

Politics, Media and Culture 2026

at Balliol College, Oxford

Politics, Media and Culture Summer School Programme

August 22nd– September 5th 2026
Balliol College, Oxford

A thematic approach

This course offers an integrated study of politics, international relations, media and culture. There will be a range of classes – lectures, seminars, advanced English tuition, and smaller workshops. In these, we will investigate, discuss and debate aspects of global politics and British media and culture. We also give you the option to specialise more in politics or literature, depending on your interests.

Oxford-style teaching

The programme improves your *spoken and written English*. It is highly participatory, and the teaching group size is small: you will receive personal attention from world-class academics, and can ask them questions directly. You will also have a one-to-one writing tutorial. This method of education, characteristic of Oxford University, encourages students to take part, ask questions and argue persuasively.

A real student life

Students currently studying at Oxford University will be involved in classes, and will lead a social programme which will offer you a taste of student life at the college. Fascinating social and cultural activities, including visits to the theatre and trips to London and Stratford-upon-Avon (Shakespeare's birthplace), will immerse you in English language and culture: you really will have the time of your life.



Teaching schedule

Politics, International Relations and Media stream

L = lecture S = seminar W = workshop

	Week 1		Week 2
Mon	<p>9.15-10.15 <i>The Emergence of a Constitutional Monarchy in Britain (L)</i> Dr Daniel Jordan</p> <p>10.30-12.00 <i>Why Shakespeare matters (L)</i> Dr Charlotte Clark</p> <p>1.30-3.30 <i>Writing craft (L/W)</i> Dr Colin Clark</p>	Mon	<p>9.30-10.45 <i>Imperialism, Postcoloniality and International Relations (L)</i> Dr David Rampton</p> <p>11-12.30 <i>The Humanitarian Paradox and its Implications: the Politics and Principles of Humanitarian Action (L)</i> Prof. Tom Scott-Smith</p> <p>1.30-3 <i>Imperialism, Colonialism and International Relations (S)</i> Dr David Rampton</p>
Tues	<p>9.30-11 <i>Satire in the Media (L)</i> Dr Ben Davies</p> <p>11.15-12.30 <i>Investigation into British Media (W)</i> Dr Charlotte Clark</p> <p>1.30-2.30 <i>Elections in Britain (L)</i> Prof. Stephen Fisher</p> <p>3-4 <i>Why Poetry Matters (L)</i> Dr Colin Clark</p>	Tues	<p>9.30-11 <i>The Politics and Principles of Humanitarian Action (S)</i> Prof. Tom Scott-Smith</p> <p>11-12.30 <i>Understanding Empire – Trump and Brexit through a Postcolonial Lens (S)</i> Dr David Rampton</p> <p>2-4 <i>To go or to stay? Dilemmas of emergency aid after the genocide in Rwanda (L/S)</i> Prof. Tom Scott-Smith</p>
Wed	<p>9.30-11 <i>AI: Opportunities and Ethics (L)</i> Dr David Birtill</p> <p>11-12.30 <i>Dystopian Literature (S)</i> Dr Charlotte Clark</p> <p>2-5.30 <i>Trip to London and Houses of Parliament</i></p>	Wed	<p>9-10.30 <i>Critical War Studies (L)</i> Dr David Rampton</p> <p>10.45-12.15 <i>The Return of Great Power Politics as the Return of 'History'? (L)</i> Dr Aaron McKeil</p> <p>1.30-9.30 <i>Trip to Blenheim Palace</i></p>
Th	<p>9.30-10.30 <i>How AI ate the world (L)</i> Dr Chris Stokel Walker</p> <p>11-12.30 <i>Introduction to British Law (L)</i> Anne-Marie Elliot</p> <p>2-3.30 <i>Thinking journalistically (S)</i> Dr Chris Stokel Walker</p>	Th	<p>9.30-10.30 <i>Can we successfully wean ourselves off fossil fuels? (L)</i> Prof. Jan Rosenow</p> <p>10.45-12 <i>Understanding Power Politics (S)</i> Dr Aaron McKeil</p> <p>1.30-3.30 <i>Critical War Studies (S)</i> Dr David Rampton</p>
Fri	<p>9-10 <i>The Ethics of Migration (L)</i> Professor Matthew Gibney</p> <p>10.30-12 <i>Producing multimedia journalism (W)</i> Dr Chris Stokel-Walker</p> <p>2-3.30 <i>Shakespeare play study (W)</i> Dr Charlotte Clark</p>	Fri	<p>9-10 <i>Working for the UN (L)</i> Dr Yuka Hasegawa</p> <p>10.30-12 <i>Identity, Security and War (S)</i> Dr David Rampton</p> <p>1-2 <i>What Kind of International Order? Open, Multipolar, and Alternatives (S)</i> Dr Aaron McKeil</p> <p>2-5 <i>Student presentations & individual tutorials</i></p>

