



UNIVERSITY OF
BIRMINGHAM

Masterclass Programme 2018–19

Challenge what you know

Subject experts in action at the
University of Birmingham!

‘The masterclass motivated
me to do wider reading
around my subject.’

*Student, ‘Drugs for Human Health’
Pharmacy Masterclass*



Masterclass information

- Are you a teacher in a state school or college?
- Do you work with Year 8–13 learners?
- Are you looking for opportunities for your widening participation/pupil premium cohort to experience learning in a Russell Group institution?
- Do you want to ease your learners' transition between sixth form and university?
- Would you like your learners' to learn how their current post-16 studies are developed at university, or discover new subjects they may be interested in studying?

If so, then the University of Birmingham Masterclass programme is for you. Our masterclasses are designed to allow learners to experience what learning is like at a selective Russell Group university.

Most masterclasses are two hours long and are normally held in the Autumn Term between 1.00–3.00pm on a Wednesday afternoon.



LEARN MORE

To find out more about our masterclass programme and to submit a booking request, please visit our website:
www.birmingham.ac.uk/masterclasses



Business

Taxing Our Wealth – Do We Have It Right?

In this masterclass, we will be exploring together issues of wealth equality in Britain today. How unequal is our society? Should we care? Does it matter? Can anything be done about it even if it does matter? In particular, we will focus on the role taxation plays in affecting wealth equality. We will explore questions such as: How does the UK tax system affect people's wealth in modern Britain? Do we have the right mixes of taxes in the UK to create a fair system of contributions from everyone – rich and poor? What changes are being suggested to improve our tax system? Are they sensible? Students should come prepared to participate in the debate and offer opinions in what we hope will be an interesting and interactive session.

Date	Wednesday 12 December 2018
Time	1.00–3.00pm
Subject area	Accounting and Finance
Year group	Year 12/13

Engineering

Biomedical Engineering: Accident and Emergency Engineering

This workshop will give students a taste of what it is like to be a biomedical engineer and design and make their own medical implant. A patient has broken the femur bone in one of their legs and been brought to A&E for help. Their X-rays show it is a nasty break and they are going to need surgery. The surgeon needs you, the engineers, to design and build a device that will hold the bone together while it heals. Students will discover the science behind these amazing implants and how biomedical engineers help patients.

Date	Wednesday 28 November 2018
Time	1.00–3.00pm
Subject area	Biomedical Engineering
Year group	Year 10/11

Sunny with a Mild Chance of Catastrophe

The impact of major space weather events is an active area of research and a topic of national interest. The potential damage of a solar superstorm to our economy, communications network and electricity grid is a real threat and must be taken seriously. Such storms can cause the loss of GPS (with many more consequences than just not being able to find the way to the supermarket), alter the orbits of satellites and could cripple the electricity grids around the world. This session will present an overview of the causes of space weather and the potential repercussions of a superstorm.

Date	Wednesday 28 November 2018
Time	1.00–3.00pm
Subject area	Electronic, Electrical and Systems Engineering/Physics
Year group	Year 12/13

Humanities

Why is English Weird?

In this class, we will look at some of the features of the sound system and grammar of English, and compare it with the sound systems and grammars of other languages in the world. We will look at what linguistic features are rare or common across the thousands of languages used in the world today in order to answer the question: Is English weird?

Date	Wednesday 7 November 2018
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Time	1.00–3.00pm
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Subject area	English Language
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Year group	Year 12/13
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Climate Change: Past to Future

Climate change is a major issue facing governments and society today. There is now very strong evidence for a discernible human influence on warming over the past half-century. However, climate has also changed in the past before industrialisation. What do we know about these past events? How do they fit into our understanding of our own impact on the Earth System? How well can we trust computer climate model projections of the future? This talk will provide a broad overview of paleoclimate science from a perspective of a better understanding of future change.

Date	Wednesday 7 November 2018
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Time	1.00–3.00pm
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Subject area	Geography
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Year group	Year 12/13
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'Everybody Knows About Alabama': Interpreting the Civil Rights Movement

On 15 September 1963, a bomb exploded at the 16th Street Baptist Church in Birmingham, Alabama, killing four girls and injuring numerous other people. With its large black congregation, the 16th Street Baptist Church served as a meeting place for civil rights leaders, including Martin Luther King, Jr., who called Birmingham a 'symbol of hardcore resistance to integration', particularly in light of Alabama's governor, George Wallace's ambition to preserve racial segregation in the state. Birmingham had one of the most violent and lawless chapters of the Ku Klux Klan, and the church bombing was the third in Birmingham in 11 days, following a federal order to integrate Alabama's school system.

