

## Magdalene College Arts and Humanities Essay Competition 2023

### Essay Questions

1. Why should we read stories from the medieval or ancient worlds?  
*If you like this question, you may wish to explore Cambridge undergraduate courses in Anglo-Saxon, Norse, and Celtic; Classics; History; or Theology, Religion, and Philosophy of Religion.*
2. "All of human society and relationships make sense only from the perspective of agreement." Discuss.  
*If you like this question, you may wish to explore Cambridge undergraduate courses in Human, Social, and Political Sciences, or Law.*
3. "Studying poetry is like looking at life through a magnifying glass." Discuss.  
*If you like this question, you may wish to explore Cambridge undergraduate courses in Asian and Middle Eastern Studies; English; or Modern and Medieval Languages.*
4. Can artificial intelligence create art, and what issues does this question raise? You can address this question with reference to one or a combination of the fine arts, literature, or music.  
*If you like this question, you may wish to explore Cambridge undergraduate courses in English; History of Art; Music; or Philosophy.*
5. "If only there were evil people somewhere insidiously committing evil deeds and it was necessary only to separate them from the rest of us and destroy them. But the line dividing good and evil cuts through the heart of every human being. And who is willing to destroy a piece of his own heart?" Reflect on this quotation by Alexander Solzhenitsyn and discuss its implications for thinking about ethics, religion, philosophy, or politics.  
*If you like this question, you may wish to explore Cambridge undergraduate courses in Classics; Human, Social, and Political Sciences; Law; Philosophy; or Theology, Religion, and Philosophy of Religion.*
6. Reading literature, in any language, is escapism and will never replace real experiences. Discuss.  
*If you like this question, you may wish to explore Cambridge undergraduate courses in English or Modern and Medieval Languages.*
7. "Archaeology provides a more complete view of the ancient world than classical texts do." Discuss.  
*If you like this question, you may wish to explore Cambridge undergraduate courses in Archaeology or Classics.*
8. One of the earliest proponents of a 'big bang' theory of the origin of the universe was a Christian and Roman Catholic priest called Georges Lemaître, who was also a theoretical physicist. Is this surprising, and to what extent is religious faith compatible with science?  
*If you like this question, you may wish to explore Cambridge undergraduate courses in History; Philosophy; or Theology, Religion, and Philosophy of Religion.*

9. Is access to justice as important as access to a hospital?  
*If you like this question, you may wish to explore Cambridge undergraduate courses in Human, Social, and Political Sciences or Law.*
10. “English, once accepted as an international language, is no more secure than French has proved to be as the one and only accepted language of diplomacy or as Latin has proved to be as the international language of science.” Discuss this quotation by Edward Sapir.  
*If you like this question, you may wish to explore Cambridge undergraduate courses in Asian and Middle Eastern Languages; Classics; English; or Modern and Medieval Languages.*
11. “The people of the past are dead and gone and have nothing to teach the citizens of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.” Would you agree? You may answer with reference to the ancient world or any other period of the past.  
*If you like this question, you may wish to explore Cambridge undergraduate courses in Anglo-Saxon, Norse, and Celtic; Classics; or History.*
12. Thomas Jefferson famously argued, “One generation is to another as one independent nation is to another.” For this reason, he thought that no society can make perpetual laws that bind future generations and that every government should naturally expire after each generation. “If it be enforced longer, it is an act of force and not of right.” Do you agree?  
*If you like this question, you may wish to explore Cambridge undergraduate courses in History; Law; Philosophy; or Theology, Religion, and Philosophy of Religion.*

Please refer to this page for submission guidelines. If you have any questions about the Essay Competition, please contact Natalie Thompson, Schools Liaison Officer, by contacting [access@magd.cam.ac.uk](mailto:access@magd.cam.ac.uk).