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EXAMPLES

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Anthropology

Offers from: Manchester

During my childhood I was introduced to, and became captivated by my mother's Bulgarian culture. It was only as I started to mature that I became interested in other groups and ethnicities. This posed a variety of questions, not only about my own culture, but also that of other peoples, and the effect the environment had on them. This led me to study Geography at GCSE and A2, and initiated my interest in studying Anthropology at degree level.

I have a methodical, practical and a common sense approach to work and I enjoy problem solving and facing challenges head on. During my field trip to the Isle of Wight, investigating the human pressures on Bembridge Harbour, I particularly enjoyed analysing relevant data in order to present findings to the group. I was also able to develop the ability to adapt within a team environment. Human Geography has helped me understand the statistics of population concentration and the connection between spaces and locations, as well as how urban growth can threaten the environment.

My English studies have taught me to remain open minded when dealing with a variety of texts, not interpreting words at face value, but exploring their deeper meaning and relevance. I have also improved my critical thinking and analytical writing skills. My understanding of project work has developed as a result of my Graphics and DT coursework. I have interviewed clients and collected data, feeding my findings into my end project, a storage unit for pupils. The practical skills needed when working with different materials, machines and people have increased my dexterity and confidence throughout all of my studies.

During the Anthropology day at the British Museum, I relished the opportunity of listening to a range of lectures and met likeminded people with similar interests. The lecture, 'A Walk on the Dark Side' by Jonathan Skinner explored the human attraction to death, which developed my curiosity about Social Anthropology and confirmed my wish to study it at degree level. I subsequently read 'Social and Cultural Anthropology' by John Monaghan and Peter Just, which made me further contemplate what is it about human beings that make us so unique. Whilst on work experience with an events management company I was able to develop some of the skills required for an Anthropology degree. These included managing small groups of people and seeing an event through from inception to completion. This experience, amongst others, demonstrates that I relate well to people and welcome their input and advice with an open mind.

I enjoy a wide variety of extra-curricular activities, most notably netball, which has been a passion of mine since an early age. I have trained and competed frequently throughout my school career, and I am currently a member of the 1st VII Netball Team. The dedication and commitment required has taught me the value of hard work, consistency and reliability. I have regularly volunteered at the weekly Age UK charity lunches, where I have built and developed relationships with those who attend. I learnt about their various cultural backgrounds and the diversity of their rituals, finding this a humbling and rewarding experience. My ability to work with others and problem solve was proven as I was elected as House Officer. I was able to demonstrate my organisational skills through the smooth running of inter-house competitions, leading the team, and resolving any issues as they arose.

I consider an Anthropology degree a natural choice given my abilities and developing interests. I believe that I have the necessary skills to achieve success in this area and look forward to studying Anthropology further.

Architecture

Offers from: Edinburgh BBB, Oxford Brooks AAB, UCL AAB

When I return to my birth place of Hong Kong I am struck by the ever changing skyline and distinct contrast between the new and the old designs of buildings. Each time, I reflect on how this tiny city integrates the use of innovative architectural design to accommodate a fast growing population. This island city is all about architecture: with approximately 1.3 million people living on 80 square km of land, no wonder the solution to accommodating everyone has been to build upwards. The city is dominated by the footprints of the world's top architects with numerous iconic buildings such as Norman Foster's Hong Kong Shanghai Bank and IM Pei's Bank of China. It is my connection with Hong Kong that has triggered an enthusiasm for studying Architecture.

Being an Art scholar has given me the confidence to experiment with a variety of new techniques, and encouraged me to work with different materials and explore alternative approaches. One example was a piece I created by sewing multi-coloured sheets of acetate to form a small scale 2D cityscape. I have also attended numerous life drawing classes at the Saatchi gallery that have allowed me to develop my observational and freehand skills. Much of the design technology work this year has been about working independently, using practical skills such as CAD and CAM to create my own interpretation of an "Alessi" egg cup. The final piece was made using a 3D printer. Having studied Geography for A level has provided me with a deeper understanding and interest in town planning and urban growth. Recently I have been reading about Heatherwick Studio's project, the Garden Bridge, which plans to integrate a new kind of public space into the fabric of the city, adding to London's diverse urban heritage. I admire the idea of having a quiet, beautiful traffic free zone floating above the Thames. The project successfully utilizes the concept of sustainability as an integral part of its landscape design. It is the link between these spaces and places which draws my interest towards Architecture.

Last year I visited Luang Prabang and Guilin. These trips really opened my eyes as to how the majority of the rural population live in quite simple structures, often built by hand, using local resources. I was intrigued how bamboo was so widely used within the fabric of houses, as well as being part of the construction process, from tables and chairs to scaffolding around buildings. It struck me that this must be one of the most versatile, eco friendly, sustainable and hard wearing materials on earth. I spent a week working with an architectural firm called Stiff and Trevillion. I was given my own project to work on, developing a pavilion for a local park where I carried out research into the client profile and suitable materials. I used my knowledge of "Sketch up", "Rhino" and "Photoshop" to create computerized 3D drawings and to superimpose my designs on to photographs to see how compatible they were with the environment. During London's Architecture Week, I visited some open studios and listened to a motivating talk by Alex Haw at Atmos Studio. I love the way his curvaceous and organic designs often reflect the natural world, such as his housing project in Guilin which echoes the shape of the surrounding rocks and mountains. I like the way he pushes the boundaries of contemporary design with really strong ideas, but at the same time clearly acknowledging the past. My time at school has allowed me to develop my leadership and communication skills: helping out with Mathematics in the Junior School and assisting with Art lessons in my local primary school once a week. Completing my Duke of Edinburgh Bronze Award solidified my teamwork skills and patience, which would be beneficial when studying Architecture.

I look forward to being taught about how designs and decisions can impact society and nature, as well as stimulating my creative mind in a rigorous academic environment.

Landscape Architecture

Offers from: Edinburgh ABB, Birmingham BBC & Sheffield BB

Since a young age, I have been inspired by my father's role in the forestry sector and have enjoyed discovering how natural spaces can be transformed to bring long-term and sustainable benefits to people. His work on the design and construction of user-friendly facilities within a forest, such as cycle paths and a children's playground, have helped encourage people to engage with nature. His work has added tangible recreational benefits without compromising the natural environment. Studying Geography A-Level has enabled me to delve deeper into the threats caused by human activities in the physical landscape, most notably deforestation for timber and clearance of land for agriculture. Consequently, the destruction to the flora and fauna is often neglected, and I am passionate about working with nature rather than against it, in order to achieve an equilibrium between the need for economic growth and environmental conservation. Pursuing a Landscape Architecture degree will allow me to explore spaces through a creative lens, and offer me the opportunity to design projects that will meet the needs of different users and cope with changing weather patterns, extreme rainfall events and rising sea-levels.

I am intrigued by how architects overcome challenges of climate change. This led me to research into sustainable water management schemes applied in Rotterdam; the city is situated 6 metres below sea level, therefore the need to reduce future flood risk exceeds the current capacity provided by the system of man-made dykes and levees. The resilience planning and smart design that the landscape architects have created include: a dual purpose plaza that operates as a public square for sports and performances during dry weather, but in periods of intense rainfall, it acts as a water storage facility that relieves the pressure on the surrounding drainage and sewage system. Equally, I was fascinated by the creation of floating pavilions and green roofs in the city to protect the environment and its people. Rotterdam's integrated town planning means that people can appreciate nature, thus this is my motivation and hope to design 'green' attractions in the future.

Visiting the Park Güell in Barcelona introduced me to Gaudí, whose innovative approach to design is fascinating. I appreciated the use of curved and organic forms which evoke nature. The use of colour is also interesting, as it creates a celebratory atmosphere not often found in public spaces. It is thought provoking to compare this approach to landscape architecture with that of Versailles, which I have studied in Art History A Level. Whereas the former works with nature, the latter seeks to dominate and control through its ordered, linear design. One of my favourite contemporary projects is James' Corner High Line in New York. Here a derelict, raised train line has been regenerated and transformed into a park, creating a tranquil, green public space which snakes through the city, contrasting with the urban environment. Another project I am interested in is the Hetherwick Studio's plan for a pedestrian garden bridge across the Thames. Like the High Line, it will create a new type of public space, bringing the calmness of nature into the urban environment.

Work experience has helped me appreciate what landscape architects do on a daily basis. I was introduced to the concept of removing trees in order to create space for cycle paths. I also learned the importance of keeping clear records documenting projects, and recognised the significance of budget planning for the successful running of a business.

In Art, I have developed observational drawing skills focusing on cityscapes and experimented with new techniques and media, such as Photoshop and etching, and produced landscapes using coffee and charcoal. Duke of Edinburgh has developed my leadership skills and competitive fencing my determination. I eagerly look forward to the challenges of a Landscape Architecture degree.

History of Art

Offers from: Cambridge A*AA, Bristol AAB, Edinburgh AAA

We are constantly bombarded by images, which form the foundations of our culture. The digital age has enabled the rise of the mass media, which I see as persistently exploiting the image's power to entice and manipulate. My interest led me to read Freedberg's *The Power of Images* and I was struck by his discussion of the innate power of images across time and place. My Art history A Level has inspired me to learn more about how art has been used as propaganda, exploring works such as Caravaggio's *Madonna of Loreto*, which can be seen as embodying the Council of Trent's demand that art cultivate piety and promote the Catholic Church. I am interested in Clark's claim in *Art and Propaganda*, that institutions, governments and individuals have harnessed the image's social and political power. As an effective example, Picasso's major political statement *Guernica*, retains its impact today.

Writing my EPQ, an analysis of fairy tales from a feminist perspective, I explored the communication of sexual politics through image and text. I was engaged by Mulvey's idea that images shape widespread cultural perceptions. Growing up watching animated fairy tales, their imaging of gender has affected my definition of women and myself. Exploring the image of women from a Marxist perspective, I was influenced by Zipes' argument that class appears as a distinguishing factor between good and evil characters, as does the correlation between wealth and beauty. Visual analysis of illustrations and animations, as in the depiction of the Evil Queen in Disney's *Snow White*, was invaluable in revealing character and patriarchy. As in *Snow White*, the threatening presentation of women within art history is prevalent. Considering this theme, I read Berger's *Ways of Seeing* which explores women's suppression by patriarchy through art. I was struck by his claim that women merely 'appear' while men 'act'. I would relish the chance to examine these ideas in more detail by studying History of Art at university. In addition, I would be interested to investigate the impact of religion on the representation of women in art.

An interest in film has piqued my fascination with the classical ideal of beauty. I was captivated by Barthes *The Face of Garbo*, in which he compares the star's glamorised image to a classical sculpture. By contrast, I became aware of female artists, such as Kahlo, who challenge or subvert the ideal. Through Kahlo, I have been drawn to Surrealist theory. Interpreting Gothic texts such as *Wuthering Heights*, I applied my knowledge of Freud and Surrealism's exploration of the subconscious to my discussion of dreams in the novel. I am also intrigued by the Romantic concept of the Sublime as it defined by Burke in *The Sublime and the Beautiful* and explored in pictures such as Friedrich's *Wanderer Above the Sea of Fog*, which presents the dominant power of nature over insignificant man. I used Friedrich's landscapes as inspiration for my photography A Level coursework, exploring different photographic techniques to capture the essence of the horrific Sublime.

My work experience in film has enabled me to thrive under pressure and multi task, as I assisted on sets while simultaneously studying for my A Levels. During my gap year I am excited to be going on a John Hall course in Italy, enabling me to see works of art in the flesh and in their original contexts, as well as allowing me to improve my Italian. I am passionate about languages, and believe they help me more fully understand different cultures and their artistic practices. I am currently learning French, German and Arabic. Being of Iraqi descent, I feel it is crucial to explore my heritage through art. In some sense, a history of art is a history of the world. A degree in History of Art will equip me with valuable analytical skills, helping me to further understand the power of art, and so progress to a career in film.

History of Art

Offers from: UCL AAA, Courtauld AAB

During an inspirational trip to Italy in the summer in 2014 I was amazed by the grandeur and scale of Roman architecture. I was particularly stuck by the Pantheon which showcased the engineering skills of the ancients, as well as their adoption of the language of Classical Greek architecture to communicate the power of the Roman Empire. More recently, I have become fascinated by how, in different cultural contexts, this language has been revived and manipulated. My interest led me to read John Summerson's 'The Classical Language of Architecture'. I was intrigued by how the tradition has been venerated and employed symbolically to communicate status and cultural prestige in a range of buildings from Baroque church architecture to the palace of Versailles or Behrens's ARG Turbine Factory. My curiosity was also aroused by the sculpture I saw in Rome, particularly Bernini's Apollo and Daphne. I was impressed by the way in which he manipulates marble to resemble both flesh and the textures of the tree into which Daphne is transforming. The power of this sculpture led me to research it further, and as I study Latin, I read Ovid's Metamorphosis which inspired Bernini and was fascinated to notice how faithful he was to the text. Studying Baroque art at A2, I began to appreciate how influential Ovid's writing was in the 17th Century. This led me to read P. Barolsky's article on Poussin's The Garden of Flora: 'Poussin's Ovidian Stoicism'. I was intrigued by Poussin's interpretation of Ovid through the lens of Stoicism. Stories of passion become a reflection on the ongoing cycle of nature, the transformation from life to death and can thus be seen as an aspect of the 17th century vanitas theme. I am also interested in the interpretation of the nude since antiquity, especially the Doryphorous type where the highly idealised male nude form embodies beauty or 'kalos'. The Greek ideal of beauty is found in perfect proportions and symmetry and it is thought provoking that this ideal has, both in Antiquity and in the work of artists such as David, been associated with moral good, an idea that is so different to contemporary interpretations of the nude. I find the impact of the classical tradition of the nude fascinating. It has been referenced from the Renaissance onwards, yet from the mid Nineteenth century, artists such as the Realists sought to reject and subvert it as they wished to explore contemporary culture in their work. An artist such as Manet both referenced and challenged the traditional representation of the female nude in his painting 'Olympia' which, in 1863 was deemed inappropriate and controversial because he presented a 'real' unidealised naked woman in a contemporary interior, thus identifying her as a prostitute rather than a mythological goddess. In 1863 Cabanel produced 'The Birth of Venus' which also depicts the female nude but keeps within the classical, idealised tradition and was therefore well received. These conflicting attitudes towards the nude can be seen in relation to ideas of the naked and the nude explored by Kenneth Clark and reveal the fascinating complexity of the subject in the mid Nineteenth century, a topic which intrigues me. The changing interpretation of the nude compelled me to read Alyce Mahon's 'Eroticism and Art' and I was struck by her discussion of contemporary perceptions of nudity. It is increasingly sexualised and at the same time deemed inappropriate if the figure is not conventionally "beautiful" and idealised. I further researched these areas for my A2 Art topic, particularly focusing on the work of Jenny Saville. I am intrigued by her realistic, raw and unsettling interpretation of the nude body because it is such a contrast to the idealised, 'airbrushed' depictions of the female nude found in the contemporary media. I am excited about the prospect of exploring these issues in more detail at university and look forward to deepening my knowledge of a subject I am passionate about.

Art History

Offers from: Aberdeen BBB, Edinburgh ABB, Oxford Brookes BBC, St Andrews AAB, York AAB

I grew up with a passion for art and have always bought a postcard of my favourite work. Now, studying Art History, I have been able to deepen my understanding of different artworks and periods, becoming certain that I would thoroughly enjoy reading Art History.

Living in London, studying Art and Art History, I regularly visit museums and galleries. I am interested in contemporary artists who experiment with new media such as digital technology, reflecting upon its role within society. An artist such as Josh Harris lived streamed one hundred artists through his own online portal, critiquing the reality of technology and exploring how private life is becoming increasingly public. In addition, new processes are gradually being employed, for example Dan Hiller combines Victorian prints with Photoshop. It catches my attention that the lines between technology and art are ceasing to exist.

Studying Art History and Sociology has revealed the extent of gender inequalities within society, as well as within the art world. I have noticed that in the past female artists were essentially written out of Art History. I attended a lecture by Sarah Dunant and I was struck by the almost complete lack of female artists in Renaissance Florence. I was fascinated that it was socially unacceptable for women to be artists. Dunant's discussion on convents interested me as nuns were allowed to paint.

Surrealism fascinates me, and, as a woman, I am interested in the differing perspectives of male and female artists on 'woman'. Most Surrealists were male, viewing women as muses, projecting their desire, and seeing women as sexual objects. I was able to explore this in my ARTiculation presentation, researching Giacometti's 'Woman with Her Throat Cut'. It occurred to me that the work is aggressively misogynistic, with the woman splayed across the floor, and Giacometti's use of the insect-like form of a praying mantis, who devours her mate after breeding. Here woman is viewed as both victim and victimizer. Female Surrealists also depicted women, but not as objects of desire. Instead artists such as Leonora Carrington and Dorothea Tanning explored their own realities through the subconscious. My presentation equipped me with research skills and improved my public speaking, winning me Second Prize. After attending a Frida Kahlo exhibition at the Victoria and Albert Museum, I was enthralled by works where she expressed her hybrid feminine identity. Reading Whitney Chadwick's 'The Militant Muse', I realized that although labelled as a Surrealist by Andre Breton, she used her work to explore her own political views and identity. At the time it was controversial for women to be artists, yet Kahlo continued to paint and so challenged cultural conventions about women.

I am intrigued by the classical tradition in architecture. Architects have often returned to a language that employs both the orders and ideas of harmony, but also transformed it and employed its values in different ways, even within periods. For example, during the Baroque, Bernini used the orders, creating dynamism and drama through projection and recession. Contrasting to this, the French Baroque was restrained and classicising in style. Within Modernism, these traditions were apparently rejected. However, it is interesting that in Mies van der Rohe's Seagram Building, although radically simplified, and classical detail abandoned it is still underpinned by the classical principles of harmony.

At school I am both Charity and Tuck Shop prefect, and last year I raised money for an expedition to rural Tanzania for the 'Girls for Girls' Project. This furthered my teamwork and time management skills. We built menstrual hygiene toilets, painted classrooms and attended workshops. I was also reminded of the difference in technique and skills used cross culturally upon meeting two local artists. I am excited to continue expanding my knowledge of Art History through the centuries and across the world.

Classics

Offers from Edinburgh

I have always been an avid student of literature and of classical works in particular. However, it was only when I started to read works in their original languages that I started to appreciate the style and use of language and this is where my real love of classics began. I became interested in Latin poetry, having sampled Virgil's Aeneid in the original and then going on to read the whole work in English. I have also read some of Ovid's Amores and was struck by the differences in style and content of the two poets' works. I enjoyed the more personal, first person narration in the Amores, whereas Virgil's grand epic style was very beautiful to me.

I am interested in the social and political context of ancient literature. I learnt that the Aeneid was composed to suit its patron, and that there are serious political undertones within the work, contrasting with Ovid's poetry with which he may have gotten into trouble because it did not comply with the moral programme Augustus promoted. My studies of history of art have influenced my thoughts on both patronage and public reception in the arts and how they were put to use in the classical period. I have read sections of Paul Zanker's work on the power of images in the Augustan period and I am interested in how visual images were used to shape public opinion. I am also intrigued by how the artist's expectation of the reception of his work influences him. For example, Aristophanes' 'The Clouds' made it clear to me how Aristophanes was engaged with the intellectual concerns of his time and had a view as to how his audience saw them; he represents Socrates in a way his audience will appreciate, not as a reflection of the real man. How the arts changed over time according to the ruling powers' ideals intrigues me and I am interested in learning about who the audience of a work of literature or art would have been, enabling me to understand how it was received by its contemporaries.

