives have been shaped by it.

Inside Death Row with Trevor MacDonald - Trevor MacDonald interviews inmates on death row in Indiana State Maximum Security Prison

Louis Theroux Behind Bars and Miami Mega-Jail - Louis Theroux meets inmates in San Quentin and in Miami's County jail including those on death row

LGBTQ+

Milk - In 1972, Harvey Milk (Sean Penn) and his then-lover Scott Smith leave New York for San Francisco, with Milk determined to accomplish something meaningful in his life. Settling in the Castro District, he opens a camera shop and helps transform the area into a mecca for gays and lesbians. In 1977 he becomes the nation's first openly gay man elected to a notable public office when he wins a seat on the Board of Supervisors. The following year, Dan White (Josh Brolin) kills Milk in cold blood.

Pride - Realising that they share common foes in Margaret Thatcher, the police and the conservative press, London-based gay and lesbian activists lend their support to striking miners in 1984 Wales.

Carol - Set in New York City during the early 1950s, Carol tells the story of a forbidden affair between an aspiring female photographer and an older woman going through a difficult divorce.

Brokeback Mountain - In 1963, rodeo cowboy Jack Twist (Jake Gyllenhaal) and ranch hand Ennis Del Mar (Heath Ledger) are hired by rancher Joe Aguirre (Randy Quaid) as sheep herders in Wyoming. One night on Brokeback Mountain, Jack makes a drunken pass at Ennis that is eventually reciprocated. Though Ennis marries his longtime sweetheart, Alma (Michelle Williams), and Jack marries a fellow rodeo rider (Anne Hathaway), the two men keep up their tortured and sporadic affair over the course of 20 years.

My Beautiful Laundrette - In a seedy corner of London, Omar (Gordon Warnecke), a young Pakistani, is given a run-down laundromat by his uncle (Saeed Jaffrey), who hopes to turn it into a successful business. Soon after, Omar is attacked by a group of racist punks, but defuses the situation when he realizes their leader is his former lover, Johnny (Daniel Day-Lewis). The men resume their relationship and rehabilitate the laundromat together, but various social forces threaten to compromise their success.

Orlando - In 1600, nobleman Orlando (Tilda Swinton) inherits his parents' house, thanks to Queen Elizabeth I (Quentin Crisp), who commands the young man to never change. After a disastrous affair with Russian princess Sasha (Charlotte Valandrey), Orlando looks for solace in the arts before being appointed ambassador to Constantinople in 1700, where war is raging. One morning, Orlando is shocked to wake up as a woman and returns home, struggling as a female to retain her property as the centuries roll by.

Tomboy - Posing as a boy with the kids in her new community, ten-year-old Laure enjoys playing about as a lad, despite the challenges this sometimes presents. However, the truth cannot remain hidden and the games have to end.

Believer - Believer is an American documentary that examines the intersection between LGBT people and The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints (LDS Church) through the eyes of Dan Reynolds of Imagine Dragons. It focuses on his efforts to organize the LOVELOUD Festival in Orem, Utah in support of Utah LGBTQ youth.

For The Bible Tells Me So - Delving into values of the religious right and the accompanying homophobia, "For the Bible Tells Me So" focuses on how conservative Christians' interpretation of the Bible is commonly used as a way to deny homosexuals equal rights. Following five families with an openly gay son or daughter, director Daniel G. Karlslake offers a firsthand look at how those in the Christian community with an out child are affected by the homophobic fervor. Karlslake also interviews a number of religious leaders.

Stacey Dooley, Gay to Straight – Stacey Dooley goes to the USA to explore gay conversion therapy, a conservative Christian approach that argues homosexuality is a psychological problem that can be 'cured'.

Gay Muslims – a Channel 4 documentary about the experiences of five Muslim people who identify as lesbian and

gay and how they challenge the heterosexual-worldview within Islam, and attempt to integrate Islam with homosexuality. It is usually a stark choice between suppressing homosexual desires and leading an undercover double life, or coming out and losing the respect and support of their families and communities.

