



CSG SIXTH FORM MASTERCLASSES



Spring 2026 Programme

CSG Sixth Form Masterclasses

No exams.

No grades.

Just interesting speakers and stimulating discussions.

- Masterclasses are extra-curricular lessons delivered by teachers from CSG or visiting experts in various fields.
- Each masterclass will either provide an introduction to a subject which is not taught at A Level – or explore a new aspect of a subject you are familiar with - taking you beyond the confines of the A Level syllabus.
- Most sessions should be accessible and of interest to students who study the subject in question, as well as those who do not. We hope that a student who is studying sciences would still be interested in poetry and music, and a student of the arts would be interested in scientific questions.
- Hopefully attendance will encourage students to read further and perhaps inspire some to pursue a subject at university.
- Aim to arrive at S5 (Sixth Form Hall) soon after 3.30pm – usually there will be tea, coffee and biscuits – the session will begin at about 3.40pm and finish by 5pm at the latest - **but watch out for occasional exceptions.**

Unfortunately, due to government cuts to the funding of state education since 2010 (and particularly of post-16 state education), it is with regret that we have to make a charge for certain extra-curricular opportunities such as these.

- **Attendance is free for students on bursaries or free school meals.**
- For students who are not on free school meals or a bursary the cost is £10 for a 'season ticket' to attend as many masterclasses as you like in one term – so if you come to all 10 that is only £1 per session!
- Parents/guardians will be sent an invitation to pay through ParentPay by email.

Parents and friends are also welcome to attend masterclasses - one off tickets for a session are £10 - **please email jstubbings@csg.school to register your interest.**

We hope that you will find something of interest in these masterclasses - and that you enjoy them as much as we enjoy preparing and delivering them.

Jon Stubbings

CSG Masterclasses Coordinator

Author Q&A with David Nicholls

Bestselling author and screenwriter David Nicholls started out as an actor, before achieving international success with his novel *One Day* in 2009. As well as his six novels, David has written many screenplays for film and TV - including original drama series, adaptations of his own books and of classics by Shakespeare and Thomas Hardy. Join him in this session for a wide ranging insight into his life and work.

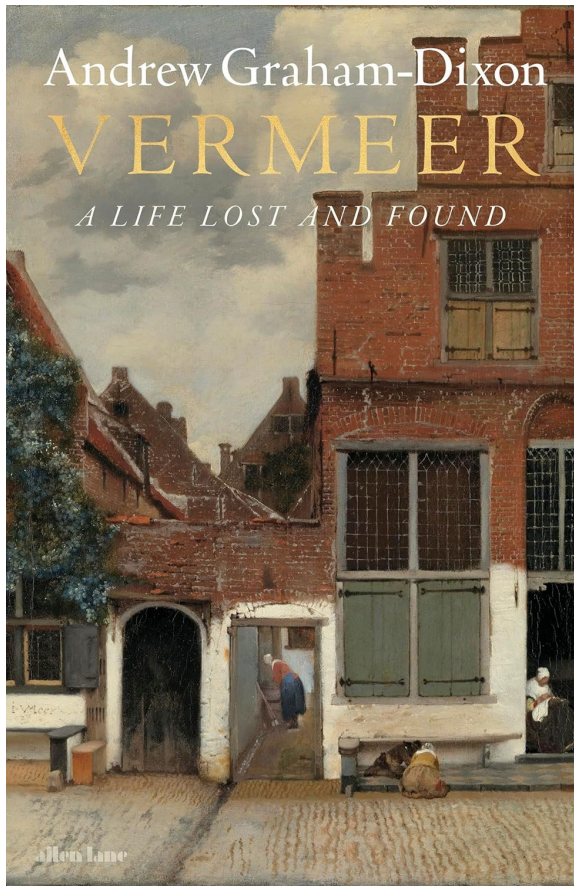


Tuesday 24th February - 3.30pm - S5

Academic Freedom - and why it matters with Edward Skidelsky

Freedom of speech has become an increasingly vexed question in recent years; claimed as a good thing by both the political left and right - but both have been prepared to undermine it when it suits them, only seeming to see a problem with censorship when it is being done to 'us' by 'them'. Universities have become a particularly significant battleground in this war of ideas, with growing numbers expressing concern about academic freedom in an age of conformity and censoriousness. Edward Skidelsky is a lecturer in philosophy at Exeter University and founder of the Committee for Academic Freedom, a group dedicated to defending the speech rights of UK academics and students. In this masterclass he will set out his view of what is happening in our universities and what needs to change.





Vermeer, toleration, and women's rights in 17th Century Holland

with Andrew Graham-Dixon

Art historian and TV presenter Andrew Graham-Dixon will discuss his groundbreaking new biography, *Vermeer: A Life Lost and Found*. Drawing on newly uncovered archival material from Delft, Rotterdam, and beyond, Graham-Dixon offers a dramatic reassessment of Johannes Vermeer—not as the isolated genius of legend, but as a painter deeply embedded in the radical, intellectual, and political life of the Dutch Golden Age - revealing Vermeer's hitherto unknown friendships, his ties to a radical underground movement, and the powerful women who shaped both his private life and career.

Monday 2nd March - 3.30pm - S5

Unpacking Israel and Palestine with Colin Shindler

Colin Shindler became the first professor of Israel Studies in the UK in 2008 and is now emeritus professor at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS). He is the author of many books and over 800 articles and reviews since 1969 on Israel and Jewish political history. His latest book, *A Forever War - Israel, Palestine and the struggles for statehood* is published in February. In this masterclass he will set out some of the historical context for the tragic ongoing conflict in the Middle East - from the birth of modern Zionism and the creation of the state of Israel in 1948, to the wars with its Arab neighbours and the ongoing struggle between the Israelis and Palestinians.