In connection with this, I have also developed an interest in the ancient comic novel. After reading Petronius and Apuleius I began to understand from this literature what a broader section of the population was like. In contrast to a work of epic such as the Iliad, the characters in novels are not great heroes but ordinary people. Both the Satyricon and Metamorphoses intrigue me because they present to the reader a world which is based on reality, echoing the true lives of contemporary people (albeit in a satirical, humorous way). Following on from this, I read some of Mikhail Bakhtin's work; I was interested in his thoughts on voice in the novel, and the nature of novelistic discourse in comparison to the omniscient voice in epic. I find it is important both to look at epic and also works in a novelistic style to understand the ancient world better. Epic gives an important insight into the ideals that were widely accepted, whereas novelistic works represent the more mundane, realistic lives of ordinary people.

As I am interested in art, I did work experience in the Victoria and Albert Museum, working in the ceramics and glass department. I undertook tasks such as helping to catalogue different works within the museum and in storage, which helped develop my organisational skills and I had the privilege of handling different objects. From this experience I was able to appreciate what a job in a museum incorporates and how many areas it involves. Last year I also helped out in the Queen's Gate Junior School, helping year four with their Art and English lessons. I found it a rewarding experience, and it helped me to fulfil a role of higher responsibility. I have always enjoyed reading novels and I have a particular interest in Russian literature such as Gogol, Bulgakov and Dostoevsky. However, my tastes are broad and I think that classics gives me the ability to read critically and to recognise themes common to literature throughout the ages.

Classical Civilisation

Offers from: Bristol, AAB, Durham AAA, Edinburgh AAB

My interest in Classics was initially born from a love of literature; novels such as those by Khaled Hosseini shaped my upbringing by opening up an unfamiliar world in which I might begin to understand backgrounds very different to my own. It fascinated me that I could sympathise so greatly with people so culturally diverse, and I believe this was the foundation for my attraction to the Classical world. Classical Civilisation A Level allowed me to combine literature with history, studying both stories and their historical contexts, in order to gain an insight into the Ancient World. Combined with English, which developed my analytical technique, these subjects enabled me to approach literature with more confidence.

The portrayal of women in Classical literature surprised me for its diversity. In my Extended Project Qualification, I explored the extent to which *The Odyssey* can be seen as a proto-feminist text. I concluded that those who most fitted the definition of 'feminist,' such as Circe and Calypso, were depicted as powerful opponents of Odysseus. Their status was thus elevated, as they were seen as worthy adversaries to one of the most intelligent heroes in Ancient mythology. This led me to consider women in Greek tragedy. Because honour and pride were regarded as typically male attributes, I found it significant that Euripides' *Medea* placed great importance on personal reputation, her anger growing from her desire to take revenge on Jason who had humiliated her. This contrasted with Euripides' *Phaedra* in *'Hippolytus'*, who was also highly concerned with reputation, but it was that of her family, as opposed to her own. Similarly, Sophocles' *Antigone* appears to care little for her reputation, but rather remains obsessed with her objectives, whilst staying indifferent to her own feelings and the consequences of her actions. This diversity of portrayal of females in Greek Tragedy led me to consider whether men at the time attributed a greater complexity to the female sex than I had previously believed.

Alongside literature, I enjoy studying historical background, especially to *'The Aeneid'* when looking at the Roman Empire under Augustus, and the fall of the Roman Republic. It fascinates me to consider Virgil's parallels between Augustus and Aeneas, and how Aeneas' positive and negative characteristics indirectly criticised Augustus and his rule. I am also interested in Cicero's writings and his influence upon Roman society: from the prosecution of Verres, to his destruction of Clodia Metelli's reputation, to his brilliance with words and his famed wit. I enjoyed Robert Harris' *'Imperium'* trilogy, which explored Cicero's political involvement in the Senate and how it shaped the course of Roman history. I look forward to exploring his works further in the future.

I am fascinated by languages: I grew up speaking Italian and English, studied French and am taking Spanish A Level. My love of the Classics means I now wish to employ my strong linguistic abilities to learn ancient languages. To this end I have begun taking Latin, and I look forward to fully appreciating texts in their original Latin and Greek. The prospect excites me, especially as English translations can never fully express the poetics of language, the importance of word placement and the use of sound that, among other things, are only captured in the original language.

I am a dedicated athlete, fencing for the London Regionals and coming 8th in the country for woman's epee in 2016. The strong bond I formed with my team helped me develop my communication and teamwork skills, as did being a Prefect and running my own classics book club at school.

I eagerly look forward to the challenge of studying these and other areas in greater depth at university.

English

Offers from: Oxford

It was through writing an essay on 'The importance of play or playfulness in *Hamlet* and *Henry IV, Part One*' for the Corpus Christi Essay Competition that I decided to study English. I developed particular interests in the ideas of Huizinga, whose approach to play in '*Homo Ludens*' became an integral point of reference to my own thoughts within the essay. In developing the concept of a 'play within a play,' I concluded that the spontaneous and metaphorical value of play in literature perhaps resists the confining nature of sober analysis. I was also able to explore Shakespeare's characters from a more psychoanalytical perspective, which provided an interesting link to the concept of intentionality. Jones' '*Hamlet and Oedipus*' gave me an insight into both intentionality and Freudian criticism, and as I am particularly interested in Shakespeare's tragedies, references to Sophocles' '*Oedipus Rex*' proved enriching, through Jones' sophisticated use of the Oedipus Complex as an explanation for Hamlet's erratic behaviour. Whilst his views, along with those of Bradley are perceived to be outdated by some, I personally was captivated by his discussion of Hamlet's subconscious conflicts.

My particular enjoyment of Shakespeare is only a part of my growing interest in Renaissance literature. After using Montaigne's essay '*On Idleness*' to support my own ideas on play, I was inspired to read more of his work. The themes he tackled seemed to epitomize notions integral to the Renaissance, such as the concept of 'self' and identity as well as the relationship between life and death, which he artfully describes as the 'greatest task we have to perform,' yet the one thing we cannot rehearse for. Montaigne's treatment of these themes is neither excessively grand nor overly philosophical; and after reading the Essays of Sir Francis Bacon it was extremely rewarding to discover the parallels between their works.

I have begun to explore the life and times of Montaigne, which has opened my eyes to the intellectual mood of the late Renaissance, with the loss of earlier humanistic optimism as well as ubiquitous religious conflicts shaping the literature of the period. I certainly felt that Greenblatt's '*Renaissance Self-Fashioning*' gave me a deeper insight into the period and the influence of literary figures such as More, Marlowe and Spenser. Although I feel that occasionally Greenblatt's New Historicist approach neglects the aesthetic value of literature, his work presented me with a new perspective on a period of literature which is fascinatingly complex.

I often find the divide between historical and literary studies hard to resolve but have always been fascinated by the influence of context on literature. Over the summer I discovered the essays of George Orwell, whose assertion that 'the opinion that art should have nothing to do with politics is in itself a political attitude' was thought provoking.

Politically engaged, realistic novels, in which the role of society is scrutinised, have always appealed to me.

Wharton's '*The Age of Innocence*' focuses on the central moral question of whether it is more important to please society or please yourself, and similar comments on social status can be found within the poetry of Larkin, whose often dismal outlook on 20th century life seems antithetical to the expressive style of his verse. I also enjoyed Orwell's discussions on '*Why I Write*' and '*Politics and the English Language*', which actually led me to re-evaluate my own writing style. I was particularly struck by his statement that 'good prose is like a window pane,' either suggesting that the reader should be able to see through uncluttered language to grasp the writer's intentions, or portraying that 'good prose' itself is a reflection of reality. For me, this struck a chord, as I approach literature as a representation of the flaws and virtues of human behaviour, effectively becoming, in Shakespeare's words, a 'mirror up to nature.'

English

Offers from: Bristol AAB, Kings AAA, Royal Holloway ABB, Warwick AAA

I was smitten by literature years ago when, at the age of ten, I was treated to a holiday in the Yukon along with a copy of 'The Call of the Wild'; for weeks, I was Buck. I have always been captivated by stories. It seems to me the need for narrative is a fundamental component of human nature. More recently, I have become interested in why stories are so important and how they are told, in what Peter Brooks calls "the desire, power and the danger of storytelling". I believe that the study of English literature is important to the development of people individually and collectively, and this is why it is such an important subject to study at university.

The First World War poets consolidated my desire to pursue English. The poetry of the men who fought brought the trenches horrifically alive with the vivid images of poems like "The Army of the Dead" by Barry Pain and the simple poignancy of others, for example, Owen's "Anthem for Doomed Youth" which allowed me to walk in the shoes of those haunted men. This corpus of work is a powerful example of literature that both enacted the trauma of a society and changed attitudes towards war forever. It is illustrative of Stephen Greenblatt's view, in the "Poetics of Culture", that there is a close relationship between texts and their socio-historical contexts. A recent revelation for me was 'Never Such Innocence' edited by Martin Stephen, which includes less-known poets like Patrick MacGill who wrote poems like 'Matey', work of touching plainness, not for public effect, but as the only possible receptacle for such intense feeling. The effect of these poems is to impart, in Peter Brooks' words, a "type of wisdom"; in the poet's contemplation of death, the reader is invited to "integrate experience into his own experience".

Similarly, Emily Dickinson's poetry opens up the consciousness of another human being in a more intimate way than is possible in any other art form, for example in her explorations of death and madness in such poems as "Because I could not stop for Death", and "I felt a cleaving in my mind". Equally fascinating is her poetry about nature and the spiritual world, which approaches the reader as Emerson says, "by the stairway of surprise." Dickinson's elliptical style is similar to Emily Brontë's in the sense that both poets remark on the world surrounding them and simultaneously allude to a world of spirituality; Dickinson's themes echo those of Brontë's in "No coward soul is mine" and "Lines". Ironically, this poetry, created as a secret way of maintaining their sanity, now provides an escape for other imaginations. In contradistinction to Greenblatt's view that poetry serves an important cultural function is the view of the Aesthetics. Oscar Wilde is fascinating because even though he expresses the belief that art is superficial and urges that beauty should be appreciated before meaning, works like "The Importance of Being Earnest" and 'The Picture of Dorian Gray' operate at a number of levels. These include exposing the flaws of Wilde's society, thus suggesting that his meaning is at least as important as his style.

I have been studying stories that concentrate on the act of storytelling - for example, the use of a frame narrative, and in reading Shelley's "Frankenstein", Brontë's "Wuthering Heights" and Conrad's "Heart of Darkness" I was struck by how the same form could be used so differently and across different centuries. I am keen to explore these connections in more detail.

Fundamentally, I love reading and have always tried to read as much and as often as I can. At the moment on my bedside table, I have a selection of Byron's poetry allowing me to examine his experimentation with romanticism; 'Room' by Emma Donoghue which contrasts due to its claustrophobic narrative, and Toni Morrison's 'Beloved' which contains lots of different shades of shifting subtlety that is truly captivating.

English

Offers from: Exeter AAA, Kings AAA, Royal Holloway ABB, St. Andrews AAA

Keats argued in his letters that a visceral proximity to Beauty overrules literary 'disagreeables', such as logic. That is, that Truth in literature is not what is right or rational, but the presentation of an emotion so raw that it is unquestionable. This concept of 'negative capability' is prominent in his own poetry, namely through the relationship of Porphyro and Madeline in 'The Eve of St Agnes', which on a logical level is beyond rational thinking. Keats's words, for me, crystallise the importance of the study of English.

I particularly enjoy reading texts through which social taboos are exposed. For example, in 'Mathilda', Mary Shelley explores the gothic motif of incest through the protagonist's relationship with her widowed father. What sets this gothic text apart from others is that Shelley explores the intricacies of the relationship, as opposed to leaving it hanging as a horrific taboo. The audacity of this text is underlined by Shelley's father's reaction: Godwin, who was fairly liberal, not only refused to publish the manuscript, but even refused to return it. It is similarly astonishing that Nabokov, in 'Lolita', presents the protagonist's socially unacceptable hebephilia in an absurdly humorous tone. Despite its disturbing content, the publication of 'Lolita' opened important debates about the power of language: a reader may be repulsed by the themes presented in the novel, but the beauty of Nabokov's language drives one to carry on reading. Due to my synesthesia, every word I read is intrinsically linked to colour, so I particularly enjoy Nabokov's work as he also 'heard' colours.

My other A Levels have added new dimensions to my reading. In History, the study of the Russian Revolution added detailed context to my reading of Socialist Realism from Stalinist Russia; to think that writers had to comply with a certain set of rules in order to suit a political regime is outrageous. Bulgakov's satirical 'Master and Margarita' is a personal favourite. This is due to the richness of the underlying political message, and is enhanced by the scandal that the Soviet regime suppressed the text for so long that the writer was dead before it was published. Biology has developed my analytical skills, encouraging me to approach texts logically and pay close attention to detail. I enjoy reading around the subject, for example 'The Man Who Mistook His Wife for a Hat' by Oliver Sacks. I am also interested in the curiosity many writers have for Biology: McEwan's 'Enduring Love' questions whether love is biological or romantic and, in 'Frankenstein', the protagonist's fascination with defying death explores both the dangers and benefits of the study of science, raising important questions about where to draw the line in tampering with nature.

My involvement in Drama has given me confidence of expression, and my practical experience of acting has greatly enhanced my understanding of dramaturgy. In our most recent school play, I played the role of Professor Henry Higgins. I also received a Distinction in my LAMDA Grade 7 Silver examination.

I have always loved studying English and have been a member of various school book clubs over the years. For three consecutive years I was chosen to be a member of the CILIP Carnegie Medal Shadowing panel. As Head Girl, I have enjoyed writing and delivering speeches and, having been elected as Head of my House, I lead the younger girls in events such as House Debating, where my experience as a member of the debate team (making it to the regional MACE debates in 2013) can be of real help. I have relished these opportunities and hope this shows my ability to both communicate with others, and shoulder greater responsibility.

I am eager to study English at a higher level, as I am fascinated by the way literature has developed and how interpretation has evolved alongside it. I look forward to deepening my knowledge of a subject I am passionate about.

English and Philosophy

Offers from: Birmingham AAB, Bristol AAA, Edinburgh AAA, Leeds AAA

As a French native speaker, I was introduced to English upon moving to South Africa where storytelling became part of my life. The need for a narrative is critical to human nature, it is a gateway to learning, reflecting and changing the course of history.

Through presenting on the ambiguity of gender in Shakespeare, focusing on *Twelfth Night*, I appreciated the spectrum of interpretations of literature. I developed an interest in Traub's reading of the boy actor in women's roles in Shakespearean comedies and concluded that this phenomenon embodies the meta-dramatic theme of identity: always a charade, a masquerade, or 'other'. I was able to explore the characters in *Twelfth Night* from a psychoanalytic perspective, particularly homoeroticism and binarism.

Morality has always intrigued me, especially after reading Plato's *Meno*. This prompted me to research into the theme and I discovered Burgess' *'A Clockwork Orange'*. I was enthralled by his exploration of different kinds of good, the 'aesthetic good' and the 'ethical good':

'Goodness...is a naturally occurring phenomenon, yet they argue that evil, the opposite of goodness, somehow requires a rationally explicable cause.' Kant's theory of evil takes this further by arguing free will conflicts with our natural inclination towards goodness and evil; he argues evil actions are not an absence of goodness but are motivated by self-love rather than the moral law. Exploring Burgess' unhinged protagonist, in light of my studies of Kant's theories of evil and his ethics, invited questions on the existence (and extent) of our autonomy to choose between good and evil. I hope to explore this further through my studies of Philosophy at university.

Being able to read *'L'Etranger'* in its original French and in English, I was struck by the nuances of various translations of the opening line: 'Aujourd'hui, maman est morte.' Gilbert translates this as 'Mother died today.' Later, Ward reverted 'Mother' to 'maman.' My study of literature in both French and English has made me alive to the import of minor changes, such as the impact of the pronoun used in order to shape the reader's understanding of Meursault, and his distant relationship with his mother. 'Maman' however, hangs somewhere between the two extremes: it's neither the cold and distant "mother" nor the childlike "mummy." I feel Ward was right to leave the word unchanged as the English reader will have no preconceived notion of the word 'maman' - yet they are now faced with a foreign term which impacts their analysis of Meursault's psyche. In this way, I became conscious of the unintended loss of meaning in novels having undergone translation, which planted the seed for a grave question: should books be translated at all? This experience shed light on the importance of words, amplifying my passion for literature and affirming my decision to study this subject at university.

My curiosity for English literature led me to do work experience at the Evening Standard where I was given the opportunity to write an article on literary London, allowing me to mature as a writer and researcher. I built upon my literary adventures attending a great deal of theatre such as *'Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?'* and *'Macbeth'* at the National. As well as reading seriously, including Richard Yates and Alfred Hayes, I am part of my school's English Society; I have also been a peer mentor and led the Philosophy Society. All require commitment, patience and organization - attributes which I feel will be invaluable to my university studies.

Academic intensity comes naturally to me; my passion for literature and philosophy has been sparked through my combined explorations of analytical readings and grappling with the concepts of morality and gender fluidity. I am aware that I have only scratched the surface which only intensifies my eagerness to delve deeper into these subjects at university.

French

Offers from: Bristol, Edinburgh, St. Andrews

While born in France, I have always lived in England. Nonetheless, my passion for French culture is what defines me. The opportunity to pursue French studies in an English university setting would enable me to explore the culture and literature from a more detached perspective, something which would be less easily accomplished at a French university.

French, once the world's "lingua franca", has always been a particular interest of mine, both as an academic subject and because of its impact on world culture. My background has drawn me to explore this language and its legacy. Through its study I have got a taste of both the "ancien regime" and a vibrant modern culture.

My A-Level subjects, History, Latin and Ancient History, have enabled me to improve my knowledge of French language and civilisation. Last year my course in History, which focused first on Italian Unification and secondly on Hitler's rise to power, also identified the role played by France in connection with both historical events. Latin has likewise aided my study of "Romance languages". I find the complex structure of Latin grammar has strengthened my command of French grammar, and has helped me to learn Spanish. As for Ancient History, in the spring of 2014 I submitted an essay to the St Hilda's College's (Oxford) Essay Competition upon the theme: "Why was the classical Greek and Roman past so important to later European societies?" In this paper I analysed in part the influence of the Classical World on both French 18th century literature and political development.

As for French literature, I have enjoyed exploring different aspects. Moliere is a special favourite. The humour of his plays is strikingly similar to that of French comic films of the 1960s and 70s, particularly those acted in by Louis de Funès, which I think epitomise modern French comedy. More recently, I have been exploring the correspondence between Voltaire and Frederic II of Prussia during the so-called "République des Lettres". I also admire works from a more contemporary period written by Marguerite Duras, in particular her books "Un Barrage sur le Pacifique" and "L'Amant". While the setting for each book is the declining French colonial empire in the first half of the 20th century, the writing style of the former is more ideological than the latter, and the interplay between characters also differs markedly. My interest in French goes further than its literature. For example, in order to stay up-to-date with French politics I make good use of the "Le Figaro" and "Le Monde" applications on my phone, especially recently with the commotion within French political parties. Last year I ran a language club for younger students in which we discovered some of the numerous regions in France.

Currently serving as Deputy Head Girl and School Prefect, I have sought to develop my leadership skills, which can also be put to use in helping others. As a School Prefect, I advise and assist girls in our Junior School. In the Senior School I currently direct a Theology Club. This past summer I trained as a camp counsellor in Spain and now take an AS course in Spanish.

I expect my university career to challenge me on many levels, as well as encourage me to explore my passion for French language and culture within a stimulating academic environment. In undertaking such studies I believe I have much to gain, but also much to give.

French and Politics

Offers from: Exeter AAA, Nottingham ABB, Warwick AAB

Coming from a family that was affected by the Algerian War of Independence has contributed to my decision to pursue a degree exploring politics, the mechanics of international relations and French. Growing up in multicultural London, combined with my North African roots has encouraged me to approach global politics with an open mind. Since the early twentieth century, the Middle East has become a political flashpoint at the core of international disputes. The crisis in Syria illustrates how extreme terrorism from groups such as ISIS is considered by many to be a serious existential threat. Global debate on whether to attack the region through coordinated airstrikes from Western powers subsequently led to varying actions and national policy reviews. My awareness of current affairs has been raised by reading a variety of newspapers, watching different news channels and exploring academic journals such as *The Economist* and *History Review*. My wider reading made me realise that the 'unprecedented' political predicaments in the Middle East have left politicians struggling to find the 'right' solution for regions that suffer extensively from a lack of democracy and rampant corruption. The complexity of these issues concerning governance, rules and political systems raises numerous questions that I hope to answer at undergraduate level.

