

Dr Thomas Roulet



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. Thomas Roulet, who has taught on the Business Summer Programmes since 2019. We asked Dr. Roulet for his thoughts on the Girton Summer Programme and the experience of studying at Cambridge.

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

I teach the students of the summer school in the same way I teach Cambridge students, and even the assessment – an essay with a lot of freedom on the focus – is in the tradition of the Cambridge studies. In this sense, summer school students experience Cambridge in a very similar way to the rest of the students.

I am hoping that what students learn in my course, they can use it in their everyday work life, and in the way they think and analyse organisational and leadership situations.

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

Because of the intensive format, I really get to know the students, how they think and what experience has fuelled their journey so far. It helps me connect with their background and make my content even more relevant to them.

Can you tell us about your teaching style and influences?

I believe that learning should be exciting (I want to trigger curiosity and discovery), discursive (there are many possible angles and perspectives on a problem and I want them to be discussed in class), and stimulating (I want the student to challenge themselves). Those three elements very much influence my teaching style, and I force myself to balance and pace out conceptual arguments, case studies and discussion.

Can you tell us about your latest research?

Most recently, I have published a book called “The Power of Being Divisive: Understanding Negative Social Evaluations” (Stanford University Press) where I look at why some leaders and organisations seek controversy for their own gain.

But a lot of my thinking can be found on a column I publish for Forbes <https://www.forbes.com/sites/thomasroulet/>

Please describe the learning style at Cambridge, and in the UK, and how a UK educational experience could impact international students in future employment.

At Cambridge, we pride ourselves in trying to understand our students perspectives and background and feeding it into the exchanges, and our delivery of the class.

In addition, most Cambridge academics are heavily research focused and have usually published academic work at the highest level – it is the guarantee that what is explored in class is at the frontier of knowledge and is up to date, because we know our fields of enquiry very well.

What outcomes can students expect from studying Business Leadership with you?

They can expect to be challenged, to be involved in the discussion, and to learn new concepts that will get them to see the world differently.

What is your favourite thing to do in Cambridge?

My favourite thing in Cambridge is to have lunch or dinner in college, whether it is a formal hall, at which we wear our gown and light candles, or more casual meals. Colleges are an important part of what makes Cambridge one of the best university in the world – it enables people to have fruitful and challenging discussions on a regular basis while enjoying great food.

Dr. Thomas Roulet, who teaches the Business Summer Programme's Business Leadership module, is a senior lecturer in Organisation Theory and the Deputy Director of the MBA programme at the University of Cambridge's Judge Business School, and a Fellow in Sociology, Director of Studies in Management, at Girton College.

