

Centre for  
Medieval & Renaissance Studies  
Oxford



HONOURS PROGRAMME

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## **GENERAL INFORMATION**

### **CMRS**

The Centre for Medieval & Renaissance Studies was founded in 1975 by Dr John Feneley to achieve two purposes: to establish in Oxford a permanent institute for the interdisciplinary study of the Middle Ages and Renaissance, and to provide an academic training for overseas students who wish to complete part of their education in Oxford but are not matriculated members of the University. The CMRS curriculum is rooted in the liberal arts tradition: qualified students from all academic disciplines are welcome to apply.

### **ST PETER'S COLLEGE**

CMRS has a reciprocal relationship with St Peter's College, Oxford. Students at CMRS have access to College facilities, academic and social: Library, Music Room, Chapel, Junior Common Room, Dining Hall, sporting facilities and clubs. Students at St Peter's may also use the CMRS Common Room and Library. Through CMRS's proximity to the College, its students also enjoy informal participation in the life of the University.

### **SCHOLARSHIP**

The emphasis at CMRS is on scholarship. The academic programme is carefully devised so that students can receive *either* specialized training in Medieval and Renaissance Studies *or* a more general course of studies in the Liberal Arts. Most teaching at CMRS is provided by one-to-one teaching in tutorials, supplemented by small seminar classes, and by an integral lecture course. The Oxford tutorial system ensures the closest possible cooperation between teachers and pupils.

The overall aim of CMRS is to provide each student with a rigorous training in particular disciplines within the context of a broad and well-balanced academic, cultural, and social life. Certain qualities are necessary if a student is to obtain

maximum benefit from an education here: an enquiring mind, a critical approach to facts and, above all, a capacity for creative as well as analytical thought. In considering each individual applicant, the greatest importance is attached to recommendations from faculty members who have personal knowledge of his or her work.

## **ETHOS**

CMRS seeks to provide a strong intellectual, spiritual and social environment in which students may acquire a deeper understanding of the Western heritage and its Christian, historical, religious and cultural traditions. We hope to build a community in which students of all religious traditions (and none) feel free to exchange ideas, debate issues, and learn from one another in mutual respect and support.

## **ST MICHAEL'S HALL**

The academic, cultural and social life of Oxford is to be found in the square mile surrounding Carfax, the ancient crossroads of the city. CMRS is located in St Michael's Hall within three hundred yards of Carfax. Recent excavations opposite the Hall in Shoe Lane support a tenth-century date for the layout of the streets and lanes adjacent to the building.

The present building, built in the years between 1869 and 1875, was acquired in 1978 by Dr John Feneley, the Principal of CMRS, who planned its transformation into a residential and teaching institute. It underwent a second total refurbishment in 1992, and additional facilities have been added each year since then. The Hall is a tall rectangular building in red brick with large arched windows. From an arcade, the entrance leads upstairs to five floors on which are located the various activities of CMRS.

St Michael's Hall contains the following facilities: a lecture hall; seminar and tutorial rooms; Library; rare book room; computer room; studio for sculpture and stained glass; accommodation for 40 students; Common Room with television, dvd and video; a fully-equipped student kitchen and dining room.

## **LIBRARIES**

Oxford has one of the world's largest and most varied collections of manuscripts and printed books. The main libraries to which CMRS students enjoy access are the following:

### **Oxford University Libraries**

CMRS students are presented for admission as readers of the Oxford University Library Services (OULS) in the ten week period of each semester that falls within the University terms. As OULS readers CMRS students may gain access to all of the system's thirty-eight libraries, whose specialisms range from history to physical science, from archaeology to theology, taking in social sciences and various types of literature along the way. Altogether the OULS libraries hold over eleven million volumes.

Chief among these libraries is the Bodleian (Bodley), taking its name from Sir Thomas Bodley, who refounded it on the site of the previous, fifteenth-century library. It was opened on 8 November 1602 and has an unbroken history from that time. Bodleian buildings include Duke Humfrey's Library above the Divinity School, the Old Schools Quadrangle with its Great Gate and Tower of the Five Orders, and the Radcliffe Camera, Britain's first circular library. It now contains more than seven million volumes, and is an international centre for advanced study and research. Thus, the Bodleian is a reference **not** a lending library, but CMRS students may use it whenever it is open.

