

University Conference sees Sixth Formers Reflect on Religious and Ethical Issues

Sixth formers from across the region came to the University of Worcester to debate and discuss issues around religion, faith, philosophy and ethics.



The University's A-Level Sixth Form Conference saw more than 200 Religious Studies students participate in a number of seminars and meet faith and world view leaders.

The event, titled *Suffering and Evil*, aimed to both improve their academic performance, but also to broaden their discussion and thinking, while giving them a taste of university life.

There were keynote lectures from the University's Professor [Darren Oldridge](#), a Professor of Early Modern [History](#), and Dr David Webster, Director of the Centre for Innovation in Learning and Teaching at the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London.

Seminars looked at a wide range of issues, such as 'Has evil and suffering contributed to secularisation?', feminist theology, the ethics of euthanasia, business ethics and religious views on gender identity. There were also more practical seminars, such as how to achieve high grades, revision techniques and essay writing advice.

Students at Christopher Whitehead Language College and Sixth Form said they enjoyed the event.

Molly Cutler Stevens, age 17, said: "The A-level Religious Studies day was an interesting and eye-opening event for all religion, philosophy and ethics students. The seminars were fantastic."

Ori Colthurst, also age 17, added: "The whole day was informative and helpful to apply to our subject. I particularly enjoyed chatting to the different faith leaders."

The quality of teaching at the conference was outstanding, which is evidenced by feedback we received in the evaluation postcards, comments included:

"Super engaging lectures"

"I loved the different styles of teaching (lectures and seminars). [Dr] David Webster's lecture was great".

"The lectures were great, particularly on evil and suffering"

"All the teaching was useful for our A Levels"

"The feminist theology seminar was extremely interesting and led by a gripping teacher – so knowledgeable"

"Seminars expanded the knowledge we had learnt in lectures and I discovered new ideas to use"

Gemma Coley, Head of Religious Studies at Christopher Whitehead, said: "The experience of university life for the day was an excellent opportunity for our A-level students. The facilities and organisation from the University made the day run smoothly and gave the students the feeling of being undergraduates. The RE community came together to put the conference on, and the support from fellow colleagues to be part of the conference, just shows how passionate we all are about the importance of RE in education. It was excellent to see so many students take part in a thought provoking, engaging and academic day, all full of questions and thoughts, religion, philosophy and ethics related."

[Rebecca Davidge](#), Senior Lecturer and [PGCE RE](#) Tutor at the University of Worcester, who helped co-ordinate the event, said: "I was delighted to welcome so many sixth form students to Worcester to have a taster of what university life might be like. They seemed to really enjoy the day, making the most of the facilities and learning opportunities.

"It was a privilege to also welcome members of local faith communities who contributed to the conference. The students had great conversations with them and they learnt so much from each other."