



UNIVERSITY
OF WOLLONGONG
AUSTRALIA

Bachelor of Arts in Western Civilisation

2023 REPORT

SCHOOL OF LIBERAL ARTS

**FACULTY OF THE ARTS,
SOCIAL SCIENCES AND HUMANITIES**



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We acknowledge that Country for Aboriginal peoples is an interconnected set of ancient and sophisticated relationships.

The University of Wollongong (UOW) spreads across many interrelated Aboriginal Countries that are bound by this sacred landscape, and intimate relationship with that landscape since creation.

From Sydney to the Southern Highlands, to the South Coast.

From fresh water to bitter water to salt.

From city to urban to rural.

The University of Wollongong acknowledges the custodianship of the Aboriginal peoples of this place and space that has kept alive the relationships between all living things.

The University acknowledges the devastating impact of colonisation on our campuses' footprint and commit ourselves to truth-telling, healing and education.



Head of School overview

The School of Liberal Arts and its Bachelor of Western Civilisation degree, though only four years old, have begun to realise their potential. Nowhere is this more evident than in the incredible achievements of our students. In general, across all our cohorts, those taking the degree continue to be among the University's highest performing and most satisfied students.

Our students have consistently figured prominently in the Dean's Merit List over the years. Impressively, in 2023, 26 of our students were included on that list – which is remarkable for a School of our size and given the overall size of our Faculty. Two of our students achieved Top Students prizes in connection with the majors they study in conjunction with the degree. Jasmin Pike was awarded the Dorothy Jones Prize for English Literatures and Jesse Lane was awarded the French Embassy Second Year French Language Award. Phoebe Eldridge-Smith, of the 2022 cohort, was invited to join the prestigious Golden Key International Honour Society, acknowledging her status as being in the top 15% of students in our university.

Our first full cohort of BA Honours in Western Civilisation students also distinguished themselves by achieving first class results across the board, the highest distinction for UOW's Honours program. One student, Geoffrey Weir, achieved such strong results that he has been short-listed for a University Medal.

In addition to these remarkable academic outcomes, I am delighted to draw attention to some additional, extraordinary successes of our students and the contributions they are making to the University and beyond its borders.

Madison Ballard and India Becroft, of our 2020 intake, have both been selected as Top 100 Future Leaders in Australia by GradConnection. This is an immense achievement. Madison is also currently a finalist for the Clifford Chance Social Impact award and India is a finalist for the 'Ashurst Law Top100 Future Leaders Award' and the 'First in Family Award'.

Also from our 2020 cohort, Carly Lavings, was named Wollongong Council's Volunteer of the Year in recognition of

her work on Student Advisory Council in helping to improve facilities for students with diverse needs and helping to make our university more supportive and welcoming for all. Joshua Lane, of the 2020 cohort, has been serving as a member of the University's Academic Senate and Student Advisory Council. Amity Lees, of the 2021 cohort, has also joined the Academic Senate. Jadzia Wolff, of our 2022 intake, was awarded a highly competitive New Colombo Plan Mobility Scholarship offered by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade to conduct a semester of research on climate change and its impact on Pacific communities. Jadzia achieved this outcome after being vetted through a highly selective process at the faculty level, the university level and, finally, the national level, which included having an interview with the DFAT panel in Canberra.

Being recognised in this way and winning major competitions of this kind are extraordinary achievements, reflecting not only on the academic abilities of our students, but also their capacity to make a positive difference through leadership and engagement in the community.

None of these outcomes would be possible without the strong support and guidance of our excellent academic staff. In this vein, I am delighted to report that quality of our teaching has also received recognition. Both Dr Bernardo Ainbinder and Dr Elena Walsh have been nominated for the University OCTAL Awards which "recognise staff commitment, achievement and contribution to the University's exceptional learning and student experience". Nominations for these awards come from students and colleagues. They must be endorsed by the Learning, Teaching & Curriculum Unit and the Associate Dean of Education for the Faculty. Only around 120 teachers are nominated across the University each year, so this speaks well of the teaching in our small School.

