



HARROW
SCHOOL

SIXTH FORM ELECTIVES
2017-2018

HARROW SCHOOL SIXTH FORM ELECTIVES

Electives are unexamined courses, which Masters elect to offer and which boys in turn choose to complement their examined subjects or to contrast with them. Electives may extend vertically beyond A-level syllabuses or horizontally away from boys' examined areas of study. Most importantly, Electives offer boys an opportunity to explore areas of scholarship beyond the confines of any syllabus. They promote independent learning, extension work, lateral thinking and problem-solving skills. All Electives will be taught next year in three 40-minute periods per week. There will be one prep per week, for which the target length will be 60 minutes.

All boys in the Lower Sixth will take Electives in the autumn and spring terms. Most of the courses are structured to last for one term but some of them will feature in boys' timetables for both the autumn and the spring term.

Boys currently in the Fifth Form will be asked to choose their Electives by Saturday 20 May, putting five of the courses in this booklet in order of preference. The demand for courses will then be balanced to ensure that as many boys as possible are assigned to their preferred Electives across the two terms.

Upper Sixth Electives will be taken only by boys taking three subjects to A level or Pre-U. Further Mathematics will count as a full A level for that purpose. Boys currently in the Lower Sixth will be required to make that decision about their timetables for September by the end of August and to submit at the same time their five Elective choices in order of preference, if they are going to drop one subject.

A.J. Chirside
Director of Studies



STUDY OF EUROPEAN CINEMA: CONTEXT, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

NGI

Film is a dominant medium allowing film makers and audiences to reflect upon historical, cultural and linguistic phenomena. This Elective will combine an introduction to classic works of European cinema with their effects on contemporary examples. It will include analyses, commentaries and interpretations of film technique, context and cultural significance. The course will be of particular interest to linguists, as some awareness of the target language is appropriate, as well as historians, students of English and those studying Art. Examples of genre will include German Expressionism, Italian Neorealism, Spanish cinema post-Franco and the French Nouvelle Vague. More specific examples of films are *I ladri di biciclette* (The Bicycle Thieves), *Das Kabinett des Dr Caligaris* (The Cabinet of Dr Caligari), *Volver* (Volver), *El laberinto del fauno* (Pan's Labyrinth) and *Les Quatre Cents Coups* (The 400 Blows).

Upper Sixth

IMAGINATION, CREATIVITY AND SUBVERSION: SEISMIC SHIFTS IN 20TH-CENTURY IDEOLOGIES

LWH

The 20th century saw an explosion of ideologies brought about through science, philosophy, art and literature. Underlying tensions and subsequent conflicts led to some of the most extraordinary and seminal cultural statements, which still resonate and send shockwaves to this day. This Elective aims to look at flashpoint events which led to these moments in art, film and other aspects of visual culture. For historian, artist, mathematician, philosopher, linguist or scientist, this Elective promises to stretch and challenge received wisdom and extend ability in the art of thinking sideways.

Upper Sixth

AUTHORSHIP AND ORIGINALITY IN LITERATURE

JJAM

This ambitious course will incorporate Homer, the Bible, folk tales, mythology, Medieval and Renaissance poetry and drama, the birth of the novel and contemporary literature. We will examine the evolution of storytelling and discover that ideas of originality in plot and characterisation, which are today taken for granted, are relatively recent phenomena. We will look at how the individualism of the modern age gave rise to the writer/author as celebrity and paved the way for the novel in English.

Upper Sixth

ECONOMIC LITERACY

CST

Is it really true that Brexit will damage the UK economy? Is it really such a bad thing if the exchange rate falls? Does the provision of better public services really require higher taxes? Does buying Fairtrade coffee really help developing countries? Does it matter if the Bank of England raises the interest rate? Does the minimum wage really help reduce poverty and inequality? A basic knowledge of economic ideas and principles is essential for anyone wishing to make sense of the world around them and to make informed judgements about contemporary issues. This Elective therefore seeks to equip boys with some basic economic literacy, to correct some common misconceptions, and to provide a fascinating glimpse of the world through the lens of the economist.

Upper Sixth (non-economists)

THINKING, FAST AND SLOW

JDBM

Our minds are tripped up by error and prejudice (even when we think we are being logical). Using the research of Daniel Kahneman, Amos Tversky et al, this Elective will investigate strategies and techniques that enable you to make better decisions at School, at home, in the workplace, and in everything you do. The central thesis is a dichotomy between two modes of thought: 'System 1' is fast, instinctive and emotional; 'System 2' is slower, more deliberative and more logical.

