

Dear 1<sup>st</sup> year Somerville law student

Congratulations on being awarded a place at Somerville to read Law starting in October 2017! We hope that you have had a good summer and are looking forward to coming to Oxford to start your degree as much as we are looking forward to welcoming you. To introduce ourselves: there are two permanent tutorial Fellows in Law in the college: Professor Julie Dickson (who specialises in Jurisprudence/Legal Philosophy and European Union Law) and Professor Christopher Hare (who specialises in the Law of Obligations and Corporate and Commercial Law). Professor Hare is on sabbatical research leave during academic year 2017/18 but you will meet him once you arrive. In addition, Mr Zachary Vermeer, a specialist in Constitutional Law, and in Public International Law, will be a lecturer in law at Somerville during the coming academic year, as will Mr Tobias Lutzi, who specialises in Contract and International Private Law. In addition to the tutors above, Professor Steve Weatherill, who is the Jaques Delors Professor of European Union Law, is a Professorial Law Fellow of the College. He is mainly involved in teaching postgraduate students in the Law Faculty. We are writing to welcome you to the College, and also to give an indication of what the coming year will hold for you, in terms of which subjects you will be studying at which times.

The Oxford academic year consists of 3 eight-week terms (called Michaelmas, Hilary and Trinity Terms - there are many new and sometimes odd bits of terminology to learn in Oxford, but if you don't know what something means, of course just ask, we all had to at one time!). Students usually study 1.5 subjects per term. During your first term (Michaelmas Term 2017) you will be studying all of *A Roman Introduction to Private Law* and half of the *Constitutional Law* course. Once term begins, your teaching schedule will involve a weekly tutorial in *A Roman Introduction to Private Law*, and a fortnightly tutorial in *Constitutional Law*. Usually, you will be required to write an essay on an assigned topic before each tutorial you attend. You will also be expected to attend lectures in *A Roman Introduction to Private Law*, *Constitutional Law* and *Criminal Law*, details of which will be made available at the start of term. As this indicates, hard work for the law degree in Oxford starts very soon after you arrive - you will be starting with tutorial reading lists and essay assignments in the first week of term, namely the week commencing 9th October 2017 - and our expectations of you are high, but always remember that those expectations are matched by the support, resources and opportunities we will make available to you.

In your second term (Hilary Term 2018), you will study the remaining half of the *Constitutional Law* course (which will continue to be taught at fortnightly tutorials) and a new subject, *Criminal Law* (for which you will attend weekly tutorials). Professor Louise Gullifer (Harris Manchester College) will give your tutorials in *A Roman Introduction to Private Law*, Mr Zachary Vermeer (Somerville College) will teach you for *Constitutional Law*, and Professor Jonathan Herring (Exeter College) will take you for *Criminal Law*.

You will also have what is called a personal tutor, who will be the Somerville Law Fellow with overall oversight of your academic progress. This is likely to be Professor Julie Dickson for the whole of your 1st year. She will be your first point of contact for any welfare or academic issues that arise and that you would like to discuss. Details will be confirmed on arrival and you can expect to meet with your personal tutor on a one-to-one basis very early in the academic year.

Your 1st year university examinations (these are called Law Moderations or "Law Mods") take place after the end of the second term, during the first week of the Easter Vacation 2018 (you have to stay

in college that week to take these exams; accommodation is provided for you). Once again, more details will be provided once you arrive. After having successfully completed these examinations, you then move into the (second and final) part of the law degree called the Final Honour School or “FHS” in the third term (Trinity Term 2018).

We realise that this might all sound a bit confusing, but this is only because it is new to you, and to help you start your legal studies effectively and successfully, the Somerville Law Tutors are arranging a short induction course before Michaelmas Term 2017 begins. This course is compulsory, and you should plan to arrive in Somerville by the evening of Sunday 1st October at the latest, although your accommodation will be available from that morning, so you can arrive at any point during that day. The course will run over Monday 2nd October and the first half of Tuesday 3rd October.

In mid-September, Somerville College Academic Office will email you again to let you know that further details of the law induction course, together with the course timetable and some materials to read and think about in advance of the course, have been placed on the Somerville website, at the same location/link where you found this letter.

If you are keen to start thinking about issues relating to the subjects you will study in your first term even before we make available the Somerville law induction course materials in mid-September, then you could read and think about the issues raised by this article, which is relevant in general terms to Constitutional Law: <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/constitutionalism/>

Also keep up with the news and current affairs as Constitutional law issues are very much to the fore in the UK at the moment, with developments regarding Brexit, human rights, court cases testing constitutional principles, developments in Parliament etc.

We hope this is helpful and look forward to meeting you at the beginning of term. Somerville College’s Academic Office ([academic.office@some.ox.ac.uk](mailto:academic.office@some.ox.ac.uk)) is available to deal with any general academic and administrative inquiries that you might have (such as information about accommodation, your arrival in Oxford for the law induction course, 0th week arrangements, any general academic enquiries etc.).

We look forward to welcoming you to the Somerville Law School in October.

Yours sincerely,

Julie Dickson, Christopher Hare, Zachary Vermeer, Tobias Lutzi