Finally, there are a couple of noteworthy developments on the curricular design front that will strengthen our offerings. Working with other schools in the Faculty, we have expanded the options available to students taking a double degree in the Bachelor of International Studies. Also, in response to strong interest from students studying a with a Double Degree with Law, we worked with the relevant stakeholders at the School of Law and the Faculty of Business and Law to create a new Honours pathway in Bachelor of Arts Western Civilisation-Law from 2024.

In all, 2023 was a very good year for the School and the degree, and we look forward to the exciting new developments and achievements that 2024 will bring.

Senior Professor Daniel Hutto
Head of School

“

As we reflect on the success of this partnership, I am proud of what we've accomplished so far. It's truly remarkable to witness the results of this initiative: outstanding graduates already out there making significant contributions, with more on the brink of entering the world beyond university as well-rounded and informed citizens.”

Professor Patricia M. Davidson PhD, MEd, RN
Vice-Chancellor and President



Senior Professor Daniel Hutto
Head of School

Curriculum



University of Wollongong

Bachelor of Arts in Western Civilisation 2023

Bachelor of Arts in Western Civilisation – Honours

Our first five Honours students graduated in 2023 and, momentarily, all of them were awarded First Class Honours.

The Honours program provides training in research methods and critical literacy for our highest achieving students, offering them dedicated supervision and mentorship to guide their individual research projects. The fortnightly seminars in the first semester help students cultivate a critical imagination using a variety of methodological tools: mastering online databases detailing the latest research in their chosen field; becoming familiar with archival research; and learning about the art of reading, writing, and interpretation in the liberal arts tradition.

The range of projects our students pursued this year is indicative of the virtues of a liberal arts study founded on interdisciplinarity, creativity, and collaboration. Each honours graduate chose a topic of socio-cultural currency and critical import in the Western tradition, across philosophy, the sciences, and literature. The Honours Conference in May was a remarkable success, with speakers presenting the details and implications of their research to fellow students and academic staff; and our graduates wrote theses recognised by examiners for their theoretical sophistication and independence of thought.

The thesis topics for 2024 include Romantic and Epic poetry, the Victorian novel, evolutionary biology, and Nietzsche's philosophy. Distinctively, our students exhibit intellectual dexterity and are able to move across various subjects with ease when engaging with each other in conversations about their respective research topics, offering suggestions and learning from each other. Their confidence and self-autonomy mean they have a natural readiness for the challenges of writing an extended argument in the form of a thesis.

The intention, as stated at the 2023 UOW-Ramsay Annual Dinner, is to make SOLA's Honours program one of the most attractive, critically rigorous, and personally transformative on offer. Fourth-year study is now attracting a sense of lively interest and anticipation amongst the School's younger scholars.

All subjects continue to be reviewed and refined through student evaluations and questionnaire feedback.

“

The course has been excellent in my experience. Moving into my honours year, I feel as though I am part of a great community with access to lots of support.”

Student Feedback



University of Wollongong

Bachelor of Arts in Western Civilisation 2023

Subject descriptions – first year subjects

WCIV101 THE GREAT CONVERSATION

This subject is foundational for the entire degree. It provides basic training on how to approach great philosophical and literary works. It provides an overarching rationale for a liberal arts education and sets the tone for studying the degree. Focusing on selected exemplars, students are given firsthand practical training in how to engage with great literary and philosophical masterpieces. In each case, students confront the philosophical questions raised by the work. They explore how the work connects with other great works within the Western tradition and how it might be viewed from diverse perspectives. They also explore how the work could connect to great works of non-Western traditions of thought and art. Students also engage with contemporary writings by philosophers such as Martha Nussbaum, Bernard Williams, Richard Moran, and Hilary Putnam.

KEY READINGS

Hutchins, *The Great Conversation*; Baggini, *How the World Thinks* (selections); Loos, *Ornament and Crime*; Freud, *Mourning and Melancholia* and *The Moses of Michelangelo*; Henry James, *The Golden Bowl*; Jane Austen, *Pride and Prejudice* (selections); Martha Nussbaum, *Love's Knowledge* (selections); Schopenhauer, *Genius and Virtue*; T.S. Eliot, *Tradition and Individual Talent*; Tolstoy, *What is Art?* (selections); Vasari, *Lives of the Most Excellent Painters, Sculptures, and Architects* (selections).

