



NEW COLLEGE
UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

Dear law offer-holders,

Many congratulations on your impressive achievements in school, and, of course, fine performance at our admissions interviews. It was a great pleasure for us to meet you last year, and we are very much looking forward to you joining us at the start of the next academic year.

Prior to your arrival, you may wish to do some preparatory reading. There are many ways you can begin to engage with legal material. To a large extent, you should follow the things that interest you, but you may find one or more of the following resources interesting (although not directly related to material that you will find on your reading lists when you arrive). You may be able to access the books through your local library, or find cheap used copies online, but don't worry if not – this reading is optional, and these are merely suggestions:

Catherine Barnard, Janet O'Sullivan and Graham Virgo (eds), *What about Law: Studying Law at University* (2011)

Philippe Sands, *East West Street* (2016)

The Secret Barrister. S/he has now written 3 books: *Nothing but the truth*, *Fake law*, and *Stories of the Law and How it's Broken*.

Wendy Joseph, *Unlawful Killings* (2022) (she was an entertaining guest speaker at our annual New College Law Society dinner)

Tom Bingham, *The Rule of Law* (2011)

Tony Honoré, *About Law: An Introduction* (1996) (you might be interested to know that the author was a student at New College, and then taught here)

Jeremy Waldron, *The Law*, 1990 (Chapter 6, which contains an interesting discussion of the role of the judges in applying and developing the law, might be particularly helpful)

['In Black and White: A Young Barrister's Story of Race and Class in a Broken Justice System'](#) by Alexandra Wilson. She was previously interviewed by the Oxford Women* In Law Student Society for the [Oxford Women in Law Interview Series](#).

The Supreme Court publishes lectures given by Justices on its website: you may want to look through them to see if any are of interest: <https://www.supremecourt.uk/news/speeches.html>

You may find the following is helpful background material to some of the things that you will be looking at in the first couple of terms, but again we suggest (for the books) that you try to find a copy in a library or cheaply and not to worry if they are not easily available as they are not compulsory.

Oxford law students participate in a Legal Research and Mooting Skills programme, organised by the Law Faculty. The webpage for this course (<https://www.law.ox.ac.uk/legal-research-and-mooting-skills-programme>) contains some useful information which you may find useful to read in advance.

Nicholas J McBride, *Letters to a Law Student* 5th edn (Pearson UK, 2022) This will help introduce you to law and the legal system,

You will be studying constitutional law. An engaging introduction to some of the ideas at play and their context can be seen in Jonathan Sumption, *The Challenges of Democracy: And the Rule of Law* (Profile Books 2025)

You will also study criminal law. A helpful introduction to some of the issues discussed can be found here [Jonathan Herring, *Great Debates in Criminal Law*, 4th edition \(Palgrave, 2020\)](#)

The best law students are aware of what is going on in the world. Regularly reading a quality newspaper or current affairs magazine or listening to some related podcasts will heighten your awareness of contemporary legal issues and the surrounding social and political debates, and is thus highly recommended.

We wish you a wonderful rest of the summer!

The Law Team, New College