Upper Sixth

GEOGRAPHICAL PERSPECTIVES

SMS

This Elective will explore geographical perspective and the history of geography (how it has evolved and how it is viewed differently around the world). It will outline and give advice on studying geography at university, offer supervised reading periods followed by peer-reviewed resource sharing, and prepare boys for the International Geography Olympiad (iGEO). There will be the option to incorporate the Monday Night Lecture Series at RGS into the programme of study, either by attending the lectures in person, or by watching them online.

Upper Sixth

THE AMERICAN WEST: EXPANSION, EXPLOITATION AND EXCLUSION

AGC

How the West was won has long been a source of fascination for Americans. How can people who idealise cowboys, prospectors and backwoodsmen come to terms with the darker realities of Western expansion and the frontier? This course will go beyond the myth and explore a new history of the West and the enduring legacy of the frontier on American identity, both at home and abroad, during the 19th and early 20th centuries. We will examine the wilderness myth and look at how Americans have come to shape their physical environment. Issues such as genocide committed against native inhabitants, environmental destruction, the dustbowl, disease and ecological exchange will be considered. This Elective will suit any boy with an interest in history and geography.

Upper Sixth

WITCHES, WITCHCRAFT AND WITCH-HUNTS IN EARLY MODERN EUROPE

DF

Between 1450 and 1750, more than 100,000 people, three-quarters of them women, were prosecuted by secular and ecclesiastical courts in different parts of Europe for acts including murder, cannibalism, black magic and devil worship. Some 50,000 of those were executed, usually by being burnt at the stake. Why did these trials take place? Why did they suddenly proliferate at this particular time in European history? Why were more witches prosecuted in some countries than others? Who were the accused and who were their accusers? And why, after nearly 300 years, did the trials eventually draw to an end? These are some of the key questions which this course will address. The focus is on the plurality of causes underlying the strange and terrible phenomenon of the witch-hunts: the growth of witch-beliefs in the late Middle Ages; changes in criminal procedure; the Protestant and Catholic Reformations; and a variety of social and economic tensions which made it all possible. The course will also offer insights into the ways in which people in the early modern period framed their ideas about the creator and the created universe in terms of magic. This mental framework informed and moulded theology, philosophy, the law, medicine and the sciences, as well as offering practical help with the problems of daily life.

Upper Sixth

HOLOCAUST AND GENOCIDE STUDIES

MEPG

In recent decades, controversy surrounding the Holocaust has greatly increased. Whether it is how we define it, the role of Hitler in the evolution of policy or its legacy in the modern world, dispute is rife. Was the Holocaust unique? Are there lessons that can be learnt and which should be taught? Can the Holocaust be compared with other genocides in, say, Cambodia, Rwanda or Darfur? While being grounded in historical enquiries into the past, this course will explore contemporary themes relating to religion, justice, international law, politics, culture and education. This is an ideal area for any boy interested in history, politics, international relations or law.

Upper Sixth

THE DILEMMA OF ART

JESB

The art world is a small, insular and unregulated industry that is run exclusively on reputation, relationships and trust. Should art be available to everyone? What happens to a national collection when a nation goes to war? How do studios work and how important is the hand of the artist? What is the place of minority groups within the establishment? Should the Elgin Marbles be returned to Greece? Looking through the lens of contemporary and historical case studies, this Elective will consider some of the ethics of the art world through pupil-led discussions and debate.

Upper Sixth

THE VIKINGS

CWE

This Elective will examine the history and culture of the Vikings - Scandinavian seafarers who raided and traded from their Northern European homelands across wide areas of northern, central and eastern Europe between the eighth and 11th centuries. It will attempt to dispel some of the rumours and myths surrounding the Norsemen and encourage a deeper appreciation of the impact they have had on the world. Whilst war and conquest are an inevitable (and fascinating) part of the Vikings' story, there is much more to be studied: their activities in the fields of trade, commerce, craftsmanship, agriculture and even art and literature were substantial. This course will give you a better understanding of some of the formations in the UK today, as we shall examine the Viking impact on modern Britain, from place names to DNA to architecture, and much more.

Lower Sixth

A HISTORY OF MODERN POLITICAL THOUGHT

DRW

This course explores the ideas of some of the key political philosophers of the last 400 years, including many that are found on university politics and international relations courses: Niccolo Machiavelli, Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, Edmund Burke, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, John Stuart Mill, Karl Marx, Michael Oakeshott, John Rawls and Robert Nozick. In using these texts, we begin to develop an understanding of liberalism, socialism, and conservatism, as well as introducing new directions in politics such as feminism, ecologism and multiculturalism. This is a good Elective for any boy interested in politics or a related degree at university.

