

The Taunton Talks

What are the Taunton Talks?

Searching for Truth

Oxford students generally put in the hours and the terms are intense. Besides the dangers of burn-out from overwork, there may be a sense of frustration that having to focus solely on one discipline means there is little time to range more widely and explore other fields of knowledge.

There may also be a feeling of isolation or even rejection on account of a prevailing atmosphere that does not allow for open discussion on issues where debate has been closed down.

Where does this leave the student who wishes, in the words of John Henry Newman, to be 'properly trained and formed to have a connected view or grasp of things'?



Saturdays in term-time
at Grandpont House, Oxford

Talk starts at 12 noon
Discussion from 12:45-13:30
Optional buffet lunch at 13:30

The buffet lunch costs £5, and the number of lunch guests is restricted to 12; please contact Alex Norris at alexander.norris@sjc.ox.ac.uk to be added to the mailing list and to book a place at lunch.



The Taunton talks are intended to appeal to students who wish to engage in serious thinking beyond the confines of the tutorial and are motivated by the pursuit of truth.

They touch on pressing topics of the day as well as on perennial questions about the world and how to lead the good life, providing a forum for robust discussion in an informal setting where these topics can be dealt with honestly and deeply. The talks are aimed at bringing together undergraduate and graduate students at the University of Oxford to foster an atmosphere of open discussion and interdisciplinary learning.

Schedule Hilary Term 2024

Week 2 - 27 January

'Wittgenstein, and What Language Can Teach Us About Ethics'

Michael Wee, Associate Research Fellow
at the Anscombe Bioethics Centre

Week 4 - 10 February

'Diverse or Divided? The Absolute Truth in a Multiethnic Society'

Dr Marie Daouda, Stipendiary Lecturer in French at Oriel College

Week 6 - 24 February

'To What Extent is the Lord of the Rings a Christian Story?'

Dr Holly Ordway, Professor of Faith and Culture
at the Word on Fire Institute

Week 7 - 2 March

'Legacy, Jeopardy and Opportunity: The Challenges Facing the West'

Rev Dr Michael Nazir-Ali, President of the Oxford Centre
for Training, Research, Advocacy and Dialogue