

Dear Land Ec Freshers,

I'm Pedro, second year Land Economist at Pembroke, and I'll be your subject rep for the year! Welcome to the Cambridge bubble, where you will basically not sleep, meet loads of fun people and genuinely have the greatest time ever.

Firstly, congratulations on meeting your offer for Land Ec! Land Economy is a very small course (around 50-60 a year) that is extremely diverse in all the ways you can imagine – course content, student background, and social life! I really enjoyed being able to dabble in constitutional law whilst working on my statistical software ... reading about game theory whilst studying about deforestation in Brazil. It's the only course I have ever seen in the world where you have such a variety of options! On top of choosing **the best degree ever** you also chose the best college for it (legitimately no exaggeration here). The department is just across the street, and most of your lectures are too. Personally, I choose to wake up 3 minutes before my lectures and run to the lecture rooms – where I still make it on time. Additionally, you will have two very key figures in the Land Economy department at Pembroke that you can always ask for help (Maria and Collin – more about that below).



**Lectures:** Your first year will entail around 8 hours of lectures a week (2 per paper). For **paper 1** (economics): you should have microeconomics in your first term and macroeconomics in second term. For **paper 2** (law): you have law both terms, with the first term being (some type of law that I genuinely can't remember – sorry got a 2.2 in this paper lol) and the second term being administrative law. For **paper 3**, you will have statistics, maths refreshers and a couple of legal methodology lectures in first term and proper maths in second term. For **paper 4**, you will have sustainability in first term, and real estate finance and more sustainability in second term.

**Supervisions and workload:** approximately 4 (hour-long) supervisions per fortnight. These will consist of around 3-4 students to a professor, where you'll discuss the week's topic and hand in your essay. They are really not that bad and even though there are some supervisors which are harsher than others, don't feel too down if you do badly in your first couple of essays. I got a 3<sup>rd</sup> in my first essay and ended up with a high 2.1 so the first couple of pieces of work really don't reflect your time here. Personally, I am not a fan of how the department organises supervisions, so be prepared for this – sometimes you will have no supervisions at all in a week, sometimes you will have 3-4. This depends on the paper, but you will usually have a (*comprehensive and impossible to fully read so don't try to read it all*) reading list for each supervision, accompanied by an essay. The workload is very dependent on the paper, with the Paper 4 supervisions being heavy on academic papers and Paper 2 taking a while to do preparatory reading.

**Before Cambridge:** CHILL. Please don't bother trying to read the reading list – not only is it a waste of your time as you will likely never use those books, it is a waste of money and a waste of your precious energy that you will 100% need more in Cambridge. Just chill with your friends and family. Regarding actual reading lists, your lecturer will recommend key text books in the Land Economy Handbook, available on the department website once you have your email login. This is really dependent on you guys now – you can either take out your books every week or so from the department or college library, or you can buy them yourselves. They're quite pricey new, so check on the Land Ec page if anyone is selling theirs. I'm going to be selling a couple of mine so please message me if you want them!

**Key advice:**

- **Do not stress!** Part 1A is designed to bring everyone to the same level, so no matter what subjects you have studied before, you will not be at a disadvantage. However, the first year has a considerably steep learning curve, especially for subjects that you may have not covered before (e.g. Law). Just remember, so long as you stay on top of things, regularly revisiting material, you will be fine.
- **Difficulty with work:** know that whilst you may be finding one paper really hard whilst others aren't, there are definitely papers that other people are finding hard and you aren't. Just ask someone else for help and they will help you, one of the benefits of having such a small course is that everyone knows each other. Fun memory for me –crying the night away (and being comforted by Ryan the other land ec at Pembroke lol) because I couldn't do a statistics worksheet that everyone found really easy – end result: aced that exam.
- **Setting up your Raven and Hermes login:** Your Raven account is your main university online portal login. For any intra-university source online you will need your Raven Login (e.g. ABC32 or AB123 etc. and password). This will be the same login as for your Hermes (email), Camsis (your student database/info) and Camcors (Report system). My advice is to set this up once you have received your confirmation so that you are able to deal asap with admin from the beginning of term. Do pay attention to incoming mails! Every email at the beginning of term in particular will be very important in terms of setting up supervisions and where to be when etc. I would strongly recommend using an electronic calendar of sorts to organise your life.
- **Appreciate Cambridge as a city:** it is not all about work! Allow yourself some time to settle into the city, enjoy meeting a wide variety of new people (the older years are a sociable bunch and love meeting new faces). There is undoubtedly an equilibrium for work/life balance, which is different for each individual, so find what is comfortable for you. If you enjoy going out, you will find out during freshers the main nights but I'll write them down here:
  - Wednesday Cindies: the social night out with terrible music but is somehow fun
  - Sunday life: very similar to Wednesday cindies crowd
  - Thursday Lola's, Friday Life, Sunday Fez are alternatives to the above
  - Turf is a techno night every couple of weeks

- Arcsoc is the Architecture Society parties which are cool and a lot of people go to
- Tuesday Life is Kaleidoscope (LGBT night)
- The Cambridge Junction has (really good) drum & bass nights a couple of times a term
- Termly bops (big parties) at Pembroke are ‘enjoyable’

Going to Formals at Pembroke and other colleges is also really nice so I suggest going to as many as you can and trying them out (most people want to come to Pembroke though because the food is better). If you enjoy drinking, try organizing and going on swaps with other colleges or other degrees!

- **Work smart:** First year is undoubtedly very daunting, and the challenge is to filter out and learn the key components, instead trying to copy out entire textbooks. This is unrealistic to say the least! My advice for lectures, is not to frantically write down notes from the lecturers slides, as these are accessible online the day before the lecture. Probably best to print them out before the lectures, read them thoroughly, and then make notes over the slides in lectures. However, everyone works differently, so do what you feel most comfortable with and after a while you will become better at working more efficiently. I like writing out notes on my Mac and then copying the lecture notes onto the document. Above all, **you have earned your place** at Cambridge, so be confident.
- **Don't be afraid to ask:** Whether you need support in the academic, medical, social or extra curricular, there is always someone there to reach out to. Maria always makes time for you – no exaggeration – as will the entire group of Land Ecs at Pembroke. Speak with your Land Ec friends, be it for testing and teaching each other, as this can only be more effective in consolidating knowledge, as well as making studying more enjoyable.

Please feel free to add me (Pedro Ornelas – cover picture is a ball committee in b&w and profile pic is me in Zermatt) on Facebook and I will be happy to answer any of your questions, Land Ec, Pembroke, Cambridge or whatever related! I look forward to seeing you all in October! Have a good summer!

Best wishes,

Pedro Ornelas

PS: I'm organizing a subject lunch for the second year Pem Land Ecs with you guys on the Monday of freshers week, so be sure to schedule that in already – and message me if you have any dietary requirements so I can choose the restaurant accordingly.