ASSESSMENT TYPES AND WEIGHTINGS

Critical Review, 10%; Essay Plan, 10%; Essay, 35%; Critical Review, 10%; Digital Object, 35%.

WCIV102 CLASSICS OF ANCIENT GREECE

Ancient Greece produced some of Europe's finest and most lasting works in poetry, history and theatre. In this subject, students become acquainted with a sample of these great works, and assess their relevance to contemporary philosophical debates.

KEY READINGS

Homer's epic poems: *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey* (selections); Hesiod, *Theogony* and *Works and Days* (selections); Aeschylus, *Agamemnon*; Sophocles, *Antigone*; Euripides, *Medea* and *The Trojan Women*; Aristophanes, *Lysistrata* and *Frogs*; Aristotle, *The Poetics* (1-16).

ASSESSMENT TYPES AND WEIGHTINGS

Critical Review, 10%; Essay Plan, 10%; Essay, 35%; Critical Review, 10%; Exam, 35%.



WCIV103 WISDOM, TRUTH AND REASON

Socrates famously explained the Oracle of Delphi's verdict that he was the wisest of all because he knew that he knew nothing. The philosophies of the ancient Greeks connected wisdom with a way of life. They laid stress on the distinctions: between appearance and reality; between sophistry and philosophy; between reason and rhetoric. They gave us thinking tools for distinguishing between such things. This subject examines the importance these contributions still play in our lives. Students investigate these issues and ask if we have really arrived in a post-truth age by looking at classic and contemporary sources.

KEY READINGS

Plato, *Republic*, *The Apology* and *Theaetetus*; Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, *Prior Analytics*, *Categories*, and *Topics*; *Metaphysics* (selections); Sextus Empiricus, *Outlines of Pyrrhonism*; Carroll, *What the Tortoise Said to Achilles*; Nāgārjuna, *The Fundamental Wisdom of the Middle Way*.

Students also engage with the work of following contemporary authors: Simon Blackburn; Harry Frankfurt; Miranda Fricker; Jay Garfield; Edmund Gettier; Graham Priest; Duncan Pritchard; W. V. O. Quine; Richard Rorty; Bertrand Russell; Linda Zagzebski.

ASSESSMENT TYPES AND WEIGHTINGS

Critical Review, 10%; Essay Plan, 10%; Essay, 35%; Critical Review, 10%; Exam, 35%.

WCIV104 AESTHETICS: MASTERPIECES OF WESTERN ART AND ARCHITECTURE

This subject is foundational for the entire degree. It provides basic training on how to approach great art and architecture. Focusing on selected exemplars students are given firsthand, practical training in how to engage with great artistic and architectural masterpieces. In each case, students confront the philosophical questions raised by the work under scrutiny. This subject also introduces students to philosophical theories of art, putting them to the test by looking with reference to examples of great music, paintings, and literature from across the Western canon. Students consider a series of case studies in order to determine the adequacy of various theories of art. The subject matter for the case studies focuses on major exemplars of Western art and architecture, sculpture and painting – classic styles and techniques used and repeated down the ages.

KEY READINGS

Kant, *Critique of Judgment* (selections); Wittgenstein, *Notes on Aesthetic*; Loos, *Architecture*; Danto, *Andy Warhol* (chapter 3); Freud, *The Ego and the Id*; Lukacs, *Healthy or Sick Art?*; Belting, *Iconic Presence: Images in Religious Traditions*; Hume, *On the Standard of Taste*; Berger, *Ways of Seeing* (chapter 3); Cavell, *Taste and the Moral Sense*; Collingwood, *The Principles of Art* (chapter 6); Wilde, *Lecture to Art Students*.

ASSESSMENT TYPES AND WEIGHTINGS

Critical Review, 10%; Essay Plan, 10%; Essay, 35%; Critical Review, 10%; Exam, 35%.

“

I am incredibly appreciative of the opportunity we have to discuss, debate over and investigate great books in such a streamlined and accessible way - this is truly the opportunity of a lifetime for me.”