My A Level subjects have opened my eyes to the intricacy of global politics. Studying History has helped me appreciate how the world has evolved through the analysis of the causes and consequences of past historical events. For example, the ratification of the Treaty of Versailles contributed to the rise of Hitler. This has shown me that politics has always played a significant role in shaping our current world. Furthermore, the interpretation and analysis of sources has encouraged me to think critically. This has helped me form coherent arguments in order to take part in debate. Geography has made me aware of the interdependency between nations. Case studies such as the Mekong River Commission have given me insight into how nations work to secure finite resources to promote economic growth and development. Similarly, Economics plays a pivotal role in politics, as numerous decisions taken by governments are based on the macro and micro environment. These range from issues of war, to addressing problems of unemployment or the allocation of resources, to the reliance on trade agreements. Economic links between countries are also becoming increasingly important in this ever-globalised world.

Studying 'L'Etranger' by Albert Camus, where the author introduces philosophical themes such as the absurd and existentialism has deepened my knowledge of French literature. I realised that through the disengaged character of Meursault, the book raises more questions than it answers, such as, does afterlife exist? To me, France's colonial past in Algeria and other countries has impacted the way France acts in both domestic and international arenas. I was struck by how the culture of 'secularism' has created serious tensions with immigrant subcultures which have resulted in them becoming more politicized. I learnt about the growth of anti-immigrant groups such as the Front National that have entered French politics due to popular support. In connection with this, I took a keen interest in how socio-economic, political and cultural polarisation resulted in the civil unrest of the 2005 Paris riots involving disillusioned African immigrants. The movies 'La Haine' by Kassovitz and 'Welcome' by Lioret address these issues whilst reinforcing my love for French cinema. My fluency in Arabic, French and Spanish has helped me communicate and gain a deeper appreciation of these cultures.

It is the significance but unpredictability of global politics, as well as today's increasingly interdependent world that intrigues me. This degree will equip me with many of the skills required for a career in the diplomatic field.

Geography

Offers from: Cambridge A*A*A

We are all 'Prisoners of Geography'. In his best-selling book Marshall argues that humans are bound by the constraints of their surroundings, a position reminiscent of the idea of environmental determinism made popular in the Victorian era by Halford Mackinder. Whilst volunteering on a construction project in rural Tanzania I reflected on a paradox: despite Africa being the origin of humanity, development has been hindered by what Marshall would argue is a poor geographical lot. However, his stance firmly ignores the interweaving relationships between people, power and the environment - relationships that are at the core of why I feel drawn to studying Geography at university. My experiences in Tanzania allowed me to witness the wretched interplay of a hostile climate, unforgiving terrain, poor governance and a lack of institutions, despite vibrant autochthonous social structures. At the heart of this is the shadow of colonialism, which continues to undermine attempts at tackling poverty and inequality. 'The Wisdom of the Whores' convincingly describes how poor governance has exacerbated the issue of AIDS; a pertinent example being Tanzania's Magufuli, whose persecution of the LGBTQ+ community has deterred people from seeking treatment for HIV. I question how neo-colonialism will affect the future of Africa, wondering whether China's recently announced US\$60 billion worth of investment in Africa to accompany the infamous Belt and Road Initiative will aid progression or mirror the past, hindering development.

It is these kinds of questions I would seek to interrogate during a degree in Geography. As Danny Dorling has argued, the study of Geography becomes increasingly relevant in a time of such rapid global change. Since Malthus, various theories of population growth have emerged; Boserup famously challenged Malthus' conclusion, coining the phrase 'necessity is the mother of invention'. Applying Boserup's theory, Wageningen University & Research (WUR) works to improve agricultural yield demonstrated by their Photosynthesis 2.0 Program. They simultaneously aim to tackle and mitigate the effects of global climate change by re-capturing carbon dioxide from the atmosphere. WUR also recognize what Hahlbrock emphasizes in 'Feeding the Planet': the necessity for concerted agricultural progress. Yet I am not certain that innovation and technological development can occur at the same rate as exponential population growth. Perhaps, only a synthesis of multiple solutions will suffice, with reduction of food waste and improved distribution being of paramount importance. Independent research into the complexities of Quaternary climate change ignited my interest in the analysis of proxy climate records. An understanding of the Earth's processes and how they have evolved over the course of history gave me a greater appreciation of the spectacular geomorphology I witnessed in Yosemite Valley on a trek earlier this year. Detailed research such as the analysis of ice cores and ocean sediments equip us with knowledge of the causes of past climate change. Yet I cannot comprehend that, despite recognition of accelerated global warming, there seems to be an inability to execute strategies that counter anthropogenic activity. In spite of socio-economic losses caused by the increase in hydro-meteorological disasters, recent climate agreements have been nullified by economic self-interest.

A Geography degree would provide me with the knowledge imperative to tackling the issues that will be faced in the coming century. It is from the holistic perspective of a geographer that I wish to see the world. My experience at MUN has honed my critical evaluation skills and my work on the Inspiring Women Programme allowed me to witness the power of conviction demonstrated by the experiences of these remarkable women. I believe I have the research ability to complement my overarching fascination with Geography and relish the prospect of further studies.

Geography

Offers from: Bristol AAB, Kings AAB, LSE AAA, Nottingham AAB, UCL AAA

My fascination with the human societies and the natural environment stems from my multicultural and diverse background. My parents are from Canada and Norway and I grew up in three cosmopolitan cities; Singapore, Hong Kong and London. I am trilingual and have experienced how different cultures, lifestyles and geographies have shaped my life. The combination of my upbringing and heritage has helped to develop a genuine interest in peoples and societies. Last summer, I volunteered in a rural community-based project in Tanzania which reinforced my decision to study Geography. The experience enabled me to witness first-hand how access to education can be limited by poor menstrual hygiene provision. Initially, I thought that poverty and gender inequality were the root causes of this problem. However, working in two schools and engaging with the local community made me realise that negative social attitudes, and the lack of knowledge on menstruation were the key reasons causing poor school attendance. This resulted in psychosocial outcomes such as shame and insecurity in young girls. Upon reflection, these gender-based prejudices and challenges exist in both developed and developing countries. For example, the status of women in the UK has advanced over time but issues such as closing the gender pay gap and under representation of women in politics remain to be tackled. This motivated me to read 'Gender equality and sustainable development' by M. Leach and led me to appreciate the importance of empowering women and girls by valuing their skills, knowledge, and recognising their rights.

In Geography, I enjoy analysing multi-layered, real-life case studies to identify the connections between physical and human topics. I learnt how the 2011 Japanese tsunami caused the shutdown of nuclear power stations and subsequently impacted its energy policy and security. This resulted in an unexpected increase in demand for natural gas and a rise in global energy price. Evaluating the relationship between the magnitude of events and its socio-economic impacts allowed me to appreciate the importance of governance and how responses to natural hazards can influence a country's resilience and recovery.

I have integrated the skills gleaned from studying Mathematics into my geographical studies, and I enjoy interpreting complex trends and analysing large data sets to gain a deeper level of understanding. I have used real time data from USGS to analyse tectonic activity, and compared the spatial variability and frequency of earthquakes and volcanoes. This enabled me to identify how geophysical processes interact with vulnerable populations at different scales.

Studying Biology has extended my awareness of environmental threats and their effects on different ecosystems. I have developed a particular interest in marine environments which complements my love for scuba diving and sparked my interest in endangered whale sharks. I visited the Marine Vertebrates Institution in the Philippines where I learnt about research on the resident population of whale sharks and the socioeconomic impacts of the tourist industry. I was surprised to discover how effective the use of multiple temperature-depth-recorder tags was on monitoring local habitat and diving behaviour, and their contribution to sustainable conservation.

Beyond my studies, I completed work experience in a corporate law firm where I gained an insight into the repercussions of Brexit in the business world. As a Sports Scholar, I enjoy competing in nationwide biathlons and marathons and have represented my borough in two series of London Youth Games for netball. These activities helped me improve time management and leadership skills and increased my determination and stamina. My interest in people and places, combined with my ability as an Academic Scholar, makes me confident that I have the knowledge and skills necessary to be a successful Geography undergraduate. It is an exciting prospect.

History

Offers from: Bristol AAB, Durham AAA, Exeter AAA, Oxford AAA, York AAA

When I was seven we moved to the USA, where history was not on the curriculum, so I began reading about British history. My initial love of the subject was based upon wonderful stories. I am now fascinated with all we can learn from the past: about power, beliefs and social structures.

During GCSEs I worked for the National Trust as a guide at Thomas Carlyle's House. I noticed that visitors were more interested in Victorian social history than Thomas Carlyle's literary career. This prompted me to read 'The Carlyles at Home' by Thea Holme which describes the Carlyles' lives, from neighbourly disputes, to difficulties with servants. I read the couple's personal letters and I developed skills in using primary sources. I was particularly intrigued by Jane's discussion of Victorian class structure and how it impacted domestic life. Whilst working at Carlyle's House I explored the archive learning independent research skills, the ability to tailor information to interest an audience and the confidence to address large groups. I also developed this latter skill by representing my school in debating and public speaking, reaching the regional finals in both. In 2012 I was awarded 'ESU Regional Best Questioner'. Debating has improved my confidence and the clarity, logic and structure of my arguments.

I attended Debate Chamber Summer Schools in both History and History of Art. I particularly enjoyed the module on witchcraft, which explored different interpretations of the supernatural and the underlying fears it provoked in early medieval European cultures. This led me to read 'Religion and the Decline of Magic' by Keith Thomas. I was struck by the degree to which traditionally pagan beliefs in the supernatural permeated Christianity in the early medieval period. It is interesting to contrast the often negative view of magic in medieval Europe with the far more lenient view of the Iron-Age Vikings. The fact that Odin was also patron god of magic made the notion of mortals harnessing the supernatural far more acceptable in Norse culture. In ancient Rome there was also a very fluid line between religious cult and superstition which was apparently exploited in Roman propaganda against the Druidic religion of the Celts.

I enjoy pursuing issues across traditional academic boundaries. The relationship between commercial and financial power, political tyranny and artistic florescence in classical Athens and Medici Florence, and more generally the ways in which cultures develop is a particular area of interest. I am also keen to study the dynamics which led to wars and the resources which sustained them in both antiquity and the modern world.

I am also intrigued by the methods of power, especially when corrosive or corrupt. In Antony Read's work 'The Devil's Disciples' he describes the lives and characters of the men who would come to form Hitler's inner circle. It was surprising to see how the often indecisive, but consistently manipulative character of their leader shaped these men. Mary Beard's documentary on Caligula showed how, through the spectacle of the funeral of his mother, Caligula promoted his own dynastic links to Augustus in order to legitimize his claims to power. The commentary provided a glimpse both into the character of a man who has come to epitomise the excesses of Imperial Rome, and also to the successful posthumous slander of him by his enemies. This sparked an interest in the nature of power in Imperial Rome leading me to read sections of Tacitus' Annals. This in turn led me to think about how the presentation of history changes over time and so I plan to read Richard J. Evans' 'In Defence of History'.

I hope one day to work in the world of curatorship or antiquities. But whatever career I pursue, I want to study history at university because I cannot imagine a more rewarding, challenging or interesting way to spend three years.

International Relations and Politics

Offers from: Leeds AAB, Manchester AAB, Nottingham AAB, Southampton AAB, Westminster Unconditional

My interest in International Relations and Politics was first sparked by my grandfather's insights into European politics as a result of his role as a political journalist in Italy.

Our fascinating conversations about corruption in the Berlusconi regime inspired me to apply his first hand experiences to international relations more broadly. Developed countries are not immune to the impacts of corrupt governance, regardless of their position on the world stage.

Having been introduced to the effects of conformity in A Level Psychology I was able to link politicians' behaviour to a fascinating study done by Serge Moscovici on how minority groups are influenced. The study revealed that in order to be persuasive, consistency of opinion has a more significant and lasting impact than an inconsistent argument. In addition, commitment to a cause has been seen to result in the 'augmentation principle'. This means that groups are more inclined to follow a cause if the leader is seen to be committed to, and has sacrificed themselves for, the ideology. I began to notice how politicians have exploited this phenomenon to persuade others of their beliefs.

Studying Geography has emphasised the ever-growing importance of relationships and connections between and within countries over space and time, and how this can affect society, politics and the economy. I have been particularly fascinated by China's rapid rise to superpower status and the way in which its physical geography continues to shape its geopolitical relationships. This is emphasised in Tim Marshall's book 'Prisoners of Geography', as sovereignty over the South China Sea is the key to China becoming a two ocean power like the USA, with strategic and military dominance over the Pacific and Indian Oceans. China claims almost the entirety of the South China Sea as its sovereign territory, leading to disputes over territories such as the Spratly Islands, where China is investing in potential military infrastructure. This is increasing geopolitical tensions with the USA and its South-East Asian allies, such as the Philippines, who continue to restrict Chinese dominance. They wish to limit Chinese power and reduce the risk of conflict in the South China Sea, given the importance of the sea, and particularly the narrow strait of Malacca, as an international trading route for goods and energy supplies. This shows how physical factors, such as location and access to the oceans, continue to shape international relations.

My Italian oral has provided me with another opportunity to further explore issues resulting from geopolitical relationships. An article I recently read in 'La Repubblica' was the catalyst for my further investigation into the mounting political tensions that have resulted from an influx of migrants, who were able to travel freely between member states once they had entered the EU's Schengen Area. I have been particularly interested to explore the impacts of large-scale forced migration across the Mediterranean resulting from heightened conflict and disputed borders in the Middle East. This has undoubtedly contributed to the turbulent political situation within the EU.

Beyond my studies I volunteered with the charity Crisis at Christmas, developing my ability to work constructively in a collaborative environment, as well as honing my communication and organisational abilities. I was fascinated by people's unique individual stories which enabled me to understand the human impact of turbulent political systems, war and poverty, and how these factors directly affect migration. It was these narratives, alongside my fascination with International Relations and Politics, gained through conversations and wider reading that inspired me to pursue this degree course. I am excited and motivated to deepen my understanding and knowledge of significant, contemporary issues, both on the global stage and within individual political systems.

International Relations and Politics

Offers from: Kings AAA, Queen Mary ABB, SOAS AAA & City ABB

I left Egypt at the time of the revolution. This upheaval was the single most influential factor in my wanting to study International Relations and politics. Seeing the devolution of power and its consequences has taught me a lot, not least to be careful what you wish for. The current polarization of support in the country has highlighted the return of a system similar to the previous administration, under Morsi, which the uprising had supposedly overthrown. I feel strongly that the protectionist approach of El-Sisi is influencing Egypt's relationship with other countries. I believe that the only way forward is through international trade. Friedman's anecdotal 'From Beirut to Jerusalem' resonated with me, claiming the future success of Middle Eastern countries is dependent on these states giving up some of their sovereignty and embracing global markets. I would like to be part of a new generation to develop a more free-market approach.

I am also fascinated by international crises, such as the ongoing migrant crisis, and seek to understand the underlying causes of immigration, one of which is inequality. I believe that if wealth were balanced more equally between the First and Third worlds, migration would inevitably reduce. However, I also feel developed industrial countries have more to gain than to lose from some form of immigration. States need to see beyond possible short-term social instability, and the cost of expanding infra-structure, to the ultimate economic benefits.

Sociology A-level has taught me that societies do not remain static, but continually develop due to forces such as trade. Reading Diamond's 'Guns, Germs and Steel' opened my eyes to theories about why Eurasian countries have, historically, evolved to be dominant in commerce. I found persuasive his argument that disparities in environment and geography, at an early stage of development, created advantages that are reinforced through competition and trade.

Studying Classical Civilization has made me aware that the ancient world has given us democracy, economy and diplomacy. I was intrigued by the range and scope of the Roman and Greek civilizations; the way city states collaborated in the case of Greece, and organisation of a vast empire in the case of Rome. The course opened my eyes to the history of diplomacy and the relationships between states; themes I look forward to studying in greater depth at university.

In studying English Literature, I have been particularly interested in the way writers use fiction to convey political ideals in a range of different ways: Orwell through his plain speech, Wilde through satire, and Mary Shelley through subverting genre. All politics is centred on the ability of the politician to convey his vision to the populace or the House effectively. As a member of a debating club, I appreciate the value of rhetoric. Controversial as it is, Nigel Farage is a compelling example, not because of what he says but of how he says it, demonstrating the power of language and the force of conviction.

Outside of my studies, I am involved with an educational charity in Egypt. The experience opened my eyes to issues of inequality and the benefits of international development. It also helped me develop my team working and communication skills. I also came to appreciate that not everything is black and white, and believe this is crucial for an understanding of International relations. As I am trilingual, speaking English, Arabic and French, I am able to interact freely with people of many different backgrounds. This has helped me deepen my understanding of different perspectives. I am excited at the prospect drawing on these skills and experiences and studying International Relations in greater depth at university.

Politics and International Relations:

Offers from: Bath AAA, Durham AAA, Exeter AAA and unconditional offer from Nottingham

I have always been able to see both sides of an argument, even mediating between my warring brother and sister. I am fascinated by politics and conflict, examining all arguments and coming to my own conclusions.

In Geography A-level I have studied the rapid industrialisation of China, which assists growth and moves people out of poverty but whose pollution affects the rest of the world. In Sociology I have studied China's demographics and the implications of the recent removal of the long-standing one child policy. I chose Psychology A-level as I have long been fascinated by the criminal mind and what motivates people such as serial killers and big game poachers. In my view many of the key studies I learn in Psychology are dated and I am more stimulated by concepts that are accompanied by cutting edge research. I enjoy examining empirical evidence and thus much prefer the cognitive elements of my course, for example gender differences in spatial skills, which are based on scientific principles with quantifiable data.

Having spent much time in South Africa I have developed an interest in, and become directly engaged in, the issues around rhino poaching. Poaching is a problem that needs to be solved across borders, the causes and possible solutions raise both an international and a geopolitical debate. My particular focus has been the campaign to Save The Waterberg Rhino. Anthony Baber, the campaign leader, is a close family friend and also a rhino owner. I have attended lectures by Anthony and fellow supporters of the cause, and helped organise fundraising events. The problem is deeply rooted in sociology with poaching caused by widespread poverty; with horn being sold for \$60,000 per kilo in 2014, so it is no surprise that poachers would rather kill an innocent animal than see their family starve. One solution would be to legalise the market, which would involve harvesting horn from live animals, not killing them, and would see the release of the South African government's stockpile. By flooding the rhino horn market, prices would fall and poaching would cease to be profitable. However, my Geography and Sociology studies show me that the population increases in China and Vietnam and their steady move to mass affluence will increase the demand for traditional Chinese medicine, so regulation may not be enough on its own. Having seen first-hand the devastating effect of rhino poaching on people and animals (in most cases both poachers and animals are killed) I know that intergovernmental co-operation is desperately needed.

Working in my family business taught me the vital importance of the EU and the free movement of goods. Having grown up in the EU, I can see both the positives and negatives of the trade bloc and I am a keen observer of the refugee crisis. Whilst understanding the need to help these people who have been forced to flee their homes, I have also considered the response of those who believe that the UK does not have the space, or funds, to rehome these people. Studying Geography, I think that water scarcity rather than ISIS will cause the next wave of refugees. A co-ordinated, international political response to solving both the current crisis in Syria and the refugee intake is needed, especially if more people are to arrive. Despite not being on offer as an A level at school, I have always been fascinated by politics. By choosing it for a degree I hope to better understand both politics and international relations. Having done a summer program in direction at the New York Film Academy, I see the power that film has as a medium for social change, e.g. the controversial documentary 'The Cove', about the slaughter of dolphins in Japan. I hope to be able to seek a career that will in some way help to solve global issues such as these and make the world a better place for both animals and people alike.

