

The Peter Cane Prize for Legal Reasoning by an Aspiring Lawyer 2021

Corpus Christi College Oxford is proud to announce the fifth Peter Cane Prize for Legal Reasoning by an Aspiring Lawyer (2021). The prize was launched in 2017 and seeks to promote engagement with the ideas and reasoning behind law and legal studies, and particular to encourage those from all backgrounds and walks of life to apply to study law, especially at University. The prize is named after the distinguished lawyer, Professor Peter Cane, an internationally acclaimed scholar of legal theory, obligations and public law, and Corpus' first dedicated tutorial law fellow.

The Prize promotes legal reasoning: the ideas, concepts, calculations and structures which lawyers use to engage with the law. In particular, it engages with four key parts of legal reasoning, represented by the instruction "Understand. Analyse. Communicate. Persuade?" The implication is that persuasion, if it is to be done, should only be done on the back of understanding, analysis and careful communication. The written competition focuses on the first of three of these aspects: *understanding* a legal text, *analysing* it and *communicating* that analysis. The authors of the best entries to the competition will be invited to a workshop at Corpus Christi, to work further on *communication* and develop skills of *persuasion* in the context of legal reasoning: what arguments work, why they work and what ideas can really allow us to do. At the workshop, Law Fellows of the College and current students will work with you, using the written material as a launchpad for further exploration of legal reasoning.

To assist you with preparing for the competition, we have provided a sample question and three sample answers. Each answer looks at the question from a different perspective, just to remind you that there may well not be a single 'right' answer to a question. We hope you find them useful. The full rules for the competition are below.

We hope the prize gives you a glimpse of just how interesting thinking about law can be. We very much look forward to reading your entries, and in due course, to meeting some of you online virtually. The previous workshop events were real joys for us, and incredibly interesting; we look forward to meeting some of you at the 2021 event.

Matthew Dyson
Liz Fisher

The rules for the 2021 Peter Cane Prize:

- The competition is open to everyone in Year 12 and 13 or equivalent, that is, normally the penultimate or final year of school. A student may enter the competition only once regardless of in which year they enter.
- Each entry may be of any length up to a maximum of 2,000 words (including any footnotes). A separate bibliography is not required, so long as the footnotes include enough information to follow up on any references.
- The deadline for entries is Monday 1 February 2021 at 5pm (UK time). Entries should be sent by email to prizes@ccc.ox.ac.uk and include the [cover sheet page](#) as the first page of a single PDF document. Please name the file with “[Surname_FirstName].Peter Cane Prize”. You must also fill out the [submission form](#).
- Candidates may discuss the subject matter of their entry with other students and teachers at their school; however, the work submitted must be that of the author alone.
- Entries will be assessed on a range of factors, including how well material set is analysed and the author’s understanding of it is communicated, the quality of language and appropriate use of supporting material and facts which support any assertions made.
- First prize will be an award of up to £175, second prize an award of up to £75; the prizes can be shared.
- Authors of the best essays will be invited to a virtual workshop on legal reasoning inspired by this year’s essay competition, which will take place online on Monday 15 March 2021. These students will also be invited to the online Law Faculty Taster Day on Tuesday 16 March 2021. Attendance at both events is optional.
- The decisions of the judges are final. No correspondence will be entered into in respect of the results of the competition.