This workshop will use a range of texts to broaden and deepen our understanding of the events of 15 September 1963 and its aftermath, thinking about the Civil Rights Movement, the South, the nature, form and purpose of protest, the American dream, community vs. individual identity, and race relations in America since the 1960s. We will also think about the ways in which different kinds of text – songs, interviews, speeches, newspaper articles, images and more – might be used in order to interpret, analyse and write about both the present and the past.

Date	Wednesday 7 November 2018
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Time	1.00–3.00pm
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Subject area	American Studies/History
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Year group	Year 12/13
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Elizabeth Gaskell and Her Afterlives

Published in 1866, Elizabeth Gaskell's last and unfinished novel, *Wives and Daughters*, is one of her most complex and satisfying to read. This masterclass will explore the ways in which the 1999 BBC serialised TV drama, *Wives and Daughters: An Everyday Story*, engages critically and creatively with Gaskell's novel. Comparing some clips from the drama with passages from the novel, we will explore how Gaskell uses the novel to weave social commentary with domestic realism, and in turn, how these are renegotiated in the transition into period drama for a contemporary audience.

Date	Wednesday 14 November 2018
Time	1.00–3.00pm
Subject area	English Literature
Year group	Year 12/13

How to Read a Shakespeare Play (GCSE)

Why do Shakespeare's characters use such difficult language? Wouldn't it be better if they expressed their feelings by laughing, crying or running around with their hands in the air? In this workshop, we'll look at an extract from a Shakespeare tragedy currently set for GCSE to see how characters think by using creative language and literary devices. This close reading will allow us to see how Shakespeare creates characters, and where tricky speeches belong within the tragedy as a whole.

Date	Wednesday 14 November 2018
Time	1.00–3.00pm
Subject area	English Literature
Year group	Year 10/11



Writing Other Lives

Creative Writing is not just about 'writing what you know'. It is also about exploring the lives of others and imagining what it would be like to step into someone else's shoes. Through a series of reading and writing exercises, we will discover how fiction can break down barriers and ultimately lead to a greater sense of understanding and empathy.

Date	Wednesday 21 November 2018
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Time	1.00–3.00pm
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Subject area	Creative Writing
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Year group	Year 12/13
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Dystopias 101: Utopias in Disguise

Dystopias are bad for you. Some commentators, however, have suggested that dystopias might in fact be utopias in disguise, which raises a number of pertinent questions: How do we distinguish between 'bad' and 'good' social structures? Who benefits from social engineering, and who loses out? And how can literature help us think about these intractable problems? In this session, we will explore these issues in relation to the 'big three' literary dystopias of the past hundred years: Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* (1932), George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949) and Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale* (1985).

Date	Wednesday 21 November 2018
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Time	1.00–3.00pm
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Subject area	English Literature
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Year group	Year 12/13
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What Makes Science Fiction?

'Science Fiction' is a difficult term, evoking all kinds of prejudices – positive and negative – yet also defying strict definition. Is it about spaceships and lasers? Do we need contact with alien life? Does it have to be set in the future? Part of the problem is that the goalposts are constantly moving: science-fictional ideas are more and more visible in mainstream literature and cinema, as well as in real life (the touchscreen computer in your bag). Under these circumstances, what makes the genre what it is right now? What are the rules and who gets to decide? And how do we talk about these things at university?

This session is intended both for lovers and haters of sci-fi. One of its purposes is to ask you how the literary analysis you've been doing at school works on non-canonical writing – can we talk about Susanne Collins as we talk about Shakespeare, or do we need different questions, different techniques? Mainly, though, we will try and create some sci-fi of our own and have a chat about how that process works.

Date	Wednesday 28 November 2018
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Time	1.00–3.00pm
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Subject area	English Literature
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Year group	Year 12/13
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BLAST! Reading Modernist Magazines

In the 1910s, 20s and 30s, radical writers and artists published dozens of magazines packed with daring pieces of writing and experimental art and design. These magazines were like today's blogs: a way of quickly sharing thoughts, ideas and new pieces of work.

