

# Welcome to Classics at Cambridge

## *Preface*

This greeting and this section of the Handbook are addressed to you if you are starting a Classics course at Cambridge this year.

## *First things first: getting going*

The Handbook is one handy way for the Faculty to welcome you here – to provide you with the information you need to get going without any hiccups. It will also be your guide through the whole BA course. You are advised to check the e-copy on the Faculty website at the start of every year. Those of you who are starting the MPhil have your own separate handbook, but we hope you will find some of this material useful too.

Your teachers and advisers in the Faculty and Colleges rely on it, too, and will help you consult the battery of regulations when they become relevant. We do want you to find your way round the Handbook yourself, in due course, and you might like to give it a quick read through now. But don't think that you are expected to study the whole thing in detail at one go.

This first section is, however, meant for use right now.

## *Finding your way round*

Your College will include you in all sorts of introductory meetings, tours, and events. Your Director of Studies in Classics – who looks after your work at the College end – will contact you for a meeting soon after you arrive. This is the key event in the whole induction sequence. Be sure to take a diary.

You will also receive an invitation to attend the induction programme at the Faculty. So you will need to find the Faculty Building. This is the first building you get to on the Sidgwick Site if you approach from Sidgwick Avenue.

## *The Faculty building*

It all happens here – lectures, seminars, other Faculty-based teaching. Plus the Faculty Office, where you can get help on almost anything to do with your life as a Cambridge classicist; the various Faculty officers for consultation in their lairs – Chair of the Faculty, Academic Secretary, and so on; the Faculty Library and computing facilities; your common room, with drinks, snacks, and company; and the Museum of Classical Archaeology (housing those classical statues).

All notices for students, including the lecture timetable for the current term, will be displayed in Entrance 2. Rooms are easy to find in the Faculty Building: 'G + a number' means Ground Floor'; upper storeys are indicated by '1 + number', or '2 + number'.

## ***Induction programme***

You will be told where and when to come to the Faculty for this essential programme via your pigeonhole or mailbox in College. Besides meeting up with the whole of your year of classicists, you will be given all the information you need about how to join and use the Faculty Library, what and where the University Library is, as well as how to join it, and when to come for an introduction to the Faculty computing resources. If any problems arise, contact your Director of Studies or ask at the Faculty Office. Notices from the Faculty will also arrive at the e-mail address you are given by the University, so it will be important for you to get comfortable with this medium if you are not already used to it.

## ***The starting line***

By the time that your Director of Studies in College and the Faculty officers running the induction programme are done, you will be ready to start work. The lecture programme begins on the morning of the first Thursday of each Full Term, so you need to be clear by then which courses of lectures you are expected, or plan, to attend. (The lecture day starts at 9 a.m.) Your Director of Studies fills you in on this, guiding you into and through the programme set out in this Handbook. Also available for you to consult is the official Lecture List, issued as a number of the *Cambridge University Reporter* at the beginning of Michaelmas Term (with updates and corrections in the Lent and Easter Terms), and available on the University of Cambridge website at: <http://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/reporter/>.

The lecturing week, as we have said, starts on the first Thursday of Full Term (in Michaelmas Term 2011 this is 6 October), and the last day of lectures is the Wednesday of the final week of Full Term. Hence the lecturing week runs from Thursday to Wednesday. This means that when, in this Handbook or in the official Lecture List, a course is described as e.g. ‘weeks 1-4’, or ‘last 2 weeks’, these are lecturing weeks, running from Thursday to Wednesday. However, it is also common practice, especially when arranging supervisions, to speak of weeks as running from Monday to Friday, so that the week in which Full Term starts is charmingly known as ‘week 0’, and is followed by weeks 1-8. This may sound confusing, but you will quickly get used to it. To preserve your sanity and to navigate successfully through the system, it is essential to get a diary, and to get into the habit of bringing it to supervisions, meetings with your Director of Studies, and so on. Make sure you check the lecture timetable in Entrance 2 for any last minute revisions.

You are free to attend lectures in any Faculty of the University (but not courses marked as ‘classes’, though you can ask about them at the relevant Faculty Office). Plenty of other Arts Faculties are also housed on the Sidgwick Site, so it is easily possible for you to attend lectures in Classics and another subject on the same morning. But your first priority is to make sure you get your week’s work in Classics sorted out properly, following the advice of your Director of Studies.

## ***Lectures and classes***

**Lectures** last for an hour, unless otherwise stated; but it is usual for the session to start at 5 minutes past the hour, and to end at 5 minutes before, to allow for movement between rooms, buildings, and Faculties. The audience may be large or small; most lecturers welcome interventions in the form of questions or comments. Some lecturers

distribute handouts giving bibliographies and other types of guidance, e.g. a programme for the course and the topics to be covered, summaries of the main arguments under each heading, or references to ancient sources.

A **class** can be defined as a group meeting devoted to discussion of a chosen topic or text, or of some visual material. It may be led by more than one lecturer, and it may run for up to two hours. The normal expectation is that all participants will have done some previous work, e.g. in preparing a section of text (as in Intensive Greek and Latin classes) or in attending a lecture and doing some recommended reading in advance (as in follow-up classes related to Part II lectures). In all cases the emphasis is on participation, and the success of a class (like that of a College supervision) depends on the willingness of everyone involved to do the work in advance.

You will be given a good idea of what to expect from lectures in the Faculty induction programme and at your meeting with your Director of Studies. You will soon learn how to take what sort of notes, how to use handouts effectively, and how best to engage with our different teaching styles and methods. This is something of an art or skill, and there are no set formulae, but the Faculty will be keen to hear about, and respond to, your experience of the programme; sets of questionnaires will be distributed at each course, and to cover the term as a whole.

### ***The handbook***

The next section gives a full profile of who does what at the Faculty. It will probably be useful to you soon, when you want something, have a problem, can't recall which responsible person is responsible for what, or their name. The same section also tells you about the principal facilities available in the Faculty, notably the Library and computing resources. It is a good idea to get thoroughly familiar with these early on – so once again, be sure to attend the induction programme laid on.

Then the Handbook turns to the course itself. There is a different section, with different coloured pages for each year of the course. In the first – ‘Prelim to Part IA’ or ‘Part IA’ – year there is a clear-cut common curriculum. Each element in the programme is introduced and its rationale explained. Details are given of the examination papers you sit at the end of the year, and of the lectures and/or classes provided, together with brief reading lists.

Some of the rest of the information will most likely be more use later in the year. There are details of prizes and scholarships with their terms of eligibility, explanations of how your work in examinations is assessed, and a copy of the formal regulations which underpin the whole operation. This last is the section to which you should turn if you want to see the exact and fully authoritative statement of the rules that govern the Classical Tripos. But beware: you would be well advised to seek the help of an expert, such as your Director of Studies, in interpreting this document.

### ***Course costs***

The estimated cost of books, study materials and stationery costs for Classics students are covered in the University's estimate of living costs for all students. Photocopying costs in the Faculty Library are 10p cash per A4, 20p cash per A3 sheet. Costs can be reduced to 6p per A4 or 12p per A3 if you do more than 13 A4 sheets and purchase a rechargeable copy card from the Library desk.