Student feedback



WCIV105 CLASSICS OF THE ROMAN REPUBLIC AND EMPIRE

This subject looks at a Roman Republic and Empire through the eyes of its historical, literary and philosophical products. In this subject, students become acquainted with a sample of these great works, and assess their relevance to contemporary philosophical debates.

KEY READINGS

Caesar, *On the Gallic Wars*; Cicero, *De Re Publica*; *De Officiis* (selections); Horace, *Odes and Epodes* (selections); Juvenal, *Satires*; Livy, *From the Foundation of the City* (Book 1); Lucretius, *De Rerum Natura*; Aurelius, *Meditations* (selections). Ovid, *Metamorphoses* (selections); Petronius, *Satyricon*; Seneca, *Selected Philosophical Letters* (selections); Vergil, *Aeneid* (selections).

ASSESSMENT TYPES AND WEIGHTINGS

Critical Review, 10%; Essay Plan, 10%; Essay, 35%; Critical Review, 10%; Exam, 35%.

WCIV106 THE GOOD LIFE AND THE VIRTUES

Ancient thinkers were deeply concerned with the good life and how to live it. This subject gives special attention to Aristotle's account of human nature, ethics and the virtues, drawing mainly from *De Anima* and *Nicomachean Ethics* (focusing on selections from Ackrill, J.L., *A New Aristotle Reader*, Oxford, 1987). Aristotle's ideas are brought into conversation with counterpart notions found in *The Analects* of Confucius. Students explore the contemporary relevance of virtue ethics, and its credibility today, responding to current philosophical concerns. Themes in Alasdair MacIntyre's seminal *After Virtue* (1984) are a major focus. Working together, students carry out independent studies on selected topics which form the basis of a small group presentation.

KEY READINGS

Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*; Confucius, *Analects* (Books 1 and 2); MacIntyre, *After Virtue*.

ASSESSMENT TYPES AND WEIGHTINGS

Critical Review, 10%; Essay Plan, 10%; Essay, 35%; Critical Review, 10%; Group Presentation, 35%.

Subject descriptions – second year subjects

WCIV201 CLASSICS OF THE MIDDLE AGES AND EARLY RENAISSANCE

The Middle Ages lasted in Europe from roughly the one thousand years spanning from the fall of the Western Roman Empire ca. AD 500 to the beginning of the late 15th century. Europe was later reborn and reformed during the Renaissance. In this subject, students engage with classic literary and artistic works from these remarkable periods.

KEY READINGS

Augustine, *Confessions*; Beowulf, *Boethius and The Consolation of Philosophy*; Chaucer, *Canterbury Tales* (selections); Erasmus, *In Praise of Folly* (selections); Dante, *Divine Comedy, Inferno* (selections); Machiavelli, *The Prince*.

ASSESSMENT TYPES AND WEIGHTINGS

Essay, 45%; Exam, 55%.

WCIV202 EARLY MODERN PHILOSOPHY: RATIONALISM VERSUS EMPIRICISM

Plato portrays a fundamental divide between appearance and reality in his 'Allegory of the Cave' in Book VII of *The Republic*. According to his rationalist vision, it is possible to make contact with the Forms, to get at a deeper reality that goes beyond how things appear to us. This encourages the idea that philosophers can discover the true essence of things by relying on their faculty of pure reason – a faculty independent of the senses. These Platonic claims were revived in the early modern era, in a quite different intellectual context, by thinkers such as Descartes and Leibniz and challenged by empiricists such as Locke, Berkeley and Hume. Students critically examine the early modern debates between rationalists and their empiricist challengers about the nature of ideas and whether and how they are acquired.

KEY READINGS

Descartes, *Meditations on First Philosophy*, and *Discourse on the Method*; Leibniz, *The Monadology* and *Discourse on Metaphysics*; Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*; Berkeley, *Principles of Human Knowledge* (selections) and *Three Dialogues between Hylas and Philonous*; Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature* and *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*.

ASSESSMENT TYPES AND WEIGHTINGS

Essay, 45%; Exam, 55%.