Lower Sixth

A HISTORY OF EUGENICS

NDAK

Defined by its founder Francis Galton, a cousin of Charles Darwin, as the science of improving the inborn qualities of the human race, 'eugenics' was a science that enjoyed considerable international currency during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The eugenics movement counted among its supporters Winston Churchill, H.G. Wells, Theodore Roosevelt, Herbert Hoover, George Bernard Shaw and John Maynard Keynes. This course traces the eugenics movement from its inception in debates about national degeneration to the punitive use of negative eugenics in the form of sterilisation in the United States, and ultimately to the policies of negative eugenics in Nazi

Germany culminating in the systematic murder of some 100,000 liberally defined 'mental defectives'. We shall also seek to address the question of to what extent eugenics remains a relevant theme in modern medicine and in population policies. The course will involve reading primary source material and secondary literature, and watching documentaries. Boys will give presentations on various topics alongside teacher-led discussions on the historical and philosophical aspects of eugenics.

Lower Sixth

THE FIRST CRUSADE AND THE ORIGINS OF CRUSADING

RP

In 1095, Pope Urban II preached a holy war against the unbelievers who had destroyed the Christian churches in the Middle East. He told those who joined the war that their reward would be everlasting life in heaven. The response was extraordinary: tens of thousands of people, armed and non-combatants, set off from France, Germany and northern European countries on the pilgrimage to Jerusalem. Their aim was to free the Christian churches in the region from Muslim control. This course will investigate the origins of the idea of crusading by analysing (among other topics) the state of the Medieval church and the role of Cluny, the Spanish Reconquista, conditions in western Europe in the late 11th century, and the key individuals and battles of the resulting First Crusade. A rich amount of contemporary evidence will be surveyed and scrutinised in order to gain a balanced understanding of this seismic historical event.

Lower Sixth



BOB DYLAN

ADT

A towering figure in American culture and a global icon, the singer-songwriter Bob Dylan has chronicled and interpreted many of the cultural upheavals in America since the Second World War, and was awarded the Nobel Prize for literature in 2016. In this Elective we will trace the evolution of Dylan's writing, examine his credentials as a songwriter and performer, and explore his engagement with some major themes including love, fame, politics and religion. Through an analysis of some landmark Dylan albums, we shall consider the consummate artistry of Dylan's most accomplished studio releases and try to explain his ongoing appeal not only to fans of popular music but also to teachers and students of literature.

Lower Sixth

CULTURAL GEOGRAPHY AND ANTHROPOLOGY

PSL

Why are Tibetan monks setting themselves on fire? Is the world becoming ever more American, moving towards one global culture? How do we solve the problem of nurdles in our oceans? Why does disease

flourish in Africa? Is collaborative consumption the solution to climate change, or does the secret lie with the Elder Brothers in the Sierra Madre? The study of geography is intimately tied to the study of people, place, landscape and culture. Our collective actions shape the world and are in turn shaped by cultural paradigms that we may even be unaware of. This course will seek to enable boys to answer these questions and to develop an awareness of some of the core issues arising from the study of cultural geography and anthropology while also assisting them in accessing, assimilating and using a wide range of sources of information.

Lower Sixth

HOW ANIMALS COPE WITH LIVING

MJMR

This will be the latest evolution of MJMR's popular course that deals with the basic classification of Kingdom Animalia and the processes such as speciation and adaptation that have given rise to the wealth of diversity we see today in the animal world. There is a practical element to the course; full use is made of the specimens, live and dead, in the department.

Lower Sixth (spring term only)

MEDICINE IN THE 21ST CENTURY

NSK AND JAA

The course will consider current and future breakthroughs in medical research and treatment plus the issues that surround these developments. All potential medics in the Lower Sixth should take this course.

External speakers will be invited under the auspices of the Medical Society.

Lower Sixth (autumn term only)

INTRODUCTION TO PHILOSOPHY

RJH

This Elective will explore some key philosophical areas and questions: epistemology; philosophy of science; language and logic; philosophy of mind; philosophy of religion; ethics and political philosophy. These areas will be explored through questions such as: How do we know what we know? What faculties do we have that enable us to gain knowledge? Why should we be governed? What would life be like without a government, without laws? Why should I be moral? What is a person? Are all humans persons? Are any non-humans persons? This course is open to anyone considering reading philosophy at university or with an interest in philosophical thought.

