Jesus College, Oxford

Subject Notes:
GEOGRAPHY

Academic Staff

Fellows

**Prof Patricia Daley** is the Helen Morag Fellow and Tutor in Geography, and a Professor in Human Geography of Africa at the School of Geography and the Environment. She teaches the human geography components of the course, including development geographies, geopolitics, economic globalization, African societies, and the philosophical and methodological underpinnings of the discipline of geography. Her research interests are in African politics and political ecology; political and gender-based violence, refugees, ethnicity, citizenship and sustainable peace.

**Prof Richard Grenyer** is a Fellow and Tutor in Geography, and an Associate Professor in Biodiversity and Biogeography at the School of Geography and the Environment. He teaches the physical aspects of the geography course, including ecology, geomorphology, remote sensing, statistics, biogeography, biodiversity conservation, and global environmental change. His research interests are in the role of space in macroevolution, and how to use mathematics and computing to make conservation more efficient and effective. He particularly works on mammals and plants.

About the Course

Geography at Oxford

Approximately 90 undergraduates are admitted to read Geography at Oxford each year and it is one of the biggest departments in the country, with the School of Geography and the Environment as one of four sister institutions within the Oxford University Centre for the Environment. The others are:

- Environmental Change Institute ([http://www.eci.ox.ac.uk/](http://www.eci.ox.ac.uk/))
- Transport Studies Unit ([http://www.tsu.ox.ac.uk/](http://www.tsu.ox.ac.uk/))
- Smith School for Enterprise and the Environment ([http://www.smithschool.ox.ac.uk/](http://www.smithschool.ox.ac.uk/))

Academics from all the sister units are involved in teaching and research supervision of undergraduates. The OUCE building, in the University Science Area on South Parks Road, contains lecture rooms, laboratories, computing facilities and tutors’ offices, and is within a few a minutes’ walk of the Radcliffe Science Library and the Bodleian Library.

College and University Life

Jesus College normally admits 8 geographers annually. Students are admitted to read for a degree in Geography purely on the basis of their ability and potential. We were a pioneer Oxford college in awarding Scholarships and Exhibitions in Geography, and since that time over 60 years ago, the subject has retained a firm place in the College.

Undergraduates’ activities in Oxford are divided between University and College: in this respect Geography is like other subjects. Lectures, practicals and field classes are arranged by the University and attended by students from all the colleges. Similarly, examinations are set by the University. On the other hand, tutorials and discussion groups are organised by the College and attended only by Jesus College students. Accommodation is arranged through the College, and most students eat in the College Hall.
Course structure

During their three-year course, undergraduates take two public examinations – the Preliminary Examination at the end of the first year and the Honour School at the end of the third year.

The Preliminary Examination consists of four papers (exams):

1. Earth System Processes (physical geography: Atmosphere, Biosphere, Lithosphere)
2. Human Geography ('Economy and Transformation', 'Territories and Identities', and 'Culture and Society')
3. Geographical Controversies (critical issues faced by modern geographers)
   (a) 1 examination (b) 1 practical folder
4. Geographical Techniques (research techniques in physical and human geography)
   (a) 1 examination (b) 1 fieldwork notebook

The Honour School is examined in one compulsory subject, two Foundational courses (from a choice of three) and three options (plus 3 extended submitted essays). Candidates also undertake a significant piece of independent research between their second and third years, leading to a geographical dissertation. Students also undertake a week’s fieldwork during the Easter Vacation of their second year: currently this is in either Berlin or Tenerife.

Compulsory course: Geographical Thought (1 Examination Paper & 1 fieldwork notebook)

Foundational Courses:

1. Earth System Dynamics (1 examination paper)
2. Environmental Geography (1 examination paper)
3. Space, Place and Society (1 examination paper)

Optional subjects are available to all students at all colleges in their second and third years. Applicants should consult the School website at http://www.geog.ox.ac.uk/undergraduate/course/course.html for details.

Teaching

Geography provides undergraduates with a varied course ranging in content from earth history, environmental problems such as climate change and biodiversity loss, global geopolitics, the future of global cities, aid and developmental issues, and in method from GIS and computational modelling to focus groups, questionnaires, philosophical discourse, and textual analysis. Dissertation research has taken recent Jesus geographers to study the education and aspirations of young women in Canada and in Cambodia, rainfall re-use in Australia, sacred forests in Kenya, healthcare in Tanzania, and the palaeo-ecological history of coastal swamps in Georgia.