This hands-on workshop gives you the chance to explore these rare artefacts in person at the Cadbury Research Library. We'll think about the following two questions: How is the experience of reading these magazines different from reading literature in books? And how do advertising, cover design and page layout affect how we read modern fiction?

Date	Wednesday 28 November 2018
Time	1.00–3.00pm
Subject area	English and Media
Year group	Year 12/13

The Hard Problem of Consciousness: Can This Really Be a Physical Property?

Students will examine basic arguments around the subject of consciousness in detail. Students will then be divided into groups – membership determined by their emerging sympathies on the issue – and will undertake supervised critical discussions intended to identify possible weaknesses in the arguments, and ways in which they might be improved.

Date	Wednesday 5 December 2018
Time	1.00–3.00pm
Subject area	Philosophy
Year group	Year 12/13

Mind Your Language!

We all have ideas about what constitutes good and bad language. Whether we are thinking about the language we should use in an essay, words it is inappropriate to broadcast on television, or things it would be awkward to hear our parents say, we are likely to have a strong sense of what's right and what's wrong. This interactive session is all about exploring these linguistic prejudices: Why do we have them? What deeper issues might we be getting at when we argue about language? What justification might we have for our beliefs about good and bad language?

Date	Wednesday 5 December 2018
Time	1.00–3.00pm
Subject area	English Language
Year group	Year 12/13

Creating Communities That Work for Everyone

This session is set within the context of designing and building new communities that work for everyone. The first part of the session will be a lecture format, exploring key issues around the provision of new housing developments in the UK. The main activity will be group work on i) identifying appropriate spaces for development; ii) thinking through service provision, and iii) the importance of designing for all by identifying a series of stakeholders and their needs.

Date	Wednesday 5 December 2018
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Time	1.00–3.00pm
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Subject area	Geography
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Year group	Year 12/13
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Creative Writing Workshop: Citizen Project

This is a sample Creative Writing Workshop in which we will show students how to devise and develop ideas for a piece of creative writing from scratch. In this session, students will learn how to work independently, and how to work in a group to develop ideas. Participants will be writing during the session, working in small and large groups.

Date	Wednesday 5 December 2018
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Time	1.00–3.00pm
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Subject area	Creative Writing
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Year group	Year 10/11
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How to Read a Shakespeare Play (A level)

This session will provide an opportunity for A level English Literature students to see how the ways of reading and responding to Shakespeare that they are encountering are taken forward and developed in university-level study. Led by the Department of English Literature, this session will offer students a taste of the different ways in which Shakespeare is researched, taught and explored at university; it will offer a taste of different teaching and learning methods, via a mini-lecture and small group work. The session might be tailored to reflect particular plays studied by those students attending.

Date	Wednesday 12 December 2018
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Time	1.00–3.00pm
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Subject area	English Literature
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Year group	Year 12/13
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Philharmonic Orchestra Workshop

Have you ever wondered how an orchestra works? What are all of those instruments and what do they all do? Is there a story behind the music? And why is there someone waving a stick? The University of Birmingham Philharmonic Orchestra invites you to join us in our home, The Elgar Concert Hall, to answer these questions and more. We will take participants on a musical journey, exploring the many sights and sounds of the orchestra and ensure that by the time they leave, they'll think about classical music in a whole new way.

Date	Wednesday 12 December 2018
Time	1.00–3.00pm
Subject area	Music
Year group	Year 8/9

Languages

Try a New Language! Portuguese, Chinese and Japanese

Why are languages useful for your future? In what ways could languages improve your employability or allow you to meet new people? What are the different ways to carry on with a language at university? Participants may be studying a modern language now, like French, German or Spanish, but Portuguese, Chinese and Japanese are languages in demand and can be studied from scratch at university level. The masterclass allows students to try their hand at learning something new!

Date	Wednesday 7 November 2018
Time	1.00–3.00pm
Subject area	Languages
Year group	Year 10/11

Boost up Your Languages!

Some students find the gap between GCSE and A level a bit difficult. This masterclass will boost up Year 12 students' language skills! In French, German or Spanish, these sessions will help students to understand and practise more grammar points or to help them expand and memorise vocabulary.