Politics and International Relations

Offers from: Birmingham AAB, Manchester AAB, Nottingham ABB if made first choice

Human rights in Saudi Arabia has been ranked among the 'worst of the worst' in Freedom's House's annual survey of political and civil rights. Being the first generation in my family to leave Saudi Arabia and gain an education in the UK, a country where democracy and gender equality are not questioned, has allowed me to gain an understanding of the stark contrast between the two regions' societal norms. The combination of my heritage and upbringing have led me to become passionate about studying International Relations and Politics. Furthermore, the legacy that my grandfather has left, as the King's adviser in the Royal Court in Saudi Arabia, specialising in solving conflict in North Africa, has inspired me to follow his political footsteps, and hopefully become the first Saudi woman in my family to pursue a career in politics.

A Level Politics is not offered at my school, so I have chosen to engage in global and current affairs through being a member of the MUN Programme. Researching and writing resolutions for questions such as terrorism has given me an insight into different political systems which can influence policy and decision making on a global scale. One area which challenged me was to represent a country whose views conflict with my own, and then having to negotiate and defend its national interest regardless of my own opinion. I found this difficult when debating the question of 'modern slavery' whilst representing the country of Senegal, as the country itself violates its own laws on this issue. However, the roleplaying scenario taught me vital skills such as diplomacy and conflict resolution.

My awareness of current affairs has been enriched by my Geography studies. It has made me more conscious of how interconnected our world is, due to impacts of globalisation and migration, inspiring my EPQ question, "To What Extent can China be referred to as a Superpower?" I researched the unprecedented rise of China's economy, and how its 'miracle growth' has taken place. I concluded that China can challenge the geopolitical order to become a rival to the USA, stemming from its military strength and economic power. This led me to read 'Prisoners of Geography' by Tim Marshall which explained how China's geographical location is an essential factor in its becoming a superpower. It also emphasises the importance of the geopolitical tensions in the South China Sea over ownership of islands and natural resources, as this can be a key factor in making China a two-ocean power like the USA. Comparing two countries helped to hone my research skills and independent analysis, an aspect of the project that will be beneficial in my future studies.

Sociology has taught me the relevance and importance of policy making. By analysing different educational policies such as the tripartite system, privatisation and marketisation, I have learnt how much they impact inequalities within the education system. Contrastingly, studying Art has allowed me to explore the ways in which different political views are portrayed, and how artists' views can conflict with those of mainstream society. I have been interested in Ai Weiwei's work and how his opinions on China's human rights have resulted in his unfair imprisonment.

Being trilingual has helped me appreciate cultures and has made me keen to undertake a work placement in an international organisation. Furthermore, my role as a House Officer has allowed me to develop organisational skills through holding meetings and leading a group of girls in competitions ranging from debating, drama and sports. Playing the piano for 7 years, I have learnt to balance school work and extra-curricular commitments.

My love for different cultures has led me to question how and why their societies are formed and why they change. Stemming from my early exposure within my family, as well as the skills interests gained during A Levels, studying International Relations and Politics is a prospect that truly excites me.

Politics

Offers from: Kings A*AA, LSE AAA, Queen Mary ABB, Royal Holloway ABB

I am intrigued by how government and legislation shape the real and monetary flows between households and firms, as these political forces can often influence the core functions of our economy. This was exemplified by the 2008 financial crisis in which the banks bore the brunt of the blame for over-lending and subprime loans, despite the immense governmental pressure on financial institutions to maintain economic output and sustain growth. It is this complex and dynamic political and economic interdependency that inspires me to explore this further at university.

Reading 'Dear Leader' by Jang Jin-sung, which gives a rare insight into North Korea's opaque, totalitarian government and how it oppresses its population through the restriction of information and the implementation of government surveillance, highlighted that politics is a powerful force that influences the way people behave. Upon reflection, politics is an inescapable element of people's lives. From determining free speech and the power of the media, to regulating most aspects of life, such as abortion rights and racial segregation, political agendas and government policy can shape society. We are unable to function in a civilised manner without strong governance; however, we are equally able to act inhumanely under its operation. It is therefore of personal importance to me, living in a time of ongoing conflicts, rising global tensions and unprecedented environmental challenges, to be able to appreciate the intricate roles and functions of politics.

Geography has enhanced my knowledge of global development and connections, and the concept of 'Superpowers' has encouraged me to explore the importance of geopolitics. I am fascinated by China's expansion into the South China Sea, through the development of the Spratly Islands, in order to extend its political sphere of influence and control of resources. This has been integral to my understanding of the growing tensions over territorial boundaries, as well as the interaction between the global economy and international politics. I am also intrigued by the issue of energy security and how it motivates Russia's encroachment into the Arctic region in order to exploit untapped resources.

In English, deconstructing the novel 'Frankenstein' allowed me to analyse texts critically, giving me a deeper understanding of the morals of a society, and the ethical responsibilities of those in power. This qualitative approach to analysis starkly contrasts to my studies in AS Mathematics, which taught me to evaluate a situation from a purely logical perspective, using my quantitative skills to build statistical models. Moreover, in an increasingly globalised society, being multi-lingual is essential. This is why my German studies, as well as my strong proficiency in French and Spanish will enable me to communicate effectively in an international environment, and form a stronger appreciation of contrasting foreign ideologies. Studying German has also allowed me to carry out independent research, and I chose to explore the key issues such as the modern migrant crisis. This has had a global impact, and exacerbated pre-existing xenophobic, insular and nationalist attitudes. This is exemplified by the Brexit vote, the rise of nationalist parties in Germany, Trump's anti-immigrant rhetoric, and the recent success of the far right politician, Jair Bolsonaro in Brazil.

I completed an internship at an asset management company which introduced me to the complexity of global markets. I gained an insight into marketing strategies adopted by different firms and the contrasting approaches necessary for global success. It became clear that even in a modern, interdependent world there are vast political and religious divisions across the America's, Europe and Asia, illustrated by the 'glocalised' marketing strategies.

I look forward to immersing myself in a course that will deepen my understanding of the politics shaping our society and economy.

Law

Offers from Durham A*AA, Warwick AAA, LSE A*AA, Nottingham A*AA

My ambition is to use the law to make a positive difference in people's lives. Having lived in Lebanon until the July 2006 war, I was exposed to the dangers of changing systems of government and this led me to appreciate the importance of Human Rights. My support for the Human Rights Act of 1998 has led me to investigate the potential consequences of exchanging it for the 'British Bill of Rights and Responsibilities'. This would leave our established Human Rights vulnerable to the decisions of politicians. Chakrabarti's 'On Liberty' enhanced my appreciation of the vital role of the Human Rights Act. I concur with her that Human Rights are especially important during times of crisis due to the tendency of political bodies to respond by infringing rights and to discriminate against minority groups. This reinforces the importance of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights to ensure our liberty. However, I appreciate the value of engaging in adversarial arguments. I read Lord Neuberger's Speech, which he delivered on the 800th anniversary of the Magna Carta. I thought he, unlike Chakrabarti, alluded to the issue through his emphasis on the need for flexibility and change in reference to Human Rights which raised some interesting concepts such as whether or not our notion of Human Rights today will one day be regarded as archaic. Therefore it is wrong to enshrine in stone Human Rights as currently conceived. Moreover, I read 'On the Republic and On the Laws' which raised questions on the suitability of natural law as a foundation of our justice system. I began to ponder whether 'nature or nurture' determined our ethical and legal inclinations. Thus having explored Cicero's argument for natural law, I sought a different approach. I found Mill's 'On Liberty', in which he applies his theory of Utilitarianism to society at large in a bid to maximise happiness and morality more amenable to me. A key strength of Mill's 'nurture' approach that is perhaps lacking from natural law, is that it privileges universality and remains a pragmatic theory.

During the two weeks I spent at the Oxford summer law school, I enjoyed engaging with hypothetical, yet highly controversial cases such as that of the Speluncean Explorers which dramatizes this broader conflict between natural law and legal positivism. It also raised issues concerning the interpretation of statutes as literal or purposive. My argument for their acquittal, was based on the idea of them being in a 'state of nature' outside the realm of our society and law. I was forced to consider the complexity of definitions, such as when this 'state of nature' begins and whether this kind of verdict creates a problematic area in future cases. This taught me a valuable lesson on the importance each ruling bears not only to the case, but to future rulings and laws, especially in the UK where there is a Common Law system. Religion has in recent years become more central to discussions on how our legal systems should be formed. I began to think about the extent to which religion should influence and shape our laws, as well as to consider larger issues such as the degree to which religion hampers the development of a country when it is reflected in its legal system. I wrote an EPQ on this issue, ultimately concluding that a secular government is more progressive, as it is difficult for religion to evolve as rapidly as our society or in the way that our laws must in order to keep up with it. On a more practical level, having spent a week working alongside lawyers in the heart of London I was able to gauge the demanding and rewarding nature of the career. I also learnt the importance of being able to effectively detach any emotional or other personal investments in a particular case in order to come to a sound and fair decision. I am determined to devote myself to pursuing a Law degree and it would be an honour to have the opportunity to do so in an intellectually stimulating and reputable university.

Law

Offers from: Leicester unconditional, Warwick AAA, Westminster ABB

During my recent travels to Asia, I witnessed the frequent neglect of Human Rights; I feel that this has allowed me to appreciate the importance of the Law in protecting the rights of an individual. I strongly believe that the enforcement of certain legal rights for all, regardless of location and circumstances, is something that the world should aspire to. Studying History has made me aware of the extent to which law is driven by historical events. I have been particularly inspired by historical legal developments in human rights, specifically American civil rights and the American Constitution. An example that sparked my interest is the 1896 Plessy v. Ferguson case: I was fascinated by the way that the Constitution could be undermined by the words, 'separate but equal'. I discovered that many conflicts between State Laws and the Constitution developed because of ambiguities in the latter. L. Kallins in 'The Juvenile Death Penalty: Is the United States in Contravention of International Law?' explores the filing of Amnesty International's brief of 'amicus curiae' with the Supreme Court and shows that, due to the Eighth Amendment being open to interpretation, it might be argued that the juvenile death penalty is not an 'unusual or cruel punishment.' This sort of discrepancy between parallel legal systems also occurs in the UK as decisions taken by the European Court of Human Rights can legally overrule British Law after the UK ratified the European Convention in 1998.

My main interest is in Human Rights Law, and the implementation of International Law. In my research for my Extended Project Qualification, I was shocked by the extent to which the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) is violated by states that claim to adhere to it. The UDHR presents difficulties, as it is merely a declaration and therefore cannot be enforced by International Law. Aung San Suu Kyi, whose house arrest, according to the UN, violated articles 9, 10, and 19 of the UDHR, argued in 2012 that improving the law in Myanmar would require judiciary connections between nations and the introduction of laws that could be used against judges. In the UK, there is a higher degree of self-regulation within the legal profession, and bodies such as Transparency International UK also work to combat corruption; this is not possible in many dictatorial regimes. My research on freedom and democracy has empowered me to aspire to further the implementation of International Law in regard to the protection of human rights.

Although I feel emotionally attracted to Human Rights Law, my academic interests extend to other aspects of Law. I have recently become more familiar with these, both through attending introductory Law courses at UCL and Oxford, and through my work experience in Rome at the international law firm, Baker and McKenzie. Here I examined various French-Italian cross-border transactions. I enjoyed using my language skills in French and Italian to translate communications between lawyers and clients and to work with legal documents concerning banking and finance law. My stay in Rome, which was after Berlusconi's final sentence by the Court of Cassation, also gave me the opportunity to analyse the flaws inherent in the Italian legal system. I was particularly interested in the 2006 pardon law, which after an excessive 15 years of court hearings, allowed Berlusconi's sentence to be reduced to only one year of community service. The inefficiency of the legal system is outlined in The Economist, stating that such inefficiency wastes 1% of Italy's GDP.

Working on my Gold Medal in LAMDA allowed me to develop my public speaking skills. I also actively support the Lankama Association charity, where I organised a theatrical fundraiser and maintained professional relationships with sponsors and colleagues. My organisational and linguistic abilities were crucial whilst working at the Valentino fashion house, as I participated in the management of events.

Law

Offers from: Warwick AAA, Exeter AAA, York AAA & Leicester Unconditional

I was initially inspired to study Law while working on my Extended Project, which focused on the responses of European countries to the present refugee crisis. I was particularly struck by the fact that many countries have defied the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, ignoring the principle of 'non-refoulement' in the face of security risks and economic challenges. Italy, however, amongst others, despite having the highest Debt/GDP ratio in Europe after Greece, has responded effectively in launching Operation Mare Nostrum in 2013, which rescued over 150,000 migrants in the Mediterranean Sea each year. I decided to explore this topic further by reading 'On Liberty' by Shami Chakrabarti, in which I discovered an alternative view of refugees and immigrants. Although, as demonstrated through the recent EU referendum, refugees are often perceived as a negative drain on the economy, Chakrabarti argues that they should be seen as 'noble or even heroic' figures: an inspiring view which showed me that it is vital to challenge even the most self-evident of standpoints and to consider alternative interpretations.

Studying Geography and Economics at A Level has furthered my understanding of the way international law interacts with socio-economic and cultural developments in low-income countries. Working on the period of military rule in Niger before 2010, I have learned that international conventions are impotent when challenging and regulating corrupt governments. More recently, because this corruption has come to be regarded as a violation of human rights, the present regime has attempted to enforce international principles in the domestic constitution, passing a law against human trafficking in May 2015. However, this has still failed to prevent officials from accepting bribes from migrants crossing the borders to seek refuge in Europe, in clear disregard of Article 13 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the 'right of individuals to travel...leave his own country and return to it.' I was surprised to encounter a situation in which the Law is unable to control human behaviour and instincts.

Inspired by my studies, I attended an InvestIN Education course where I was given an insight into the skills and challenges involved in the daily life of a solicitor or barrister. One vital lesson I learnt was that it is often necessary for a lawyer to disregard their own opinions, no matter how strong, and to 'turn grey into black and white'. In 'Is Eating People Wrong?', Allan Hutchinson argues that this is particularly the case in agreements concerning money or services, which require clarity: although agreements of all kinds are 'ubiquitous and unremarkable', sometimes we must 'turn to the law for relief or vindication'. I was able to observe this principle in action throughout my internship at Baker & McKenzie in Rome, where I widened my knowledge of different areas of legal practice, specifically focusing on financial transactions in the aerospace industry.

During my work experience at a London-based Hedge Fund, I appreciated the importance of weighing up complex arguments and making confident decisions within specific time-constraints. While working at the Press Office of Maison Valentino, during the Paris Fashion Week, I enjoyed the challenge of preparing material for press deadlines in a fast-paced environment, while maintaining attention to detail. Being bilingual in English and Italian, I appreciated the opportunity to hone my language skills and practice my French when communicating professionally with European clients. I have also helped to plan charity fundraising events such as the Lankhama association and 'Women of Africa', projects which work to fight AIDS, malnutrition and poverty. These experiences have strengthened my desire to understand complex and wide-ranging legislation from cooperative to human rights law, whilst upholding principles of justice and equality to the best of my ability.

Law

To me, law and its wider social context are interdependent. As mores change, the framework of the law has to evolve to take account of what society views as acceptable: it is paradoxical that the law both comforts us with a sense of security and at the same time curbs and modifies our behavior.

A particularly interesting sociological aspect of law is human rights. Obama's current commitment to closing Guantanamo Bay, where the US Government has effectively established a prison outside of any Western jurisdiction, provokes extreme views on either side of the argument. On the one hand, it can be argued that it is in society's interest to incarcerate suspected terrorists without the protection conferred by most Western legal systems; on the other, this can be viewed as a fundamental breach of their human rights. I am intrigued by the idea that a legal representative can act for one side or the other with equal conviction.

This idea was illustrated when I visited the Old Bailey. As I observed various cases from theft to murder, the dexterous skills required of the barristers were highlighted. Their ability to take a piece of evidence or a claim, examine it meticulously and then present a potentially weak argument in the strongest manner was captivating. My visit underlined a principle explored by Ehrlich: the codes of conduct followed by the defendants could be considered to be Ehrlich's 'living law'. This inevitably conflicted with the law applied by the court or 'positive law'. Whilst the defendants seemed to adhere to the Hobbesian idea of the 'state of nature', where man acts chiefly to preserve his own life, the law must ultimately remain objective in order to reach a rational evaluation.

My two weeks of work experience in a legal practice presented an opportunity to understand how Ehrlich's theories might apply in a specific context. A live case I read on the infringement of a trademark, where the owner of several pharmaceuticals companies allegedly committed fraud and distributed counterfeit items, exemplified the idea of a defendant following 'living law': he behaved according to his own rules, using a competitor's intellectual property as his own. Additionally, I witnessed the fast pace and rigour of a legal environment and I was placed in a position of responsibility, compiling confidential documents and working to critical deadlines.

My study of French reflects the importance of detail in legal language. I was told how a border dispute between countries began through the imprecision of a law having been written in English; the translation into French (a language emphatic on precise grammar) created ambiguity and dispute. This accentuated the significance of words and how easily they can be misinterpreted, alerting me to the importance of being as definitive as possible with language in order to manipulate it.

English has aided me in honing important skills such as constructing a lucid argument: my current study of 'Frankenstein' has engaged me with different but equally persuasive interpretations - Marxist, Feminist and Psychoanalytical - with which I am required to wrestle and resolve. In essays, I must sift and sort complex points in order to reach a cogent conclusion. Similarly, my study of History of Art has helped me to develop a rigorous approach to interpretation; rather than describing in broad terms I have learnt to cut incisively to the core ideas.

Outside of academic work, I was appointed Managing Director of the Young Enterprise scheme. I have assumed a position of leadership as my school House Secretary which entails strong commitment and being a role model: I co-directed the House play in a competition, which we subsequently won. Additionally I undertook voluntary work in a homework club for children. These experiences have reinforced the necessity of tailoring communication to fit the audience as well as highlighting the importance of organization - key skills in studying and practising Law and Sociology.

Law

Offers from: Leicester AAB, Royal Holloway ABB, Warwick AAA

My initial interest in studying Law stems from a talk delivered by Dexter Dias QC about the effects of FGM and the consequences of legal loopholes in terms of mutilation abroad. This prompted me to read Tom Bingham's 'The Rule of Law' and I was intrigued by the way in which our governing body has used the threat of terrorism to justify the encroachment of civil liberties. I believe the rule of law is too often subverted in the name of security, with governments employing Orwellian euphemisms such as extraordinary rendition and enhanced interrogation techniques to mask their flagrant breaches of fundamental human rights. Moreover, reading 'What About Law?' and 'Learning the Law' has given me a valuable insight into other aspects of the discipline, such as liability in tort for economic loss, as well as providing me with an understanding of the principal differences between common law and equity. I developed my knowledge of property law through my EPQ. I investigated how the implementation of Section 144 of LASPOA in 2012 affected the rights of squatters, using relevant court cases from both before and after the criminalisation to support my findings. The project enabled me to familiarise myself with the highly complex language employed within legal documents and develop my ability to conduct research independently.

A pivotal moment in deciding to read Law was a visit to the Old Bailey. I witnessed cases ranging from murder inquests to terrorism trials. This experience provided me with a glimpse into the complex legal framework that surrounds criminal law. I also attended a law course during which I watched a mooted demonstration and I was intrigued by the way in which a supposedly established legal principle can be open to interpretation and utilised to an individual's advantage. In addition, I participated in a mock trial at the Royal Courts of Justice, acting as lead prosecutor in a case of drink-driving. My team subsequently won the case owing to the fact that we were able to adapt and respond as new evidence emerged.

I undertook a two-week work experience at the law firm DWF which allowed me to see the fast pace and rigour of the legal world and has further stimulated my intellectual curiosity for the rich and multifaceted discipline of Law. I worked closely with the Commercial Litigation team on a number of cases, ranging from embezzlement to the mishandling of tender negotiations. I conducted research using Westlaw and Practical Law to find relevant cases that would establish precedent. I also worked with the Business Restructuring team on insolvency cases and met with clients to discuss the arrangement of administration procedures. This experience heightened my commercial awareness and provided me with a first-hand insight into client-solicitor relationships.

