

Dr Benjamin Thompson

Somerville College

Fellow & Tutor in Medieval History

OXFORD OX2 6HD

Benjamin.Thompson@Some.ox.ac.uk

Tel. 01865 270600

Direct Line: 01865 270682

Fax 10865 270620

To Prospective Somerville Ancient & Modern Historians

17 August 2017

I need hardly say that my colleagues and I were very pleased to be able to offer you a place at Somerville to read Ancient & Modern History this October. And we are delighted that you have negotiated the terms of your offer successfully. I know that Beate Dignas has already been in touch, but I am now writing to ask you to go firm on your 'modern' History choices.

History at Somerville is run by a team of Tutors, some of whom you will have met at interview. I should say that for the next two years there will be a number of changes in the tutorial team, what with the retirement in 2018 of our long-standing Senior History Tutor in modern history, **Joanna Innes** (a historian of social policy in the C18 & C19), whose replacement will be appointed in the next year, and the return from project-work in 2018 of our early-modernist, **Natalia Nowakowska** (who works on Eastern Europe), whose role for another year will be filled by **Oren Margolis**, who covers the Renaissance in France and Italy. You will also encounter next term **Patrick Clibbens**, who studies twentieth-century India. *I* hope I will be a constant presence through these changeover years: I am our earliest historian, of England from the Conquest to the Reformation. I will act as your Personal Tutor, organizing your studies and reviewing your progress, as well as being a point of contact for questions and problems.

As you know, the **Ancient & Modern History course at Oxford** is divided into two parts, Prelims and Finals. Prelims is examined at the end of the first year, by means of four three-hour examinations on the courses you will study during the year. You will prepare for these papers primarily by reading books and articles and writing essays, with additional back-up from lecture-courses. Each essay will then be discussed in a tutorial or small class, with your tutor and one or more other students; you will have a tutorial at least once each week throughout the year, with eleven or twelve in each of the first two eight-week terms.

Your four courses will be in ***Ancient History, European and World History***, a more closely defined ***Optional Subject***, and a ***Historiographical*** option (*Paper 4*). The first of these is 'ancient' and the second 'modern' (i.e. after 285!); in the other two options you have more freedom to determine the relative proportions of ancient and modern content for yourself. **I need you to confirm now the first and last of these menus**, for your Michaelmas Term papers. We will ask you to make provisional choices about your EWH and Optional papers when you come up, and you may want to think about those now too.

There are various considerations which you will want to take into account in planning your choices, including the overall balance of the year's work. It is a good idea to use the first year to broaden your historical experience by exploring periods other than those with which you are familiar; this will then give you a good overview for deciding on the more specialized options later on in the course. **We therefore urge you very strongly not to choose your first-year Ancient and General papers from periods which you have done at A-level, IB, High School or equivalent.** Apart from that, you may want to use the first year to cover three different periods, or you may choose an Ancient or General period which will match the Optional subject you will choose in the third term: the choice is up to you.

In order to discover which options you take next year, and the various choices within those menus, you should go to the faculty website: <http://www.history.ox.ac.uk/undergraduate-admissions> (or <http://www.history.ox.ac.uk/>, Admissions menu, Undergraduate Admissions submenu), where 'History Single Honours', if you scroll down a bit, enumerates the History options.

For **Ancient History**, you have chosen between

-
- Greek History, c.650-479 BC, or
-
- Roman History, 241-146 BC.

For the **Methods** option (for which you will have tutorials fortnightly for the first two terms) you need to choose from three groups of options:

A Greek or Latin Text

Approaches to History

Ancient Language

- If you have an A-level or good GCSE in Latin or Greek, you should choose the ***Sallust*** or ***Herodotus*** text (the latter being studied partly in English, partly in Greek).

- You can also take the opportunity to start an Ancient Language, ***Greek or Latin*** from scratch, or to improve one that you have at GCSE.
- If you choose ***Approaches to History***, you will study two sections. For the first term, we ask you to choose between ***Anthropology*** and ***Gender***. In the second term you can choose any of the remaining options.

If you have chosen Herodotus or Sallust, you should choose the Roman or Greek history paper which matches it, since this outline or period paper will provide background to the text. Otherwise, you can choose either period paper.

Please return the **form** on the next page to the office, preferably by e-mail attachment, ***as soon as possible, and certainly by Friday 31st August***. Email to academic.office@some.ox.ac.uk

Having made your choices, some advance preparation will help to make you feel less pressured during the initial weeks of your first term. We will send you some suggestions when you have made your choices. For the Foreign Texts, you need to acquire and start reading the text.

We hope that you enjoy the summer, and we look forward to seeing you in the autumn.

With best wishes,

Benjamin Thompson

Choices for Somerville Ancient & Modern Historians, 2017-18

NAME _____

PERIODS & AREAS STUDIED in last two years at school:

—

Please select options by underlining, ticking, highlighting — or anything that makes clear what you have chosen.

I Ancient History

*Please select **ONE** of the two options – I know you've chosen these, but if you could tick so that we know on our side, that would help.*

1

Greek History c. 650–479 BC

2

Roman History, 241-146 BC

IV 'Paper 4'

*Please select **ONE** of the options a-e, then further selections as appropriate.*

a

Herodotus (in English with some Greek passages)

b

Sallust (in Latin)

c

Approaches to History

Please select **FOUR** options, *indicating order of preference*

1

Anthropology and History

2

Archaeology and History

3

Art and History

4

Economics and History

5

Gender and History

6

Sociology and History

d

Ancient Language: choose *one* of the following:

Beginning Ancient Greek

Beginning Latin

Intermediate Ancient Greek

Intermediate Latin

NB We are not offering 'Historiography: Tacitus to Weber' this year. If you have a particular desire to study this, please get back to me directly and we can discuss it.