Teaching schedule

Literature and Shakespeare stream

L = lecture S = seminar W = workshop

	Week 1		Week 2
Mon	<p>9.15-10.15 <i>The Emergence of a Constitutional Monarchy in Britain (L)</i> Dr Daniel Jordan</p> <p>10.30-12.00 <i>Why Shakespeare matters (L)</i> Dr Charlotte Clark</p> <p>1.30-3.30 <i>Writing craft (L/W)</i> Dr Colin Clark</p>	Mon	<p>9.30-10.45 <i>Imperialism, Postcoloniality and International Relations (L)</i> Dr David Rampton</p> <p>11-12.30 <i>The Humanitarian Paradox and its Implications: the Politics and Principles of Humanitarian Action (L)</i> Prof. Tom Scott-Smith</p> <p>1.30-3 <i>Postcolonial Literature and the Idea of Place (S)</i> Dr Colin Clark</p>
Tues	<p>9.30-11 <i>Satire in the Media (L)</i> Dr Ben Davies</p> <p>11.15-12.30 <i>Investigation into British Media (W)</i> Dr Charlotte Clark</p> <p>1.30-2.30 <i>Elections in Britain (L)</i> Prof. Stephen Fisher</p> <p>3-4 <i>Why Poetry Matters (L)</i> Dr Colin Clark</p>	Tues	<p>9.30-10.45 <i>Shakespeare's soliloquies (S)</i> Dr Colin Clark</p> <p>11-12.30 <i>Shakespeare's soliloquies (S)</i> Dr Charlotte Clark</p> <p>2-4 <i>Shakespeare's Original Stages (S)</i> Dr Jen Waghorn</p>
Wed	<p>9.30-11 <i>AI: Opportunities and Ethics (L)</i> Dr David Birtill</p> <p>11-12.30 <i>Dystopian Literature (S)</i> Dr Charlotte Clark</p> <p>2-5.30 <i>Trip to London and Houses of Parliament</i></p>	Wed	<p>9-12 <i>History of the English Language: from Beowulf to Shakespeare to Eliot (S)</i> Dr Colin Clark</p> <p>1.30-9.30 <i>Trip to Blenheim Palace</i></p>
Th	<p>9.30-10.30 <i>How AI ate the world (L)</i> Dr Chris Stokel Walker</p> <p>11-12.30 <i>Elements of Poetry (S)</i> Dr Colin Clark</p> <p>2-3.30 <i>Thinking journalistically (S)</i> Dr Chris Stokel Walker</p>	Th	<p>9.30-10.30 <i>Can we successfully wean ourselves off fossil fuels? (L)</i> Prof. Jan Rosenow</p> <p>11-12.30 <i>Louise Labé as the New Sappho: A Woman Love Poet in Sixteenth-Century France (S)</i> Dr Chimene Bateman</p> <p>1.30-3 <i>Metaphysical poetry (S)</i> Dr Colin Clark</p>
Fri	<p>9-10 <i>The Ethics of Migration (L)</i> Professor Matthew Gibney</p> <p>10.30-12 <i>Producing multimedia journalism (W)</i> Dr Chris Stokel-Walker</p> <p>2-3.30 <i>Shakespeare play study (W)</i> Dr Charlotte Clark</p>	Fri	<p>9-10 <i>Working for the UN (L)</i> Dr Yuka Hasegawa</p> <p>10.30-12 <i>Shakespeare's sonnets (S)</i> Dr Colin Clark</p> <p>1-2 <i>Shakespeare's sonnets (S)</i> Dr Charlotte Clark</p> <p>2-5 <i>Student presentations & individual tutorials</i></p>

Taking your English to a higher level

You will have an unequalled opportunity to improve and refine your English, no matter your level

Masashi Kawamura
4) Collective memory is malleable = who shapes it.
Who shapes collective memory? It's possible by everyone if you're able to express your opinion on the past events. Collective memory is formed of stories told by many people. It tends to be vague or inaccurate. It's just the record of past events on various levels. But if you want to shape collective memory, you have to do so. What if there are opponents of your opinion of past events? Further more, what if they try to rewrite collective memories which you believe in?
Good, searching set of questions
To shape collective memory shouldn't be hard for those who have a memory of a particular event. When you want to hear the voice of those who has gone through World War II or war era, you would try to ask people who lived at that moment, which is the best way of shaping of your collective memory. Besides, it's quite easy for them to tell that story because they have experienced through that dreadful time. Although they might not want to dig it down deeply.
You could vary your punctuation a little more (i.e. =, etc) what if someone tried to shape their own collective memory, they want to create that is completely opposite idea of (your) collective memory.
A contradiction would happen between you and someone like them, then it'd turn into argument and finally both of you would try to beat opposite idea from your view of collective memory. Then which of you would win? The answer is the one who has more power, authority or opportunity of stating your collective memory and capability (of letting people believe in your collective memory, ability to?)
1.5.3: and or or at the end. basically, who is more persuasive