Having attended several introductory law lectures I have become increasingly aware of how the law influences every aspect of our lives. For example, how a consumer contract is made every time we simply purchase a product from the supermarket, by accepting the supermarket's 'invitation to treat'. The influence of the law is also demonstrated in Dubner and Levitt's 'Freakonomics' with the case of Roe v Wade, where a change in the law regarding abortion affected a seemingly unconnected aspect of society, as it reduced crime rates. The outreach of the law, to me, is part of its appeal.

Beyond my studies, I helped to produce house drama productions which have honed my leadership and time-management skills. Additionally, for the past two and a half years I have been working as a part-time nanny, as well as volunteering on a weekly basis at a local primary school as a teaching assistant in Year 5 maths. The experiences demonstrate my reliability and long term commitment. I also speak fluent Italian.

I believe that the combination of my critical and analytical skills, coupled with my intellectual curiosity makes me eminently suited to the study of Law.

Theology

Offers from: Durham AAB, Exeter AAB, Kings AAB, St Andrews AAA.

Religious discussion has always been central in my family life. From an early age I have been exposed to ideas around religion and spirituality, which in turn sparked my interest in exploring this more deeply at school, and hopefully at university. I am very conscious that religion is quite unfashionable for many people, yet it continues to influence the ways we think and behave.

Having attended Alister McGrath's lecture on the tension between science and faith, I began to explore the rationality of faith in an increasingly scientific world. I found Kierkegaard's 'Fear and Trembling' particularly insightful, because he articulates the difficulty of having faith in a claim apparently contrary to reason, and his first-person narrative illustrates the notion that faith can only be understood by having direct experience of it. Initially I was skeptical of a non-rational justification, however, I realised that it was precisely Abraham's refusal to conform to the limits of reason which justified his faith in God. I agree that whilst there is illusory comfort in certainty, reason is limited and cannot help us in our search for eternal truth. I saw parallels between Kierkegaard's view and William James' in his essay 'The Will to Believe', whereby he maintains that pure reason cannot be the final determinant of what we believe. I feel that the study of theology embraces James' view that whilst faith may lead us to believe in what is false, ultimately, if we are to 'know' God, we must risk believing the false in order to be open to finding the truth.

I started thinking about the relationship between religion and conflict after reading a BBC article 'The decline of religion in the West' by Ed Stourton, which suggested that religious extremism is a factor in the move away from religious faith in developed countries. In pursuing my interest in the secularisation of society I read contemporary theologian Tom Wright's 'Spiritual and Religious: The Gospel in an Age of Paganism'. His view that Western civilisations are replacing the God of classical theism with pagan Gods is compelling, because he makes connections between current New Age spirituality and Roman polytheistic religion.

Art A level has also helped me see the interdisciplinary nature of religious studies. My personal project explored the efficacy of visual images in communicating theological concepts, such as Michelangelo's 'The creation of Adam', which conveys the Biblical notion of man being made in God's image. My interest in art also led me to explore Coptic iconography. I was intrigued by the fact that Coptic artists did not see themselves as merely artists, but as vehicles for expressing Christ's spiritual presence.

My extra-curricular involvements have also influenced my choice of degree. As my school's Challenge and Enrichment prefect, I introduced a club where we question our basic assumptions regarding current affairs and sensitive global issues. This made me recognise how challenging it is to be confronted with conflicting views and how we need to move beyond superficial responses. I have also played a key role in organising a cross-curricular project titled 'The Future' for pupils to investigate aspects of life that they expect will change, such as, the introduction of self-driving cars. My volunteering at Queen's Gate Junior School has helped me communicate ideas to younger children, being clear but not imposing my beliefs.

I recently participated in the Cambridge University Model United Nations conference which reinforced my awareness of the relevance of religious studies to contemporary global issues. Whilst religion is widely perceived as encouraging acts of terror, I found that marginalized groups, not religious ones, are most susceptible to radicalization.

By reading Theology and Religion at university, I hope to deepen my understanding of why religious belief still retains its power and how we can use this to resolve the conflicts that arise.

Economics

Offers from: Durham A*AA, Exeter AAA

Taking part in the stock market challenge at school gave me first-hand experience of why economics is a 'social' science and showed me why predicting the outcome of anything cannot be done precisely; I now realise that any market is the outcome of lots of decisions taken by individuals. I am fascinated with the volatility of the market - why it fluctuates and what happens as a result. This reinforced my decision to study A-Level Economics, and throughout my studies I have especially enjoyed the application of economic models to real life situations. The importance of formulae in Mathematics has allowed me to develop my logical thinking; furthermore, the statistical skills learned in Chemistry and Biology are especially useful when looking at data and models in Economics.

My special interest now is Macroeconomics and particularly the use of quantitative easing, the arguments for which seem to me to be more political than economic. I have sought to discover more about the history of quantitative easing and the extent to which it can be justified by economic theory. My Royal Economics Society essay competition entry "Must Quantitative Easing End In Inflation?" looked at the theoretical links between monetary supply and inflation. My conclusion was that in a static scenario, inflation would be the outcome; whereas in a dynamic and complex economy, while there will be an increase in inflationary pressure, it will not necessarily result in inflation. In my research, I was struck by the contrasting view of classical and Keynesian economists and my desire to understand this more deeply led me to take the Oxford continuing education course 'History of Economic Thought'. This in turn informed my EPQ essay, in which I consider the political and historical impacts of printing money on contemporary decisions to use quantitative easing across the globe. One of my case studies is Iraq's inflation, partly caused by American troops bringing \$32 million to secure information.

China's rapid growth intrigues me. Dambisa Moyo's 'Winner Take All' argued that the increasing demand for cars, electricity and a better quality of life, means that the consumption of finite resources negatively affects other economies. Evan Davies' 'Made in Britain' has strengthened my opinion that China's development is simply catching up to that of Western countries, and once it gets there, growth will slow as there will be a lack of new technology. The Solow-Swan model shows this, displaying the diminishing returns to capital with the level of investment and depreciation; I found this especially useful as I studied diminishing marginal returns for labour in my A-level course. I have used this reading in setting up my Economics blog which has received over 1300 hits since October 2012, improving my writing and analytical skills as well as providing a platform to post new stories and opinions on relevant topics. <http://www.economics1996.blogspot.co.uk/>

Work experience at Aon, HSBC and Morgan Stanley has reinforced my interest in the financial markets, and with an executive search firm my understanding of how human capital can affect company performance. I arranged two of these unaided which taught me the importance of persistence, preparation and communication.

I fence competitively, allowing me to focus on teamwork through competitions as well as developing patience and respect for my opposition. Fencing reflects my dedication and commitment to hard work so that positive results are achieved. I have competed at national level at the British Youth Championships in 2012 and at the British Junior Championships in 2013. I sail, and have completed my RYA stage 4.

I consider myself both analytical and critical in my approach to study and to life, which I believe will serve me well as an economics student, and beyond.

Economics

Offers from: UCL A* AA, St. Andrews AAA and Kings AAA

I first encountered the consequences of economic deterioration in 2014 while visiting Russia. Suddenly all goods appeared much cheaper in Sterling and soon there were no Western food imports available to Russian consumers. My curiosity led me on to investigate the economic issues facing Russia and the 2014 Financial Crisis has now become the focus of my EPQ. My initial research explored the impact of sanctions, triggered by Russia's military involvement in the Ukraine on the economy. However, I came to realise that the roots lay deep within the economic structure of the country. A drug-addict-like dependency on oil, referred to as the "oil needle", and the lack of transparency created a difficult, unattractive environment for business development and deterred foreign investment. Furthermore, reflecting on the situation, I realised how important a government's active management of the economy is for it to prosper. This led me to read N. Wapshott's "Keynes and Hayek" to understand the debate between Keynes and Hayek on government intervention. I concluded that the presence of an elected governmental body is essential in managing missing markets and applying policy to stimulate the economy. For example, the Russian government is employing Keynes's public works policy through constructing a major bridge connecting Russia and Crimea. This injection of capital into the circular flow is an attempt to stimulate the economy via the multiplier effect. However, I also consider a degree of the free market to be important as consumer demand is a vital signal in allocating resources. Yet despite this, reading D. Ariely's "Predictably Irrational" made me realise that neo-liberal economics is becoming outdate. New ideas of relativity and arbitrary coherence mean that Hayek's free market cannot be relied upon to allocate resources. So, considering consumers' irrationality, markets such as healthcare and education would represent market failure without governmental intervention.

Last February I represented the UAE during a Model United Nations Conference at Westminster School. My participation in the Economics and Finance Committee introduced me to the role of microfinance in eradicating poverty. For example, micro loans are highly effective in stimulating economic activity by targeting the base of the socio-economic ladder. J. Novogratz, in a TED talk, highlighted the importance of building small, scalable business models. She suggested that microfinance institutions are able to provide tailor-made information to each borrower and through this scheme the people can help themselves out of poverty. In contrast S. Delle stressed the importance of macro loans over micro loans and urged investment into pan-African titans, suggesting that an expansion of their businesses would create jobs and improve trade. However, I disagree with this analysis. The strategy would lead to monopolies and a lack of diversity in the market, plus smaller entrepreneurs would have limited market access. I am fascinated by these debates and am interested in how they might be applied in Russia. In my opinion, Russia should utilise the already established microfinance institutions to diversify its economy away from oil and to promote long term entrepreneurial skills of small businesses.

My two week work experience at the property development firm SANMAR gave me insight into the way a fast paced business functions. Liaising with suppliers, I learnt to maximise the firm's profits through analysis of obtained quotes, picking the best valued option. Furthermore I have developed my leadership and team working skills as a prefect, working in a charity shop and volunteering in the junior school.

My A levels in Mathematics, Economics and History have equipped me with the quantitative and narrative skills necessary for success in Economics, and I am eagerly looking forward to the challenges of the degree.

Management

Offers from: Bath AAA, Kings A*AA, LSE AAA, Royal Holloway ABB & Warwick AAA

After observing my father's property development business, SPL, I developed an interest in the world of management. From the age of 14, my father encouraged me to attend meetings so that I could gain an understanding of how a company functioned. As a result I gained an intimate knowledge of what marketing involved: USPs, SWOT analyses and marketing segmentations were enthralling. My fascination blossomed after observing these processes at work during the launch of a new project; I was also able to observe how different aspects of the business united as a complementary whole. My attachment to SPL has helped me understand the importance of communication amongst the levels of a company, as well as the salience of understanding all aspects management processes.

Due to my interest in economics, my EPQ focused on the extent to which fracking caused the 2014-16 fall in global oil price. I concluded that, fracking was the key driver due to its technological advancements. I was also eager to learn about the asymmetrical influences on oil prices when players like OPEC were at work. With the motive to destroy rivals, OPEC used its monopolised share of the oil market to increase its supply which decreased the price of oil. Despite this clever strategy, I disagree with OPEC's business motives as it was damaging to OPEC itself: decreased profits. Having an inquisitive nature, I decided to investigate this further and encountered an article in 'Economics Today' entitled "Is OPEC doomed to fail?". This shed new light about the infamous cartel and the importance of business management adapting to rapidly changing economies, which OPEC seemed to ignore. My EPQ also enabled me to develop my research skills.

'The Economist's Guide to Management Ideas and Gurus' developed my appreciation for the importance of procurement & supply-chain management (P&SCM). This resonated with me when I researched into Toyota's innovative just-in-time (JIT) method of production, which arguably revolutionised the automobile industry as it led to firms re-evaluating their production methods, resulting in lower inventory costs. With the hopes of witnessing P&SCM, I shadowed a P&SC analyst. When tasked to secure a competitive quote from a contractor, I was able to draw parallels to Draft's theories from 'The Leadership Experience' and appreciate the advantages of supplier-customer relations, allowing me to hire a contractor which saved the firm £3000. Reading Draft led me to reflect on the "distinction between leadership and management" and I recognised the symbiotic relationship between the two; leadership being the setting of the longer term vision whilst management is fulfilling the business objectives.

Team work is also an integral component of management. Volunteering at Cancer Research gave me an opportunity to work as part of a team designed to optimise sales. My responsibilities included: maintaining stock-levels, creating competitive prices and fundraising, personally raising £1700. I also observed the importance of good communication between co-workers and managers for the successful running of a business.

I attended the Enterprise programme at Oxford University. The essence of the course reinforced my desire to study Management and encouraged me to explore other positions in SPL, ranging from human resources to business development. At the accounts department, I applied the Poisson Distribution to calculate the number of on-site casualties per fiscal year, helping the finance team budget their legal expenses, decrease their risk portfolio and variable costs in the long run. Management merges qualitative and quantitative methods with the practical application of theory to identify and solve problems and this inherent versatility of the subject, along with its fundamental importance in the real world excites me to study it at university.

Management with Marketing

Offers from: Bath A*AB, Exeter AAA, Leeds AAA and Newcastle AAB

Consumer behaviour has always intrigued me: the decision-making process and the unpredictability of expenditure make me curious as to why one product is preferred over another. I am interested in how a business approaches its target audience, as well as how a customer's relationship with a brand evolves over time. Consequently, I would like to study Management with Marketing at University.

I worked on a fashion-branding project as part of my Graphic Communication A level which provided me with an insight into the world of marketing. I found determining the brand values and developing a logo for synthetic fur coats both challenging and exciting. Through analysis of consumer behaviour and research on specific age groups, I was able to design an eco-friendly campaign for an audience of young women. Through the project I became aware of business strategies such as maintaining an effective business-to-consumer bond and communication campaigns that are vital for marketing clothes in today's society. The aspect I enjoyed the most was producing an advertising video utilizing my technical skills and innovative approach to illustrate the product in the best way. Furthermore, studying Mathematics A level has allowed me to think critically when interpreting data and acquire problem-solving skills. Through the statistics module I learned how mathematical models are applied to real world scenarios including a business environment.

The breadth of my work experience confirmed my interest in studying Management with Marketing. A branding agency, Principal Ingredient, dealing with startups, gave me the opportunity to observe the initial stages of a company's marketing development. Here it was interesting to notice that relationships with clients are pivotal to a company's success. This taught me the importance of communication and customer relations, and I appreciated the reasons why businesses invest in these areas. My other work experience, at the architectural firm HouseHam Henderson, where I collated and edited photos for clients' presentations, enabled me to compare how businesses are organised and managed in terms of roles and projects. During my time at Christie's I undertook detailed research on artworks for auctions. I observed their marketing department and saw how teams work together to help attract an audience for art. Having witnessed these distinct environments, I liked the focused, interactive and creative aspect of the branding agency, and the diversity of the architectural firm and auction house. These opportunities have enabled me to gain a broader outlook on how a business functions socially with consumers, and economically with other competitors.

To expand my knowledge of the business world I read O'Malley's 'The Wisdom of the Bees'. The comparison between a beehive and a business allowed me to appreciate key factors that contribute to the success of a company such as decision-making and clearly defined roles. I recognised that it is important to think objectively while analysing possible outcomes and, at the same time, take risks as there is never any certainty.

Developing a debate as House Officer helped me to become a more collaborative team player and honed my leadership and logical thinking skills. Being a Mentor to a diverse range of students made me more emotionally intelligent. Growing up in a multi-cultural environment, I have a natural curiosity for the global marketplace. Being bilingual in English and Italian, and speaking Spanish at an advanced level, I would be very keen to take a year abroad or do a work placement in an international organisation to be exposed to different working styles and cultures.

A Management and Marketing degree will give me a strong business background that will be instrumental for my future career. I very much look forward to a challenging and enriching university experience.

Sociology and History

Offers From: Edinburgh ABB, Warwick AAB, Manchester ABB, Leeds AAB and Glasgow AAB

In my future career, I would like to play a part in effecting social change. For this reason I wish to read History and Sociology, so as to gain a deeper understanding of how events in the past have shaped today's social structures.

My Sociology and History studies have illuminated one another. For example, I have become interested in religion, as both a force for social change, and as an inhibitor of that change. Studying History has made me aware that, in the past, religion can be seen to have reinforced the status quo, with God's will being used as a hegemonic tool. However, many in the West today consider themselves to be living in a more secular society. Yet despite this perception, Islamic fundamentalism is on the rise and society is once again being rocked by religion. I am concerned by the anti-Islamic stance that some European countries are taking, but also fascinated by the complex role religion is playing in changing societies committed to being inclusive.

Philosophy, one of my other A Levels, has added a further dimension. Studying Philosophy of Religion, I looked at sociological attempts to 'explain away' religious beliefs by accounting for their origins sociologically. Durkheim saw religion as the glue that holds society together and the fundamental social institution. Given this theory on the social significance of religion, I have been led to wonder whether it is possible, or even desirable, to have a fully secular society.

I followed the Brexit referendum avidly and noticed parallels between the social volatility of 1930s Germany and the disenchantment of ordinary people in the UK in 2016. Just as Hitler's rise to power could be attributed, in part, to the disempowerment felt by the German working classes during the Great Depression, so too could UKIP's populist surge be attributed to the marginalisation of the working classes in Britain in the wake of the recession. It is fascinating to track the social drivers of British politics and I am interested in delving deeper into this.

Reading 'Gang Leader for a Day' by Sudhir Venkatesh made me realise that some social policies have little or no impact on people's lives when pitted against institutionalised inequalities such as the legal system in America. It would be comforting to think that British criminal law enshrines equality, but attending sessions at Debate Chamber's summer Law School on criminal law, jurisprudence and human rights law revealed that human rights are in jeopardy here, too. I am keen to defend these rights and was inspired by hearing Shami Chakrabarti speak on the topic. I agree that we need to fight hard to protect the much maligned Human Rights Act, which many wish to replace with a Bill that is less protective of the vulnerable, especially when other countries seek to indict UK citizens.

Owen Jones' 'Chavs: The Demonization of the Working Class' gave me an insight into prejudice in relation to class. It sharpened my perception that power in our society is hopelessly imbalanced, but also made me wonder about individual responsibility and the effect a benefits culture has on a person's sense of responsibility. The relationship between individuals and society is an area that interests me greatly, and I am keen to study this further at university.

Over the summer, I secured a work placement at the law firm Eversheds LLP. I helped on a number of projects, developing my inter-personal, organisational and time management skills. I began to get a sense of law as a method of social control. I also worked in the financial department which opened my eyes to the way city firms have been able to harness the law to make it work for the richest members of society.

I look forward to studying both History and Sociology at university and learning more about how humans interact within local, national and global societies.

Sociology

Offers from: Bath AAB, Bristol AAB, Edinburgh ABB, Exeter AAB

Growing up in London, I have become increasingly aware of the inequalities that surround us and query whether this is the natural order of society or whether it is due to the political system and social structures. Studying sociological theories allowed me to ask these questions, and I am now more aware of the invisible boundaries that exist if you are of a certain race, class or gender.

I have been exploring gender inequalities and attended a lecture by Banet-Weiser. In a presentation, I was able to develop her view that popular feminism is becoming a trend. I examined the movements 'Me Too' and 'Time's Up', finding it incredible that even though these movements produce visibility, they fail to expose systematic sexism across all industries. I drew attention to the way that the African-American woman, Tarana Berk (the founder of 'Me Too') had been largely eclipsed by white celebrities, demonstrating that inequalities still exist within the feminist movement. It occurred to me that the gender texts I read were exclusively by white people. This observation made me reflect upon how feminism is profoundly dislocated and that there is little connection between marginalised groups of women and privileged ones. For example, predominately white feminist groups may view the family as patriarchal, yet it could be a safe place against racism for ethnic minorities. I made an effort to read texts by women of colour, such as Abu-Lughod's 'Do Muslim Women Need Saving' which highlights the importance of nuanced cultural relativism through the example of the burqa. Intersectional and Difference feminism are areas I look forward to explore more at university.

