

**Oxford International Politics Summer School  
(July 31st - August 13th)  
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This summer I participated in Oxford International Politics Summer School held at St. Antony's College. The program hosted around 70 participants, and many of the students were working people rather than university students. Classmates who became one of my closest friends were all out of studies, working as a consultant, a journalist, or as a marketing manager. Thus I would say a good majority had or were working on their masters or Ph.D. degree. In terms of gender distribution, I had the impression that the women to men ratio were around 6:4 with around half of the men being quite mature, their ages ranging from 40~late 70s. Within the program I attended "Europe in Crisis? Key Transformations in European Democracies and the European Union", which was the largest group of all 5 courses and held a total of 15 students.

The program consisted mainly of three parts: seminars (the 'course' I previously described), lectures (an hour and a half session in which professors from each course + invited lecturers presented their research), and discussions (in which students from various courses come together to discuss implications of the lecture content). What was most stimulating out of the entire program were the discussion groups. This non-mandatory session was a precious opportunity to interact with students from different courses and warm up with those I haven't had the chance to talk to. Students were randomly assigned to a different time slot/mentor so as all discussion groups had at least one student from each course. Since each course covered different regions of the world --China, Latin America, Europe, Africa, and Russia— the sessions at times operated in semi-Model United Nations mode, with students from each course participating in discussions as representatives of their regions. Thus the sessions were useful in the sense that we were, to a certain extent, forced to regurgitate the insights we gained from classroom discussions/readings and apply them to more abstract themes such as the validity of the current international order.

I held two objectives coming to this Oxford program: one was to clarify my research topic for my final paper, and the other was to learn the headspace of my intellectual peers --where their academic interest lies, and what they seek to pursue. The second was most definitely achieved through participation in discussion groups and engagement in night-time bar excursions or casual post-lecture talks with my peers. Of my peers' interests included the below: rising tensions between the West and East, subliminal discrimination against Muslims/people of color through selective policies, rise in populism, and the environmental issues as well as the unequal distribution of its effects. Through the seminar and talks with my peers, I've come to sense that there is hegemony based on certain values and priorities (i.e. democratic values such as natural rights and capitalistic priorities) that is acting as a detriment even within Europe, its negativities which surface especially in tensions between Western Europe and Eastern Europe. While far from clarity, this realization would most certainly be an important puzzle piece for my future research.

I express my most sincere gratitude for your funding, which has allowed me to gain the precious experience of studying at Oxford and surrounding myself with truly talented peers. Being able to share our respective interests and have discussions regarding the current international order was one of the most insightful and enriching experiences I have had out of my entire university experience thus far. The thought-provoking stimulations I've gained and the connections I've made would be valuable assets for my future career, whether I choose to remain in academia or pursue a job. Thank you very much for your generous support, and I hope to utilize this opportunity so as to contribute to positive societal change in the near future.