Dear Downing HSPS freshers,

Congratulations on achieving your place! Hsp is an extremely fulfilling and interesting course which will keep you engaged all year.

When you matriculate, you will usually sit with the other Downing HSPS students so you can get to know each other. There will also be some subject drinks throughout the year.

When you first arrive, you have a few weeks to decide your subject options. You will then have around 10-12 lectures a week, spread differently based on your choices. Make sure you attend all lectures and seriously engage with the lecturer (most HSPS lecturers have an interactive approach). They are usually located on Downing or New Museums site which are very close to Downing, and occasionally at Sidgwick which is a 15 min walk away. I didn't have a bike for first year, and I survived!

You will usually have to write 1-3 essays a week, but this varies based on how your supervisors have arranged your supervisions. You will usually be with your fellow Downing students but you may also get mixed with other students, which is quite nice! Make sure you do all the reading for your supervisions and put your all into your essays so that you can really elevate your learning in your supervisions.

Downing has a few HSPS supervisors, which is great because they are always around if you need any support. Likewise, you can ask any 2nd year students, myself included, for any thing!

It's not all work, but I would recommend doing a good amount of work so that you can really enjoy yourself a few times a week. I hope you really enjoy your studies this year, and remember not to stress too much!

Contact me if you need any thing (sg766@cam.ac.uk)

Good luck! Sofiya