Jesus College

Alternative Prospectus
Welcome to the Jesus College alternative prospectus! Thanks for reading - this is a chance for the students at Oxford’s friendliest college to tell you a bit what it’s like to live and study here at Jesus.

So, why should you apply to Jesus? The College really is well known for its welcoming atmosphere, and we’re nearly always at the top of student satisfaction tables across all of the colleges. This makes it really easy to get involved in a range of activities, such as sport, music and drama, even if you’ve never done it before. The College itself provides accommodation for your entire degree, saving you the hassle of searching for housing, and the central location is really useful. Also, we have twenty-four hour library access, generous financial support, and a fantastic Junior Common Room (JCR).

To an extent, the JCR does what it says on the tin, providing a common place for students to socialise. In the Jesus JCR, we have a pool table, a table tennis table, Sky TV, a collection of newspapers and journals which we subscribe to, computers, and a “hatch” where you can grab a snack, a drink or a superbly-priced panini. It means that the JCR is a great place to socialise, and you’ll never be short of a place to relax when you fancy a break from the library.

However, the functions of the JCR go far beyond this, and it actually acts as a sort of mini Student Union within College. The JCR committee (which is elected each year) organises social events, co-ordinates College sport, provides welfare services, and generally tries to provide the best possible experience for students during their time in Oxford. It also provides funding for everything from student-run initiatives like speaker events to random fun ideas, like a hot-tub for finalists (something we do at Jesus every year)!

If you want to get even more of a feel for life at Jesus, be sure to come and visit us. The College advertises Open Days on their website (jesus.ox.ac.uk), but prospective students are welcome to look around at any time. Also, make sure to check out the JCR website (jcr.jesus.ox.ac.uk) for more information about student life at Jesus!
Monday

This week’s essay in Spanish is on a long poem by Antonio Machado. I decided this morning to work my way through the story version of the poem in the library at Jesus, before going to a language tutorial in Lincoln College. I have three tutorials a week: one for Spanish translation, one for Spanish literature and one for Celtic literature. I like having one of my tutors at a different college as it means that I get to mix with people from outside Jesus on a regular basis, and it’s also just across the street.

After that, I went with a friend to the covered market for a coffee break, made a quick stop at the Taylor Institution library (which is for medieval and modern languages and linguistics) to collect some books for the afternoon, and then went to Hall at Jesus to have lunch. I spent the afternoon reading through the essay for the day; this is the time that’s set aside for a friend of mine, who rows for one of the teams in the Jesus College Boat Club, had invited us to the launch of the summer boat race between the colleges called Summer VIIIs.

Tuesday

I began this morning as I endeavour to begin each one – but don’t always succeed – by reading at least one article on the Spanish newspaper El País’s website, and spending half an hour an hour or so doing ‘admin’ – a term to try and make answering emails and organizing things that aren’t directly to do with the topic of the tutorial), I rush back to College for a Welsh grammar class at 12pm. That busy period meant that I missed food in Hall and so I had a late dinner I went over to St. Peter’s College to rehearse with my band.

Wednesday

I got up nice and early today, as Wednesdays are one of the busiest days of the week. I started by writing the essay I had been preparing for the last two days. Then I had a Celtic tutorial in which we discussed an Old Irish tale that I had written an essay about the previous weekend. Although the language is completely new for me this year, it has gotten easier, and more of the same skills apply for all languages and analyses of any literature when it comes to writing an essay, so I really enjoyed the tutorial.

After finishing there (these normally go on for a bit more than the allocated hour, since we talk about a lot of language-related things that aren’t directly to do with the topic of the tutorial), I rushed back to College for a Welsh grammar class at 12pm. That busy period meant that I missed food in Hall and so I had a late dinner I went over to St. Peter’s College to rehearse with my band.

Thursday

Tomorrow is Mayday – a strange pagan tradition that is widely celebrated in Oxford and is lots of fun. However, as one of the traditions of this celebration is to stay up all night and sing straight after dawn, this means that I have to get a lot of work done today so that I can take it easy tomorrow. This meant getting all my translations done in the morning – I have to do every week, and then getting started with next week’s essay in Celtic, which will be on two twentieth-century Welsh poems.

I had time off in the afternoon as though the College choir, of which I am a member, had a rehearsal twice a week; once on a Thursday afternoon, and then on a Sunday afternoon just before we sing in the weekly service in chapel. I enjoy going to the rehearsals since it’s a great place to catch up with friends, and although it’s a non-auditioning choir, meaning that there’s lots of fun and joking to be had, the standard is very high.