Be Like Others - *In Iran, homosexual relationships are punishable by death, but sex reassignment surgery is a legal "cure" in accordance with religious leader Ayatollah Khomeini's 1983 fatwa. Be Like Others examines the effects of these two policies, namely that some Iranians are pressured into having sex change surgery who would not otherwise have become transsexuals.*

Prayers For Bobby - *In this adaptation of a true story, devout Christian Mary Griffith (Sigourney Weaver) fights to "cure" her gay son, Bobby (Ryan Kelley). Although he tries to please his mother, Bobby cannot change his lifestyle, and his depression leads to suicide. Mary questions her faith and searches for comfort, but after the church is unable to help her cope with Bobby's death, she seeks to understand her opinions on homosexuality for herself. Eventually, Mary becomes an advocate for gay rights.*

Love Simon - *Simon Spier keeps his sexual orientation a secret from his family. However, when a blackmailer threatens to reveal it, he goes on a roller-coaster journey to come to terms with his identity.*

Louis Theroux, America's Most Hated Family - *Louis Theroux spends time with the Phelps family, the family at the heart of the Westboro Baptist Church. The Westboro Baptist Church are known for protesting against America's increasing tolerance of the LGBTQ community.*

Dallas Buyers Club - *Based on true stories of the HIV epidemic in the 80's. Focuses on transgender HIV victim and the stigma faced daily by society*

Genetic Modification / Cloning

The Island - *Futuristic thriller about a contained, seemingly utopian facility in the mid-21st century. The residents hope to be chosen to go to the Island - the last uncontaminated place on Earth, but when one inhabitant discovers that there are sinister forces at work, he and a female friend make a daring escape.*

Gattaca - *Vincent Freeman (Ethan Hawke) has always fantasized about traveling into outer space, but is grounded by his status as a genetically inferior "in-valid." He decides to fight his fate by purchasing the genes of Jerome Morrow (Jude Law), a laboratory-engineered "valid." He assumes Jerome's DNA identity and joins the Gattaca space program, where he falls in love with Irene (Uma Thurman). An investigation into the death of a Gattaca officer (Gore Vidal) complicates Vincent's plans.*

Animal Farm - *Two episodes shown on Channel 4 with Giles Coren opposing GM in farming and Dr Olivia Judson putting forward the case in support of GM.*

Jurassic Park - *In Steven Spielberg's massive blockbuster, paleontologists Alan Grant (Sam Neill) and Ellie Sattler (Laura Dern) and mathematician Ian Malcolm (Jeff Goldblum) are among a select group chosen to tour an island theme park populated by dinosaurs created from prehistoric DNA. While the park's mastermind, billionaire John Hammond (Richard Attenborough), assures everyone that the facility is safe, they find out otherwise when various ferocious predators break free and go on the hunt.*

Animals

Blackfish - *The story of Tilikum, a captive killer whale that has taken the lives of several people, underscores problems within the sea-park industry, man's relationship to nature, and how little has been learned about these highly intelligent mammals.*

Speciesism - *A young man begins investigating the underworld of "factory farming" and soon discovers a growing political and intellectual movement that considers animals as important as humans*

Cowspiracy - *Follow the shocking, yet humorous, journey of an aspiring environmentalist, as he daringly seeks to find the real solution to the most pressing environmental issues and true path to sustainability.*

The Ghosts in our Machine - *Activist and photojournalist Jo-Ann McArthur uses her camera to document the plight of abused and exploited animals and advocate for their rights as sentient beings.*

The Ivory Game - *Ivory is a prized status symbol for middle-class Chinese, and poachers in pursuit of white gold are slaughtering African elephants in record numbers. Filmmakers went under cover for 16 months, infiltrating and documenting the deep-rooted corruption at the heart of the global ivory trafficking crisis.*

The Monkey Lab – *BBC documentary exploring the issues surrounding the use of monkeys in medical research, hearing from those who carry out the research and those protesting against it.*