Lower Sixth

LOST LANDS AND FORGOTTEN CIVILISATIONS

JLM

This Elective will focus on how and why some of the greatest and most advanced civilisations of all time suddenly fell to complete ruin or simply vanished, their prestigious role in history all but forgotten by the modern world. The first half of term will look at four great ancient civilisations: the Minoans, Mycenaeans, Spartans and Carthaginians – plotting their history, discussing their dominance, and wondering about their disappearance or fall from grace. The second half of term will see boys branch into an individual research project on a lost land or civilisation of their choice from any time, and create a detailed case study and presentation. Possible research topics include the Maya, the Indus Valley, the Mauryan Empire, or the Nabateans. No prior knowledge of classical subjects is expected or required.

Lower Sixth (spring term only)

ALEXANDER THE GREAT

JLM

This course will look at the history and legend of Alexander the Great. As a conqueror, he went further than any man before him, yet his legend for thousands of years has resonated even further across foreign cultures, religions and traditions. The first half of the course will retrace the life of Alexander, looking at the sober truth; it will follow his accession to the throne, his victories, his psyche and all the way up to his underwhelming death in 323 BC. The second half of the course will look at the fantasy – how the legend of Alexander has been transmitted through time. From the Jewish prophet to the Persian arch-Satan to the voyager to the bottom of the ocean, we will explore how different ages have woven tales of Alexander into their cultural fabric. We will examine his portrayal in religious texts, in film, in music, in literary fiction and even in computer games. As we pass through different cultures and media, the course will highlight the quicksilver nature of Alexander's legend, serving to highlight his tremendous cultural and historical importance to so many ages, thousands of years after his death.

Lower Sixth (autumn term only)

INTRODUCTION TO QURANIC ARABIC

SMK

This Elective offers boys the chance to study select portions of the Quran, and is designed to provide beginners with an introductory knowledge of Arabic grammar, syntax and vocabulary to enable them to read portions of Quran with the aid of a dictionary. Quranic Arabic may attract boys who are interested in Arab history, linguistics, Semitic languages, religious studies, philosophy and theology. By the end of the course, boys will be able to read in the original Arabic language some small but well-known excerpts from the Quran, as well as some selections from Sura Al Yunus, Sura Ta Ha, and Surah al Fur'qan.

Lower Sixth (autumn term only)

HILARITY AND HORROR: AN INTRODUCTION TO CLASSICAL COMEDY AND TRAGEDY

SFM

This Elective will introduce and explore aspects of Athenian comedy and tragedy. In particular, we will read works by the greatest Athenian comic poet, Aristophanes. We will also study the development of the genre of tragedy as represented by the three great fifth-century authors: Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides. The performance aspects of these texts will also be considered.

Lower Sixth (spring term only)



BUSINESS AND LEADERSHIP

DMM

In this Elective, small teams of boys will be challenged to find solutions to real-world business problems. Critical to success will be learning and developing the personal and leadership skills that are required in the real world. The Elective will be run in collaboration with the LEAD curriculum, which aims to bridge the gap from school to university and the workplace through practical application of such skills. Boys must be willing to work with others and be critically assessed by their peers. The business task will be set by an external business such as Lloyds TSB, IBM or Sky, with a final presentation at the end of the Elective to industry experts. Each group of boys will also have access to a mentor during the process and be given various workshops or masterclasses by professionals. This will be a highly challenging Elective, requiring real endeavour and a willingness to explore, improve and work collaboratively.

Lower Sixth (spring term only)

BUSINESS-APP DESIGN

DMM

Excitement and anticipation builds as the new Hill Shop opens its doors. But how can you be involved?

This Elective sets the challenge of designing an app for the Hill Shop. This will involve research, teamwork and design.

Lower Sixth (autumn term only)

THE ART OF PROGRAMMING

CMC

We are surrounded by devices that compute and contain programs written to perform all manner of tasks. From gaming consoles and smart phones to tablets and PCs, an understanding of how these devices operate is an incredibly valuable skill in an increasingly technological world. In this Elective, boys will learn the art of programming by writing their own games and software in Python, an international programming language. By the end of the course, boys will be programming graphics-driven games that include their own artificial intelligence. The course will conclude with an assessed project in which they will design and write their own game or application.

Lower Sixth



FROM BEOWULF TO BILBO: THE HISTORY OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

TGE

How can you understand why Mary Shelley wrote *Frankenstein* if you've never heard of Alexander Pope? And how can you grasp the subtleties of Pope if you've never heard of John Milton and the beheading of Charles I? Literary texts don't just 'happen': they belong to a vast and exciting tradition, stretching right back to the first monster-filled texts in our language.

This Elective will help A-level students gain an understanding of the chronology of literature and language. The variety and richness of English literature over the centuries indicates that it is composed of much more than words on a page. Students will have the chance to delve further into the important historical, cultural and political events that helped shape the fascinating ways in which our language and literature have developed. The Elective will begin with a study of etymology and the origins of English, before tracing the progress of language through the ages by looking at selected texts from different centuries and genres. For those boys wishing to impress universities with evidence of wider reading and understanding, as well as evidence of independent thought in this subject, this Elective is particularly relevant.