Friday

I have a Spanish oral class every other Friday, but that’s all I have on Friday, meaning that this week I had the day completely free of any contact hours. However, it was May Day and so having stayed up all night to celebrate most pubs and bars were open all night), gone to listen to Magdalen College choir sing at dawn, and sung in my college’s May Day service in second quad, so I was understandably tired. Completely contrary to the norm, I slept for a few hours that morning, before making sure I got up in time for lunch.

In the afternoon I split my time between working on the Celtic essay, and reading through my favourite poetry anthologies in order to find some poems to read in the first meeting of the newly founded Jesus College Poetry Society on Saturday. Although Sunday morning is less work-related for most, I had to make or less finish my essay for Celtic – due on Monday, and because of the College’s Sunday breakfast, I’m quite sleepy and so I go back to my room, and try to have a relatively early night.

Saturday

spent a few hours this morning in the Radiolife Camera learning vocabulary and revising Old Irish grammar, as it is a library that I like to work in if I have things to learn. It’s also pretty, and very close to Jesus College. Apart from that, I didn’t do much work. Just before lunch I had a meeting with a theatre review group who I’ll be going to the Edinburgh Fringe Festival with in the summer, as we are organizing an event later during term to promote our trip to the Festival. After a lunch break I made my way over to the Exam Schools where my Spanish tutor was holding a Q&A session in the Modern Languages Open Day, so my tutorial partner and I went along to answer questions from a student perspective.

Sunday

Although Sunday morning is less work-related for most, I had to make or less finish my essay for Celtic – due on Monday, and because of the College’s Sunday breakfast, I’m quite sleepy and so I go back to my room, and try to have a relatively early night.
A Biology Student

On an average week, I have two lectures every day, at 9am and 2pm, plus an extra 10am on Wednesdays (the 2pm is also moved to 12pm on Wednesday so you have most of the afternoon off!) These are an hour long, and in first year are always in the same lecture theatre, so there’s never any running round trying to find where you’re meant to be. Usually we have Cells and Genes in the morning and Organisms in the afternoon.

We have three labs a week; Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday, each three hours long from 10am (straight after the morning lecture) to 1pm. The time you spend in labs varies depending on the topic you are covering - a complex dissection may take the full three hours, whereas drawing microscope slides can take far less time. When you start the Organisms course, two of your labs a week will be dissection, the third being either Cells or Genes. There are write ups to complete in the lab, and occasionally you have to finish these in your own time, but that rarely happens. On Fridays, we also have an hour in the computer suite, where we work on statistics and learn code for data analysis.

Overall work hours in a typical week:
Lectures - 11
Labs - 10
Tutorials - 1
Private work/essay reading and writing - 15-20+ (depending on the question)

Every week, I am set an essay by my tutor. Which tutor I have varies approximately every fortnight, as we go to tutors from other colleges to see experts in particular fields. The essay is preparation for the tutorial we have once a week, and is the only set work we are set outside of labs, so the work I do during the week is always essay reading followed by a couple of days of essay writing.

Outside of contact-time and essay-writing, I have plenty of time to spend doing my own thing. I volunteer with an environmentally minded education group who teach in primary schools, which has one meeting a week, I row at least three days a week, and I also do an awful lot of socialising, especially in the evenings! Film nights are a regular fixture, and I usually leave my door open during the day so my friends can wander in for a chat whenever. This term has been really busy socially - I have spent a lot of time at the Oxford Playhouse and one professional play. I have been to two Bops (College fancy dress parties), and at least four formal meals, including the annual Biology dinner with the tutors, postgrads and Fellows, a couple of meals out at restaurants, a musical performance at the Principal’s Lodgings and so many more things. Despite the course being pretty full on with the contact time and the weekly essay, I think biologists get a pretty good deal considering how much free time we can have once you’ve got the week’s work done.
A Day in the Life of...

A Geography Student

Being a geographer typically affords me the privilege to indulge my laziness as very rarely do we have early lectures. Normally lectures will begin at 11 on most days and last for an hour or two. This means the morning can be used either to get ahead on work for the week's essay or for catching up on some sleep! Following lectures, everyone usually heads into College to get lunch in Hall. What should be only a twenty minute meal almost always ends up stretching out to a break for an hour or so, as people attempt to avoid the library.

My afternoons are usually spent in the College library reading for or writing my essay/s for the week and dealing with any issues that arise from my position on the JCR Committee as Treasurer. Unless I have any meetings or other commitments I normally work through until dinner at 6 in College. During first year, geographers are expected to attend computer sessions teaching them skills for Earth Observation and statistics in order to prepare them for the Final Honour School; these take place for around two hours on one afternoon a week. Most of my tutorials are organised for the afternoon so some afternoons will be spent reading through my essays and trying to prepare myself for any questions that might be asked. Tutorials can either be incredibly enjoyable and rewarding if you are engaged with a topic, or a scramble to say anything that will get you through the hour if you haven’t put the effort in...