The Island of Dr Moreau - *Dr. Moreau uses the key of science to turn animal life forms into human-like beasts which threaten not only the island laboratory, but ultimately all humankind.*

Gorillas in the Mist - *Midwesterner Dian Fossey (Sigourney Weaver) leaves the United States for Africa, where she studies the gorillas of Rwanda and Uganda. As Fossey develops a bond with the animals, she also becomes wary of the poachers who prey on them. Fearing that the gorillas will go extinct if humans continue to hunt them, she organizes a defense league to protect the animals; in doing so, though, she puts herself in a perilous situation.*

Okja - *For 10 idyllic years, young Mija has been caretaker and constant companion to Okja - a massive animal and an even bigger friend - at her home in the mountains of South Korea. But that changes when family-owned, multinational conglomerate Mirando Corporation takes Okja for themselves and transports her to New York, where an image-obsessed and self-promoting CEO has big plans for Mija's dearest friend. With no particular plan but single-minded in intent, Mija sets out on a rescue mission.*

Environmental Issues

Erin Brockovich – *Erin Brockovich is a woman in a tight spot. Following a car accident in which Erin is not at fault, Erin pleads with her attorney Ed Masry (Albert Finney) to hire her at his law firm. Erin stumbles upon some medical records placed in real estate files. She convinces Ed to allow her to investigate, where she discovers a cover-up involving contaminated water in a local community which is causing devastating illnesses among its residents.*

Day After Tomorrow – *After climatologist Jack Hall (Dennis Quaid) is largely ignored by U.N. officials when presenting his environmental concerns, his research proves true when an enormous "superstorm" develops, setting off catastrophic natural disasters throughout the world. Trying to get to his son, Sam (Jake Gyllenhaal), who is trapped in New York with his friend Laura (Emmy Rossum) and others, Jack and his crew must travel by foot from Philadelphia, braving the elements, to get to Sam before it's too late.*

An Inconvenient Truth – *Oscar-winning documentary about the environment featuring the unlikeliest of movie stars. Former presidential candidate Al Gore holds this film together as, in front of an audience and with few aids beyond photo slides, he explains how humans have messed up the planet.*

An Inconvenient Sequel: Truth To Power – *Former American Vice President Al Gore continues his tireless fight, travelling around the world to train an army of activists and influence international climate policy. Cameras follow him behind the scenes, in moments both private and public, funny and poignant, as he pursues the inspirational idea that while the stakes have never been higher, the perils of climate change can be overcome with human ingenuity and passion.*

Toxic Town — *a television mini series about a group of mothers who took up a legal battle relating to the disposal of toxic waste in Corby that led to birth abnormalities.*

Buddhism

Little Buddha - A Buddhist monk, Lama Norbu (Ying Ruocheng), believes that a 10-year-old American boy, Jesse (Alex Wiesendanger), is the reincarnation of his spiritual teacher, Lama Dorje. Jesse's father, Dean (Chris Isaak), and mother, Lisa (Bridget Fonda), are dubious, but following his business partner's suicide, a transformed Dean relents and allows his son to travel to Bhutan. However, there are two other children who the monk thinks may also be the reincarnation of Lama Dorje.

Seven Years in Tibet - The story of Austrian mountaineer Heinrich Harrer, whose attempt to scale a Himalayan peak is interrupted by the Second World War. After many adventures, he finds himself in Tibet where he befriends the Dalai Lama, gaining maturity and humility. However, turbulent times lie ahead.

Buddha in Africa - This is a moving observational documentary focused on the experiences of Enock Alu, who has been brought up in a Buddhist orphanage in Ghana. Enock is now at a crossroads; he must decide whether to return to his relatives in a rural village in Ghana or go to school in Taiwan.

The Buddha - The Buddha is a 2010 PBS documentary directed by David Grubin and narrated by Richard Gere. The film follows the story of the Gautama Buddha's life and discusses the history and teachings of Buddhism.