Lower Sixth

SHAKESPEARE OUR CONTEMPORARY

JKB

Guided by Jan Kott's 1961 work, *Shakespeare our Contemporary*, this Elective will involve an in-depth study of some of Shakespeare's greatest plays, looking in particular at the way in which Shakespeare's work anticipates contemporary political and social concerns. We will explore Shakespeare's plays from a political, cultural and historical perspective, and consider ways in which they present ideas that are radical, even now.

Lower Sixth

SUPER PHYSICS

MTG AND MR

This Elective is aimed at boys who intend to study a physical science or engineering subject at a top university. In it, we will consider several A-level topics using full mathematical rigour, while also introducing extension topics such as special relativity and quantum mechanics. The latter will also pull on some of the concepts introduced in Chemistry, such as the nature of atomic orbitals, molecular spectroscopy and bonding in molecules. This is a highly mathematical Elective, including differential equations, vector calculus and complex numbers, and as such has the prerequisite of an A grade in AS-level Mathematics.

Lower Sixth (for both terms)

CHEMISTRY OF COOKING AND FOOD

DH

Ever wondered why bananas turn brown over time? Why are some curries spicier than others? What makes a great Hollandaise sauce? The answers all lie in cooking's foundation in chemistry. Cooking is chemistry and every time you set foot in your kitchen you walk into a laboratory packed with high-tech gear and stocked with supplies that enable you to carry out a very applied form of science. People say cooking is an art, and that's true, but the science behind cooking is easier to grasp and repeat. Understanding it will make you a better cook, and a better chemist, and will help you have a little fun in the process.

This course will use the science of chemistry to understand what is happening when we cook food. We will cover some aspects of basic nutrition before researching the chemical reactions that take place in cooking processes. The production of chocolate, beer, wine and distilled spirits will also be studied. It wouldn't make sense simply to learn the theory behind these processes and we will, of course, need some practical work to accompany these tasks. In the lab, students will practise cooking and carry out experiments to illustrate and understand these cooking practices. Students may have the opportunity to taste foods during the course but will never be required to eat anything.

Lower Sixth (autumn term only)

BREAKING BAD PHARMA

DH

Following scandal after scandal, big pharmaceutical companies are now under scrutiny for some of their questionable ethical calls, where patients are seemingly sacrificed for greater profit margins. Yet the benefits to society that can be achieved through scientific advances in drug research are enormous, so there must be a better way. From the bottom up, this Elective will not just analyse how drugs are designed, made and taken through to production but also consider the ethical and social implications of drug production and legislation. The course will emphasise the application of organic synthesis to the development of pharmaceutical targets at both the medicinal and process chemistry levels. We will examine the target molecules of some of the more popular types of pharmaceutical therapies that exist today, using case histories of modern drug molecules for each topic. As well as looking at the scientific background of these procedures, we will research some of the scandals involving pharma companies and attempt to find solutions to some of the issues that ultimately place a huge cost on our society.

Lower Sixth (spring term only)

ARCHITECTURE: MEMORY AND EXPERIENCE

SA

How does architecture engage our senses? How can it enhance memory? When does architecture move beyond being practical and functional and offer something more? How does architecture engage the human spirit? Focusing on key examples such as Libeskind's Jewish Museum, Bachelard's *The Poetry of Space*, Shiguru Ban's *Cardboard Cathedral* and the Royal Academy's *Sensing Spaces: Architecture Reimagined* exhibition, we will delve into how architects of the 21st century explore the very nature of how human beings experience space. This Elective is practical, exploring a variety of sculptural techniques, and will enhance knowledge, appreciation and understanding of our built environments.

Lower Sixth

OBJECTS AND ART

SLE

Our possessions can carry a specific resonance through their associations with places, people and past events. During this course, we will examine closely the work of artists who use objects with such associations and consider the ways in which art can influence our relationship with the real world.

Lower Sixth

DESIGN TECHNOLOGY

RRM AND TMK

This Elective will be practically focused, allowing boys to design and build an automotive trailer for a business venture. This group project has the aim of raising money to help the homeless in local London boroughs. Boys will learn electrical and practical fabrication skills whilst exploring entrepreneurial and philanthropic work with the local community.

Lower Sixth (for both terms)





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5 High Street, Harrow on the Hill, Middlesex HA1 3HP

+44 (0) 20 8872 8000

www.harrowschool.org.uk