### **St Peter's College Library**

The College library is open at specified hours to CMRS students **on a non-borrowing basis**. The library has a collection of about 60,000 books and periodicals, with about 75 reader places. The library is automated, and its holdings listed on the University's union catalogue OLIS. It is situated in Linton House, a handsome Georgian rectory dating from 1797, which forms the entrance to the College. It is a convenient place to read books and work in the company of others.

## **Feneley Library at CMRS**

This library, with a collection of about 20,000 volumes, contains the standard works and reference books required by undergraduates for the subjects taught here, as well as several specialized collections of value mainly to graduates. The rapid growth of the library has been made possible by regular purchases and by several donations, most notably from the Charles Wolfson Charitable Trust, the Margaret Thatcher Charitable Trust, Sir Basil Blackwell, Cynthia Crawford and the Benevolent Aid Fund. The library received a collection of incunabula and early printed books from the Society of St John the Evangelist in 1978, the Geraldine Norman Collection of art auction catalogues in 1980, and a library of modern books from the University of San Diego in 1981.

Most books can now be accessed from the Computer Terminal or the Card Catalogue cabinet located in the Computer Room.

## **The Charles Williams Collection**

This collection of books, articles, biographies and photographs has been placed on loan at CMRS by the Charles Williams Society. Charles Williams (1886-1945) was a poet, novelist and theologian who spent his working life from 1908 until his death at the Oxford University Press. With his friends C.S. Lewis and J.R.R. Tolkien he was a founder member of the 'Inklings', a literary, philosophical and theological discussion group based in Oxford between the wars.

## **Pusey House**

Pusey House, opened in 1884, was founded to commemorate the work of Edward Bouverie Pusey (1800-1882), the

reforming theologian. It is one of the two best theological libraries in Oxford with a collection of 80,000 volumes, specialising in Church History, Patristics and Liturgy. It holds the most significant archive of manuscript and printed materials relating to the Tractarian and Oxford Movement. The Library charges £5 for a reader's ticket.

### **Oxford Central Library**

All CMRS students may obtain tickets for this free library which houses, in addition to its main lending and reference sections, material of interest for specialist research, particularly in the field of local history.

### **Oxford Union Society Library**

From its earliest days, a general lending library has been maintained by the Union Society which now contains valuable resources for the study of English literature, history, politics, philosophy and theology. Membership of the Society is by subscription, not included in CMRS fees. For further information see under 'University Societies', p.15.

## **COMPUTER FACILITIES**

CMRS has a networked AppleMac computing system with permanent access to the internet. The Computer Room, open 24 hours a day, has AppleMacs and a cross-platform printer for general use. Hardware and software are upgraded and expanded regularly. St Michael's Hall is covered by wireless networks and there are ethernet points in teaching rooms and every study-bedroom. Students are encouraged to bring their own laptops.

## ACADEMIC INFORMATION

### ADMISSIONS POLICY

CMRS works on the semester system with two fourteen-week sessions from September to April. The academic programme is planned primarily for undergraduates in their junior and senior years and first-year graduate students. Applicants may apply for **one** or **two** semesters. While enrolled here, single semester students may apply for a second term, subject to visa status. CMRS follows a rolling admissions policy, accepting suitably qualified candidates as they apply until all available places are filled.

In order to be considered for admission, candidates should have a Grade Point Average of around 3.50 points on a 4.00 point scale. In considering each applicant, the Admissions Committee looks first at the transcript(s) but attaches the greatest importance to faculty recommendations, whereby the 3.50 requirement may on occasion be reconsidered.

### SEMESTERS

Ten weeks of each semester coincide with the University's Michaelmas or Hilary Terms, and the CMRS programme of tutorials and seminars is planned to take advantage of Oxford's academic and cultural life. The remaining four weeks are devoted to the intensive lectures and field trips of an Integral Course, which provides a framework for the more detailed work of the tutorials and seminars. During a semester a student takes four courses in all for a total of 16 semester credits: **two tutorial courses, one seminar course, and the Integral Course.**

The teaching of the **Integral Course** is designed for students to obtain from its lectures, colloquium and field trips a comprehensive overview of the Middle Ages, or Renaissance and Early-Modern period, a first-hand knowledge of seminal writers of each period, and a deeper understanding of the relationship between faith and learning. The **seminars** focus

on the development of presentational and other scholarly skills and the writing of a research paper; and the **tutorials** develop skills in reading, critical analysis and essay writing.