Date	Wednesday 14 November 2018
Time	1.00–3.00pm
Subject area	Languages
Year group	Year 12/13

Try a New Language! Portuguese, Italian and Russian

Why are languages useful for your future? In what ways could languages improve your employability or allow you to meet new people? What are the different ways to carry on with a language at university? Participants may be studying a modern language now, like French, German or Spanish, but Portuguese, Italian and Russian are languages in demand and can be studied from scratch at university level. The masterclass allows students to try their hand at learning something new!

Date	Wednesday 5 December 2018
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Time	1.00–3.00pm
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Subject area	Languages
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Year group	Year 12/13
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Mathematics

Mathematical Analysis in Sport

Mathematics is an increasingly important tool in sporting analysis, and can be used to answer many interesting questions arising there. For example: Is there such a thing as ‘form’? How likely is it that the winner of a competition is in fact the best player/team? When does it make sense to deliberately get yourself sent off? How closely is money linked to success? This masterclass will showcase how mathematical techniques can be brought to bear on such questions.

Date	Wednesday 7 November 2018
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Time	1.00–3.00pm
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Subject area	Mathematics
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Year group	Year 12/13
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Using Maths to Survive the Zombie Apocalypse

Understanding how an infection such as swine flu spreads through a population, or how different populations interact with each other, is essential to maintain healthy and diverse populations. By describing these situations with maths, we can make predictions about what will happen when a particular treatment/containment strategy will be most effective. We will show students how to develop these mathematical models and look at ways to ensure the human race survives if (and when) the zombies attack!

Date	Wednesday 21 November 2018
Time	1.00–3.00pm
Subject area	Mathematics
Year group	Year 12/13

How Many Numbers Are There? Measuring the Infinite

Infinity has intrigued and puzzled the most brilliant minds. Indeed dealing with infinite quantities easily leads to paradoxes, which have prevented a sound logical discussion of the matter for centuries. We will undertake a mathematical journey through the fascinating realm of infinity, where the usual rules do not always apply, and see how contemporary mathematics can answer questions such as ‘how many numbers are there?’ or ‘does a longer line segment contain more points than a shorter one?’

Date	Wednesday 28 November 2018
Time	1.00–3.00pm
Subject area	Mathematics
Year group	Year 12/13

Science

Physics: Hot and Cold

The session will introduce students to the idea of temperature – our experience of extremes of temperature, what temperature means and how is it different to heat. We will discuss what happens to materials when they get very hot or very cold, with lots of demonstrations using liquid nitrogen. Superconductors will be introduced at a basic level. The students will each get an opportunity to solder together a circuit designed to warn if a fridge temperature exceeds a certain level (40°C) and will be able to take the completed circuit away with them to test at home! Student helpers will be involved.

Date	Wednesday 7 November 2018
Time	1.00–3.00pm
Subject area	Physics
Year group	Year 10/11

The Earth as Seen from Space

In this masterclass, students will learn about the ways scientists use instruments launched into space to understand the Earth's atmosphere, climate, weather, vegetation and ice cover. We will explore what instruments are in space, how they view the Earth, what science questions we can ask and answer with space-based observations, and tools we can use to look at the data.

Date	Wednesday 7 November 2018
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Time	1.00–3.00pm
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Subject area	Environmental Science
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Year group	Year 12/13
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Reading Between the (Head)lines: How to Make Sense of Health Stories in the Media

This session will explain concepts in health research and show how to use this knowledge to make sense of items we read in the news. We will use examples from everyday life to explain topics such as 'relative risk versus absolute risk', 'regression to the mean' and 'causation versus correlation' and demonstrate how to use this knowledge to make sense of health stories in the media.

We will also discuss the issue of 'publication bias' and consider whether we actually do hear 'all' about it, or only the parts people want us to hear.

Date	Wednesday 14 November 2018
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Time	1.00–3.00pm
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Subject area	Biomedical Science/Medicine/Public Health/Health Care
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Year group	Year 12/13
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Monoclonal Antibodies as Anti-Cancer Drugs

In this session we will cover the vaccination of mice with human proteins or tissues. We will look at how it is possible to select lymphocyte clones producing mouse monoclonal antibodies specific for selected targets and engineer mouse monoclonal antibodies to generate chimeric (mouse/human) and fully human monoclonal antibodies as therapeutic drugs. By the end of the session you will learn how these drugs work as mechanisms of action.

