

OXBRIDGE
ACADEMIC
P R O G R A M S

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August 2014

To Whom It May Concern:

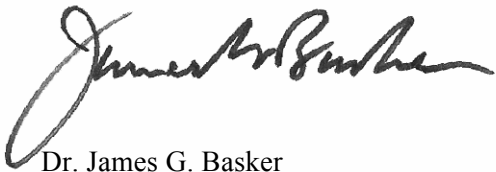
The Oxford Prep Experience is an intensive academic summer program for students completing 8th and 9th grades that prepares them for the upper years of high school and beyond. The program combines a superb faculty and small-group teaching with a genuine hands-on experience of English history and culture. Under its auspices, students from all over the United States, Canada and multiple foreign countries come to live and study at Oxford University for the month of July. This program is now in its tenth year.

Our courses are taught by an outstanding faculty of teachers and scholars drawn from Cambridge and Oxford Universities, Ivy League colleges, and other top institutions. In addition to daily classroom activities – lectures, discussions, lab experiments, etc. – **Oxford Prep Experience** students hear talks by guest speakers, attend musical and theatrical performances, and explore local museums, galleries and historical sites. Depending on their Major course, students take a final exam, submit a portfolio, produce written work for final assessment, mount an exhibit, publish a magazine, or take part in a theatrical production.

Over the course of the summer, students experience over 90 in-class hours, plus countless hours more of extramural learning and cultural enrichment. The level of academic performance achieved by the students is truly extraordinary. We are very pleased to observe that many of our former students carry this standard forward in their college careers at some of the best universities in North America and Europe.

If you have any questions or would like more information about the nature of the program, the work students have done on it, or the colleges at which former students are currently enrolled, please do not hesitate to call or email our New York office.

Yours sincerely,



Dr. James G. Basker

President, Oxbridge Academic Programs

Richard Gilder Professor of Literary History, Barnard College, Columbia University

Major Course Title:
COMPUTER SCIENCE AND APP DESIGN

Faculty:
Iulia Raluca Turc,

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course aimed to introduce students to basic principles in computer science. The span of topics was rather wide to ensure that students were acquainted with multiple areas in the field and given the opportunity to discover potential interests to pursue in the future. The more theoretical topics included numerical bases, algorithms for sorting (such as Bubble Sort, Min Sort, Merge Sort, or sorting networks), algorithms for searching (linear search, binary search, hashing), graphs (the Minimum Spanning Trees problem, together with Kruskal's and Prim's solutions), complexity analysis, Finite State Automata, and Information Theory. At the other end of the spectrum, topics in applied computer science ranged from networking and error detection and correction to image representation. Lessons often included quizzes on computer science history, current technology and facts about the industry. Ted Talks were used as a common source of information, covering areas such as visual representations of data, gaming, robots, augmented reality, passwords, and privacy. Towards the middle of the programme, the Python programming language was introduced. Students wrote their own code to solve elementary problems such as adding the numbers in a list, finding a particular element in a sequence, or finding the minimum in a set. For those with previous programming experience, additional work was assigned; they implemented various sorting algorithms and solved more advanced problems such as number factorisation.

REQUIREMENTS:

In-class time amounted to approximately 70 hours. Most lessons started off as a game, in which students had to complete a challenge or solve a puzzle. In the second part of the class, they were guided in discovering how these activities were related to computer science, and had the satisfaction of seeing their solutions being generalised into algorithms. Their participation in class was rewarded using a marking scheme in which they were given points whenever asking a smart question, giving a good answer or asking for extra work. The highest score was used to select the winner of the final prize. Home assignments were designed to anticipate the topic of the following day or to consolidate the last lesson, requiring not more than one hour each.

CLASS GUEST SPEAKERS:

Not applicable

PROGRAM GUEST LECTURERS:

Professor James G. Basker (Poetry and Slavery); Kevin Melbourne (Oriel College); Daniel Udy (Art and Activism); Kwok Lee (Oxfam); Dr. Nigel Strudwick (Egyptologist); Nick Hutchison (Shakespeare's Globe); Professor Andrew Motion (Former Poet Laureate); Chris Sangwin (Mathematician); International Education Forum; David Benedictus (Author); Will Wintercross (Photojournalist, The Telegraph); General Sir Michael Rose (Retired British Army General and SAS Officer) Marion Vannier (Legal Parole Systems); Graham Banes (Zoologist); Erika Nitsch (Archaeologist)

FIELD TRIPS:

Not applicable

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES:

PROGRAM FIELD TRIPS: Salisbury Cathedral and Stonehenge; London.

ACTIVITIES: Oxford Quest; Natural History Museum; Cricket; Yoga; St. Mary's Tower; tea tasting; Punting on the River Cherwell; Fencing; Midsummer Night's Dream; Christ Church Meadow; Museum of the History of Science; Rowing; King Lear; Croquet; Oxford College tours; Fruit Picking; Oxford; Botanical Garden; Oxford Castle; Ashmolean Museum; Pitt Rivers Museum; Quidditch; CPR Course; Ice Skating; Talent Show; Architecture, Studio Art, and Photography Exhibition; Moot Court in the Oxford Union; Drama production; Final Ball.



