

# Pembroke-King's Program — An unforgettable summer

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( Anthropology / 4 )



The famous Bridge of Sighs in Cambridge

world, as well as allowing me to indulge in the mesmerizing beauty of Cambridge.

During the 6 weeks of the program, we have the opportunity to take 3 courses from a variety of disciplines. I wanted to challenge myself to learn something new that I had never studied before; therefore I chose international relations, global political economy, and behavioural ecology as my 3 courses. To maximize the output of the classroom experience, each class was limited to 30 students only to ensure that every student could get to actively participate in class discussions. At the beginning of the program, I was quite intimidated by the classes because I had no previous exposure to these topics, and my classmates seemed to be well-versed in these subjects. However, I realized that the unique feature of a multicultural classroom is that each person brings their own perspective from their own culture. For example, there was an international relations lecture about whether China could rise peacefully. While some Chinese students may argue that China is helping developing countries by providing resources, other students would try to repudiate the argument by saying economic aid is merely a means to exert pressure on these countries. The classroom was filled with ideas that were rooted in different backgrounds and school of thoughts, which made the interactions very interesting and thought-provoking.

Although it was a summer program, it has been very academically demanding. In CUHK, we study around 5 courses each semester. But in PKP, we had to complete 3 courses in only 6 weeks, which means there would be lectures and seminars every day. There

I still remember when I first started the online application for the Pembroke-King's Program (PKP) in October last year. I was filled with enthusiasm and eagerness to learn in one of the best universities in the world. I set up goals for myself, such as asking questions more frequently in classes, having a deep chat with a friend from another culture, and simply making the best out of the short 6 weeks I have in Cambridge. Time flies, and now I am already an alumna of PKP. I reflected on my exchange experience and I cannot help but feel that I could have done a lot more, but overall it has been an enjoyable study adventure. If I have to sum up my PKP experience in three words, they would be knowledge, fun, and friends. This program has challenged me intellectually and academically. It also has given me valuable opportunities to exchange ideas with students from different parts of the


were daily readings, and we were required to submit 6 papers in total for the whole program. These all sounded quite nerve-wracking in the beginning, but ultimately it has been very rewarding. Studying at Pembroke College and King's College was truly magical. We were allowed to use the breathtaking libraries with a long history, which motivated us to study hard. I am not a very hardworking student, but PKP transformed my studying pattern to live up to such exacting standards. All students coming to PKP were academically able, my classmates often shared insightful comments on various social issues, which sometimes I felt burdened to perform as well as they did. Another concern I had was that many PKP students were from America and they could speak fluent English, and I was often insecure about my English proficiency, but I realized that the classroom in PKP was a safe place for everyone to express themselves. No one would judge your grammar or pronunciation. What mattered was your ideas. The academic intensity of PKP has really pushed me to my limits and I have grown as a student.

PKP is not only about gaining knowledge, but it is also about having fun! Outside of the classroom, there were program assistants (PAs) who were Cambridge students. They organized an exciting and wide-ranging schedule of social activities to help us make the most out of our time at Cambridge. Every week, PAs would send us a weekly bulletin which includes the schedule of the activities of the following week, and I was always thrilled to receive the bulletin. Visiting the magnificent Fitzwilliam Museum, attending the Pembroke College historical tour, punting on the River Cam, eating the best ice cream in Jack's Gelato, having a lovely pub lunch in Grantchester, and even visiting the spectacular Ely Cathedral. These activities were an integral part of my PKP experience, not only I got to explore Cambridge as a city with unique culture, but also I bonded with the PAs and my fellow PKP students from different parts of the world. The PAs always shared with us anecdotes about the Cambridge traditions and the Oxbridge competition. During the six weeks, I visited other cities in the UK. I watched some legendary musicals in London,

strolled around the seaside in Brighton and got intoxicated by the Medieval architecture in York.

Last but not least, I have made life-long friends that have taught me a lot from their personal stories. Before PKP, I was worried that I would end up being friends with other Hong Kong students only since students from the same culture tend to stay together. But I am proud to say that I now have friends from the United States, Morocco, the Philippines, Singapore and Japan. I met them in classes, social activities and plenary lectures. They were bright individuals with great ambitions, and I was keen to listen to their lives at home and I was glad to share my life in Hong Kong as well. Six weeks are not a long period of time. As we bid goodbye to each other in the last formal hall dinner, it was like a dream had finally come to an end. I will definitely cherish the time I spent studying in the exquisite campus, rowing down the river, and chatting with friends. I hope I can take what I have learnt in PKP to motivate myself to be a more determined student. 🌍



 Punting with my friend down the River Cam