

Hey philosophers,

Congratulations on making it to Cambridge! I'm Demi, your subject representative. I'm here to help you and answer any questions you might have about philosophy at Cambridge, starting with this letter.

So, what can you expect from philosophy this year? The first thing I want to say is that thank God, you have one of the lowest-workload subjects in the university, so you don't have to worry about Cambridge being super stressful! In terms of contact hours, you'll have about 6-8 hours of lectures a week, a one-hour supervision a week (more on this later), a one-hour logic class every fortnight and a one-hour discussion group every fortnight.

Throughout this you'll have to do reading in preparation for, and eventually write, a 2000-2500 word essay every week which will be discussed in your supervision. A supervision is basically an hour-long deep philosophical conversation/argument with your supervisor (basically a teacher) where you'll discuss and have to defend the argument you've made in your essay. This might seem like a lot of work at first glance but honestly, having a lecture or two every day (*none* of which will be before 10am, may I add – result!) and only one essay to write a week on a subject you love is nothing compared to school!

You might be wondering what you have to do *before* you actually start at Cambridge – summer reading lists and that. The philosophy department will usually have a summer reading list on their website, and you can read a couple of things from there if you want, but it's really not essential at all – I hardly used anything I'd read on the summer reading list during first year. The only books I *would* recommend reading are the books that you will be doing on your Set Texts exam paper: Plato's *Meno*, Descartes' *Meditations* and Mill's *On Liberty* and *The Subjection of Women*. You'll have to write on two of these authors for your exam and some of the texts, like Mill's, are really long so it's useful to read it before term starts. Otherwise I wouldn't bother reading the other books on the summer reading list, unless you're really keen or you haven't done a lot of philosophy before.

You might have loads of other questions that I haven't covered, so feel free to add me on Facebook and message me there – my name is Demi Cole and my picture is of the blonde girl in the cheerleader kit (but maybe send me a message request while you're at it so I don't think you're some random weirdo and reject your friend request, haha). Ask me about philosophy, societies, life in general at Cambridge... Otherwise I'll see you at the philosophy subject lunch during freshers' week, where you'll get to meet all the other philosophers at Pembroke. Us philosophers tend to be quite a small bunch, so you may be the only person studying in college this year or there may be up to four freshers, but we'll see soon enough. See you in Michaelmas!

Philosophy love,

Demi xxx