I chose to write my EPQ on the extent to which gender identity is constructed by social environment and explored questions raised by the way gender norms have changed dramatically over time and between cultures. Psychology A level allowed me to explore biological studies which examine the influence of social conditioning on gender. I discussed these ideas further at a Debate Chamber summer course. Together we considered the value of campaigns such as the 'Always' advertisements, exploring the commodification of feminism under the hegemonic tyranny of capitalism which allows for difference as long as it makes money for companies predominantly run by men. For my Art A level project, I explored gender from a male point of view as only recently have academic writers begun to see a man as distinct from the construct of 'masculinity'. I was interested that in feminist discourse the concepts of 'women' and 'femininity' have been perceived as separate since the time of Wollstonecraft, but this has not been the case in discussions of male identity.

Visiting Grayson Perry's exhibition 'The Vanity of Small Differences' made me consider the peculiar attention that the British pay to class and the barriers we erect. I realised that class is not solely about economic capital but also about shared taste within a subculture. This made me reflect on the widening gaps that exist between the classes in our society, and realise that social mobility and equality are much harder to achieve than raising minimum wages or contextual offers at university.

Sociology and Psychology have taught me to think critically about research methods. Both disciplines employ a diverse range of rigorous scientific methods which seek to establish general laws of behaviour and societal norms, but can also examine the nature of human subjective experience from qualitative data.

Outside of academic work, I am a prefect. I help run a peer mentor scheme and lead a feminist book club. They have taught me to be a strong leader, aided my communicational abilities and developed my sense of empathy: all important skills for the study of Sociology.

A degree in Sociology would develop my sociological imagination and make the distorted and blurred conditions of this world clearer.

Sociology and Social Policy

Offers From: Edinburgh ABB, Bristol ABB, Exeter ABB, York ABB and Leeds ABB

My name is Alexandra Ellen Keenan, a name that belies my paradoxical background, which is both Irish working class and English middle class. Indeed, it was the fascinating contradictions of my family and culture which first attracted me to Sociology and Social Policy. I have witnessed first-hand these two differing aspects of society, and it was my interest in class structure which motivated me to attend a stimulating talk at LSE on class and the welfare state. It was inspiring to observe Perkins and Stewart debate welfare policies and question controversial issues such as whether the increasing number of children born into middle to lower class families could perhaps be causing a proliferation of employment-resistant characteristics in people's personalities. This would then lead to a rise in the number of people on welfare benefits. It led me to read O. Jones' 'Chavs: The Demonization of the Working Class' in which he discusses the absurd normality of class bias and the symbolic violence against the working class today. Reading the book made me reflect upon the widening gaps that exist between classes in developed modern societies, and the far-reaching impact these can have on future policy and public opinion. I followed the recent Brexit vote with fascination. It seems incredible that a political movement can divide a nation so completely. I am keen to explore the impact individuals and political movements can have on society.

I enjoyed my voluntary work in two London schools, and the diverse range of children with whom I worked. The experience widened my perspective on society, and highlighted problems such as prejudice and discrimination that young people can suffer in the classroom. It alarmed me to see unfair treatment between peers with culturally diverse backgrounds and made me more aware of this inequity. I have also taken part in an Age UK project at school, where I spend an hour a week serving lunch, as I was keen to connect with my elders. I was able to talk to the elderly participants which made me aware of the differing attitudes of the young and the old. The experience made me reflect upon how contemporary society is profoundly dislocated, as there is little connection between these generations. I feel it is important for society to attempt to close this gap, as it is paramount to societal cohesion.

My English, Philosophy, Art and Spanish A Levels have enabled me to develop skills that will be invaluable at university. I regularly question, criticise and break down the mechanics of an argument, whilst articulating my beliefs. I am used to carrying out meticulous research and scrupulous analysis, whether discussing the multi-faceted nature of Shelly's craft in Frankenstein, or Descartes' theories about the world and our existence. Art has also deepened my sociological interest. I have been exploring the contrast between the acceptability of female nudity in art, in comparison to its perceived unacceptability in contemporary society. Spanish, meanwhile, has provided me with an alternative perspective from which to view a different culture and society through the lens of a modern language.

Apart from my academic achievements, I take pride in being both a team player and a strong leader, whether using my motivational skills to push my Duke of Edinburgh group up one last hill or directing and acting in drama productions. In my role as Sixth Form Prefect, I have continued to demonstrate these skills, as well as my ability to work independently. I believe that these are invaluable assets which form part of the broad skill set needed to study Sociology and Social Policy at degree level, particularly with regards to group discussions, presentations or independent work.

Through studying Sociology and Social Policy, I will gain insight into the patterns and structures of society, as well as into the characteristics of human relationships. This will enrich my whole outlook on life and challenge me intellectually.

Biology

Offers from: Oxford A*AA, Bristol AAB, Durham AAA, Exeter AAB, UCL AAA

There are so many unsolved questions in the natural world, from the fundamental uncertainty of how many species exist on earth to the unknown mechanisms within cells. The answers to these questions will greatly influence our future health, environment and economy. At the heart of my interest in Biology is my A level course, which has helped me understand the complex frameworks of biological molecules that comprise all organisms and how systems of chemical reactions allow them to function and reproduce.

I have also been motivated by my experience at the British Heart Foundation labs which demonstrated to me the potential for biological research to influence health. Work on the connection between the immune response in mice and the ability of newborn mice to regenerate heart tissue after a myocardial infarction was particularly remarkable, as it may provide human therapies in the future. I assisted in the process of isolating macrophage RNA in order to compare the adult and neonate samples, which could contribute to identifying the developmental factors that result in differences in tissue renewal. This made me appreciate that important discoveries are made in small and hard won-increments. Reading related articles also showed me that it is vital to look at the same problem from different angles. For example, I read a new study based on the observation that zebrafish, which retain the ability to regenerate their hearts as adults, live in analogous hypoxic conditions to fetal mice, suggesting that it is the high oxygen levels after birth that begin to inhibit cardiomyocyte production.

The scientific environment at the BHF encouraged me to devise my own experiment for the ZSL Marsh Prize. While setting up a wormery, I identified an unresolved question about whether worms are repelled by citrus peel in compost, possibly due to reduced pH. I tested my hypothesis by constructing an avoidance test and established that at high concentrations of peel, worms were not only repelled but suffered high mortality even though soil pH was unaltered. Further reading indicated that other factors, such as terpenes in citrus peel, might be important. I enjoyed this project since it allowed me to convert a theory into a practical scientific reality. I also spent time working at London Zoo gaining hands on experience in zoo-based conservation by designing enrichment activities for servals. Spraying strong scents in their enclosure stimulated natural grooming and scent marking behaviour, thereby preventing symptoms of zoochosis. This highlighted the importance of ex-situ organisations in the wider context of conservation and how they help build a detailed knowledge of biology and ecology, which is crucial for the success of wildlife protection. However, reading *The Diversity of Life* by E.O.Wilson showed me the critical value of preserving natural habitats in-situ, even if they are poorly understood, as removing just one unknown keystone species may result in whole ecosystem breakdown and the loss of immeasurable biological wealth.

My other A levels have proved essential to my study of Biology. Studying Chemistry has illustrated the significance of concepts such as isomerism and bonding to the way cells work and I can see that the application of statistics skills is crucial when interpreting data. As Deputy Head Girl, my responsibilities are focused on charities, particularly Age UK and our school mentoring scheme, where I have enjoyed organising events for old and young people alike. These activities, as well as attending external lectures, volunteering and figure skating competitively for 12 years, have taught me to manage my time efficiently and that perseverance and determination are very rewarding.

I look forward to studying Biological Sciences at a higher level, as I already know that the subject, with its broad applications and ever-changing nature, will continue to challenge my intellectual curiosity during and well beyond University.

Biomedical Sciences

Offers from: Surrey

Biology is a fascinating subject due to its diverse nature. It encompasses many aspects such as animals, plants and the environment, medicine, biotechnology and, of particular interest to me, is the study of body systems. The knowledge of the subject is continually expanding as research reveals more information. The increased depth of detail in my A level studies has enhanced my interest and keenness to study the subject further.

I am currently studying Chemistry and Biology which I am thoroughly enjoying, due to the range of topics covered and the depth of detail. It is interesting to study Chemistry and see how topics such as optical isomerism, used in Chemotherapy, enhance my general understanding of science and Biology. With Biology I have found particular areas such as learning about the structure of DNA and genes fascinating. As a result I read 'When a Gene Makes You Smell like a Fish' by Lisa Seachrist Chiu which I found particularly intriguing, especially the chapter 'The Dracula Gene' which discussed porphyria and the belief that some historic figures were sufferers. In this chapter I also found it interesting that zebra fish cannot be exposed to light otherwise its red blood cells become fluorescent and explode. By studying Biology and Chemistry, I have also had the opportunity to develop my practical skills through the experiments that we have covered during the course. By contrast my third A-Level, History, has enhanced my analytical and evaluation skills; for example undertaking source work has developed my written communication skills.

I have attended several lectures at UCL and Imperial College on a range of different Biology and Chemistry topics. I also attended a forensic science course at the University of Nottingham, including a session on mental health, and how it can be problematic in some criminal cases. This inspired my interest in neurology and diseases that affect the brain and led me to read 'The Man who Mistook his Wife for a Hat' by Oliver Sacks which fascinated me with all of the bizarre conditions discussed. I regularly read Biological Sciences Review and the BBC science website. I was particularly interested by the news that there is a new treatment for melanomas. The process involves placing an implant the size of a fingernail under the skin and it will reprogram the immune cells, replacing the current system of removing the cells and reprogramming them.

I had the opportunity to spend a few days at Charing Cross Hospital where I was able to see many different areas of speciality. The departments I observed were the histology, haematology and microbiology labs. I particularly enjoyed the histopathology department where I was able to see the process of biopsies being placed onto slides in order to look at tissue samples for diagnostics. Also, I spent a day observing in the haematology lab where they were testing for diseases such as malaria and mononucleosis. Additionally, I was shown how they store the blood for transfusions and the different conditions needed for each, such as the constant agitation of platelets.

I strive to be hardworking and organised and hold positions of responsibility in my School: presently house officer and tours and charities prefect. As tours prefect, I organise the rota of students from different year groups to lead tours for prospective parents (often at a moment's notice). I have also co-run a history film club for younger years and I have been volunteering regularly at the junior school where I listen to year 3 pupils read and help them with ICT lessons, all of which I found very rewarding and demands my commitment and empathy. I believe I am a committed student and that my passion for Biology and Chemistry goes further than just my A-Level studies. This has enhanced my knowledge and desire to study for my intended degree at University and beyond.

Computer Science and Maths

Offers from: Edinburgh AAA, Exeter AAA, Leeds AAB, Birmingham AAA and Loughborough ABB

I have always been fascinated by technology and intrigued by the fact that it is constantly evolving and advancing at a pace we can hardly keep up with. Computer Science is essential to most areas of our everyday lives – be it in the shape of embedded systems that use sensors to control a multitude of inputs or in the encryption required in mobile technologies such as ApplePay or Smart Watches. During the second year of my ICT A Level course, I had the opportunity to create a relational database, which helped me recognise the complexity of the process and how important the developmental stage is to a successful outcome. It also allowed me to develop independent research and problem solving skills. Outside of school, I have taken part in various courses to prepare myself for studying Computer Science at degree level, gaining invaluable programming skills when studying Java Script as part of the 'Code School' programme. Robotics is a passion of mine and I have taken every opportunity to extend my knowledge in this area, including completing an online course called 'Building a Future with Robots'. The course gave me insight into how dependent on robots we will be in the future, and I look forward to studying the area in more detail at university.

My enthusiasm for Mathematics was sparked at the age of 13 by a rendition of 'The Magic Flute' by Marcus du Sautoy which illustrated the mathematical roots of some of Mozart's most famous works. The idea that Mathematics lays the foundations for seemingly unrelated areas of life captivated me and fuelled my interest in the subject. Recently I watched a BBC documentary focusing on Fermat's Last Theorem and Andrew Wiles' lengthy attempt to prove it. The documentary inspired me to investigate other mathematical proofs, such as Buffon's needle problem, and I was fascinated by the intricacy and length of the proof in contrast to the apparent simplicity of the problem. I have recently completed an online Mathematics course run by Future Learn called 'Getting a Grip on Mathematical Symbolism' which explored the properties of graphs and helped me recognise the links between Mathematics and other disciplines. I feel the course will help me bridge the gap between studying Mathematics at A-Level and the demands of a course in Computer Science and Mathematics.

In addition to academic study, I believe it is vital to have practical experience. During a volunteering project in the Bahamas, where I worked with young people from different fields and backgrounds, I had the opportunity to gain experience in the collection and analysis of statistical data. It was my task to tag sea turtles to track their migration patterns and to rope off quadrants for data collection. I carried out analyses for each of the quadrants to establish movement patterns and feeding habits. The project helped me develop my data collection and interpersonal skills.

As a Senior Prefect at Queen's Gate, I represent the school on official occasions such as the Remembrance Service and Christmas Fair, events which improve my ability to communicate. I also assisted Year 3 students, helping them develop in Mathematics. Another area of my responsibilities is Environment. I have honed my organisational skills through arranging events including the school's Environment competition, which aimed to raise awareness of recycling and other environmental issues. As a committed member of the school's cross country team and swimming club for the past seven years, I have enjoyed the challenges of competitive sport. I have learned to manage my time effectively, while working towards personal goals.

I am looking forward to taking on new, academic challenges as a student of Computer Science and Mathematics, and ultimately hope to build a career in these exciting areas.

Dentistry

Offers from: Bristol AAA

The dynamic nature of Dentistry is evident in its evolutionary progress: from barbers extracting teeth in 19th century England to today's research into stem cells to grow new teeth. These developments fascinate me and have led to Dentistry becoming the crucial public service we know today. My academic studies and work experience have undoubtedly strengthened my determination to study Dentistry and enabled me to gain a better understanding of what the profession entails.

Last summer, I spent two weeks volunteering in a hospital in Jaipur, India, where I not only attended, but also assisted dental procedures such as root canal treatments. My placement made me conscious of the fact that the majority of cases presented were curative rather than preventative, underlining the different attitudes towards dentistry both in the developed and developing world. For instance, I spoke to middle-aged patients who had never visited a dentist before, and due to the severity of their condition, were undergoing procedures such as extractions. I also visited a dental laboratory, where I saw how crowns and dentures are made, both by 3D printers and manually. With a keen interest in Art and having gained an A* at GCSE, I was struck by the high levels of artistic skill and manual dexterity needed to recreate realistic teeth.

During a week of work experience at Guy's Hospital, I realised the importance of communication in developing a good relationship between the practitioner and the patient. I gained knowledge of different diagnoses and acquired an understanding of the logical and concise approach necessary in some of the more difficult cases. When I witnessed a routine check-up develop into the diagnosis of a potential tumour, I noticed the dentist's compassion towards the patient and realised the positive difference this made. I was allowed to follow the patient into Radiology and gained a better understanding of diagnostic procedures. I spent time in Oral Surgery and found this field particularly intriguing: I was fascinated by the application of textbook knowledge to real life scenarios and the intricate manual tasks that dentists perform daily. Exposure to this fast-paced environment showed me that dentists must work closely and effectively with other colleagues, such as nurses, in order to treat patients. My two-week work placement at Addison Place Dental Practice allowed me to look at dentistry from a different perspective, witnessing first-hand the value of building long term relationships between dentists and patients.

Being a mentor for Year 8 pupils and through voluntary work with the elderly I have been able to develop my communication skills, and more importantly, it has shown me how rewarding helping and caring for others can be. I spent three months at Harrison Housing for the elderly as well as volunteering for Age UK. I visited a 95 year-old lady with whom, over eight months, I developed a very strong bond. The element of trust that formed allowed me to appreciate the importance of patient care.

My A-Level subjects have heightened my capacity to understand complex concepts. Maths especially has allowed me to develop problem solving skills. Experiments in Chemistry and Biology have helped me develop my manual dexterity as well as become more confident when following precise procedures. I enjoy sports: primarily netball and tennis, and balancing these activities with my academic commitments has taught me the necessity of time management.

Attending three days of lectures at the University of Nottingham cemented my desire to pursue dentistry as a career even more. I was able to understand the profession further by learning about different fields and the scope of the profession, such as forensic dentistry, where the discipline is applied outside the clinical setting. As a diligent and compassionate student I believe I have the necessary skills and determination to pursue a career in Dentistry.

Dentistry

Offers from Bristol AA

My memories of childhood are punctuated by visits to the family dentist. I remember the acute sense of apprehension preceding the visit, and the relief when it was declared that my teeth did not, after all, betray my sugary diet.

During my work experience at Castelnau Dentists I enjoyed the way that the dentist and his team were able to both diagnose and treat the patient. In particular, I liked the way that a dentist is able to develop a relationship with their patients.

The depth of my A2 studies and extra-curricular activities have allowed me to feel confident when working with a team of others in a dental practice. In particular, my understanding of cohesive practical work during my scientific courses enabled me to feel at ease in such a professional environment. I was fortunate enough to test my communication skills by talking to patients and even, under supervision, to carefully drill four holes on the crown of a tooth to alleviate the pain caused by a swelling. Then I sealed the tooth with a paste called N2. The more I did, the more fulfilment I found: this work experience placement ceased to be a duty and became a very satisfying pleasure.

I have continued to volunteer at Castelnau Dentists over the duration of the past year, and have experienced other aspects of dental healthcare including the role of dental nurses and hygienists. To deepen my understanding of Science I regularly read the Scientific American, attend the annual Royal Society Summer Exhibition and enjoy the Biology in Action lectures. I have taken a keen interest in recent developments in Dentistry such as the use of stem cells to grow new teeth. I would relish the challenge of keeping abreast of new advances in order to be able to offer the best care to patients.

I am fortunate to participate in a number of non-academic pursuits and I have been able to draw upon these experiences to enhance my academic career. I highly value the importance of good communication and peer mentoring. Working at a junior school, as well as volunteering for Age UK, has allowed me to develop my communication skills, in particular the ability to listen and explain. The responsibilities of these roles and the need for self-reflection have helped me to develop as a caring and reliable person. Competing in the final of the Young Scientist of the Year award involved presenting my electromagnet-based design for renewable energy to a collection of judges. I worked in a group to solve Science and Engineering based problems, and this taught me how, depending on one's area of expertise, to assume the various roles within a team, including that of a leader. I was able to work positively as part of a group and learn how to overcome the challenges we were presented with. This experience further developed my problem-solving skills. Of relevance to the hands-on nature of dentistry is the importance of good manual dexterity. I have been able to develop this by playing the piano and I am currently studying for Grade 8. Finally, I have swum competitively throughout my childhood, competing at a National Level, and more recently I competed in the European Championships for Biathle, coming third and qualifying for the World Championships. Competing in sport has taught me to manage my time wisely and this has shown me the rewards of dedication and perseverance.

My work experience has confirmed that Dentistry is the vocation I wish to follow. As a reliable, diligent and compassionate person, I am confident that I have the necessary foundations to pursue a degree in Dentistry.

Engineering

Offers From: Edinburgh AAB, Exeter AAA, Imperial A*AA, Manchester AAA

Coming from a South Indian family with three generations of engineers, it is no surprise that I grew up building structures whether with Lego as a child or, more recently, experimenting with my Raspberry Pi and admiring devices like the Oyster card which have made travel in London so much easier. At school, physics and maths have long been my favourite subjects. I am now keen to pursue engineering since I relish applying what I have learnt in class to the real world.

Last summer, I attended the Women's Technology Program at MIT. While formal lectures in my module focused on electrical engineering and computer science, guest speakers from other MIT departments including mechanical, aerospace and biomedical engineering helped me gain a broad appreciation of the types of problems the various engineering disciplines deal with.

