

Armstrong Arts and Humanities Essay Competition 2024

Essay Questions

1. Are there some fundamental rights which legislation cannot remove?
If you are interested in this question, you may wish to explore Cambridge undergraduate courses in Human, Social, and Political Sciences, and Law.
2. Is translation more like an art or more like a science?
If you are interested in this question, you may wish to explore Cambridge undergraduate courses in Anglo-Saxon, Norse, and Celtic; Asian and Middle Eastern Studies; Classics; Modern and Medieval Languages; and Theology, Religion, and Philosophy of Religion.
3. "It's all about feeling. If you can play 1,000 notes a minute, and it just goes straight across the board and there's no feeling, it doesn't mean anything." – B. B. King (blues guitarist), *The Life of Riley* (2012 documentary film). Discuss the role of feeling in music-making, and answer the question 'could a robot be a good guitarist?'
If you are interested in this question, you may wish to explore Cambridge undergraduate courses in Music, and Philosophy.
4. 'Crime does not exist. Only acts exist, acts are often given different meanings within various social frameworks.' (Christie, 2004). Do you agree?
If you are interested in this question, you may wish to explore Cambridge undergraduate courses in Human, Social, and Political Sciences, and Law.
5. For studying literature, the selection of a canon should not only be based on quality of the texts but also on equal representation, in terms of age, gender and ethnicity, of its intended readers. Do you agree?
If you are interested in this question, you may wish to explore Cambridge undergraduate courses in Asian and Middle Eastern Studies; Classics; Education; English; and Modern and Medieval Languages.
6. If aliens existed, would they have a concept of God?
If you are interested in this question, you may wish to explore Cambridge undergraduate courses in Philosophy, and Theology, Religion, and Philosophy of Religion.
7. 'As one reads history . . . one is absolutely sickened not by the crimes the wicked have committed, but by the punishments the good have inflicted' (Oscar Wilde, 1891). How should punishments be determined?
If you are interested in this question, you may wish to explore Cambridge undergraduate courses in Education; History, and Human, Social, and Political Sciences.
8. Does the power of multi-national corporations now exceed that of the nation state?
If you are interested in this question, you may wish to explore Cambridge undergraduate courses in History; Human, Social, and Political Sciences; and Law.

9. Why do languages change?

If you are interested in this question, you may wish to explore Cambridge undergraduate courses in Anglo-Saxon, Norse, and Celtic; Asian and Middle Eastern Studies; Classics; Linguistics; Modern and Medieval Languages; and Theology, Religion, and Philosophy of Religion.

10. "We are bored when we don't know what we are waiting for. That we do know, or think we know, is nearly always the expression of our superficiality or inattention. Boredom is the threshold to great deeds." (Walter Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*, 105). Write an essay in defence of boredom using this quotation as a starting point.

If you are interested in this question, you may wish to explore Cambridge undergraduate courses in English; Human, Social, and Political Sciences; Philosophy; and Theology, Religion, and Philosophy of Religion.

11. What can the study of sexuality in the ancient world teach us about the formation of the modern self?

If you are interested in this question, you may wish to explore Cambridge undergraduate courses in Archaeology; Classics; English; History; and Human, Social, and Political Sciences

12. "A picture is worth a thousand words". What is the place of studying texts in a world that is increasingly dependent on visual communication?

If you are interested in this question, you may wish to explore Cambridge undergraduate courses in Asian and Middle Eastern Studies; Classics; English; History of Art; Linguistics; and Modern and Medieval Languages.

Please refer to the [submission guidelines](#) for full details. If you have any questions about the Armstrong Arts and Humanities Essay Competition, please contact Natalie Thompson, Schools Liaison Officer (access@magd.cam.ac.uk).