

The Speakers

Julie Arliss

A Farmington Fellow at Harris Manchester College, University of Oxford, Julie Arliss is a highly accomplished teacher and author. Julie Arliss is a well-known international educator of gifted students with a gift for making the complex simple, and the simple complex. She is committed to the provision of world-class extension activities for these students, to extend their reach well beyond the curriculum to new areas of knowledge. She is on the examining team for Cambridge International Examinations and founder of Academy Conferences.



Peter Baron

Peter Baron read Philosophy, Politics and Economics at the University of Oxford before completing his M Litt. He is a popular and energetic speaker who has worked for many years with more able students both in schools and as a personal tutor. He is chief editor and principle author of philosophical investigations, a popular online community for philosophy which is an excellent resource for students. He also runs his own publishing house and is the author of a number of popular books. He is an educational consultant for Critical Thinking and has worked closely with Academy Learning for many years.



Dr Christopher O'Neill

Dr O'Neill is a fellow of Harris Manchester College, University of Oxford and is a polymathic thinker. He is a psychologist, registered psychotherapist and trained counsellor. He initiated the large-scale MYRIAD research project in Oxford University investigating resilience and well-being in young people. He has forty years' experience of working with students and staff in schools and is an exceptional educator.



Professor Tom Greggs

After being awarded a starred Double First Class Honours Degree from the University of Oxford, Tom completed his Phd at Cambridge. He has taught at Manchester Grammar school but is now a university lecturer and researcher with a commitment to making his work accessible to young people. He has a weekly slot on Radio 4 and holds various political offices at local regional and national levels with a general focus on education policy. He is widely regarded as a 'rising star'.



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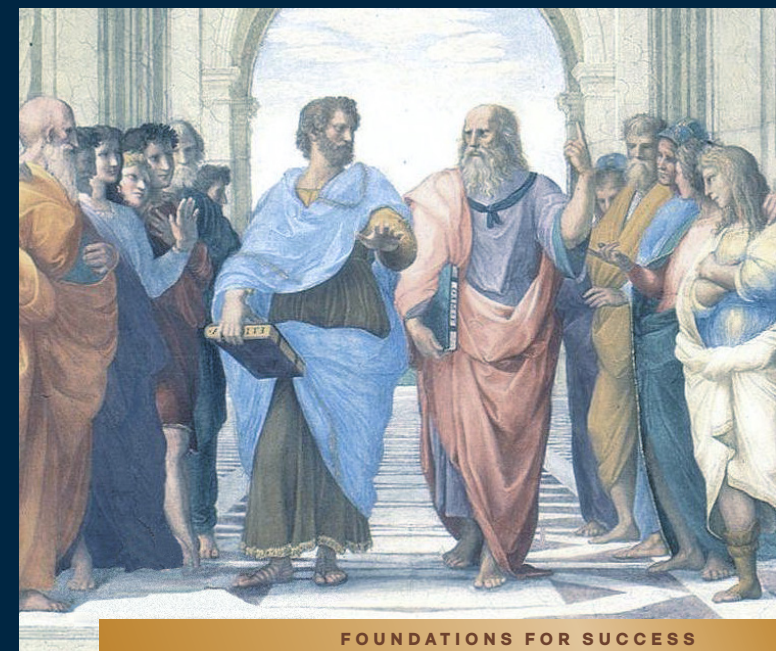
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Course 1

Oxbridge Interview Question: Here's a Cactus. Tell us About it. – Julie Arliss

At Oxford University, one of the most prestigious educational institutions in the world, admission interview questions are designed to give candidates a chance to show their real ability and potential - which means seeing if a candidate can think laterally, and apply their thinking to new ideas, and different contexts. Interviews are not about reciting what you already know, rather, they give candidates a chance to show their real ability and potential. There is no 'right' answer to many of the questions: the focus is on how well you can think. This session will provide students with essential Oxbridge standard thinking tools, and ideas for developing high-level lateral thinking skills. This thorny question will be examined as a test case.