Mini-projects allowed me to get a hands-on feel for how engineering theory links to everyday applications. I wrote the programmes for Tetris and Hangman using Python and assembled a home security system using logic gates and transducers that were sensitive to break-ins, movement and sound. The four weeks culminated in a contest between teams to design and build the fastest 5V DC motor from first principles. This experience allowed me to understand, first hand, the practical trade-offs involved even in an apparently simple design, such as that between rotor diameter and the number of windings. These mini-projects taught me the importance of teamwork, meticulous planning and careful prioritisation in order to meet tight deadlines and the value of persistence (particularly when code does not work at 2 am!).

At school, I was awarded the first Queen's Gate Sixth Form scholarship for Science and Mathematics. In November 2012, my team finished as finalists in the L'Oreal Young Scientist of the Year competition for our design of a wind turbine. In March 2013 and 2014, I helped organise our school's Science and Engineering Week where experts gave presentations about their work. For instance, Dr Eleanor Stride from Oxford University talked about how she is designing drug delivery systems based on bubble technology, which helped me realise how engineers too can save lives. Finally, I was recently appointed to be the Science and Mathematics Prefect. As part of this, I am inviting STEM women leaders to our annual Inspiring Women talks series.

My fourth A Level in English Literature has helped develop my ability to construct cogent arguments and articulate them clearly. I am writing an essay for my Extended Project Qualification on the impact of social media on contemporary Chinese politics. This is allowing me to evaluate the role and implications of technology in its wider social and political context. I was drawn to this topic having attended a course at Stanford University's Humanities Institute the summer after my GCSEs, where we studied the 'Twitter Revolutions' of the Arab Spring. Overall, I believe that my interest in literature, history and politics can only help me build more effective technical solutions as a practising engineer.

Based on my experience at MIT, I am intending to study electronics and electrical engineering at university. I have recently enrolled in two courses on Coursera - one in programming with Python and the other on the use of network concepts in fields as diverse as traffic engineering and Netflix movie recommendations. I realise that in today's world, electrical and electronics systems have become the bedrock of virtually every industry including traditional sectors like automotive, transportation and healthcare. Equally, I believe that an engineering education will give me analytical and conceptual skills that can be applied in a wide range of career paths, including many that are outside industry.

Medicine

Offers from: Cardiff AAA, Kings A*AA

During my work experience at the Royal Brompton Hospital, I observed the surgery and recovery of a patient requiring an atrial valve replacement. The transformation from the patient's reliance on a Cardiopulmonary Bypass machine to their first stages of communication after the surgery, coupled with my interest in human biology, confirmed my pursuit of a role within care and medicine.

During the same work experience, I was particularly struck by the case of a young boy who was suffering from the rare disease 'Neuroendocrine cell Hyperplasia of Infancy'. It was interesting to see the clinician communicating with the parents, who were keen to reduce the child's medication but were concerned about the gradual withdrawal of his oxygen support. This case gave me a glimpse into the highly-developed skills of communication required from doctors to converse with patients and their family. I furthered my interest in respiratory diseases by reading a PNAS article about the functional characterisation of pulmonary neuroendocrine cells in lung development, injury and tumorigenesis which allowed me to build upon my interest in human biology and its applications to modern medicine.

I developed my presentation and analytical skills at a symposium where I explored the use of conventional and molecular imaging for biodefense research. This allowed me to consider the mechanical aspect of medicine, as well as the ethical complications of studies using highly sophisticated machinery to research rare diseases.

My preparation for the Cambridge taster day mock supervision included exploring the function and importance of white blood cells and their possible abnormalities, analysing whether they are smart weapons of the body. I was intrigued by medicine's ability to modify the surface of T-cells to target specific cancer cells. This led me to read S. Mukherjee's 'Biography of Cancer', which discussed the first clinical interest in Acute Lymphoblastic Leukaemia. I was fascinated by these attempts to find cures for leukaemia and the contrasts with current treatments, such as CAR T-cell immunotherapy on which I conducted an independent project. This allowed me to develop research, essay writing and analytical skills.

During my work experience at St Thomas' and Guy's hospital, I gained first-hand experience in the research sector, observing ongoing trials to provide sufficient evidence for an obesity and weight loss treatment, which is in preparation for bariatric surgery. I was struck by the trial drugs popularity, as due to cost, they are currently unavailable on the NHS. I was also struck by the frequent pre-clinic, multidisciplinary meetings where the medical team discussed each patient and their various conditions and symptoms as well as possible treatments. This emphasised the importance of teamwork, enabling the clinicians to choose, alongside the patient, the most effective treatment for the individual by viewing the patient holistically.

I was selected by senior staff to be a Peer Mentor. This offered me the opportunity to be trained to work with children in groups and in one-to-one situations, often having the responsibility to help resolve complex situations. As Science Prefect, I have developed communication skills and empathy with children by running a year-long STEM society for Key Stage 3 students. Both of these roles have improved my organisation and patience, which I feel will enable me to thrive in a clinical environment.

As Senior Prefect, I continue to work closely with members of the Head Girls' team and staff to organise school events and activities. This requires excellent team working and communication to complete tasks. Participating as a delegate and chairing in MUN conferences has allowed me to develop interpersonal and leadership skills, and honed my ability to articulate my thoughts coherently. My many experiences have strengthened my resolve to study medicine as well as my excitement about the discipline.

Medicine

Offers from: York AAA, Southampton AAA

Medicine is an innovative art; I first discovered this when my grandmother underwent coronary bypass surgery and I learnt that a blood vessel from her leg was used to create an alternative route for the blood to flow through. This intrigued me, and my keen interest in the medical profession grew.

Observing a tonsillectomy and adenoidectomy at Wirral University Teaching Hospital reinforced my interest in surgery and its development. The surgeon told me that before the discovery of antiseptic, the risk of infection could be fatal. When observing a diagnostic laparoscopy, I was amazed by how a miniaturised camera allowed the surgeon to see organs in a minimally invasive manner. These experiences prompted me to research my EPQ on the history of medicine. I was struck by how it has developed through trial and error, accident and relentless hard work. It is apparent that medicine is dynamic and always improving.

When shadowing the substance abuse team, I realised that surgery was not the solution to every problem. I encountered a suicidal patient who attempted to remove an intravenous tube. Witnessing how the doctors dealt with this challenging situation in an empathetic manner enhanced my appreciation for the profession, and showed me that medicine encompasses mental as well as physical health. My interest in mental health encouraged me to read "The Body Keeps the Score" by B. Van Der Kolk which helped me gain an understanding of why the condition occurs and how severely it can affect one's life. This inspired me to explore PTSD and trauma in more depth. I assisted a researcher in this field to write a paper on Accelerated Resolution Therapy, which developed my awareness of how PTSD can be treated in a drug free manner. The therapy uses eye movements to facilitate a connection between both sides of the brain, and replaces negative images with positive ones to overcome traumatic events.

Whilst volunteering at Rockingham House care home for two weeks, I assisted in providing palliative care to terminally ill patients and gained an insight into the sensitive communication required in difficult circumstances. Whilst shadowing a paediatrician it was apparent that every patient is unique and has differing needs. At school, I volunteer at Age UK lunches where I interact with the elderly on a weekly basis. I also taught English to children in an Indian orphanage. These experiences deepened my ability to talk to and empathise with people of different age groups and backgrounds.

I was fascinated when learning about DNA during a biology lesson and so read "Genome" by M. Ridley. His unique interpretation of the genome, calling it a 'book', allowed me to perceive genes, and the process of protein synthesis, in a completely different way. Realising the intricacies of protein synthesis makes me eager to learn about other processes of the body.

I am passionate about drama and have studied it since primary school. Drama helps me relax and cope with stress. I enjoy taking part in school productions, where working collaboratively with cast members strengthened my teamwork and leadership skills. Completing National Citizen Service, which entailed group activities with new people, also contributed to the development of these skills. Working in an office for the last year and a half has taught me the importance of punctuality, commitment and flexibility. Moreover, balancing work with school has enabled me to develop effective time management skills.

My grandmother, a mathematician, sparked my love of problem solving. I relish the challenge of finding solutions through a logical process of trial and error, an approach that is also key in medical diagnosis. The intellectual demands of Medicine motivate me, and I believe I would thrive in such an environment. I recognise that it is a demanding vocation, but am eager to pursue a career which will enable me to improve patients' lives. I look forward to undertaking this rewarding challenge.

Medicine

Offers from: Cardiff AAA, Nottingham AAA and Plymouth AAA

During work experience in a hospital, I met a two year old boy with cataracts, glaucoma, retinal detachment and uveitis. His parents were devastated that resolving his blindness was beyond current medical ability. This case showed me that empathetic communication skills are as vitally important as intellect in becoming a good doctor. The consultant informed me that my generation of doctors would be able to help the boy, and the knowledge that I could relieve such suffering for patients and their families reinforced my desire to be a doctor. This experience also brought together the components that drive me to pursue a career in medicine.

My medical curiosity began whilst studying human biology, particularly the cardiovascular system. Watching cardiothoracic surgeries in a Polish hospital allowed me to apply textbook knowledge to reality. I observed how surgical skills can treat Tetralogy of Fallot, and it was intriguing to learn that although the cause is unknown, factors such as poor nutrition or alcoholism during pregnancy have been identified as increasing the risk.

My voluntary work reinforced my desire to care for others and pursue a career that enables such interaction. Six months assisting those with dementia in a care home, and over a year of running Age UK lunches at school, affirmed the importance of human interaction in counteracting loneliness. Such activities taught me to communicate comfortably with people of different ages; skills I look forward to drawing on when practising medicine. As Medsoc president, I organise sessions covering issues pertinent to the NHS, such as the increasing pressures of the aging population, along with ethical debates, current research and relevant news items, all of which I find both fascinating and inspiring.

By shadowing at a general practice, I gained awareness of the importance of understanding a person holistically, in order to treat them effectively. The doctor showed respect in acknowledging that spiritual guidance was important to a patient from the Far East in the restoration of good health and, after assessing all biopsychosocial factors, still negotiated the use of drugs to work alongside this.

The ongoing lack of parity between mental and physical health, despite media efforts to raise awareness of mental illness, interests me because one increases the risk of the other, and so both should always be considered. For my Extended Project, I researched the impact of social factors on the experience of having a mental illness, as each patient's experience is unique, and can be difficult to understand, especially as symptoms can be invisible. One salient finding I explored is the cultural influence on whether you internalise or externalise your emotions, thereby impacting predisposition to develop certain conditions. For instance, affective disorders are more prevalent in those who internalise, which affects treatments.

My interest in mental illness led me to organise regular fundraising for the charity Mind. I also donate a portion of profits from my small handmade jewellery business. I am the school Charities Prefect and lead fundraising teams to raise awareness within school to provide the opportunity for everyone to support a range of causes.

Through work experience in hospitals and general practice settings, I recognise the inevitability of long working hours and the extensive amount of paperwork, along with more emotionally challenging duties such as communicating bad news. My love of photography, and teaching myself guitar and jewellery making are creative outlets that I can successfully use to combat a stressful career. Studying medicine would enable a future of continuous learning. I would enjoy the intellectual challenges and being able to apply my knowledge and skills to benefit those who are physically and /or mentally vulnerable. Pursuing medicine will be demanding, but I look forward to embracing that rewarding challenge.

Medicine

Offers from: Nottingham AAA

I was 12 when my mother was diagnosed with breast cancer. Fortunately, within two weeks aggressive surgery was undertaken, followed by radiotherapy. Despite feeling very vulnerable and anxious, I was reassured and comforted by the care, skill and efficiency of the medical team. This experience was pivotal in igniting my interest in the profession.

My recent work experience has reinforced this interest. At the Royal Brompton, I spent a week with a PICU consultant. Although distressing to see new-borns with critical heart and respiratory conditions, I was heartened by the resilience of the doctors, their deep humanity and support for the families. I learnt how essential both teamwork and communication were to complement skills and knowledge. At Leeds General Infirmary, I was impressed by the holistic approach of the orthopaedic, dermatology and rheumatology consultants, emphasising that medicine is about healing the whole person, not treating a series of individual ailments. The trust within the doctor-patient relationship is crucial, as I saw that the reassurance of the doctor can be as important as the medicine itself. In Singapore, I observed a general surgeon performing endoscopies in order to detect any abnormalities, her efficient manner minimising any discomfort and anxiety to the patient. With a young woman diagnosed with advanced ovarian cancer, it was sobering to see that doctors have to balance having a better quality of life versus harrowing treatment that may prolong life only a little longer. At a GP surgery, I worked with the Practice Manager, learning the crucial role of primary healthcare as the "patient's advocate", often over extended periods of time.

I attended a surgical skills workshop in the Hunterian Museum, and enjoyed the practical aspect of learning basic suturing techniques. Whilst observing anatomical and pathological specimens, I saw that although medicine has advanced, there is still so much that is unknown, underlining the importance of continuing research. This inspired me to pursue my EPQ topic on cardiovascular and cancerous effects on night shift workers. I discovered that while some cancers are genetically predetermined, environmental factors have a far greater effect. I found that the changes in cortisol levels and circadian rhythms due to night shift work created stress on the body and lowered melatonin levels. These instigate greater susceptibility to smoking and alcohol abuse, causing a predisposition to these diseases.

Being a School Prefect and mentor to Year 8 girls has helped develop my leadership and listening skills, patience and personal resilience. In my free time, I play the piano at Grade 8, kick-box and dance, including at performances. I have completed the Ballet Intermediate Vocational exam and I will be completing my DofE Gold this winter. These activities and exams have helped me learn to keep calm and perform under pressure. For over a year, I have been visiting an elderly lady with dementia, taking her out for coffee and walks to allow her to engage with society outside her home, ensuring that her liberty is balanced with safety. Time with her has helped me understand the challenges facing our ageing population. This enthused me to undertake my biology research project on Alzheimer's disease, where I came across Dr Wayne Carter, who discovered that a tropical tree, *Carpolobia lutea*, has anti-inflammatory and antimicrobial properties. *C. lutea* has potential as a base for a new drug as there is increasing evidence of Alzheimer's patients having inflammation in the brain.

I realise that the medical profession is demanding, requiring excellent clinical knowledge, the ability to make critical judgment calls on health and even life issues, a relentless enquiring mind and desire to teach the next generation. However, the prospect of this career fills me with enthusiasm, as I believe my learning path to date demonstrates that I have the aptitude required to succeed.

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Medicine

Offers from: Cardiff AAA

Two weeks of work experience at the Royal Free Hospital shadowing a consultant general surgeon helped me to appreciate the level of tenacity a doctor's work requires. I was struck by the communication and collaborative teamwork, particularly in theatre, where I admired the surgeon's ability to perform complex surgeries, ranging from the removal of a tumor to a liver transplant. When problems arose, the surgeon took the lead in dealing with the situation with composure, whilst problem solving was a process in which the whole team participated. The partnership extended to the post-operative environment, where the surgeon liaised with the nurses and talked empathetically to the patients offering a reassuring but honest appraisal of the operation. This reflected guidance on the Duties of a Doctor to work with patients, treat them as individuals and respect their dignity. The fluency and professionalism of the whole process gave me an appreciation of the multidisciplinary nature of hospital work, as well as the stamina, technical, analytical and social skills required.

The period I spent at the hospital reinforced medicine as my chosen vocation. I spoke to many doctors who made me reflect on the hard work, unsocial hours, complications and uncertainties of surgery, as well as the impact of NHS funding constraints on healthcare and staff training - all of which add to stresses on the profession. I am grateful for these honest views as they helped formulate a rounder picture of what it is like to study and practise medicine. One of the most enjoyable aspects was speaking to patients on ward rounds and recognizing their differences, as building relationships with them is what I believe makes this profession so special.

The surgeon to whom I was attached is a specialist in pancreatic cancer. I learnt that this is one of the deadliest cancers, so early diagnosis is critical. His involvement in developing early diagnostic tests, and in the research of new treatments, was something I found particularly interesting. I spent time in the laboratories, where the future of medicine lies, seeing the development of personalised medicine. I am interested in research on the mapping of human genomes to identify defective genes and so select the most effective drugs for an individual. For this reason, I chose personalised medicine and pharmacogenomics as the specialist topic for my Biology Research Project, and learnt that developments in this area will reduce the trial and error approach to prescribing drugs, replacing it with treatments tailored to the patient's genotype. I am excited about this revolution in medicine that should decrease drug toxicities, which are a major cause of re-hospitalisations, and will improve treatment outcomes.

At school, I have been entrusted with the positions of House Captain, Prefect and Head Girl. These roles have facilitated my personal development and strengthened my leadership, organisational and management skills. They have deepened my ability to empathise with people of different age groups and backgrounds. Leading the school's MUN team in multiple conferences, and recently chairing the WHO Committee at Cambridge University, discussing the barriers for asylum seekers with mental health issues such as PTSD and depression, has developed my listening, debating, negotiating and problem solving skills. Additionally, completing Duke of Edinburgh expeditions up to the Gold Award has improved my teamwork and endurance, as well as my ability to manage fatigue and boost morale, whilst also giving medical assistance to team members. The expeditions also helped improve my resilience, adaptability and maturity when confronting difficult situations, and I am thankful for the skills they helped me acquire.

I believe I have the determination, compassion and enthusiasm required for a career in the medical profession, and greatly wish to be a part of the future of medicine's innovations.

Natural Sciences

Offers from: Edinburgh AAA, Imperial A* A* A, Kent ABB, UCL A*AA

Both languages and sciences are the fundamentals of human society; communication and the study of natural philosophies are the foundations of civilisation. A common link between sciences and languages is that they both study patterns, whether they are grammatical or linguistic structures, or mechanical patterns, such as those found in Chemistry. I feel that the skills I have acquired through learning languages, such as German, assist my mathematical development, which, in turn, complements my scientific understanding. A course in sciences will allow me to continue studying the subjects which I have such a passion for: sciences. For example, I am looking forward to studying organic chemistry further, as it is one of the topics I have most enjoyed at A-level. However, it is the diversity of the course that is so appealing to me.

Living in London, I have the opportunity to attend talks and exhibitions relating to my subjects and interests. For example, I attended a lecture hosted by the Royal Society of Chemistry at the National Gallery. The lecture expanded my appreciation of the importance science plays in so many different disciplines; from the analysis of the chemical composition of paint, to the optical properties of materials developed over many years. It was particularly interesting to expand on ideas I had learnt during my AS year, such as mass spectroscopy which is widely used in this field, and see them being used in practice. My skills and interest in the sciences were broadened through a week of work experience I undertook at GlaxoSmithKline. Not only was I exposed to a large pharmaceutical company, but my knowledge of the industry and the chemical process of drug production and identification was developed. It allowed me to learn about the practical applications of chemistry and how my evolving knowledge could be applied in such an important field. Additionally, in the summer I took part in a marine conservation project in Thailand that enabled me to work with biologists in the region of Krabi, studying oceanography and marine biology. As well as becoming a certified SCUBA diver, I took part in coral reef checks, monitoring the marine life we identified and sending the data to local biologists. The experience allowed me to understand the importance of protecting our environment, and the variety of ways we can do so. I was particularly fascinated by the significance that thriving coral reefs play in the development of pharmaceuticals: I was amazed to learn that a large percentage of compounds central to the development of pharmaceuticals have been found in these eco-systems.

My EPQ on 19th Century medicine and science allowed me to delve into a subject of my choosing, while simultaneously enabling me to expand my interests around chemistry, biology and the history of science. Personally, I feel that studying a subject's history is a gateway to the modern discipline, and it is inspiring to see how considerably science has evolved over the past few centuries. I am also in the process of completing my Gold Duke of Edinburgh Award. This has allowed me to immerse myself in the natural world, taking part in a research project studying natural processes in our environment. As part of the Award I have begun volunteering, mentoring Year 12 students with their AS Chemistry. The experience has allowed me to approach Chemistry in a new way, and reinforces my existing understanding of the subject. To develop new skills, I have been learning Japanese and will be taking the GCSE at the end of this year.

Studying the natural sciences will pave the way to so many different career opportunities. I will find it exciting to see where the course, and the specialisation I eventually choose, will take me. After completing the course, I would like to pursue a career or further studies abroad, ensuring that I continue to develop my linguistic skills, whilst working within a scientific field.

