



Academy  
Conferences

"A mind, once stretched by a new idea never regains its original dimensions."



# Oxford Masterclass 2019/2020 for the More Able and Ambitious

Big Ideas for Curious Minds  
For Students Years 10–13

There is real skill in presenting difficult material in a way that is challenging and comprehensible. It is good to see young people at these conferences engaged in deeper thinking about important topics.



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An educational programme by

*Julie Armit*



EMMANUEL  
COLLEGE



UNIVERSITY OF  
ABERDEEN

# The Lectures

## Knowing what you Know and What you Don't Know. Examining Epistemology.

Julie Arliss

Knowledge is not the same as belief. What things can we know, 'beyond reasonable doubt'? This is the task for a jury sitting in a court room and is the opening question of this session. A range of ideas will be presented from across the curriculum to explore the difference between that which can rationally be said to be 'proved' and what it is reasonable to believe. This session will give academically able students, thinking tools with which to test factual claims. In addition there will be an evaluation of the claim that there are some areas of human experience, such as claims to religious experience, which require different tests.

## Key theme: 'BODIES' with a Guest Academic

A different guest academic will speak in each region on the theme of BODIES.

**London:** Professor Charles Foster. Green Templeton College Oxford & Faculty of Law, Oxford. Ig Nobel Prize winner. *Why I lived like a badger, an otter, a deer and a swift*

**Cambridge:** Dr. James Orr. Former Corporate Lawyer, Cambridge University Philosophy. Cambridge. *Embodied Cognition – Can the BODY have knowledge?*

**Oxford, Wellington:** Mike Grenier. Shakespeare- humors and appetites. A polymathic look at how Shakespeare viewed the body, and our appetites. *How does Shakespeare use science to create dynamic dramatic characters and situations? How do melancholic moods create tragic heroes and why is it not entirely bad to have the appetites of Jack Falstaff?*

**Gateshead, Manchester:** Dr. Andrew Pinsent - Ian Ramsey Centre, Theology Faculty University of Oxford, Former CERN physicist. *A new look at Heavenly Bodies.*

## Science and the Secret of Happiness

Dr. Christopher O'Neill

We all want to be happy, so how is that achieved? Is happiness found in fame and fortune? Or in material possessions: house, car, garden, great job? Or maybe the true secret of happiness is accepting that there isn't one! What's your guess? Can science tell us how to be happy? Dr. O'Neill will review the scientific literature on the secret of happiness.

## 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?

## The BIG Debate

"What is more important? A healthy mind or a healthy body?"

An opportunity for students to contribute to this great debate topic. What do you think and can you persuade others to agree with you? An opportunity for persuasive speech and creative thinking on your feet. Dr. O'Neill and Julie Arliss will introduce the debate with just a few brief comments setting out some of the questions, and students who wish to contribute will be given a time-limit of 30 seconds to make an impact.

# The Speakers

## Julie Arliss



Recently awarded a Farmington Scholarship by Harris Manchester College, Oxford, Julie Arliss is a highly accomplished teacher and author. She 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.

## Dr. Chris 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.

## Dr. Andrew Pinsent



Oxford  
Dr. Pinsent is an international speaker, in great demand across the globe. He is a polymath with doctorates in both physics and philosophy. Dr. Pinsent is a former particle physicist at CERN, being a named author on thirty-one papers of the DELPHI experiment. He is a member of the United Kingdom Institute of Physics. Dr. Pinsent also has a second doctorate in philosophy and is currently the Research Director of the Ian Ramsey Centre for Science and Religion, a Research Fellow of Harris-Manchester College and a member of the Faculty of Theology and Religion at Oxford University.

## Mike Grenier

Alumni of St Peter's College, Oxford



Mike works with highly able students at Eton College where his students rate him as 'a legend'. He is a radical thinker who leads a number of initiatives all focused on finding the optimal challenge for each student: "Teachers need to find out precisely which bowl of porridge suits every student – not too hot too cold, too big or too small." Widely published in the education world and passionate about a broader view of education which goes well beyond marching bright young students through examinations on the basis of their date of birth. He argues that this risks 'dehumanising each and every one of them.'