Date	Wednesday 14 November 2018
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Time	1.00–3.00pm
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Subject area	Biomedical Science/Medicine/Pharmacy/Health Care
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Year group	Year 12/13
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Rocket Science

The session will introduce the basic principles behind rocket launches – the forces involved in getting the rocket off the ground! Short videos will be used to show the recent history and possible future of space flight, as well as simple activities to illustrate the scale of the Universe. The students will design and build their own card/paper rockets. They will then be able to launch them, using a compressed air rocket launcher, and learn how to maximise the range or hit a target. Student helpers will be involved.

Date	Wednesday 21 November 2018
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Time	1.00–3.00pm
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Subject area	Physics
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Year group	Year 8/9
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The Eye: Fact or Fiction?

Can you really lose a contact lens behind your eyeball? Is sitting close to the television screen really bad for your eyes? Do babies see the world in black and white? Is it dangerous to sneeze with your eyes open? We will answer these questions and more as we explore common beliefs and myths about the human eye. This workshop will teach students about the eye and visual system by separating 'fact' from 'fiction': learn about one of the most fascinating and important organs in the human body, and why you shouldn't always believe what you see on television!

Date	Wednesday 21 November 2018
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Time	1.00–3.00pm
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Subject area	Biomedical Science/Medicine/Pharmacy/Health Care
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Year group	Year 12/13
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Social Injustice Is Killing on a Grand Scale

The quote for the title of this masterclass was taken from a World Health Organization document. Inequalities are a serious and well-recognised issue. In Birmingham for example, the poorest die ten years before the richest and while they are alive they spend more of their shorter lives in ill health. These inequalities are even greater across the globe. We will explore why this is the case, why it is not a natural 'survival of the fittest' phenomena, why we shouldn't be blaming the victims, why we all should be concerned (even the richest) and what the solutions are.

Date	Wednesday 21 November 2018
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Time	1.00–3.00pm
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Subject area	Biomedical Science/Medicine/Public Health/Health Care
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Year group	Year 12/13
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Human Evolution: Who Do You Think You Are?

Meet the ancestors: introducing evolutionary trees and the major features of human evolution over the last 5 million years. You have dug up a set of bones in an African desert, but which species are they? They may represent an important link in human evolution, but are they nearer to the human or chimp branches of the evolutionary tree?

Date	Wednesday 28 November 2018
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Time	1.00–3.00pm
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Subject area	Biosciences
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Year group	Year 12/13
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Particle Physics

This masterclass introduces students to the current view of particle physics and will cover what we think we are made of at a fundamental level. There will be some discussion of the evidence found so far to lead us to this view. There will also be some discussion of where the research is going now and in the future – what is happening at CERN and elsewhere? What are the big questions still to be answered?

Date	Wednesday 28 November 2018
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Time	1.00–3.00pm
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Subject area	Physics
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Year group	Year 12/13
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Do We Need to Experiment on Animals?

With all the scientific knowledge we now have, is still a need to experiment on animals? Does information gained from animal research actually help us treat patients? Do scientists have the freedom to perform any experiment they think is interesting on an animal? This interactive masterclass will give students the opportunity to think about and discuss the issues involved in animal research. They will consider the ethics and law governing this area and will look at the medical and scientific developments, which have stemmed from work with animals.

Date	Wednesday 14 November 2018
Time	1.00–3.00pm
Subject area	Biomedical Science/Medicine/Pharmacy/Health Care
Year group	Year 12/13

Interested in the Biochemistry of Life?

Why should one be interested in the Life Sciences at all? They give you the unique opportunity to grab part of the mystery of how life works on a molecular level. Moreover, students will learn to see patterns and repeating laws in nature.

Date	Wednesday 12 December 2018
Time	1.00–3.00pm
Subject area	Biomedical Science/Medicine/Pharmacy/Health Care
Year group	Year 12/13



Sport and Exercise: Just Study It!

This session will give an overview of the academic study of sport and exercise. The session will open with a general introduction to the area of teaching, detailing the subject area and its importance to the area of sport and exercise. The subject areas covered will include, but not be restricted to, sociology, politics and policy, physiology, psychology, physiotherapy and practical studies.