## **TUTORIAL COURSES**

Students select **two** tutorial courses each semester from a wide range of options. A tutorial is a weekly meeting of one or, very occasionally, two students with the tutor responsible for a particular area of studies. The tutorial is a creative and flexible teaching method that enables the teacher to adapt a course to the precise requirements of a particular student, and to give that student individual attention and supervision.

At the weekly meeting with each tutor the student presents a formal essay, based on reading in primary and secondary sources. The tutor will point the student to the most important books and articles relevant to a topic, while also encouraging initiative and judgement in their selection.

The preparation and writing of an essay is a time-consuming and exacting process, so the student must be prepared to devote the greater part of each week to this work. The purpose of this exercise is not merely to test a student's ability to amass facts, but to develop powers of critical analysis so that he or she can identify and interpret significant information and present facts and conclusions in a clear and precise form.

## **SEMINARS**

Each student attends **one** of the seminars offered each semester in *art & art history*, *history*, *literature*, *political philosophy*, *religious studies* and *interdisciplinary*. These courses complement the one-to-one work of the tutorial by fostering students' presentational skills, by encouraging students to learn from each other as well as from the tutor, and by requiring a substantial research essay produced over the whole period of ten weeks.

Considerable importance is attached to the research essay. The

seminar tutor assists in the choice of topic, advises on the use of resources, including the Bodleian Library, and monitors progress. The essay is expected to be a substantial and exemplary piece of research which should be valuable in future applications to postgraduate or professional programmes.

Seminar sessions are one and a half to two hours long, and vary in format and style according to the requirements of the subject and the needs of the participants. They range from one-hour formal lectures followed by a discussion period, to sessions where students present the points for discussion and explore them under the guidance of their tutor. Extensive and detailed reading is required each week in preparation for the seminars. Students are given reading lists, assigned weekly topics, and asked to report regularly on the development of their research essay.

## **INTEGRAL COURSES**

Each semester has an Integral Course consisting of lectures, field trips and a colloquium. In the Autumn Semester the field trips and the majority of the lectures come at the beginning of term. By tracing the background knowledge necessary for an understanding of the Middle Ages, they provide a foundation for the student's subsequent studies at CMRS. In the Spring Semester there are fortnightly lectures during the first ten weeks of term which trace the gradual breakdown of the medieval world view and the emergence of the Renaissance. These prepare students for the lectures and field trips during the final four weeks of term which investigate the major developments from the sixteenth to the early eighteenth century that transformed society and shaped the future of Europe and America. One lecture each week is devoted to the presentation and critical analysis of a text which exercised a decisive influence on the formation of European civilization. Such texts might include Dante's *Divine Comedy*, or Milton's *Areopagitica*. Lectures are supplemented by colloquium sessions and field trips (see below) and the course is assessed by an examination and a substantial essay.

## **Colloquium**

Students meet every two weeks with a CMRS tutor to discuss one of the seminal texts introduced in the lecture series. The small size of the classes, usually about 15 students, makes it possible to have a vigorous exchange of ideas at a high intellectual level. The aim of the Colloquium is threefold: to consolidate and enhance the information imparted in the Integral lectures; to subject traditional world views to rigorous investigation; to encourage students to discuss in and outside class their different approaches to learning and living in the modern world.

## **Field Trips**

CMRS gives its students a thorough introduction to the colleges, museums and art galleries of Oxford at the beginning of each term. The city of Oxford is viewed as one of the historical, literary and artistic resources with which students should become familiar. There are also four field trips outside Oxford to places of historical importance, each under the guidance of a tutor with specialized knowledge of the sites. Field trips to places such as Stratford and Hampton Court are an essential part of the academic programme, and all students are expected to attend. Students may make a special study during their field trips of at least one site, and answer a question on it for their integral course essay.