[S @ C ? U ?] if N(S), n.k. a.12
The capability of telling the past events properly doesn't work out here. This situation is as if you've got the best fishing rod in the world in a country where there's no place to do fishing. If you have the capability of shaping collective memory well and there's no opportunity of doing so, then (your / that) ability is definitely useless. So that collective memory can be formed by everyone who has more opportunity, power, the capability of letting people believe in your collective memory, as I said before. It can't be applied that the capability of telling the past events properly.

A thoughtful consideration of the foundations and problematics of collective memory. You develop a full argument, and often draw on questioning or analogy to help guide the reader — good.

You have a nice style! Just try to connect your sentences together a little more, rather than breaking them only to begin with a conjunction. Try experimenting with more varied punctuation and your level will certainly rise. I like the variety in your sentences and the semi-conversational tone. It reads nicely.



Immersion and close personal attention

You have the opportunity to spend all day, every day of our course discussing ideas, chatting, and socialising in small groups with world-class professors and friendly teaching assistants (all of whom are students of the highest calibre). This is the best way to improve your fluency in English – and you will make friends with them for life!

One-to-one writing tutorials

During the course, each student will have a one-to-one writing style tutorial with an academic, closely discussing and improving an essay that they have written on the course; the essay will have been annotated carefully by your teacher. This individual tutorial style is typical of Oxford University, and is unique to this summer programme.

Daily drop-in English clinics

Every weekday, between the classes and the cultural and social events, there will be an informal drop-in English clinic: students are welcome to come and ask any question they might have about English grammar, expression, writing style or any material covered on the course.

An historic and beautiful college

You will be living and studying in rooms that have been used since 1263. Surrounded by history, you have a unique opportunity to live in one of Oxford's oldest and most iconic colleges.



Your tutors

Professor Matthew Gibney (lecturer: Politics and International Relations)

Matthew is a Professor of Politics and Forced Migration and a Fellow of Linacre College, Oxford University. His research specialises in the ethnographic and historical study of humanitarian relief and its impact on the lives of refugees.

Professor Tom Scott-Smith (tutor: Politics and International Relations)

Tom is a Professor of Political Anthropology and a Fellow of St Cross College, Oxford University. His research specialises in the ethnographic and historical study of humanitarian relief and its impact on the lives of refugees.

Dr David Rampton (tutor: Politics and International Relations)

David is a Fellow in Global Politics in the Government and IR Departments at LSE (London School of Economics). His research focuses on the biopolitics of nationalism and the governmental interface between nationalist and international state-building projects.

Dr Aaron McKiel (tutor: International Relations)

Aaron is a Lecturer on the MSc International Strategy and Diplomacy Programme at LSE IDEAS. He also produced 'A Short History of IDEAS' and previously served as Editor for *Millennium: Journal of International Studies*.

Dr David Harris-Birtill (tutor: AI)

David is a Senior Lecturer in the School of Computer Science at the University of St Andrews. David is head of the Med-Tech team and leads the Health Informatics Research Theme.

Professor Stephen Fisher Simon (tutor: Politics)

Stephen is a Professor of Political Sociology and a Fellow of Trinity College, Oxford University. His research has primarily been on public opinion and how people vote in elections, in Britain and cross-nationally.

Professor Jan Rosenow (lecturer: Politics and environmental sustainability)

Jan is a Professor of Energy and Climate Policy and Leader of the Energy Programme at the Environmental Change Institute, University of Oxford, and a Senior Associate at the Cambridge University Institute for Sustainability Leadership.

Dr Jen Waghorn (tutor: Literature)

Jen is a Lecturer in Shakespeare Studies at the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust. She is an expert on theatre history, Shakespeare's original staging, and Early Modern music.

Dr Chris Stokel-Walker (tutor: Journalism)

Chris is one of the most prolific and widely published journalists in the UK, working for the world's biggest publications. He is also an author, presenter and lecturer on Journalism and AI.

Dr Chimene Bateman (tutor: Literature)

Chimene is a Lecturer in Literature a Fellow of Lady Margaret Hall and University College, Oxford University. She specialises in Medieval and Early Modern French Literature.

