Enlightenment Decentred: Networks, Media, Practices

Magdalen College, Oxford
(Summer Common Room)
30 September – 2 October 2026

Convenors:
Avi Lifschitz (Oxford) & Anita Traninger (Freie Universität Berlin)

WEDNESDAY, 30 September

9.00 Welcome & Introduction
Anita Traninger (Freie Universität Berlin) & Avi Lifschitz (Oxford)

9.15 Session 1

Paris – Potsdam – Lausanne: the incomplete rehabilitation of Emperor Julian
Avi Lifschitz (Oxford)

Caracas – London – Istanbul: cosmopolitanism and patriotism in the life and readings of an Enlightened, revolutionary criollo
Mónica Bolufer Peruga (European University Institute, Florence)

11.15 Session 2

Rome – Beijing – Seoul: a knowledge network and its media, 1644–1783
Eun-Jeung Lee (Freie Universität Berlin)

A methodology for intellectual independence: Enlightened strategies for modern knowledge in Guatemala, 1790s–1820s
Nicola Miller (University College London)

13.30 Session 3

Europe – the Sinosphere: the Eurasian Enlightenment in two keys
Chenxi Tang (University of California, Berkeley)

An English Enlightenment from Lausanne and Göttingen to St Petersburg and Pennsylvania: Gibbon and Bentham in Venturi's shadow
Brian Young (Oxford)

THURSDAY, 1 October

9.15 Session 4

Oviedo – Polling – Parnassus: alternative routes to an Enlightened ars critica
Anita Traninger (Freie Universität Berlin)

Eger – Vienna – Rome: Catholicism and improvement across borders in the Enlightenment (1750s–90s)
László Kontler (Central European University)

11.15 Session 5

Making the Sephardi Jewish Enlightenment in the eighteenth-century Dutch Republic
Alicia Montoya (Radboud Universiteit Nijmegen)

Pierre Bayle: global history as Christian apologetics. Rotterdam – St. Andrews – Paris – Göttingen – Calcutta
Dmitri Levitin (Oxford)

14.15 Session 6

When the nomads met the naturalists: knowing and narrativizing the steppe from the Volga to the Amur
Shiru Lim (Leiden)

Florence – Châlons – Basel: Enlightenment projects of poor relief
Damiano Bardelli (Oxford)

16.15 *The Voltaire Foundation: an introduction*
Tom Wynn (Voltaire Foundation, Oxford)

FRIDAY, 2 October

9.15 Session 7

Berlin, Copenhagen and beyond: educational reform, public Enlightenment, and authority
Jonas Thorup Thomsen (Oxford) & Olivier Higgins (Oxford)

Enlightenment by comparison: Scotland and Naples revisited and continued
John Robertson (Cambridge)

John Pocock's decentred Enlightenments
Richard Whatmore (St. Andrews)

12.00 Concluding discussion

Generously supported by the John Fell OUP Fund, University of Oxford, and the Division of International Affairs, Freie Universität Berlin.