Hi James – Good to hear about the discussion group in Economics.  Here’s what I’ve got from the interview feedback file (kept in my office) in your area.  The ones in italics were emailed out to Tom Rutter recently for him to think about, but do pass those on to any other students who need stretching/preparing for interview.  I don’t plan to give students the whole list, as I want to make it available to those who give them mock interviews in the autumn, but we can drip-feed students a few more questions between now and the end of September to get them thinking.  Students should also check the paper copies in the file, as a lot of the questions recorded in the feedback sheets were not suitable for typing up (e.g because they recorded an area of discussion, or referred to data/graphs/source material we don’t have), and because looking at an individual feedback sheet gives you a better sense of how an interview developed, or what was asked in two different interviews at the same college.

Hope this makes sense

Cheers

Alastair

**ECONOMICS**

*Why Economics and why at (Cambridge)?*

*What is a market?  Led on to discussion of different kinds of market.  Had to pick a good/service and say how it is provided in the UK.*

What current economic issues interest you?

Give an example of a command economy – what are the features/problems of this?

Does democracy lead to a market economy or does a market economy lead to democracy?

Examples of a volatile market?  How can it be controlled?

(given article to study in advance about internet price comparison sites + a graph that needed interpretation)  Account for large differences in price.   Are these sites useful for consumers?  What are the implications of these sites for markets?

What is the impact of America’s housing crisis on a) the Federal Reserve’s interest rate decisions, b) other countries?

*What is an externality?  What are the problems of pollution?  What can you do to stop pollution being a social cost?  What are the relative merits and problems with these methods?*

**Economics & Management at Oxford**

What do you think economic efficiency is?

What’s your opinion on microfinance – e.g. Grameen bank?  Would you invest in Grameen?  Assess the risk.

How efficient is price discrimination?

How would you market a rock band?

Why do you want to study Economics with Management?

Why do Oxford offer an Economics and Management course, rather than just separate degrees in Economics and Management?

*What recent articles have you found interesting in the Economist?*

How did the credit crunch come about?

Everyone in Oxford is the same.  Gordon Ramsay opened a restaurant where people are willing to wait 30 minutes to get in and then leave to go to another restaurant, if not seated.  How long will the queue be?

The Shadow Chancellor states that the pound is overvalued.  Will this affect exchange rates?

A company in Britain gets all produce from suppliers in China.  a) Why is having all supplies from one country a problem?  b) Why is China particularly a problem?

Is IBM the same company it was 50 years ago?

Draw graph of y = 1 / (1-x)3   Differentiate

**PPE at Oxford**

Why do you want to study Economics?

What parts of Politics do you enjoy?

Why do democracies go to war with non-democracies more often than with other democracies?

Why are there fewer children born today in the UK than in the 1920s?

Isn’t politics today more about what wins votes than about political philosophy?

Outline the pros and cons of state funding for political parties.

“You are driving a train and the brakes fail.  There are five people on the track ahead.  You cannot warn them.  You can either carry on, or turn on to a side track with only one person on it.”  What do you do?

“You are a surgeon in a hospital.  Five people will die if they don’t receive (different) organ transplants.  Do you kill the innocent man in the waiting room, take his organ, and save the five people?

Should we force people to donate blood?

How does studying philosophy complement studying politics and economics?

Can you think of any recent legislation which has been influenced by philosophy?

What is a lie?  Discussion of lying followed.

Are there such things as objective values?

“To deceive someone is to make them believe something you know is false.  You cannot believe something you know is false.  Therefore self-deception is impossible.”   – argue against this conclusion by questioning the statement or the reasoning.

“The sun rose yesterday morning.  The sun rose this morning.”  Is this an argument for saying the sun will rise tomorrow?

Would it be possible to have a community where everybody always lied?