What I do following dinner is dependent on how productive I have been in the afternoon; on some days I can afford to take the whole evening off and on others I will work for a few more hours in the evening. I try to make sure that every night I am doing something social, be that relaxing with friends or going out to one of Oxford's clubs. Whilst there is a lot of work to be done at Oxford it is incredibly enriching, and rather than work eating into time spent doing extracurricular/social activities, students tend to find that somehow they push themselves to get everything done every week and ensure they’re not missing out on anything! Everyone manages their work differently, but after a term at Oxford you'll come to work out what works best for you!

Alex Proudfoot
Second Year

A Mathematics Student

Morning:

8 am, dragging myself out of bed I groggily head down to breakfast hoping that food will be able to wake me up before my 9 o'clock lecture. Making the daily cycle to the Maths Institute I weave in and out of tourists and other commuters until I arrive at the温暖 of the lecture hall and the lack of sleep the night before might entice me to curl up in my seat and nap. But no, greater things call: Maths.

Having successfully kept my eyes open for two hours, hopefully absorbing some of what I’ve written down, I head back into College to grab some lunch and play some pool, putting off work for as long as possible.

Afternoon:

Afternoons can be quite varied, depending on what work is due and how little has been completed earlier in the week. Tutorials and classes usually dominate an afternoon; in groups of two or six respectively, College tutors take us through the merits, and pitfalls, in our problem sheets. Having completed as much work as possible for one afternoon, food is usually the next port of call, and I head back into Hall to grab something to eat. On Thursday afternoons I usually have time to head down to Barts (third year accommodation) to play a game of rugby for College before rushing back, still covered in mud, for a tutorial.

Evening:

Hopefully by now I will have completed my work, but depending on when my deadlines are, or how unproductive I’ve been earlier in the day, a short stint in the library may be necessary to complete my work to hand in. After this I’m free, which usually means heading out for drinks at one of Oxford’s finest nightclubs. This seems to make me feel a lot less stressed, though this obviously has nothing to do with the number of drinks consumed.

Contact hours:

Lectures Monday to Friday 9-11
Tutorials or Classes 2-4 each week approx. 1-2 hours
Problem Sheets 3-5 each week approx. 4-5 hours

Alex Proudfoot
Second Year

Timothy Bell
Second Year
Freshers’ Week at Jesus is a fantastic experience. Freshers’ Week is an intimidating prospect for many people as everything is new - there are so many people to meet and so much to get used to. However, I found that any nerves I had about the week were soon settled due to the kind faces and warm words of the welcoming Freshers’ Week Committee. Jesus has a reputation for being ‘the friendliest college’ in Oxford and a University-wide student poll showed it to be the happiest college too. This very quickly becomes evident upon arrival in Freshers’ week – the older years are always friendly, welcoming, helpful, and immediately you feel part of the Jesus community.

Some highlights of the week include: speed-meeting, cocktails and cupcakes, a pub crawl, and open mic night (where several acts come along and perform, including fellow Jesus students). On the Friday night of Freshers’ Week you will experience your first College Bop, which are legendary around Oxford. Bops include a fantastic combination of fancy dress, Boptails (our very own cocktails) and usually very entertaining playlists created by your peers.

During the week there are loads of events organised to ensure that there is something to appeal to everyone. On the first evening there are ‘subject drinks’ where you get to meet people from every year doing your course. This is a great opportunity to find out more about your course, to ask the older years any questions you may have, and just generally to socialise! There is also a welcoming (free!) formal dinner which is a great chance to meet new people and also to experience something which is unique to Oxford (and the other place but we won’t mention that). Every night there is a club night and an alternative activity on offer. The club nights involve various themes including paint parties, foam parties etc. and the alternatives include trips to the infamous G&D’s ice cream parlour, a big night in, karaoke, and plenty more. So if you don’t like drinking, clubbing etc. don’t worry, there is sure to be something else you enjoy! And if you do like going out and are worried that Oxford won’t be fun, rest assured, it is.