A Slow Strange Death – The Failure of Environmental Economics – Peter Baron (Alumni of University of Oxford)

Without a basic understanding of Economics it is impossible to understand how the current environmental crisis happened, or how to resolve it. In a lively interactive session, students will be introduced via various engaging case studies, to the core concepts of neo-classical Economics, such as marginal gains, incentives, externalities, the invisible hand, black box thinking and division of labour. This session will argue that the philosophical foundations of this view are bankrupt and that it has failed to embrace the issues of future generations (climate change), minority groups (poorer countries) and meaningful measure of welfare (happiness). It will be argued that we need to become a different sort of economic animal if we are to rescue the environment. A polymathic insight into the philosophy of economics.

Aristotle 384-322 BCE and his Big Idea – Julie Arliss

In Nicomachean Ethics (Ἠθικὰ Νικομάχεια) Aristotle applied himself to the question of how best to cultivate the young people of Athens, so that they would grow up to be HAPPY. The work is named after and addressed to his son, Nicomachus, and many regard it as the first ever 'self-help' book for teenagers! This session will examine the big idea that he develops in relation to, 'What is normal for humans?' and explain how this idea is core to most modern-day well-being programmes in schools. The human function, reason-infused virtue, final cause, eudaimonia and habituation will all be explained and students will be encouraged to think for themselves and evaluate claims about the modern-day relevance of ancient wisdom.

The Science and Philosophy of Time – Julie Arliss

From Aristotle to Einstein TIME has proved difficult to pin down. If the past no longer exists and the future doesn't yet exist, and all my perceptions are of a past moment, what is the present? What is the relationship between time and mind itself? Is time a gigantic and universal mind-dependent delusion? In what way is time relative and is time travel possible. An exciting thought-provoking talk; a guaranteed neuron teaser. Take time to consider TIME!

Debate: This House believes that 'enthusiastic consent' is not enough'

Julie Arliss and Peter Baron discuss this highly relevant topic.

Course 2

Philosophy, Love and Relationships – Julie Arliss

Relationships are the most important part of human life and have the power to make us happy, or utterly miserable! No wonder then, that so many people have thought so hard about how to achieve the perfect relationship. David Hume argued that reason is slave to the passions, but was he right? Is it reasonable to expect something more than blind passion to regulate our relationships, or not? This session will start by examining Plato's philosophical examination of love and other ancient ideas about relationships before considering the world of online dating, Love Island and Tinder. How and why have the rules of relationships changed, and are people happier? If we 'dare to be wise,' Immanuel Kant, what does that mean in terms of relationships, and is 'not hurting anybody,' Jeremy Bentham, enough?

Science and Outstanding Achievement – Dr Christopher O'Neill

Contrary to popular belief, outstanding achievement in everything and anything, from maths to marathons, classics to clarinet, from football to physics, does not ultimately depend upon innate intelligence or ability. There are a number of important factors leading to outstanding achievement, which, unlike your genetic profile or the school you attend, are entirely under your control. This session will examine the hard evidence of what really produces a life of outstanding achievement. A fascinating and challenging examination of what really makes a difference. Follow up resources to stretch and challenge. Recorded in King's College Chapel with a live audience

Lady Gaga and Picasso at Starbucks – Professor Tom Greggs

This is perhaps one of the most significant issues for today's young people to grasp. What defines the culture we live in? Are some cultures more advanced than others or is it all relative? Do art, music, film and architecture illuminate society and create culture or simply reflect it? In a hundred years time what will our generation be remembered for and what would we like it to be remembered for? Students will be given the tools to think creatively about how new cultures emerge and what factors shape and change a culture. The formative role of the individual in cultural shifts will be identified and students will be challenged to think broadly about the kind of culture they themselves might wish to create.

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Debate: Is love a commodity to be traded?

A lively debate between Julie Arliss and Professor Tom Greggs, recorded at King's College with a live audience.

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