Date	Wednesday 12 December 2018
Time	1.00–3.00pm
Subject area	Sport Science
Year group	Year 12/13

Social Sciences

Crime and Punishment in the United Kingdom

This session will explore the history of crime and punishment in the United Kingdom and will also look at current approaches. Students will examine the social and political factors that influence approaches to punishment, and will explain how and why they think people should be punished for committing criminal offences.

Date	Wednesday 21 November 2018
Time	1.00–3.00pm
Subject area	Law
Year group	Year 12/13

Test Anxiety: What Is It, Where Does It Come From, and What Can We Do About It?

Recent research has suggested that as many as 16% of GCSE students in England experience high levels of test anxiety. But what is test anxiety, and what causes some students to become more anxious than others? In this masterclass, we will look at how psychologists define and measure test anxiety, and look at some of the factors that might cause it. We will then look at the impact it can have on performance in exams before examining potential 'treatments' to reduce test anxiety.

Date	Wednesday 28 November 2018
Time	1.00–3.00pm
Subject area	Education
Year group	Year 12/13

Investigating Social Murder: a Role for the Social Sciences

This session draws together insights from social policy, criminology and sociology to explore the idea of social murder. Using the case study of Grenfell, it highlights how social context fundamentally shapes our lives and uses. The session examines how social conditions lead some classes and groups of people to meet a 'too early and unnatural death'. The final part of the session explores how social welfare provision can be used to change the context and try to tackle social murder.

Date	Wednesday 5 December 2018
Time	1.00–3.00pm
Subject area	Sociology
Year group	Year 12/13



Study skills

Study Skills: Academic Writing

This session will help students develop the key skills that are needed for successful planning and structuring of an assignment. This session is a good starting point for students who want to know more about academic writing or for those undertaking a longer essay, such as the EPQ, for the first time.

Date	Wednesday 21 November 2018
Time	1.00–3.00pm
Subject area	Study Skills
Year group	Year 12/13

CLiC – Digital Skills for Reading Literature

This session will offer English Language and English Literature A level students a taste of studying literature using digital methods. Students will be introduced to the CLiC web app (<http://clic.bham.ac.uk>), which makes it possible to explore language patterns in over 130 19th-century books. CLiC includes set texts such as Frankenstein, Wuthering Heights and A Christmas Carol. This masterclass will show students exciting links between language and literature studies. We will also provide activities that might be used for independent projects (such as the NEA).

Date	Wednesday 21 November 2018
Time	1.00–3.00pm
Subject area	English Study Skills
Year group	Year 12/13

Study Skills: Research and Evaluation Skills

This session will help students understand how to critically think and evaluate the material they are using for essays. It will also provide them with the skills to find good quality materials. This is a great starting point for students undertaking the EPQ.

Date	Wednesday 5 December 2018
Time	1.00–3.00pm
Subject area	Study Skills
Year group	Year 12/13

Masterclass bookings

To complete a booking request via our online booking form at www.birmingham.ac.uk/masterclasses, you will need the following information at point of booking:

- Teacher name
- Contact email address
- Job title
- Name and address of school/college
- Contact telephone number
- Number of spaces desired

Please only request spaces on a masterclass where a genuine interest has been expressed by a student. If a learner is requesting a space independently, they will need to provide the name and email address of a teacher who supports their booking request.

Schools and colleges should expect to hear by email whether their request has been successful.

Booking requests submitted by 21 September 2018

Schools and colleges that have submitted applications by this date will be advised by 28 September 2018.

Booking requests submitted after 21 September 2018

The Masterclass team will aim to process all booking requests submitted after this date within ten working days of their submission.

TERMS AND CONDITIONS

In sending us a booking request, you are automatically agreeing to the following terms and conditions:

- To brief all learners attending of their responsibility for their behaviour as well as the location of the masterclass
- To send us the names of students attending ASAP once booking is confirmed
- A minimum of 25 students is needed for a class to run (this may be from different schools)
- Priority will be given to those students currently under-represented in higher education
- All transport arrangements are the responsibility of the school/college and the University of Birmingham is unable to fund transport costs
- It is the responsibility of the school/college to ensure all necessary parental consent forms and permissions are obtained for the visit
- A booking request is not a guarantee of places

If you have a query regarding the masterclass programme, please contact the Masterclass team using the details below:

Email: masterclass@contacts.bham.ac.uk
Tel: 0121 414 8489 or 0121 414 8332

www.birmingham.ac.uk/masterclasses



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