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Everyone knows that Oxford is a place for traditions and Jesus has its very own established and historic tradition on Saturday of Freshers’ Week - ‘parenting dinner’. At Jesus we are all given College families which involve College ‘parents’ from older years and a ‘sibling’ from our own year. At parenting dinner, which usually takes place on the first weekend of Freshers’ week, first years go to their parents’ flats where they are cooked a (hopefully) delicious meal to properly meet them. Afterwards everybody heads over to an after-party at the third-year accommodation. All in all it’s a fantastic week and the perfect introduction to your time at Jesus College!
One of the great things about Jesus is that you can live in college accommodation for every year of your degree. This means that you don’t need to stress about negotiating with an estate agent or choosing who to live with whilst you’re still getting to know everyone in your first term. The accommodation that most second and third years live in are annexes in different parts of Oxford, which means that you get to have a bit more space living in flats out of the city centre whilst always having college in the centre of Oxford as a base. You’ll always be able to find Jesubites hanging out in college, and enjoying sitting on the grass in 2nd quad in summer.

Third and fourth years tend to live on a site adjacent to the Jesus playing fields on the other side of Oxford in Cowley. Although slightly further from the city centre, the Cowley Road lets you experience a new side to life at Oxford – with unique shops and a diverse range of people living there, life is totally different to that of the city centre. Known as Barts, there are a range of four-bedroom and three-bedroom flats and houses, all built since 2000, with loads of green space around. All this means that you get to live surrounded by Jesubites throughout your degree, and experience living in very different parts of Oxford. What else could we ask for?

Most people move out of college in their second year into a block of Jesus flats up Woodstock Road called Stevens. Still within walking distance of college, Stevens is out of the busyness of the city centre, close by to Jericho, one of the coolest parts of the city. Also is being able to live in a flat with two friends, and having a bit more independence because you have a kitchen to cook and a living room to relax in as you like. There’s the added benefit of living in proximity to the rest of your year and having some lovely gardens for picnics, garden parties and croquet.

Accommodation

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Food

An average main course is about £2.50, and is bought in the canteen on a pay-as-you-go system using your Bod card. In the evenings there is a regular Hall meal at 6:00pm, and formal Hall meal at 7:15pm. Formal Hall (€40) is different in that it is a three-course meal, served by college staff. Every term there are international food nights – Nepalese and Polish cuisines have recently featured. ‘Formal format’ (€29) on Thursdays, this features four courses, is a bit fancier, and you have to wear your gown. There are always vegetarian sandwiches available at lunchtimes, and vegetarian options for each hot meal too. The veggie lasagne is particularly good, and sometimes the green mousseline braise pork chops are served in favour of gooey cheese and delicious tomato-ey goodness.

Chapel

Jesus College is lucky enough to have a welcoming and inclusive chapel community, based around our beautiful chapel in first quad, which is right on the right as you walk through the Porters’ Lodge. There is always a lot going on for Christians in College, both the college chaplain and the College has a friendly Christian Union who meet weekly. The Reverend Dr Megan Daffern is both the college chaplain and the head of welfare, and is well-loved by everyone in college, not only because her sermons have been known to reference the TARDIS or “nights out at Wahoo” (Wahoo is one of the nightclubs in Oxford, the favourite on Friday evenings). Sunday Evensong is the highlight of the chapel’s weekly events. This is attended by people of all faiths and none, with a visiting speaker each week and the brilliant choir singing (who are well-rewarded with a free formal dinner!). We also have a termly colloquium with sticking to monotheism, friendship, and climate change – accompanied by cheese and wine. Chapel clerks and other members of the Christian Union often provide “Bop Love” at college Bops, occupying the conservatory and providing friendly chat, delicious snacks and refreshing soft drinks.

The most significant aspect of the College musical life is probably the chapel choir. This is a very friendly, non-auditioned group open to people of all different abilities and experience. The time commitment is not too great – there’s one service of chapel evensong on Sundays, with a rehearsal beforehand and another on Thursday afternoon. In return the choir get free formal Hall after the service and free singing lessons. The choir goes on tour each summer, most recently to Cologne, Bratislava, Vienna, and Hong Kong and Shanghai. Most importantly, the choir is great fun and a lot of members make some of their closest friends at College through choir singing (who are well-rewarded with a free formal dinner!). We also have a termly colloquium with sticking to monotheism, friendship, and climate change – accompanied by cheese and wine. Chapel clerks and other members of the Christian Union often provide “Bop Love” at college Bops, occupying the conservatory and providing friendly chat, delicious snacks and refreshing soft drinks.

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Like it or loathe it, rowing is one of the most popular sports at Jesus. Don’t worry if you’ve never rowed before, it’s very rare that anyone has when they arrive. In Freshers’ Week there’ll be opportunities to give it a go and see if you enjoy it. If you do, then you’ll be put in a novice crew for Michaelmas, and at the end of term you’ll then race in the ‘Christchurch Regatta’. This is a knockout regatta entirely for novices, which results in some very ‘interesting’ racing...