## **EVALUATION**

The tutors write detailed reports on their students' work and assign grades. The Integral Course is assessed by an examination and a substantial essay. Tutorials are assessed on the quality of essays and the contribution to tutorial discussion. Seminars are assessed on the quality of the research essays and class presentations. At the end of each semester, a transcript, reports and grades are sent to the student's university or college.

## **Academic Credit**

While the instruction at CMRS is intended to form part of a student's studies for an undergraduate or graduate degree, the final right to accept credits must remain with the home university/college. Candidates must consult their academic advisor and obtain the agreement of a senior Academic Officer and Registrar before submitting their application. CMRS evaluates its semester courses as follows: an Integral Course, Tutorial Course and Seminar each carry four semester hours of credit. The normal academic load is sixteen credits per semester.

## **Grades**

CMRS grades are expressed in American terms to facilitate the transfer of credit. A student's work is graded by letter (plus and minus) as follows:

**A = Excellent** work of consistently high quality with few weaknesses, showing notable understanding, insight and scholarly ability.

**B = Good** work of fine quality, showing understanding, insight and scholarly aptitude.

**C = Satisfactory** work that is adequate, but lacking distinction.

**D = Poor** work of minimal value.

**F = Failing** work unworthy of credit.

**I = Incomplete** course work at the end of term.

**W= Withdrawal** from a course with the approval of CMRS.

*Please Note:* CMRS courses are not designed to be taken on a Pass/Fail basis.

## **OXFORD LIFE**

### **Room**

A variety of accommodation is available to students: forty live in shared rooms in St Michael's Hall and others reside in student lodgings or private homes within a mile or two of central Oxford. A Junior Dean is responsible at night for student welfare in St Michael's Hall. All properties are carefully inspected, and considerable care is taken to ensure that they are well-equipped, comfortable and well-located in relation to CMRS and St Peter's College.

Students are provided with a bed, bedding and linen, wardrobe, chest, desk or table, desk lamp and chair. They must supply their own towels, toiletries, and any other furnishings. Bed linen is laundered by CMRS or the landlord, but students are responsible for laundering their own clothes. St Michael's Hall has modern, coin-operated laundry facilities.

St Michael's Hall is closed outside the semesters. Students may not move into their rooms before the advertised start of the semester or stay overnight after its end. Those wishing to stay in Oxford outside the semesters - including during the Christmas vacation - are responsible for obtaining their own accommodation at their own expense. CMRS will be pleased to advise on what is available.

### **Board**

St Peter's College provides cafeteria style meals for CMRS students throughout each semester. The service will extend to breakfast, lunch (brunch on Saturdays and Sundays) and dinner every day during the 10 weeks of the University term. During the 4 weeks of each semester outside the University term, meals will only be available from Mondays to Fridays. Food at St Peter's is excellent value for money, costing far less than comparable food in a restaurant or pub, and is one of the major financial benefits enjoyed by CMRS students. The cost of board is included in fees.

## **Kitchen, Dining and Common Rooms**

There is a fitted kitchen and dining room in St Michael's Hall where CMRS students may prepare their own meals. It is equipped with standard and microwave ovens, ceramic hobs, and refrigerators. Adjacent to the kitchen and dining room, a Common Room provides television, DVD, video and leisure reading. The Common Room is a major social centre for CMRS students. A President and Committee are elected each term by the student body to arrange social events and activities such as the Thanksgiving Day dinner.

## **Medical Care**

Dr John Sichel serves as the medical officer to CMRS. He works in partnership with Dr Diana Ferguson at 28, Beaumont Street which is a five-minute walk from St Michael's Hall. All students are registered there, but are not eligible for free care under the National Health Service unless registered for at least six months.

## **Leisure Activities**

The city offers a wealth of cultural activities in drama, music and applied arts. There are several world-famous museums and art galleries, such as the Pitt Rivers and Ashmolean, and two good theatres, the Playhouse and the New Theatre. Oxford also offers all the facilities of a modern city with a good shopping centre, restaurants and sports facilities. St Michael's Hall and the adjacent St Peter's College are situated in the very heart of the city.

Oxford is well-situated as a centre for rail and coach travel to all parts of the United Kingdom. Evening visits to the theatre at Stratford-upon-Avon and London are quite feasible, departing in the late afternoon and returning by midnight.