Monk with a Camera - Nicky Vreeland, son of Vogue editor Diana Vreeland, gave up photography to become a Buddhist monk. Years later, he picked up his camera again to earn money to rebuild his monastery.

My Reincarnation - Filmmaker Jennifer Fox spends more than 20 years filming a Tibetan Buddhist master and documents the man's struggle to convince his Western-born son to follow in his footsteps.

Existence of God

Bruce Almighty – Bruce Nolan's (Jim Carrey) career in TV has been stalled for a while, and when he's passed over for a coveted anchorman position, he loses it, complaining that God is treating him poorly. Soon after, God (Morgan Freeman) actually contacts Bruce and offers him all of his powers if he thinks he can do a better job. Bruce accepts and goes on a spree, using his new-found abilities for selfish, personal use until he realizes that the prayers of the world are going unanswered.

Evan Almighty – Newscaster Evan Baxter (Steve Carell) leaves Buffalo behind when he wins a seat in Congress. Moving his wife (Lauren Graham) and family to northern Virginia, he seems to have it made, then God (Morgan Freeman) throws a crisis of biblical proportions at his feet: The Lord wants him to build an ark and line up all the animals two-by-two in preparation for a flood.

Dogma – Two fallen angels who were ejected from paradise find themselves banned in Wisconsin. They are now headed for New Jersey where they find a loophole that can get them back into heaven. The only catch is that it will destroy humanity. A group bands together to stop them.

It's A Wonderful Life – George Bailey has so many problems he is thinking about ending it all - and it's Christmas! As the angels discuss George, we see his life in flashback. As George is about to jump from a bridge, he ends up rescuing his guardian angel, Clarence - who then shows George what his town would have looked like if it hadn't been for all his good deeds over the years.

The Seventh Seal - When disillusioned Swedish knight Antonius Block (Max von Sydow) returns home from the Crusades to find his country in the grips of the Black Death, he challenges Death (Bengt Ekerot) to a chess match for his life. Tormented by the belief that God does not exist, Block sets off on a journey, meeting up with traveling players Jof (Nils Poppe) and his wife, Mia (Bibi Andersson), and becoming determined to evade Death long enough to commit one redemptive act while he still lives.

Religulous - Commentator-comic Bill Maher plays devil's advocate with religion as he talks to believers about their faith. Traveling around the world, Maher examines the tenets of Christianity, Judaism and Islam and raises questions about homosexuality, proof of Christ's existence, Jewish Sabbath laws, violent extremists.

The Root of All Evil – This is a television documentary, written and presented by Richard Dawkins, in which he argues that the world would be better off without religion. The documentary was first broadcast in January 2006, in the form of two 45-minute episodes (*The God Delusion* and *The Virus of Faith*), on Channel 4 in the UK. Dawkins has said that the title *The Root of All Evil?* was not his preferred choice, but that Channel 4 had insisted on it to create controversy.

Imagine – The Artist Formerly known as Cat Stevens – Alan Yentob presents this BBC documentary about the musician Yusuf Islam, the 70s singer-songwriter named Cat Stevens who converted to Islam after a search for a deeper meaning to life.

Free Will

The Truman Show -He doesn't know it, but everything in Truman Burbank's (Jim Carrey) life is part of a massive TV set. Executive producer Christof (Ed Harris) orchestrates "The Truman Show," a live broadcast of Truman's every move captured by hidden cameras. Christof tries to control Truman's mind, even removing his true love, Sylvia (Natascha McElhone), from the show and replacing her with Meryl (Laura Linney). As Truman gradually discovers the truth, however, he must decide whether to act on it.

A Clockwork Orange - **note this an 18 so approach with caution** - Protagonist Alex DeLarge is an "ultraviolent" youth in futuristic Britain. As with all luck, his eventually runs out and he's arrested and convicted of murder and rape. While in prison, Alex learns of an experimental program in which convicts are programmed to detest violence. If he goes through the program, his sentence will be reduced and he will be back on the streets sooner than expected. But Alex's ordeals are far from over once he hits the mean streets of Britain that he had a hand in creating.