Monday 9th March - 3.30pm -

S5

Pre-Natal Screening, Diagnosis and Choices with Jane Fisher



Jane Fisher is the Director of the charity Antenatal Results and Choices (ARC). In the UK approximately 720,000 pregnant women every year will be offered some form of screening test, such as an ultrasound scan and/or blood test. As a result, over 20,000 expectant parents will be told that their baby may not be developing as expected. In this talk Jane will explain the work of ARC in supporting expectant parents through the decision making process following such a diagnosis and in so doing discuss the ethics and practicalities of terminating a pregnancy in such painful circumstances.

Tuesday 10th March - 3.30pm - S5

Sexuality and Gender in Ancient Rome with Anne Alwis

Anne Alwis is a Senior Lecturer in Classical History at the University of Kent and the author of many books and articles on Late Antiquity and gender in the ancient world. In this masterclass she will talk about attitudes towards sexuality and gender in Ancient Rome through the lens of Seneca's philosophy and a selection of erotic Latin poetry, including texts by Catullus and Ovid.



Thursday 12th

March - 3.30pm - S5

Brainwashed

A New History
of Thought Control

'A frankly brilliant book'
Guardian



'This book will make you think differently about our world'
Financial Times

Daniel Pick

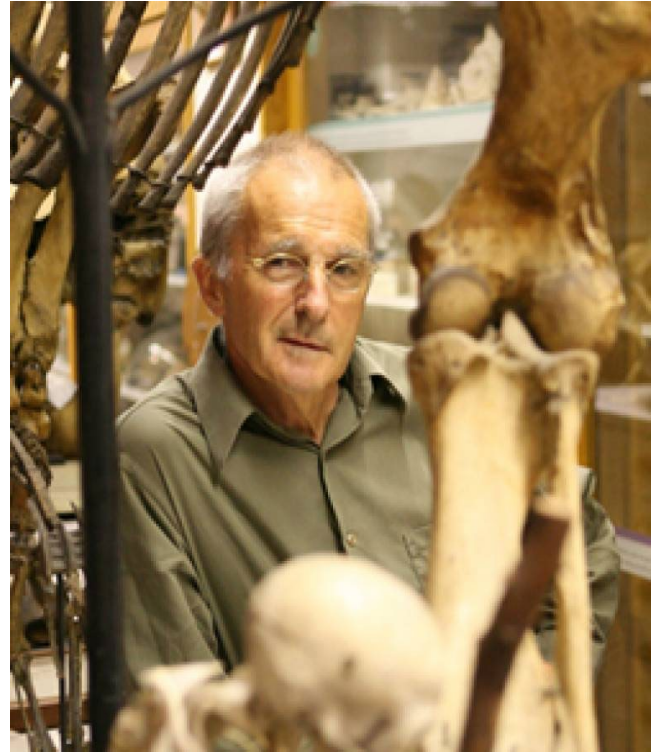
The History of Brainwashing and Thought Control with Daniel Pick

Daniel Pick is a psychoanalyst, historian, Professor of History at Birkbeck College, and the author of several books on modern cultural history, including *Brainwashed - A New History of Thought Control*. In this masterclass he will delve into the mysterious world of brainwashing in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, from Cold War fears about political indoctrination to TV advertising and online algorithms. Mixing case studies with historical and psychological insights, this session promises to be a stimulating journey into the mysteries of thought control.

Mon day 16th March - 3.30pm - S5

Evolution and Genetics with Steve Jones

Steve Jones is Emeritus Professor at University College London, where for many years he was Head of the Department of Genetics, Evolution and the Environment. He is the author of many books on biology, especially evolution, including *The Language of the Genes*, based on his Reith Lectures of the same name and *Almost Like a Whale*, an update of Charles Darwin's *On the Origin of Species*. In this talk he will set out the view of evolution and genetics that he has developed over the course of his illustrious career in academia and the public understanding of science, and answer questions about the way in which these things relate to ongoing debates about nature vs nurture and religious belief.



Thursday 19th March - 3.30pm - S5

TRANSCENDENCE FOR BEGINNERS

CLARE CARLISLE



Fitzcarraldo Editions

Transcendence for Beginners with Clare Carlisle

Clare Carlisle is Professor of Philosophy at King's College London and the author of several acclaimed philosophical biographies. In this session, as she does in her most recent book, she will explore the idea of transcendence, through the fruitful interplay between philosophy and theology, and between Western thinkers (such as Spinoza, Kierkegaard and George Eliot), and Eastern religion and wisdom.

Monday 23rd March - 3.30pm - S5

Constantine, Christianity and Byzantium

with Paul Stubbings

Few historical figures can claim to have made a strategic decision that changed the course of human history; but Constantine the Great did so twice. Proclaimed as Emperor by his soldiers in the Roman British city of York, Constantine went on to begin the process that would lead to Christianity being adopted as the state religion of the Roman Empire. He also split the Empire in two and established a new capital - Constantinople (present day Istanbul) - in the East. We in the West still live, for better or for worse, with the consequences of his two critical choices, which are arguably more relevant than ever today. Paul Stubbings is the Executive Head of the Cardinal Vaughan Memorial School. In a previous life, he used to be a Classics teacher with a special interest in the later Roman Empire.



Rearranged from last term:

Friday 13th March - 3.30pm - S5



Politics Q&A

with Jeremy Corbyn

Former leader of the Labour Party, and now an Independent MP for North Islington in the process of setting up a new party, Jeremy Corbyn has been one of the best known and most controversial figures in British politics over the last few decades. In this session he will answer questions from students about his life in politics, his beliefs, and the policies his new party might adopt. **Jeremy has had to postpone his visit on two previous occasions due to urgent parliamentary votes and constituency business - so we are hoping that this date will prove to be third time lucky.**