Dr Yuka Hasegawa (tutor: Politics)

Yuka has worked for the United Nations for many years, in various postings all over the world. She was recently Deputy Director-General of Migration Management for the UNHCR.

Dr Colin Clark (tutor: Literature and Writing; Course Director)

Colin is a literature specialist. He has taught and lectured at Oxford University (Exeter College), Grenoble University, and the University of Provence. He has published on Modernist literature and is preparing a book on Postcolonial French poetry.

Dr Charlotte Clark (tutor: Literature and Writing; Course Director)

Charlotte has recently completed her PhD in Shakespeare at the Shakespeare Institute in Stratford-upon-Avon, and is preparing a book on Shakespeare's *Tempest*. She is also an international educational consultant and course designer.

Crucial to the teaching, atmosphere and life of the course are the Course Assistants, a group of current and former Oxford and Cambridge University students, who spend each day with you!



Formal Halls: a feast in every sense

*Oxford has many traditions, one of which is the **Formal Hall**: once a term - or once a year - Oxford students are invited to have a full gourmet feast in college: this event is called a 'Formal Hall'. Instead of the tasty everyday menu, students and their teachers share in an opulent feast: gourmet delicacies, beautiful presentation, and a formal setting and dress are the order of the day.*

On your two-week course, you will enjoy two Formal Halls, allowing you to try the finest of British cuisine, wear your finest clothes (suits and dresses are required), and enjoy the atmosphere of an 800-year tradition with your new friends and teachers.



Social and cultural programme



Day	Afternoon	Evening
Saturday	Arrivals and greeting	Arrivals and greeting
Sunday	Tour of Oxford Picnic and punting on the river	Dinner in Hall
Monday	Oxford museums tour	'Ice-breaker' party: games in the college bar
Tuesday	Rounders tournament	Pub trip: Turf Tavern (oldest pub in Oxford)
Wednesday	Houses of Parliament trip	London trip
Thursday	Christ Church meadow walk	Formal Hall dinner (3 courses)
Friday	Tour: Oxford colleges	Magdalen Arms pub dinner
Saturday	Trip to Stratford-upon-Avon (Shakespeare's birthplace)	Trip to Stratford-upon-Avon (Shakespeare's birthplace)
Sunday	Trip to London	London theatre trip
Monday	Croquet on Balliol college lawn	Quiz night in Balliol JCR
Tuesday	Afternoon cream tea	Games night in Balliol JCR
Wednesday	Trip to Blenheim Palace (Churchill's birthplace; most beautiful palace in England)	Trip to Blenheim Palace (Churchill's birthplace; most beautiful palace in England)
Thursday	Tour: Magdalen College and red deer walk	Drinks reception Gala dinner (4-course Formal Hall)
Friday	Free time for souvenir shopping	End-of-course party

‘I learned more from these two weeks than one year in school! Study is not all about school; the cultural experience is much more important for me. I fell in love with the country because of you.’

Christina Lee, Waseda University

‘I have learned many things from different perspectives; we had fabulous opportunities. I cannot be more satisfied.’

Maiko Oka, Sophia University

‘It was dazzling!’

Eiji Yasuhara, Keio University

‘Amazing experience! Memorable and unique summer! This course is far more than gaining knowledge and a global view: it guides us to think and study differently.’

Zoe Wang, Shandong University

‘This course was a really good chance to practice speaking English, because it’s difficult to do so in Japanese Universities. So I hope you will keep putting the emphasis on debate or discussion.’

Yumiko Inaoka, Tokyo University

‘Thank you for organising this wonderful summer programme, and for inviting all those brilliant tutors.

I’ve made the decision to go to graduate school in the UK!’

Linda Lin, Waseda University

‘This whole experience has been the best two weeks of my life.’

Andrew Bibee, Sophia University

Course requirements

This course is open to students in any year, taking any course. Ideally, you would have an overall score of around IELTS 5.5, TOEFL iBT 76, TOEIC 600, or similar competence in English (no formal certificate is required).

The course fee (£3150) includes:

- All classes and tuition
- Accommodation (Saturday 22nd August - Saturday 5th September)
- Return travel costs between all London airports and Oxford (air travel is not part of the course cost)
- All meals (including picnics, banquets and cream teas)
- All social and cultural activities
- 2 Formal Halls: haute-cuisine, 3 and 4-course formal gourmet dinners

Application deadline: As soon as possible (places are limited), and by 30 June 2026

To apply: Contact evanscharlotte121@gmail.com for an application form



red deer on the college deer walk