

Geography

Written by:

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Example Timetable

First-year students usually have around eight lectures a week. Usually two a day, with one being physical and one being human.

In the second year this usually increases to ten and is also the same for the third year.

Week commencing 23rd October 2023

	9am	10am	11am	12pm	1pm	2pm	3pm	4pm	5pm
Monday 23rd October		Breckland Lab Prep sessi Part IA Miss Jordan Holl New Teaching Lab (NTL)					Essay Writing and Referencing (IA Skills and Research Methods fo Prof Philip Howell and Dr Celine Bristol-Myers Squibb Lecture TI		
Tuesday 24th October						Lecture (IA) Skills: Working Dr Harriet Alle Bristol-Myers §	Lecture (IA: Pap D. Geography/ Prof Robert M. Bristol-Myers §		
Wednesday 25th October							Lecture (IA: Pap B: Understand Dr Olga Petri Bristol-Myers §	Lecture (IA) Skills: Working Dr Harriet Alle Bristol-Myers §	
Thursday 26th October							Lecture (IA: Pap A: The Earth Dr Celine Vidal Bristol-Myers §	Lecture (IA: Pap C: Life on Earth Dr Harriet Alle Bristol-Myers §	
Friday 27th October							Lecture (IA: Pap C: Society, Env Prof Rachael G Bristol-Myers §		
Saturday 28th October									
Sunday 29th October									

What are Supervisions like?

- For most supervisions, I am set an essay with a reading list. I write the essay and then send it before the supervision, where I can receive feedback and ask questions. The supervisor may also ask questions about the essay topic or the overall paper the essay is based on.
 - I found these very hard at first because sometimes the reading lists aren't relevant for the exact essay question. It's best to skim the reading list, only read what is relevant, and do your own reading beyond it.
- For some supervisions, I am told to make an academic poster.
 - Depending on the topic, I usually structure this in different ways, but academic posters need an introduction and conclusion and key points,

limitations, strengths or arguments in whatever I'm presenting. They also need to have different media and need citation.

- For some supervisions, I am told to research XYZ and come to the supervision with ideas to discuss.
 - The supervisor may ask us what we liked about the topic, or how we researched XYZ and our overall opinions.

What are Labs like?

- In first year I had a series of labs analysing Breckland soil samples.
- These were very accessible and guided, with everything being explained clearly and handouts given.

What is unique about the Cambridge course?

That you don't have to specialise - you can keep both human and physical geography, all the way to year 3

What did you wish you knew when applying?

That it is REALLY reading-based

Favourite and worst thing about your subject?

I like how broad geography is - that I can learn about volcanoes in one lecture and then learn about cultural identity in another

The worst thing is the supervision numbers - I wish I had more because considering how much content and how different the content we cover is, I'd benefit from having slightly more supervisions.

Application Timeline

From Year 12 and throughout sixth form college look for opportunities to increase your understanding and knowledge of the subject. Look out for summer schools, residentials (there are many access/ outreach opportunities where you can attend for free), open lectures at universities and other institutions,

Start doing any 'super curricular' activities over summer; listen to podcasts, watch documentaries, visit museums/ exhibitions, read academic and popular non-fiction related to the subject. This is a time when you can immerse yourself in Geography and how it can be engaged with in every-day life. Use this time to do research into the application process including colleges (e.g. distance to department, Geography teaching staff at your college) and checking to see if there are any admissions tests.

Towards the end of summer, have a draft of your personal statement written out. Send it to people to get feedback and advice - ask around, from Geography teachers or students to ask about content, to any other literate people to ensure it is grammatically correct and easy to follow.

September/ October time, get your application ready, prepare the SAQ if necessary and be ready to send it in!

Personal Statement Tips

A note of reassurance: you don't have to include 'Prisoners of Geography'! Anything can be 'geography', so you need to ensure your personal statement captures an interest in the academic side of Geography - e.g. what kind of books do you like reading? What new ideas do they present? How can geography help you understand the world going forward? Draw on the core themes in Geography such as the intersection (or conflict?) between the human and 'natural' world, the holistic approach to Geography or the methods and practices used in the discipline. Review books or literature critically and explain what you learnt from reading them.

Integrate any super-curricular activities into your personal statement whether this be summer schools, study days or open lectures. Crucially, make sure you reflect on what you learnt from these and how they expanded your understanding and interest of Geography.

Talk about what your particular interests are and ensure they align with the courses offered by the Geography department. You can identify if you are

interested in urban Geography or Biogeography (for example), and explain why these broad academic fields interest you.

Although talking about personal trips and travels can be of interest, particularly in geography, always make sure you link it to your interest in the academic discipline and how the experience contributed to your understanding and thinking.

Do add some personal interests / hobbies outside of academia as these can often relate to geography!

Entrance Test Tips

Make sure you're caught up on current affairs: from geo-politics to environmental/ natural disasters, ensure you have a general grasp on what's going on in the world. Keep on top of your work in class and practice making good arguments in your writing as all these skills will help you ace a Geography admissions test.

Interview Tips

Always explain your reasoning for any answers you give. Think logically and draw on a wide range of knowledge from your A Level course and beyond. Be prepared to talk about your specific interests in geography concisely; but also be ready to be challenged on things you know well. Always try and give an answer, even if you're unsure. Make educated, informed guesses using all of the information or resources they give you. Don't worry if you give a silly answer or make a mistake, just explain why you said it and how you thought of it! They won't expect you to be confident in both human and physical geography, so don't worry if one interview goes better/ worse than the other. Be open and flexible for comments and criticism, use any feedback from interviews to help guide your following response; be attentive and listen to them as often they will guide you in the right direction!

Recommended reading/activities

Non-fiction relating to geopolitics, current affairs, the environment, climate, nature. Some authors you could read (and be prepared to critique): Naomi Klein, Jared Diamond, Robert McFarlane. If you want to read something more academic try Edward Said for human geography. Let your reading be led by your interests (for example I was interested in historical geography in fictional

novels so read Elizabeth Gaskell Shelley). Align your reading with your specific interests in human and/or physical geography.

