



# Human, Social and Political Sciences

Full details about the course are available from

[www.hsps.cam.ac.uk/](http://www.hsps.cam.ac.uk/)

and

[www.undergraduate.study.cam.ac.uk/courses/human-social-and-political-sciences](http://www.undergraduate.study.cam.ac.uk/courses/human-social-and-political-sciences)

## The subject at Selwyn

The flexibility of Human, Social, and Political Sciences (HSPS) at Cambridge allows you to explore a variety of subjects, many of which may be new to you (such as international relations or social anthropology), before pursuing advanced study in one or two specific subjects in your second and third years. Alternatively, if you already know the subject(s) in which you want to specialise, you can tailor the course to suit your interests right from the start while retaining the option to take individual papers in other subjects as well.

You graduate from Cambridge having specialised in one or two subjects but also have the advantage of a broad background across the human, social, and political sciences.

Selwyn is one of the most vibrant Colleges for HSPS. We are committed to admitting students with interests in the full range of disciplines and feel that it is important that applicants approach it without feeling obliged to commit themselves too soon to one track. Students are very well guided in their studies and receive any help needed. Our students have obtained excellent results and prizes over the years. Selwyn is next door to the new building that houses a number of the HSPS departments and is no more than ten minutes' walk from the furthest ones, as well as five minutes' walk from the main University Library. The College Library contains the most important books relevant to the course and provides an excellent study environment.

## The Teaching Fellows

The College has in Professor Patrick Baert its own Director of Studies in HSPS. He was awarded the prestigious Pilkington Teaching Prize. He is currently studying philosophers' political engagement and focuses on Sartre.

Dr Uradyn Bulag, Fellow of Selwyn and University Reader in Social Anthropology has responsibility for students in Social Anthropology.

Other Fellows who contribute to the teaching include Dr Filipe Carreira da Silva (social and political theory), Dr Mike Sewell (international relations), Dr Dacia Viejo-Rose (Archaeology), and Professor John Ray (Late-Period Egypt and Hellenistic Egypt).

## Qualities we are looking for

There are no specific subjects preferred as preparation for this course and students from arts, humanities and science backgrounds do equally well. What the course primarily requires - and what we look for in selecting candidates - is active interest in and curiosity about the dynamics of human experience in time and space, the ability to think critically about society and culture and - as in all subjects - the ability to argue logically and link theory and evidence coherently. Since the

course is based on a wide range of literature, candidates must also be able and willing readers.

Students are expected to be independent, able to motivate themselves and to have a flexible and critical mind. They need a genuine sense of intellectual curiosity about the subject in relation to both the actual day to day empirical events and their theoretical analysis.

We give no preference to any particular element of the course in the admissions process. HSPS at Cambridge is a combination of disciplines, which cannot be studied anywhere else in the UK. It thus offers a unique opportunity to study social sciences in an interdisciplinary way.

The College hosts the prestigious annual Ramsay-Murray Lecture. Recent speakers have included Sir Ian Kershaw, Professor Onora O'Neill, Professor Niall Ferguson, Professor Quentin Skinner and Professor Mark Mazower. The 2016 lecture "The Obama Legacy" was delivered by Professor Theda Skocpol of Harvard University.

## Pre-interview assessment

As at other Colleges, applicants will be asked to take the pre-interview written assessment for HSPS (HSPSAA), which will take place in schools and other assessment centres on **30 October 2019**. You must be registered in advance (separately to your UCAS application) to take the assessment. The registration deadline is **15 October 2019**. Your assessment centre must register you for the pre-interview assessment (you cannot register yourself).

## Written work

Applicants are asked to send in advance clear photocopies of two pieces of recent and relevant marked class-work in a subject (or subjects) of their choice. They may be used as the basis for discussion at interview.

## Interviews

There are three interviews. The two subject interviews last 20-30 minutes. The objective is to ascertain that the candidate has both a general interest in the subject matter of the course and an independent, critical way of looking at things. This is done through discussion of wider reading and other relevant academic interests.

You will also have a shorter general interview. This is intended to let us find out more about your motivation in applying for HSPS at Cambridge. It is intended to give us a fuller sense of your aptitude for your chosen course, the maturity of your approach towards academic work, and your interests in and beyond the course.

## Finding out more and Open Days

HSPS will be participating in the Cambridge Open Days on the 4 and 5 July. See the insert in our prospectus about this and other open days at Selwyn. Full details are also available on our website.



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