Psychology: Offers from Bath, Durham, Exeter & Kings

Psychology is a dynamic science, constantly progressing in response to new research. Its concern with the mind and behaviour presents challenges for natural sciences, which have always fascinated me. For example, research in Psychology often has to tackle the difficulty of measuring intangible elements; during my Psychology A-level, I investigated the encoding of short-term memory using different groups of words that were either acoustically or semantically similar or dissimilar. Operationalising and measuring encoding helped me to see how researchers use evidence to build theories and models. Moreover, being able to analyse the difference between groups of data using statistical testing is an area of Psychology which my Mathematics A-level complements. Similarly, as part of the sixth form enrichment programme, I conducted my own practical where I investigated gender and spatial ability. I found males had significantly higher scores than females on spatial awareness tasks. Art A-level is another way that I express my interest in Psychology; I use art to explore topics such as psychotherapy and personality in my work. Currently, I am researching the subjective experience of autism, giving me a chance to study topics outside the course. I have also worked with children in my junior school and have incorporated this into my work.

During my Psychology A-level I have appreciated learning how the different approaches in Psychology differ vastly in terms of the application of scientific methods. For example, the Biological Approach relies heavily on scientific principles which was complimented by my Biology A-level. However, I was fascinated to learn about the less falsifiable Psychological Approaches such as the Humanistic Approach which focuses on holistic explanations, and poses challenges for Psychology to be recognised as a science.

This variation in scientific principles links to debates fundamental in Psychology. I focused my Extended Project on the relative influence of nature and nurture on psychopathy. I began by separating the two factors, but through extensive research, I realised it was more logical to study them together. This led me to learn about epigenetic influences on psychopathy. For example, the MAOA-L gene, found to be more common in psychopaths, can only be activated through the environment, which furthered my understanding of the psychopathy.

Psychology has implications in the real world, for example how eyewitness testimony (EWT) research influences the judicial process. Earlier this year, I attended a Criminal Psychology lecture at Royal Holloway University, where I learned about factors affecting the accuracy of EWT and how the Cognitive Interview was developed in response to psychological research. However, upon visiting the Old Bailey in June, I witnessed the trial of a gang murder, and I was struck by the style of prosecution questioning which included multiple interruptions and closed questioning, so opposing the research which led to the Cognitive Interview.

During the summer, I shadowed a solicitor for a week, where I was introduced to the daily life of a Forensic Psychiatrist. This included learning about court preparations such as analysing client interview transcripts and psychological performance tasks. I completed the NEO Personality questionnaire and found that through extremely thorough questioning, each basic trait of an individual can be examined as numerical data. This led me to question whether it is valid to measure personality by such superficial means, as although it produces reliable quantitative data, the rich complexity of personality cannot be harnessed. I am committed to studying Psychology at University as I am fascinated by both the origins of behaviour and how to measure the mind and behaviour scientifically. I most look forward to learning about research at the cutting edge of Psychology in order to see how the subject is evolving.

Veterinary Medicine

Offers from: RVC

Death was an unorthodox catalyst for my interest in Veterinary Medicine when, aged eight, I witnessed an octogenarian vet's efforts to save a duckling I rescued. I was captivated by his commitment to finding the most appropriate course of treatment and to communicating his decision to me.

Choosing three science subjects, plus Mathematics, for 'A' level has allowed me to develop my analytical and practical skills, but has also served to test whether I have the intelligence to tackle the intense demands of a University Veterinary Medicine course. My studies have inspired me to read outside the curriculum and I greatly enjoyed 'Free Radicals' by Michael Brooks, 'The Rise and Fall of the Third Chimpanzee' by Jared Diamond, as well as 'Veterinary Times' magazine. During ten weeks' vet and animal experience, as well as testing my physical and mental aptitude, I have sought to deepen my understanding of the vet's role in treating disease in animals, as well as to learn more about the human and economic impact that the vet has in disease prevention and management. The result is that my desire to be a vet is greater than ever.

My vet work experience (domestic, equine and farm) helped me understand the vet's responsibilities beyond the diagnosis and treatment of disease in individual animals. I enjoyed my time with the farm vet as it highlighted the pressure that comes from being charged with preventing the spread of disease and from taking decisions that affect the economic livelihood of animal keepers. I also learned more than I expected from observing the role of the vet during slaughter in the abattoir. I realised that whilst primarily concerned with animal wellbeing, given that an estimated seventy per cent of human diseases originate in animals, the vet has a huge responsibility in preventing the spread of zoonotic diseases into the human food chain. Watching the euthanising of a lamb, and learning during post-mortem why it had been necessary, was a vital reminder to me as a would-be vet that there is a human keeper behind most animals, and that as well as being skilled scientists, vets must also be empathetic communicators. This was also clear in the consultations I watched in domestic animal work.

I also completed seven weeks of animal experience, including eight days at Whipsnade Zoo, a week of farm-related work, four weeks' daily work with horses and a sea turtle conservation project. I also spent a week shadowing my family GP. Both the turtle project and human medical experience were highly informative but merely strengthened my conviction that my future lay in Veterinary Medicine, not in Zoology or human Medicine.

Throughout my school career, as well as furthering my academic achievements, I have been able to maintain my commitment to sport. I represented London in the 2013 English Schools Cross-Country Championships, and also won the gold medal for my age group in the 2013 Blenheim Triathlon. I also enjoy fencing, skiing and rock climbing and have completed the Duke of Edinburgh bronze award. My other hobbies are music and drama. I took up piano and violin ten years ago and have progressed to Grades 8 and 6 respectively. I participate in school music groups and also enjoy studying for LAMDA drama certificates.

I have attended Queen's Gate School for thirteen years and was recently appointed Head Girl. I hope that the qualities and values which my teachers see in me are those which will help me become a successful vet. These include: a demonstrable long-term commitment to finish a task once started, integrity and honesty, an ability to communicate well with seniors, peers and juniors, an optimistic personality and an unshakeable belief that if one tries hard enough anything is possible.

Art

Offers from: Edinburgh, Loughborough

Art elicits powerful sentiments, raising new questions and provoking curiosity. For me, it is an inspiring, unique subject, where my ideas and imagination can become reality.

Growing up in London, visiting galleries such as the National Portrait Gallery and the Tate has introduced me to a range of artists and artistic styles. I was inspired by Giacometti's abstracted approach to the figure after visiting his recent exhibition. The raw skeletal technique in his paintings and the looming, fragile sculptures convey a sense of isolation and emptiness. Stimulated by his practice, I have explored loneliness in my work using abstraction, dark colours and harsh mark making, and experimented with his use of materials, scale and empty space.

Interested in the human figure, I compared Giacometti's distortion to Lucian Freud's realist approach which is similarly bleak. Working from life, he concentrated on the texture and colour of human flesh, using unexpected hues such as grey and yellow to help strip away all idealisation. Riveted by Freud's style, I have taken photos and worked from observation, adopting his raw unidealised approach. Both artists challenge Western conventions of the body and beauty, themes I developed in my A level sketchbook. Their work furthered my interest in human form, encouraging me to take up weekly life drawing classes at the Royal Drawing School. This aided my ability to communicate movement and personality through drawing, and improved my skills in consistently drawing proportions. Fascinated by perception, in my EPQ I explored the philosophical argument of Simulation and whether we can believe in the reality of the perceived world.

After sketching men and women and discussing gender in my Sociology A level, I became interested in how the different sexes are portrayed in art. This led me to research feminism and explore female artists who challenge the male gaze. For example, Hannah Wilke's ambiguous 'Scarification Object Series', the Guerrilla Girls and Artemisia Gentileschi's nudes which refuse to objectify the female form. Inspired by these ideas I have sought to challenge the traditional idealised image of the female body in my drawing. I am also compelled by non-western approaches to the human figure. After reading David Hockney and Martin Gayford's "A History of Pictures: From the Cave to the Computer Screen" I was struck by how gender stereotypes have dominated the visual arts, such as the male hunter and the image of the mother.

As a result of these interests I have decided to take a year out. I plan to travel so as to explore non-western artistic traditions, whilst developing and building my portfolio. I am also arranging a job in advertising, which will include animation and computer design, to expand my artistic horizons and pay for my travels.

Recently, I had the opportunity to work at the Louisa Guinness Gallery. It focuses on jewellery, working with contemporary sculptors such as Anish Kapoor and Claude Lalanne who create their own ranges. I learnt about the art world in terms of commissioning, art dealing and working with clients. Moreover, I did work experience at the Moving Picture Company. I saw the more practical side of art and design, such as working on photoshop and marketing. I particularly enjoyed the 2D drawing department, as I was introduced to new forms of image making such as sketching on drawing tablets. These experiences were very influential in terms of my artwork and my future career ambitions, as they opened up new possibilities in the creative world. Through my work experience, and being a House Officer at school, I have honed my organisational, communication and team-working skills.

I want to make art the focus of my life and turn my passion into a career. I'm excited I have so much to discover, and believe that this course will give me the opportunity to experiment and develop my artistic practice in a creative and stimulating atmosphere.

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Child Studies

Offers from: Norland

I have developed a growing interest in childcare. From my diverse work experience in a hospital and a healthcare clinic to volunteering at a school and a charity, as well as my A-Level studies, I have acquired an array of practical skills in caring, working and understanding the early years. Pursuing a career working with children has become a natural decision for me.

Work shadowing in a paediatric ward at Frimley Park Hospital enabled me to gain an insight into the way clinicians care for children, from newborn to seven year olds. I appreciated how nurses working within a highly pressurised clinical environment must have confidence, patience and diligence - all crucial to providing the care necessary for critically ill children. I was struck by a particular incident when an infant with several bruises was brought into the ward by his parents; immediately, the nurses assessed the situation and realised he was immobile. A team of specialists: the Head Nurse to officers from the Child Protection Agency interviewed his parents to ensure the child was protected, and that safe guarding procedures were followed. Fortunately, the investigation ended positively, despite his parents' anxiety from the possible accusation of child abuse. The nurses' empathy, compassion and detailed attention to the parents' emotional needs were exemplary. This episode helped me to appreciate the pivotal role nurses have in caring for people, which is far beyond the practical aspects of the profession.

The experience in the ward left me with a strong desire to deepen my understanding in other paediatric environments. I then volunteered at a day surgery and was taught by specialist nurses to carry out check-ups on children where I gained hands-on, practical experience on how to measure blood pressure, heart rate, respiration and BMI. Under the supervision of the Head Nurse, I was able to apply the skills that I learnt to perform check-ups for several infants. Furthermore, I supported the phlebotomist by applying numbing cream to the hands of children before their blood test and learnt how to apply appropriate pressure to stop bleeding and to prevent bruising. Such a procedure is often perceived as routine for adults. However, for infants, I discovered that distraction techniques such as telling stories and smiling are essential to alleviate fear and pain. For two years I volunteered at the Chickenshed Theatre Company, working closely with 5 to 7 years old children with learning difficulties - mostly from deprived backgrounds. The experience allowed me to see that it is a truly inclusive organisation that provides children, who might have been marginalised and excluded from society, with a safe, nurturing and supportive environment through creative play and performance. Working one-to-one with children of varying levels of disability, including autism, attention deficit disorder and Down syndrome, I found particularly rewarding. In my first session, I identified that differing disabilities affect a child uniquely. Tailoring my care to the specific needs of each child gave me the confidence to look after children of varying disabilities. Finally, volunteering at Garden House School as a teaching assistant to girls aged 5-9 allowed me to gain an appreciation of what makes an effective learning environment for children.

Studying Sociology and Geography has given me a theoretical understanding of family units and their changing nature within the 21st Century. In particular, I find the theories of Postman (1994) fascinating. He analysed the evolution and disappearance of childhood in modern society and concluded that due to the blurring distinction between childhood and adulthood, the hierarchy no longer exists.

My work experiences and A-Levels have fuelled a desire to fuse the academic study of child development with a practical qualification in childcare. Deepening my skills in these areas will enable me to pursue a career confidently after University.

Fashion

Offers from: Central St. Martins Fashion Foundation Pathway

I'm applying for an Art Foundation in the Textile and Fashion pathway because I have always wanted to be a fashion designer. This course is a unique opportunity to develop my thinking and ideas in fashion whilst also expanding my horizons in other creative areas.

My Art A2 sketch books largely focus on fashion and over the last year I have become fascinated by the relationship between geometric shapes and the human figure. This is reflected in my portfolio and is something I want to explore further in my work during the Foundation course. I am also intrigued by the relationship between colours and forms found in Nature and their use in fashion. These ideas encouraged me to write my Art A2 essay about the way womens' fashion evolved and was reflected by artists from the 1880s to 1980s. The research was rewarding and gave me a good grounding in fashion history. In March 2015, a friend and I started a fashion blog about classical and contemporary dress design which enables me to keep up with the latest trends and has over 500 followers.

Studying A2 History of Art has made me aware of the evolution of painting and architecture and deepened my knowledge of changing styles in fashion. I went to the V&A 'Savage Beauty' show many times because I am intrigued by the variety of McQueen's ideas and the drama of his clothes. I love the way he combined contrasting materials, such as tweed and horse hair, and drew inspiration from unlikely sources, such as Alfred Hitchcock's film 'The Birds'. The CSM Foundation course will give me the chance to experiment with the way different materials and colours can be combined. Sonia Delaunay is another inspiration; her clothing and patterns are as important as her paintings as they each reflect her unique visual sense and use of colour. I am lucky that my mother is Argentinean because the energy, landscape and colours of Latin America open a whole new world of influences and ideas in my art work.

Last Summer I did two stints of work experience; first in fashion retail at Marie France van Damme in London, where I observed how a designer co-ordinates different patterns and styles in a collection, and learnt how to advise customers and close a sale. I then worked in the buying and merchandising department at Salt, where I created looks, wrote articles and uploaded them to Salt's website. I loved working alongside people with great knowledge of fashion, and learned about building a brand identity. I have an open invitation to return to Salt whenever I want. I have also been lucky enough to secure two week's work experience in the design department at Armani in Milan this summer, which I am very excited about.

I want to explore how a designer can transform the body through innovative design, colours and materials and I'm sure this course is the best possible start for a creative career in fashion.

Hospitality

Offers from: Oxford Brookes Unconditional

I am drawn towards the hospitality industry because it is fast paced, vibrant and flexible. As the UK's fourth-largest industry, it needs to remain dynamic, responding intelligently to changes such as the UK's vote to leave the EU. I am excited to be a part of this evolution. Coming from a family that ran a catering business and a Bed and Breakfast means I have first-hand insight into the high demands and strong rewards of working in the hospitality industry.

Living in the lively and cosmopolitan city of London, I am lucky to be surrounded by a variety of different cultures and languages. This, along with my French A level and the many French exchanges I have been on, has fed my desire to discover other cultures and languages. This industry would give me the opportunity to travel further and to work closely with people from all over the world.

My experience of the hospitality industry has shown me that excellent communication is essential for working effectively with people. Being Events Prefect has helped me to hone my communication and organisation skills, as I assisted in coordinating school events from alumni reunions to Chinese New Year gala dinners. I am also responsible for the school's 'Inspiring Women' lecture series. This involves selecting suitable lecturers, advertising the event, and hosting the drinks receptions. Marketing events was challenging as I wanted to increase audience numbers; I created a video aimed at the younger years showing both the serious and approachable side of the speakers, hoping to engage students more effectively than through posters. I look forward to developing these advertising skills further, deepening my understanding of their importance in relation to international marketing and tourism. I enjoyed the challenge of leading a team of students to help run these events.

During work experience at Farrer law firm I researched how certain British laws may be affected by Brexit. I admired the calm and meticulous management skills of the head partner who drew departments together through effective communication. I look forward to studying the fundamentals of organisation behaviour and management further so I can apply the skills as effectively as she did. The experience also made me reflect on how Brexit will affect the Hospitality Industry, and upon reading 'Facing the future: UK hotels forecast 2017', I realised that the industry faces a unique future. Despite the uncertainty of the UK's economy, the fall in the value of the pound could lead to a boom in the UK industry. London is forecast to still have, by global standards, some of the highest bed occupancy rates of 80% in 2017. Other cities such as Manchester and Edinburgh are also predicted to be successful and I want to be part of this growth. Outside of academics I have a passion for sports, competing nationally in biathlons. My main sport is climbing and I gained my NICAS level 4 in September, so developing my resilience and stamina.

Success in the Hospitality Industry requires the ability to both address big crowds, but also to foster personal relationships with individuals. Competing in the prestigious ARTiculation public speaking competition raised my self-confidence in addressing large audiences in a formal environment. Speaking to a packed auditorium, I had to strike a balance between the need to impart complex information clearly whilst remaining engaging and confident. My seven week summer job at Wavehunters surf school taught me the importance of customer relations in developing a business. I noticed that many customers returned each year, valuing their close relationship with the staff. Teaching for six hours a day as well as having a variety of administrative duties such as taking bookings and hiring out equipment meant I gained an insight into the financial running of a business as well as developing my customer service skills. I look forward to becoming a part of this challenging, competitive and exciting industry.

Popular Music

Offers from: Falmouth

Throughout my life, purely through enthusiasm for the subject, music and specifically singing has played an immense role. Without the initial intention of applying for music school to drive me to want these accomplishments, I have through my own zeal and eagerness managed to become music prefect at both my junior and senior school. I have also been part of every choir open to me within these schools and attended as well as started music clubs.

As music prefect I wanted to expand the horizons of my school's previously conservative music community. Whilst teaching myself the guitar, I was inspired to start Guitar Club; we were a core group of seven. Within this club I aimed to encourage my students to explore a range of instruments, the success of which could be seen in our very well received rendition of 'I Love Rock and Roll' which was performed with drums, electric guitars, bass and singing at our school assembly. The club's rapidly increasing numbers inspired me to contact the '02 Think Big Project' team to request further funding for the club and, as a result, I managed to secure £300 worth of recording equipment which has been crucial for providing more opportunities for my school's budding musicians.

I also independently arranged a 2 week internship with Trinifold Management, most well-known for managing Led Zeppelin and The Who. I was exposed to the world of music management by sourcing equipment for gigs, researching their new clients and was shown how alive the music industry is at this moment in time. Although I enjoy playing the guitar, my main musical talent lies with singing. While the aspect of my voice I would like to pursue in the future is of a "popular" nature, I feel my study of opera has a very large contribution to the tone, range and texture of my voice. For the past nine years, I have been attending classical singing lessons and have managed to achieve up to a Grade 8 standard of opera singing. This has pushed my vocal range immensely. Furthermore, I feel that whilst singing a non-classical piece, I have a unique but equally relevant vibrato that has been developed through my opera singing.

I have also used my classical training within my study of musical theatre. For my gold medal LAMDA performance I showed flexibility in both range and style in my song choices. My first song was 'Look What Happened to Mabel' which calls for a voice suited to powerful pop ballads whereas my second song 'Poor Wandering One' is very light and high-pitched and requires a much lower larynx. My success in performing these parallel characters and vocal demands consecutively is an achievement of which I am very proud. I have further developed the skill of conveying emotion through my voice in my musical theatre lessons (that I have undergone for seven years now). This is a skill that I use within popular singing- my ability to give an emotional and true performance is something in which I take great pride.

For the past year I have had the chance to combine my love for music with my involvement in the Age UK charity, performing acoustic renditions at their weekly held lunches which culminated when I performed at their annual Age UK Tea Party. In addition, I run a Cello Club with the Head of Music, which aims to provide an opportunity for girls of ages 4-6 to start playing a string instrument that they have never been taught before, completely free of charge. As for my A-level subjects, my study of Maths has encouraged me to develop logical thinking which is essential for music theory. Ancient History has widened my vocabulary significantly and has made me more at ease with my use of words which will be an asset for topics such as song-writing. Lastly, I believe Art ties in with musical culture and I take creative stimulation and inspiration away from this study.

I want to study popular music at Falmouth because I cannot think of a more exciting, rewarding and productive way to spend the next 3 academic years.