## Professor Charles Foster

Oxford



Charles Foster is a writer, traveller, veterinarian and barrister. He is a Fellow of Green Templeton College, Oxford. His books cover many fields. They include books on travel, evolutionary biology, natural history, anthropology, theology, archaeology, philosophy and law. Ultimately they are all attempts to answer the questions 'Who or what are we?', and 'what on earth are we doing here?' His latest book is 'Being a Beast', which is published in the UK by Profile Books and in the US by Metropolitan Books. He read veterinary medicine and law at Cambridge, and is a qualified veterinary surgeon. He holds a PhD in law/bioethics from the University of Cambridge. He teaches Medical Law and Ethics at the University of Oxford.

## Dr. James Orr

Cambridge



Dr. James Law left corporate law ten years ago to become a student again and has recently secured a lectureship at Cambridge University. Formerly McDonald Postdoctoral Fellow at Christ Church, Oxford, Dr. Orr holds a PhD and MPhil from St. John's College, Cambridge, and a Double First in Literae Humaniores from Balliol College, Oxford. His publications and policy papers cover many fields including 'The Discarded Mind' 'Created Equal' and 'Being and Eternity'. An impressive polymathic mind keen to inspire curious young minds in the search for knowledge.



Bookings now open at:  
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"What makes a child gifted and talented may not always be good grades in school, but a different way of looking at the world and learning."  
– Chuck Grassley

## What students and teachers say:

"The GT focus group agreed that the opportunity to sit and listen to such a wide-ranging set of big ideas was valuable and, frankly, unique."

"My students continued to discuss the various topics all the way back to school (a 4 hour trip) and I have already been asked how long until the next one. Thank you for giving us all such food for thought!"

"The content of the talks was brilliant."

"The conference day was truly inspirational and thought-provoking."

"Thanks for all the notes. I've been using them for extension work all year!"

## Why attend?

- + Oxbridge Masterclass
- + Promote equity and excellence for diverse learners
- + Target the development of capabilities in GT students
- + Add depth, complexity and richness
- + Challenge GT students with abstract ideas
- + Engage the thinker within
- + Share ideas with like-minded people
- + Meet world-class thinkers



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# Details and Bookings

## Arrival and Registration

Arrival from 09.15. The programme begins promptly at 10.00 and concludes at 15.15. Note: times for London conference as follows: 09.45 arrival; 10.30 start; 15.45 finish.

## Conference Fees

**Students:** £25 per person. We have access to sponsorship for students wishing to attend but for whom the cost is a significant challenge for their families. Please contact us for further details.

**Staff:** £25 per person. Free staff place per 12 students. Unaccompanied teachers attending for CPD £195.

**Bookings:** Bookings and payments are made online at [www.academyconferences.com](http://www.academyconferences.com). An invoice is automatically generated for those unable to pay online.

Full terms and conditions may be found at: [www.academyconferences.com](http://www.academyconferences.com). Bookings cannot be accepted unless the member of staff confirms they have agreed to these.

Staff are warmly invited to join the team for informal discussion over break and lunch with refreshments provided. Students will need to bring their own equipment and refreshments. Please note that we do not allow recordings of the day.

Date	Location	Staff	Students
07 Nov 19	Gateshead, Emmanuel College		
17 Jan 20	Cambridge, Emmanuel URC		
24 Jan 20	London, Bloomsbury Baptist Church		
31 Jan 20	Wellington School, Somerset		
07 Feb 20	Manchester, Friends' Meeting House		
06 Mar 20	Oxford Town Hall		

Cheque enclosed (payable to Academy conferences): £

Name:

School Name:

Address:

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Please inform us of access requirements. Academy Conferences reserves the right to make alterations to the programme. Bookings cannot be accepted unless the member of staff confirms that they have read and agreed terms and conditions. Full terms and conditions may be found at [www.academyconferences.com](http://www.academyconferences.com)

- I have read and accept the Terms & Conditions (please tick)
- I'd like FREE Philosothon Training for a member of staff (please tick)

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