*Oriel College, Oxford University
5 July - 31 July, 2014*

*Director, John Pendergast
Founder, Dr. James G. Basker*

Nathan Robinson

STUDENT NAME

COMPUTER SCIENCE AND APP DESIGN

MAJOR

COMMENTS:

Nathan showed a lot of interest in this course. He volunteered to share his experience with his colleagues by presenting the work he had done in HTML5, as well as his Minecraft servers. His colleagues were truly engaged in his short talk, and expressed their appreciation by asking numerous questions at the end. Nathan continued to share his passion with the rest of the class by showing them, during breaks, the less popular tools that he is using: the Ubuntu operating system, specific development environments, etc. Nathan was receptive to new concepts and proved a good understanding of the taught material when he scored highly in the mid-programme evaluation. During class, he was quick in figuring out how the games that we played were connected to computer science. His answers were always suitable, backed up by concrete examples from his experience. I would strongly encourage him to pursue his interest in technology, confident of his future success in a potential career in computer science.

A+
Grade

Director, John Pendergast

Dr. James G. Basker, Founder

Iulia Raluca Turc, Instructor

Minor Course Title:
CREATIVE WRITING

Faculty:
David Benedictus, BA, MA Oxford

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Over the 3+ weeks that the course lasted I tried to cover all major strands of creative writing. I began by circulating to each student an anthology which I have put together and which contains examples of prose and poetry, as well as memoirs and journalism. These examples would be regularly read out and discussed in class.

The first exercise which I initiated was to give the students a choice of first and last sentences and 45 minutes in which to craft a short story beginning with one of the first and ending with one of the last sentences. It is impressive how much can be achieved in 45 minutes. We were to analyse these stories as well as a variety of stories by professional writers contained in the anthology, and look in detail at such aspects of story-writing as characterisation (aided by the 'hot-seating' technique), dialogue, description, scene setting, whether to use the first or third person and the past or historic tenses and much else.

When it came to poetry I lead an analysis into three great poems: Fern Hill by Dylan Thomas, Aubade by Philip Larkin and Daddy by Sylvia Plath. We discussed the choice of appropriate metrical forms and whether or not to employ a rhyming scheme. We were also to spend some time writing haiku.

We had a journalist visit the class to talk about a career writing for the newspapers. In a couple of sessions on film-writing I intended to analyse the first twenty minutes of The Shawshank Redemption and compared the published screenplay with the images that finally appeared on the screen. But the technology – as so often – defeated me. Instead I played the class Little Miss Sunshine and introduced them to the classic structure of a well-made film. We touched on advertising and towards the end of our time together and having had a brilliant volunteer undertake the editing I put together a magazine which would feature the work of all our major and minor talents. Each of the students could take a copy of the magazine home with them.

REQUIREMENTS:

The class met for approximately 20 hours over the course of the month-long program

CLASS GUEST SPEAKERS:

Alan Franks, journalist

PROGRAM GUEST LECTURERS:

Professor James G. Basker (Poetry and Slavery); Kevin Melbourne (Oriel College); Daniel Udy (Art and Activism); Kwok Lee (Oxfam); Dr. Nigel Strudwick (Egyptologist); Nick Hutchison (Shakespeare's Globe); Professor Andrew Motion (Former Poet Laureate); Chris Sangwin (Mathematician); International Education Forum; David Benedictus (Author); Will Wintercross (Photojournalist, The Telegraph); General Sir Michael Rose (Retired British Army General and SAS Officer) Marion Vannier (Legal Parole Systems); Graham Banes (Zoologist); Erika Nitsch (Archaeologist)

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*Oriel College, Oxford University
5 July - 31 July, 2014*

*Director, John Pendergast
Founder, Dr. James G. Basker*

Nathan Robinson

STUDENT NAME

CREATIVE WRITING

MINOR

COMMENTS:

I have to admit I sometimes felt as if I were on a different planet from the one Nathan inhabits. He wrote a dialogue piece in class which I found close to incomprehensible; but I think it's quite likely the fault was mine not his!

So I really didn't know what to expect when I cast my eyes over *The Adventures of Kellen the Gnome*. Maybe it was the scenario for a computer game? But the words "Fade In" in line 3 suggested that we are in film territory here. Or could this be an outline for a graphic book?

If it is a film scenario than some of the instructions are mind-blowing.

"Kellen uses lightning form and electrocutes fifty orcs. He then equips both of his daggers and freezes time. He kills fifty more orcs. Time returns and Kellen turns into a dragon and kills twenty orcs. He then turns back into a gnome."

My only response to this is WOW! And yet Nathan gives the impression of such a gentle giant. I really find it difficult to grade such an imaginative yet chaotic piece of writing.

B+
Grade

Director, John Pendergast

Dr. James G. Basker, Founder

David Benedictus, Instructor