

# Geography



## NAME OF COURSE

BA in Geography (3 years)

## ADMISSIONS TEST

Candidates applying 2023 (onwards) will have to take the TSA (Thinking Skills Test).

## A-LEVELS REQUIRED

None required. Geography highly recommended.

## MINIMUM A-LEVEL GRADE REQUIREMENTS

A\*AA (Not including General Studies) (A\* does not need to be in Geography)

## COURSE DESCRIPTION

Geography is a diverse discipline that bridges social and natural sciences by focussing on the interrelationships between society and the physical and human environment. It addresses pressing issues including environmental change, global inequalities and the transformation of the global economy and culture. It will give you a thorough understanding of the natural systems and processes that shape the world and how we interact with it. You will learn about how events are shaped by both natural and social phenomena, as well as deconstructing terminology, even challenging the categories of the geographical discipline itself.

One of the questions at the core of this course is why place matters, or in other words, why political institutions, social organisations and cultural norms differ across the world, which is developed through an exploration of interdisciplinary approaches.

## STRUCTURE OF MODULES

### 1st year:

- **Four compulsory courses:** Earth Systems Processes, Human Geography, Geographical Controversies, Geographical Techniques
- **Fieldwork:** Environmental geography field trip to Dorset (four days), one-day physical geography field trip in Oxford, one-day independent human fieldwork in Oxford
- **Assessment:** Four written papers, two fieldwork reports, submitted essay on Geographical Controversies

### 2nd and 3rd year:

- **Core course:** Geographical Thought
- **Foundational courses (choose 2 out of 3):** Space, Place & Society, Earth System Dynamics, Environmental Geography
- **Options (choose 3):** These vary every year. The options offered last year included African Societies, Climate Change & Vulnerability, Geography at War, Desert Landscapes & Dynamics, amongst others
- **Fieldwork:** Overseas field trip
- **Dissertation:** All students are required to submit a geographical dissertation of about 12,000 words based on primary fieldwork
- **Assessment:** One written exam on the 'Geographical Thought: Histories, Philosophies, Practices' paper, Two written exams - one for each of the 'Foundational Courses, Three written exams - one for each of the 'Optional Subjects', Three extended essays, one for each of the 'Optional Subjects', of 4,500 words each. One geographical dissertation of 12,000 words, One fieldwork report of 4,500 words

## APPROXIMATE NO. OF CONTACT HOURS PER WEEK

**Tutorials:** 1

**Lectures:** 6-7

**Labs:** 2

**Seminars/classes:** 1

## TUTORIAL TESTIMONIAL

You will have at least one college tutorial a week lasting 1 hour, consisting of one tutor and 2-3 students. Many of the tutors are world-leading experts with years of experience in teaching and research. Doctoral students can also lead tutorials. The tutorial is based around reading and a written essay that the students would have completed in advance. Students answer and ask questions on the chosen topics, defend the argument they made in their essay and challenge each other. The tutorial, and preparation work beforehand, is designed to encourage students to engage deeply with and think critically about the subject material.

## CLASSES TESTIMONIAL

Classes are held with other Geography students in your college led by your college tutors. These classes provide extra support on top of lectures and tutorials on subjects such as statistics. Lab practicals are held centrally by the department where you will be with half the cohort. They support the 'Methods in Geography' lecture material and include designing surveys, interview scripts and coding their responses, using GIS, Google Earth and other computer based software. Labs also support the Statistics Lecture material by incorporating coding in stats using programmes

## PERSONAL STATEMENT TIPS

- Geography is a vast discipline, so specify your interests; which aspects resonate with you, what do you want to explore more at uni e.g., sustainable development, environmental crisis etc...
- Most importantly, explain WHY! Why are you interested and what exactly intrigued you about this topic
- Bring any further readings on topics of interest, shows a higher level of engagement with the subject (this can even be relevant news article)
- What extracurricular activities have you done linking to your interests, e.g., reading group discussing current affairs, debate club, summer school, volunteering or work experience, these show enthusiasm for the subject
- Maybe a line/two about wider interests? Keep short

## INTERVIEW TIPS

- Take your time...
- Try to answer questions directly, don't answer the question you wish they asked you!
- Remember to explain your thought process, often times there's no right or wrong answer, tutors are looking for how you arrive at conclusions
- If an opinion is applicable to the question say your opinion... BUT
- Be prepared to be challenged!
- In which case, explain why you think this and don't backtrack immediately (unless shown to be clearly inaccurate)
- Lastly, make sure to enjoy it! It should feel more like a conversation with world leading experts in their fields, than an interview

## WHAT I WISH I KNEW WHEN I WAS APPLYING...

You are interviewing the tutors as much as they are interviewing you!  
More about the Islamic Society and fellow Muslims at Oxford

## Example Timetable

	Michaelmas Term				
Prelims					
Week 7					
TIME	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
9-10am					
10-11am	Tutorial				
11-12pm	Earth Systems Processes	Earth Systems Processes	Qualitative Methods (Lecture)	Stats Class	Geographical Controversies
12-1pm	Statistics (Lecture)			Human Geography	
2-5pm	Statistics (Practical)				Qualitative Methods (Practical)

## Recommended Reading

- Dodds, K., 2007. **Geopolitics: A very short introduction**. Oxford, OUP.
- Cloke, P., Crang, M. and Goodwin, M., 2013. **Introducing Human Geographies, 3rd Edition**. London, Routledge.
- Goudie, A. and Viles, H., 2010. **Landscapes and Geomorphology: A very short introduction**. Oxford, OUP.
- Gregory, K.J., 2010. **The Earth's Land Surface: Landforms and processes in geomorphology**. Sage, London.
- Clifford, N., Holloway, S., Rice, S. and Valentine, G. eds., 2009. **Key Concepts in Geography, 2nd Edition**. London: Sage.
- McKittrick, Katherine., 2006. **Demonic grounds: Black women and the cartographies of struggle**
- Mitchell, Don., 2000. **Cultural Geography: a critical introduction**. Oxford, Blackwell
- Any issue of the National Geographic