Jesus usually has three Men’s and three Women’s crews, so whether you’re an aspiring Olympian (we could do with a few) or a complete beginner, you’ll be able to row competitively if you want to. Jesus is known for being a very fun boat club, and is always very vocal in its support at Torpids and Summer Eights. And no, there aren’t too many early mornings!

The main regattas that we train for are “Torpids” in Hilary, and “Summer Eights” in Trinity. The main racing style at Oxford is called “Bumps”, which means that you have to try to crash into the boat in front in order to move ahead of them the next day. Cue much excitement and even more carnage. As with most sports clubs at Jesus, there’s a social side to rowing too. Most weeks we have ‘crew-dates’ with other colleges, and after all regattas we go out for a curry of questionable quality, then return to the College bar before heading to a club.

A bucketload of enthusiasm and a thimble full of talent. Those are the loose requirements for sport at Jesus (talent optional). We have some success, with some of our teams winning some of their matches sometimes, but the main thing is getting people involved!

From the more established sports like football, rugby, hockey and netball to the more esoteric croquet, mixed lacrosse and dancesport, there’s something for everyone. Despite being one of the smaller colleges, we manage to enter more teams in most sports than anyone else. The standard really does range from the sublime to the ridiculous. Why wouldn’t you join us?!
Welfare

We have a fantastic welfare team comprising staff, peer supporters, and the JCR and MCR men’s and women’s welfare reps. Our welfare reps are all Peer Support-trained so you know they are someone you can go to if you need to, and that they will be well-equipped to try and help you out, as will our equally trained team of Peer Supporters.

Welfare isn’t only about helping people who are down though. It’s also about being proactive. We run activities regularly to keep up the morale of everyone in College! For example, we run a weekly welfare tea, which everyone can come to, to enjoy some free food and drink courtesy of College, and have a chat with the welfare reps. Inevitably though, there are times when people might need some help, or just need someone to talk to. It’s times like this where the College welfare system is really important.

We also provide a number of welfare supplies free of charge to all members of College, and these include condoms, pregnancy tests, lemsip, paracetamol, and many others. Jesus is a great place to be, and you can rest assured that if ever you’re feeling down, there’ll be someone from the welfare team to listen to your concerns.

One thing we’ve started to do recently is to run a Welfare Weekend, where we dedicate an entire weekend just to making people happy. Aren’t we great? Activities have included a zumba class, a piñata, a huge load of free food (including pizza), and free STI testing. We’re looking to make this a regular event, so that’s something to look forward to!

Jesus College has a diverse student body, with around 10% of the undergraduates coming from outside the UK. We have an International Students’ Representative, who studied in Santiago before coming to Oxford from Chicago, and knows what it’s like to live and study in a foreign country. The role is meant to help out our students from abroad with any logistical difficulties they might have and also let them know about the international events going on at Jesus and around the University. The College also celebrates its student-body diversity through International Food nights in Hall – where international students help the kitchens shape a traditional menu from their home country.
Battels – the bills you get from College at the beginning of each term with your food, accommodation and other costs on

Bod card – the card you are issued that grants you access to the myriad of libraries around Oxford. It also serves as a student card.

Bop – fancy dress college parties with cheap alcohol and (often) cheesy music, Bops are way more fun and less tragic than that might make them sound

Crew-dates – one sports team (or not) from one college goes for a curry with a sports team from another college, consumes sensible amounts of alcohol and goes to bed in time for lectures in the morning, of course...

Cuppers – intercollegiate competitions in sports, drama and just about anything else you can think of. Football Cuppers is the second oldest football competition in the world after the FA Cup

Hilary – the second term, from January-March

JCR – the student body, and the actual common room

Matriculation – a fancy ceremony in your first couple of weeks, signals your formal entry to the University, some Latin is spoken (although not by you, don’t worry!)

Michaelmas – the first term of the academic year, runs from October-December

Pigeon hole – commonly known as pidge, where you get your post – maybe this is where JK Rowling got her Harry Potter owl idea from?

Porters – the College staff who work in the Lodge (reception) of the colleges, they can help you out with all things logistical (and a lot of other things too!)

Prelims – the exams that become the centre of your existence in Trinity of first year, then a distant memory by the summer

Sub-fusc – the smart academic dress consisting of a suit, gown, and white bow tie or black ribbon, worn for exams and matriculation

Trinity – the third term, from April-June

Tute – short for tutorial, the small-group teaching you have on a weekly basis with your tutors in College

Vacation – what we call holidays. We’re lucky enough to get about six weeks at Christmas and Easter, then three months for summer