



Code of Conduct for Public Lectures and On-Line Discussion

Background

Gresham College, an independently funded educational institution, was founded in 1597 and Gresham Professors have given free public lectures in the City of London for over 400 years. All lectures are live-streamed (from September 2017), recorded, and made available online, with accompanying written transcripts.

The College's mission is to provide free public lectures of the highest standard, with a commitment to free and open access to new learning of contemporary relevance and interest in the widest possible international sense. Gresham is committed to contributing to society through the provision of stimulating free education, learning and debate, linked to the core value of freedom of thought and expression.

Expectations at Gresham College Public Lectures

Successful implementation of the College's mission depends in part upon mutual respect and expected standards of conduct from Gresham staff, lecturers, and those attending public lectures. All communication given by lecturers, staff, and attendees should be appropriate for a public audience including people of many different backgrounds.

For those attending in person, Gresham College public lectures should be understood to encompass the lecture itself, any associated question-and-answer sessions, and the periods immediately before and after lectures. Our expectations apply to all of these elements.

We value the participation of everyone at Gresham College lectures and want all attendees to have an enjoyable, fulfilling, and intellectually stimulating experience. Accordingly, Gresham staff and lecturers are committed to treating audience members with courtesy, and we expect the same of those attending lectures. Intellectual debate and engagement, particularly during question and answer sessions, must be conducted respectfully and with consideration for all involved. Questioning and discussion may naturally become animated, but aggressive, harassing, or disruptive behaviour will not be tolerated.

Harassment includes (but is not limited to) offensive verbal comments related to gender, sexual orientation, disability, physical appearance, body size, race, nationality, age, or religion; deliberate intimidation, stalking, following, harassing photography or recording, disruption of talks or other events, inappropriate physical contact, and unwelcome sexual attention.

Examples of unacceptable behaviour include (but are not limited to):

- preventing participants from accessing or leaving lectures safely;
- preventing speakers from being heard clearly;

- conducting questioning in a manner that the lecturer, staff, or other attendees would reasonably characterise as offensive;
- chanting or using foul or abusive language, including racial abuse;
- refusing reasonable requests from Gresham college staff involved in managing a lecture;
- displaying flags, banners, placards or similar items in a lecture;
- throwing any item;
- acting in any other way which is threatening or abusive, or which denies to others their right to legal free speech.

In addition to individual incidents, the College also recognises the disruptive impact of a series of events or course of conduct intended to undermine or disparage the speaker. Cumulative incidents amounting to what might reasonably be described as stalking or harassment will not be tolerated and will result in the same sanctions as a single, more obtrusive incident.

Gresham College staff members have the authority to determine what exceeds acceptable standards at any event hosted by the college. Participants asked to stop any harassing or disruptive behaviour are expected to comply immediately, and any attendees violating these rules will be asked to leave the event. Police will be contacted if necessary.

Gresham College reserves the right to remove from lectures and/or exclude from future lectures any audience member who does not comply with expected standards of behaviour. All incidents will be documented via a written incident report and recorded in the College's Annual Monitoring.

Practical considerations

The majority of Gresham College lectures are not ticketed, and all members of the public are welcome to attend. Doors normally open at 5:30pm for a 6:00pm lecture. For those events that are ticketed, instructions as to how to obtain tickets are listed on the website (www.gresham.ac.uk).

Audience members should be on time for the start of a session, refrain from loud conversations outside the doors, and switch off mobile phones. If you wish to use a lap-top computer to take notes, please do so inconspicuously in one of the rear seats.

Recording

The college live-streams its lectures and subsequently posts the recordings, so personal recording of any kind is not permitted at Gresham events. This includes the periods before and after the lectures, the lecture itself, and the question-and-answer sessions. Members of the public have the right not to be recorded and the college's practices recognise and respect this. Anyone engaging in personal recording or photography at a Gresham event will be asked to leave and may be barred from attending lectures in future.

On-line Expectations

Gresham College welcomes feedback from and engagement with on-line attendees. Those attending lectures via the live-stream or watching earlier recordings are encouraged to engage with the material and with other participants in a thoughtful and respectful manner. This includes but

is not limited to comments on the YouTube live-stream or recordings of lectures, and comments on Twitter or other social media such as Facebook.

On-line attendees are encouraged to remember that on-line communication comes with challenges such as not being able to take into account the body language and tone of voice of the person who is communicating. Written text can be easily misinterpreted without the usual clues of face-to-face discourse. Avoid the use of strong or offensive language. Please subscribe to common on-line communication conventions such as not typing in capital letters (which implies shouting).

The College moderates comments and discussion (after posting) and will remove material that it deems to be irrelevant to the topic under discussion or offensive to other participants. It also reserves the right to close a discussion thread, and to block an individual from further participation in Gresham fora. It reserves the right to consider the larger context of the poster's other comments when arriving at a determination.

It is completely at the College's discretion to ban anyone whom they determine to be a detriment to the atmosphere of the comments sections, the site in general, or other attendees.

Material that may be removed includes, but is not limited to:

- Personal attacks upon the lecturer or other participants in the debate
- Content that is abusive or threatening
- Content that encourages others to harass or threaten individuals on or off the forum
- The use of profanities
- Malicious comments that will provoke others, derail intelligent debate, and reduce the professionalism of the forum
- Content that is factually incorrect or makes false claims
- Content that is deemed to have been sent by nuisance accounts or bots
- Subject matter that is unrelated to the topic of the lecture
- Any type of commercial promotion, even if related to the topic of the lecture
- Public arguments against a moderator's decision

CL-C/JB/LG/RT
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Approved Academic Board: 4 July 2019
Approved Gresham College Council: 11 July 2019