College teaching is undertaken mostly in paired tutorials and college-based discussion groups. Oxford terms are short and intense – each is only eight weeks - so students are expected to do a good deal of vacation reading, thinking and writing. University lecture courses in Geography are numerous and varied, but emphasis is on the need for each student to learn, for him or herself. Lectures and tutorials are supplemented by reading and discussion of written work with college teachers.

Joint Schools (Combinations of degree subjects)

There are no Joint Schools for Geography.
Admissions

We interview most, but not all applicants to read Geography at Jesus. Decisions about whom to interview are made on the basis of information on applicants’ UCAS forms, past and predicted examination performance, and where available, contextualised GCSE data.

**Written test:** Candidates are **not** required to take an admissions test for Geography.

**Written work:** Candidates are **not** required to submit written work as part of the admissions process.

Decisions about whom to admit to the College are made on the basis of information on UCAS forms and performance in interview.

**Interviews:** Applicants receive two interviews: one in human and one in physical geography. We are looking for an ability to identify the key arguments in the article and to express these clearly. No prior training in critical thinking is required for this exercise. In the interview applicants can expect to be questioned about the article. They may also be asked to comment on a variety of graphical, cartographic and tabulated data which are given to them during the interview, and may be asked questions arising from their submitted work or other aspects of their geography course.

**Deferred Entry:** You must apply for deferred entry at the time of application to Oxford: you cannot change your mind after an offer has been made. You should be aware that any applicants who are offered places for deferred entry will generally be among the strongest of the cohort for their subject. We do not usually offer many deferred places per subject in order not to disadvantage the following year’s candidates. An applicant for deferred entry may be offered a place for non-deferred entry instead. If you require any further advice, please contact admissions.officer@jesus.ox.ac.uk

Admissions - Offers

Successful applicants receive conditional or unconditional offers depending on whether they have already taken their final examinations. **Our normal pre-qualification offer is A*AA at A2 level (or equivalent).** The A* may be in any subject. Geography must usually be studied to A2 level or equivalent. Otherwise there are no compulsory subject requirements, so sixth-form specialization in Physical Sciences, Social Sciences or Arts subjects all provide their distinctive and valuable background to the undergraduate course in Geography.

Statistical analysis has grown in importance in recent years, so Mathematics (at AS or A2 level or equivalent) is a useful supporting subject: it is desirable, but not essential.

Postgraduate Studies and Careers

The School of Geography and the Environment has one of the largest graduate and advanced study programmes in the UK. The following degrees are offered:

- MSc by Research, MLitt or DPhil Geography and the Environment
- MSc, MPhil Biodiversity, Conservation and Management
- MSc, MPhil Environmental Change and Management
- MSc, MPhil Nature, Society and Environmental Governance
- MSc, MPhil Water Science, Policy and Management
- 1+1 MBA at the Said Business School and any MSc above (2 years)

Numerical, research, laboratory and argument skills are developed by geographers and are much appreciated by a range of employers. Geography graduates go on to a very wide variety of careers. A
number of graduating Jesus geographers continue with their subject as teachers, researchers or planners, but many go into business, the civil service and into professions such as law or accountancy.

**Preliminary Reading and Further Information**

Further information about Geography at Oxford can be found on the School of Geography and the Environment website at [www.geog.ox.ac.uk](http://www.geog.ox.ac.uk).

Further details of the Oxford application process as applies to Geography can be found at:

- [www.geog.ox.ac.uk/undergraduate/apply/](http://www.geog.ox.ac.uk/undergraduate/apply/)
- [http://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/undergraduate/courses-listing/geography](http://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/undergraduate/courses-listing/geography)

**Contact details**

If you have any questions about our entrance requirements, or about applying to study at Jesus College, please contact the Admissions Officer:

Tel: 01865 279721  
Email: admissions.officer@jesus.ox.ac.uk  
Web: [www.jesus.ox.ac.uk/study-here](http://www.jesus.ox.ac.uk/study-here)

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