

GRESHAM COLLEGE

Lectures that Inspire

Spring 2026



Time to Think



Our 2025–26 lecture programme continues, spanning an extraordinary range of subjects - from the maths behind the shape of seashells to the role of coroners, the fall of democracy in ancient Athens, and our evolving relationship with technology. Watch us online or in-person and explore the forces that shape our world: society and its institutions, the frontiers of science, the histories of belief, and the mysteries of the universe.

Visit our website to register, view our full annual programme, or watch lectures from our back catalogue of over 3,500 videos.

Find us at: www.gresham.ac.uk
enquiries@gresham.ac.uk | 020 7831 0575



SUPPORTING GRESHAM COLLEGE

“There’s an awful lot of silly debates in politics on either side of the Atlantic, so it is wonderful to be a part of Gresham College, which for centuries has provided a forum to challenge people in a range of subjects. **With your generous support, long may it continue!**”

Clive Stafford Smith
Gresham Professor of Law

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DON'T MISS...



Economics and AI

ChatGPT, the record-breaking AI chatbot, is only the latest chapter in a story unfolding for nearly seven decades. Professor Daniel Susskind traces its history from the 1956 Dartmouth University conference to today's technological upheavals.

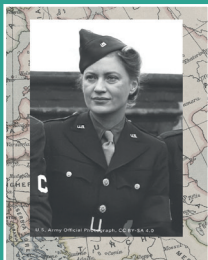
Tue, 13 Jan 2026 • 6pm • Barnard's Inn Hall, in person or online



Mithras: Master of Mystery

The cult of Mithras was the most famous mystery religion of the Roman Empire, particularly popular in the empire's north. Professor Ronald Hutton explores its shrines, myths, members, and rituals to see how much we can uncover about a faith deliberately wrapped in secrecy.

Wed, 28 Jan 2026 • 6pm • Barnard's Inn Hall, in person or online



Lee Miller's Indelible Images

Why do certain images stay with us? Many of Lee Miller's searing war photographs carry this unforgettable force - especially from the Holocaust. Antony Penrose explores her response to what she witnessed and the work he has done to authenticate her evidence as a witness – in the hope it prevents history repeating.



Tue, 10 Feb 2026 • 6pm • Barnard's Inn Hall, in person or online

PLUS...



Music of Earth and Space

Since Pythagoras, we've imagined the universe as a resonant instrument, with composers and researchers seeking nature's hidden music. Professor Milton Mermikides traces how vibration links the universe to melody, resonance, and human creativity.

Wed, 25 Feb 2026 • 6pm • LSO St Luke's / Live Online



Why Do We Hate?

Hatred is among our most destructive emotions, yet it must have evolved for a reason. Professor Robin May examines its possible evolutionary purpose, its tangled relationship with love, and whether understanding this might help us move toward more peaceful coexistence.

Wed, 04 Mar 2026 • 6pm • Barnard's Inn Hall / Live Online



A Living Planet

Earth is a living planet. But how much life is there, and what is it doing? Professor Helen Czerski discusses the distribution of biomass on Earth, and how microbes, wild, and domesticated animals drive ecosystems, showing how biodiversity is vital for planetary and human survival.

Mon, 23 Mar 2026 • 6pm • Barnard's Inn Hall / Live Online

ESSENTIAL INFORMATION



REGISTERING FOR LECTURES

All our lectures are free to attend in person or watch live online. Registration to watch online is available now for all this year's lectures via our website.

Registration for in-person tickets opens one month ahead of the lecture's date. Follow the links on our website to book your ticket via Eventbrite. We over-issue tickets because of no-shows, so please be aware a ticket will not guarantee entry. We advise you to arrive 30 minutes in advance of the start time. We do not allow people to save seats for others.

VENUES

We host the majority of our lectures in Barnard's Inn Hall, Holborn, but also use other central London venues. Please check our website for more details on lecture venues and timings. This venue is wheelchair accessible, but please contact us before the lecture so we can reserve an appropriate space for you. You are also welcome to reach out with any specific accessibility questions or additional needs: enquiries@gresham.ac.uk | +44 (0)20 7831 0575



GRESHAM COLLEGE HISTORY

Gresham College was London's first institute of higher education when it was founded in 1597, under the terms of Sir Thomas Gresham's Will. Unusually for the time, Gresham lectures were free and given in both English and Latin – most other higher education of the period was in Latin only – making them accessible to anyone who could attend. We have been providing free education to the public ever since.

FULL PROGRAMME SPRING 2026

All lectures take place at 6pm in Barnard's Inn Hall, Holborn, London EC1N 2HH, unless otherwise stated. All lectures are broadcast live online.

13 Jan **Economics and Artificial Intelligence**

Daniel Susskind

14 Jan **Music of Light and Colour**

Milton Mermikides • 6pm • **LSO St Luke's**

15 Jan **Pictures from Afghanistan: Are we making the same mistakes?** Clive Stafford Smith

20 Jan **Constable's "The Cornfield": A Bicentenary Harvesting** Malcolm Andrews

21 Jan **Why Do We Grieve?** Robin May

22 Jan **An Ocean of Air** Helen Czerski

27 Jan **The Shape of Shells: She Sells Self-Similar Spiral Seashells on the Seashore** Alain Goriely

28 Jan **Mithras: Master of Mystery** Ronald Hutton

03 Feb **Will You Be AI's Pet?** Matt Jones

04 Feb **Alien Earths: What Makes Us Special?**

Chris Lintott • 7pm • **Conway Hall**

05 Feb **Death Investigation: What Do Coroners Do?** Peter Thornton

10 Feb **Lee Miller's Indelible Images** Antony Penrose

11 Feb **Peacebuilding through the Visual Arts** Jolyon Mitchell

17 Feb **The Price of Pixels: Unmasking the Environmental Impact of Our Digital Lives** Ian Mudway



- 18 Feb **Climate Risk and Insurance** Raghavendra Rau
- 19 Feb **The Ground We Stand On** Helen Czerski
- 24 Feb **Work, Out of Reach** Daniel Susskind
- 25 Feb **Music of Earth and Space**
Milton Mermikides • 6pm • **LSO St Luke's**
- 26 Feb **That's Not Funny: The Ethics of Satire** Judith Hawley
- 03 Mar **The Shape of Gravity: Why On Earth Are Planets Spherical?** Alain Goriely
- 04 Mar **Why Do We Hate?** Robin May
- 05 Mar **Oligarchs and Their Discontents** Melissa Lane
- 10 Mar **Bridget: Goddess and Saint** Ronald Hutton
- 12 Mar **The Death of Athenian Democracy?** Melissa Lane
- 17 Mar **Born Supremacy - AI as a Pale Shadow of Real Humanity** Matt Jones
- 18 Mar **The Universe's 100th Birthday: Galactic Fireworks and Little Red Dots** Chris Lintott • 7pm • **Conway Hall**
- 19 Mar **Guantánamo on the Euphrates? Syria in a Time of Opportunity** Clive Stafford Smith
- 23 Mar **A Living Planet** Helen Czerski
- 24 Mar **Unauthorized Deepfakes and Digital Replicas: Time for Reform?** Hayleigh Bosher



SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES

If you are from a UK school or college and want to bring a school group to one of our public lectures, please email schools@gresham.ac.uk

Plus, check out our Young Orator of the Year competition for state school students in Year 12 (England and Wales), S5 (Scotland) and Year 13 (Northern Ireland) to promote the art of communicating in a clear, concise and compelling way.





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