## **ST PETER'S COLLEGE**

St Peter's College occupies the site of two of the University's oldest 'Inns' or medieval hostels, Bishop Trellick's (later New Inn Hall), and Rose Hall, both dating from the 13th century. Its history really began, however, in 1929 when St Peter's was founded by Francis James Chavasse, later Bishop of Liverpool, who was concerned at the rising cost of education in Britain's older universities, and projected St Peter's as a College where promising students, who might otherwise be deterred by the cost of College life, could obtain an Oxford education. The commitment to make Oxford accessible to any student of ability, irrespective of means, religion, gender, race, or colour, remains a feature of St Peter's today. In 1961 the University approved a statute giving St Peter's full collegiate status. With the granting of its Royal Charter in the same year, it took the name of St Peter's College.

The College's blend of antiquity and youth makes it a stimulating environment for study. It is heir to all the traditions of Oxford, above all the pursuit of academic excellence in the context of expanding the whole personality. It is a tolerant, harmonious, and open community in which students and tutors are in close contact and enjoy good relations.

St Peter's is a medium-sized College by Oxford standards, occupying a compact site in the city centre less than 100 yards from CMRS. It admits some 100 undergraduates each year, and its postgraduates number about 90, making a student body of around 400. The College now attracts a lively mix from all over the British Isles and overseas. It has over 50 Fellows and Lecturers (dons) who cover nearly all the subjects offered by the University.

### **College Buildings**

St Peter's has an interesting and varied set of buildings, many of them much older than the College itself. The College has, in effect, adapted existing buildings to provide the collective facilities required for College life, and built new ones to provide student accommodation. Linton House, dating from 1797, is the entrance to the College, and houses the Porter's Lodge and the College library.

Canal House, the Master's Lodge, dates from the early 19th century. The College Dining Hall, known as Hannington Hall after the Victorian missionary, Bishop James Hannington, dates from 1832 and is the only surviving part of New Inn Hall. The College Chapel was originally the Church of St Peter-le-Bailey, built in 1874. The buildings of the former Oxford Girls School, which adjoin the original site of the College, have been acquired more recently and provide student accommodation and a wide variety of function rooms.

### **Social Life and the Junior Common Room**

Undergraduate social life at St Peter's revolves around the 'Junior Common Room' (JCR), which annually elects committees that plan social activities in College and contribute to facilities like the College Bar. The Common Room is a place to socialize with other students, read the newspapers, enjoy music, and attend College 'bops'. It is a notable feature of life at St Peter's that all members, tutors and students, enjoy good personal and collective relations. Students at CMRS enjoy access to the St Peter's JCR, and are welcome to share its facilities.

### **College Societies & Clubs**

In a lively college such as St Peter's there is plenty of opportunity for college societies to flourish, though their fortunes rise and fall with the talents of each generation. Interests in drama, music, politics, religion and sport are well represented.

The Music Society arranges orchestral and choral concerts, and a varied and imaginative series of recitals. St Peter's has a Music Room, and the Chapel provides an excellent acoustic space for larger concerts with its piano, refurbished Willis organ and Goble harpsichord.

The College Drama Society is active, and always welcomes new recruits. It organises a production in most terms, and its repertoire is highly diverse.

The College is also active in sport, and has shared sports-ground and rowing facilities nearby. It has recently shown particular strength in men's rugby, cricket and tennis.

### **University Societies**

The range of clubs and societies is impressive, and covers music, drama, politics, religion, sport, and many other subject areas and fields of interest. Membership of most clubs is relatively cheap and, study-time permitting, can be an excellent way of meeting people outside CMRS and St Peter's. A notable resource is the Oxford Union Society, a private members' club situated very near to St Michael's Hall and St Peter's. Membership includes cafeteria/restaurant facilities, a bar and a sizeable lending library. As a debating society, it enjoys unparalleled worldwide prestige, many world leaders having begun their careers there. Speaker meetings and other events occur daily in term.

### **RELIGIOUS LIFE**

CMRS provides pastoral care for all of its students and there are regular opportunities for worship at St Peter's and within their own tradition.