Being John Malkovich - In this quirky cult-favorite comedy, unemployed New York City puppeteer Craig Schwartz (John Cusack) reluctantly takes a temp job as a filing clerk for the eccentric Dr. Lester (Orson Bean). While at work, Craig discovers a portal that leads into the mind of renowned actor John Malkovich. When he lets his attractive co-worker Maxine (Catherine Keener) in on the secret, they begin both an unusual business scheme and an odd relationship that involves Craig's restless wife, Lotte (Cameron Diaz).

Ex Machina - This film looks at artificial intelligence, God, gender identity and free will. A young programmer takes part in a scientific experiment where he is expected to assess the extent of artificial intelligence in a female robot.

The Adjustment Bureau - Just as he is on the brink of winning a Senate seat, politician David Norris (Matt Damon) meets a ballerina named Elise Sellas (Emily Blunt). Though David is instantly smitten, mysterious men conspire to keep him away from the beautiful dancer. David learns that he is facing the powerful agents of Fate itself, and glimpsing the future laid out for him, must either accept a predetermined path that does not include Elise or else defy Fate to be with her.

Prejudice and Discrimination

Malcolm X - A tribute to the controversial black activist and leader of the struggle for black liberation. He hit bottom during his imprisonment in the '50s, he became a Black Muslim and then a leader in the Nation of Islam. His assassination in 1965 left a legacy of self-determination and racial pride.

Selma - Although the Civil Rights Act of 1964 legally desegregated the South, discrimination was still rampant in certain areas, making it very difficult for blacks to register to vote. In 1965, an Alabama city became the battleground in the fight for suffrage. Despite violent opposition, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. (David Oyelowo) and his followers pressed forward on an epic march from Selma to Montgomery, and their efforts culminated in President Lyndon Johnson signing the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

Battle of the Sexes - The 1973 tennis match between Billie Jean King and Bobby Riggs became the most watched televised sports event of all time. Trapped in the media glare, King and Riggs were on opposite sides of a binary argument, but off-court each was fighting more personal and complex battles. With her husband urging her to fight for equal pay, the private King was also struggling to come to terms with her own sexuality, while Riggs gambled his legacy and reputation in a bid to relive the glories of his past.

Hidden Figures - is loosely based on the non-fiction book of the same name by Margot Lee Shetterly about black female mathematicians who worked at the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) during the Space Race. Katherine Johnson, who only recently died, was a mathematician who calculated flight trajectories for Project Mercury and other missions but the film covers issues of gender and racial segregation while also looking at what 'computers' were. Not a 'stressful' watch - cert 12.

BlacKkKlansman - Director Spike Lee looks at the first African-American detective to serve in a Colorado police department. Through his work, Ron Stallworth infiltrates a local branch of the infamous KKK and works with a white detective to bring down the organisation. The film ends with real footage of modern Black Lives Matter rallies across the United States and shows how little progress has been made in law enforcement.

The African Doctor - the story of a Congolese doctor who moves with his family to a small, rural village in France. It is a comedy/drama and documents the family's struggles to integrate. A lovely French film available on Netflix

The Hard Stop - The Hard Stop is an intimate documentary revealing the story, away from all press coverage, of Mark Duggan's friends and family following his death. He was shot and killed in a 'Hard Stop' police procedure in 2011, sparking the most violent riots in British history. For 28 months, director George Amponsah (The Fighting Spirit) filmed around Broadwater Farm in Tottenham, where Duggan grew up, capturing his family's distress and focusing on two of his best friends, Marcus Knox and Kurtis Henville.

When They See Us - In 1989 a jogger was assaulted and raped in New York's Central Park, and five young people were subsequently charged with the crime. The quintet, labeled the Central Park Five, maintained its innocence and spent years fighting the convictions, hoping to be exonerated.