



Dr. Carolina Alves



The academics selected to teach on the Girton Summer Programmes all supervise current undergraduate students at Cambridge, whilst also contributing to leading research in their fields. One of these is Dr. Carolina Alves, who has taught on the Economics Summer Programmes since 2018. We asked Dr. Alves for her thoughts on the Girton Summer Programme and the wider field of Economics.

How do you think the surroundings of Cambridge, and especially Girton, benefit the students?

I remember arriving in Cambridge; it does boost your confidence somehow, and it makes you feel proud. You're thinking that you're here, you're going to have access to knowledge in this kind of environment, which is very important for the learning process. And you feel how excited the students are by this. Cambridge has this history with economics as well, some of the big names who have come here. I could see when some had to present some of Joan Robinson's ideas and they got to say 'oh, she was born in 1903, and she was in Girton! Like us!', and this empowers them, and when you empower students in this way, they become more confident and learning becomes easier.

Girton makes the Cambridge experience more intense because you have to get into college life, working together in the college library and so on. In central colleges, it's easy to be swept up in all the tourism, but Girton gives a balance between a little bit of tourism, a little bit of the social activities, and a focus on the learning process. Also, this is Girton from my perspective and I'm biased, but I think this is one of the most beautiful colleges.

How do you think the students benefit from such a short, intensive course?

A lot gets packed in. It's so important that they hear things here, and then can go into work or research and have heard of concepts A, B, and C, and they can utilise them. Many students really make the most of their time – I give them extra readings as well. They can go back to, say, alternative theories of growth from the summer programme when they need to in the future. In seminars, the students always surprise me with how quickly they can put concepts together. Students need to be pushed, hereby how intensive the course is, and they find that they know more than they realised.

Why do you think reducing bias in modern economics so important?

The key reason for diversifying economics is that people have different views. Because of our backgrounds, we are not neutral; to give you an example, female economists are much more comfortable with state intervention, which of course impacts their prescribed policies. Very often female economists look at GDP and see that unpaid female labour in the household is not accounted for, and now that debate has become more fashionable. There must be more views on the table to improve our economic views and economics as a discipline.



Dr. Carolina Alves, who teaches the Economics Summer Programme's macroeconomic module, is a Girton College Fellow and has been teaching Cambridge students first-year macroeconomics and political economics and third-year social ontology. Her main research activities and interests include macroeconomic policy and a regional specialisation in Latin America.