Worship in the College Chapel follows the services of the Anglican tradition, and provides regular daily worship for any who wish to participate. It is also available as a place of prayer for people of all creeds. There are two Choral Services each week in term. The mixed Chapel Choir, one of the best amateur choirs in Oxford, is recruited from members and friends of St Peter's and is made up of Choral Scholars and volunteers. CMRS students may audition for a place in the choir.

There are also a number of student-led religious societies within the College and University. The Catholic Society organizes social events, and coordinates theological study, charity and social work. The St Peter's College Chapel has a good relationship with the Oxford University Inter-Collegiate Christian Union. The University Jewish Society is flourishing, and holds daily meals and frequent events. The University Islamic Society is also thriving, and maintains an active programme of religious and social activities. Other societies cater for – amongst others – Bahá'í, Buddhist, Hindu, Jain, Sikh, Taoist and secular students.

A wide variety of religious services is available in central Oxford every week. Several mosques including the purpose-built Oxford Central Mosque serve various Islamic communities. The Oxford Jewish Centre maintains three different streams of prayer; Orthodox, Masorti and Progressive. Several branches of Buddhism have places of worship or monasteries. Plans are afoot to build a gurdwara for Oxford Sikhs; meanwhile, they meet every Sunday in a local school. Bahá'ís meet together frequently to study, pray and enjoy fellowship. Roman Catholic students tend to go to the nearby chaplaincy, to the Dominicans at Blackfriars or to the Oxford Oratory. Many Protestants favour St Aldate's and St Ebbe's, major centres of evangelical Christianity within the Church of England. Depending on their churchmanship, Episcopalians go to the Cathedral, the University Church or Pusey House. Russian and Greek Orthodox celebrate the Divine Liturgy in English, Slavonic, Greek and a little Romanian. CMRS provides a list of some 40 places of worship as a guide to what is offered in Oxford.

## CMRS STAFF

### **Principal**

Dr John Feneley has overall responsibility for the planning and coordination of the programme. He has lived and worked in Oxford since 1962, first as an undergraduate, graduate and teacher and since 1975 as the co-founder and Principal of CMRS. His doctorate was in the field of medieval mysticism and his current research interest is in Renaissance Neoplatonism.

### **Senior Tutor**

Dr Mark Philpott administers the academic programme. Educated at Worcester College, Oxford, his doctorate was on *Archbishop Lanfranc and Canon Law*. Since 1990 he has been a Lecturer in Medieval History at several Oxford colleges. From 1999 onwards he has combined the position of Senior Tutor at CMRS with that of Senior Lecturer at Keble.

### **Senior Dean and Academic Librarian**

Dr Nicholas Crowe assists with the running and continuing development of the programme at all levels. He was educated at Hertford College, Oxford, and Trinity Hall, Cambridge, and most of his academic specialisations fall under the rubric of European Literature and Philosophy from the Renaissance to the Enlightenment. Since 1991 he has been a Research Fellow and Lecturer at a number of Oxford colleges, and since 1995 a Tutor at CMRS.

### **Fellow Librarian**

Dr Sandra Feneley has managed the library and special collections since she co-founded CMRS in 1975. Educated at the University of Alberta in Canada, she has lived in Oxford since 1968 and was Assistant Librarian at New College for several years. Also an artist, her stained glass windows, sculpture and jewellery are displayed in the USA, Canada, France, Australia and the UK.

### **Administrator**

Mrs Fiona Kilby is responsible for assisting the Principal and Senior Tutor in the administration and day-to-day running of CMRS. Management and upkeep of the buildings, the computer network and general student matters also fall into her remit. Previous positions include Recruitment Consultant, PR and Marketing Assistant, Public House Manager, and Head Cook at Althorp House.

The contents of this Prospectus are provided in good faith by, and are the sole responsibility of the Centre for Medieval & Renaissance Studies.

This Prospectus has been typeset throughout in Bembo, a face cut in Venice by Francesco Griffo for Aldus Manutius, the great printer and publisher, who first used it in 1495 for a book by Pietro Bembo, a young scholar who later became a cardinal. Aldus was also to introduce italic as the main type for his octavo books. This Aldine roman was copied and adapted all over France and Italy in the sixteenth century, and was the origin of the many romans now classified as Old Face.

The Prospectus was designed by John Feneley, typeset and printed in Oxford by Lynx dpm Ltd.