WCIV203 PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION: REASON, FAITH AND REVELATION

Many great religions of the world take their holy texts to reveal sacred, divine truths. This subject raises philosophical questions about this idea and the nature of religious belief and practice. It focuses on selected readings from The Bible's collection of narratives. Comparisons are made between relevant passages of The Bible and The Quran, the sacred text of Islam. Students learn how these books inform the religious attitudes that influence Western thinking, art and literature.

KEY READINGS

The Bible (selections from New and Old Testaments); *The Quran* (selections); Anselm, *Anselm's Ontological Argument*; Augustine, *That Which Is, Is Good*; Cicero, *The Design Argument*; Hume, *Of Miracles*, Galileo Galilei, *Letter to Castelli*; Al-Ghazali, *The Kalam Cosmological Argument*; Hamza Yusuf, *Death, Dying, and the Afterlife in the Quran*; Kierkegaard, "Truth is Subjectivity" from *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, Swinburne, *What does the Old Testament mean?*

ASSESSMENT TYPES AND WEIGHTINGS

Essay, 50%; Digital Artefact, 50%.

“
I love the way the course opens
my mind to new, unique and
complicated ways of thinking,
and creates an environment
where I am supported in
navigating the texts.”

Student feedback

WCIV204 CLASSICS OF THE LATE RENAISSANCE

This subject focuses on selected works of the late Renaissance, questioning the relationship between philosophy and literature and asking to what extent and in what way philosophical thought infuses imaginative literature. In musing on these matters, students examine selected comic, tragic and historical plays of Shakespeare as well as those of his forerunners and contemporaries, such as: Edmund Spenser, *The Faerie Queene*; Christopher Marlowe, *The Tragical History of the Life and Death of Doctor Faustus*; John Donne, selected sonnets and poems; John Milton, *Paradise Lost*; Miguel de Cervantes, *Don Quixote de la Mancha*.

KEY READINGS

Marlowe, *The Tragical History of the Life and Death of Doctor Faustus*; Cervantes, *Don Quixote*; Spenser, *The Faerie Queene*; Shakespeare, *King Lear*; *The Complete Sonnets and Poems* (selections); Donne, *The Complete Poems of John Donne* (selections); Milton, *Paradise Lost*.

ASSESSMENT TYPES AND WEIGHTINGS

Essay, 45%; Exam, 55%.

WCIV205 THE RISE OF WESTERN SCIENCE

Western science arose and matured in the West between the late 15th and the late 17th centuries. In this subject, students become acquainted with exemplary works produced during the momentous period that constitutes the birth of science in the West. They investigate which non-Western influences played a part in that birth and how well contemporary theories in philosophy of science can account for it.

KEY READINGS

Cartwright, *Contingency and the Order of Nature*; Ptolemy, *Almagest*; Copernicus, *On the Revolution of Celestial Spheres* (incl. Osiander's preface and Copernicus Dedication of the Revolutions of the Heavenly Bodies to Pope Paul III), and the *Commentariolus*; Galileo, *Dialogue Concerning the Two Chief World Systems*, and *Letter to the Grand Duchess Christina*; Ibn al-Haytham, *Optics*; Bacon, *Novum Organum*; Harvey, *De Motu Cordis*; Boyle, *The Origins of Forms and Qualities*; Cavendish, *Philosophical Letters*; Newton, *Mathematical Principles of Natural Philosophy*; Du Châtelet, *Foundations of Physics*; Darwin, *On the Origins of Species*; Cartwright, *Loose Talk Kills: What's Worrying About Unity of Method*.

ASSESSMENT TYPES AND WEIGHTINGS

Essay, 50%; Exam, 50%.

WCIV206 CLASSICS OF THE ENLIGHTENMENT AND THE AGE OF REVOLUTIONS

Known as The Century of Lights, the so-called long 18th century was a time when ideas dominated. It was a time during which Europe and the Americas underwent major intellectual, political and social changes – changes that issued in the modern era. In this subject, students are acquainted with the works of the great thinkers of the period.

KEY READINGS

Smith, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*; Voltaire, *Candide*; Rousseau, *The Social Contract* and *The Second Discourse*; Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France*; Paine, *Rights of Man*; Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*; Shelley, *Frankenstein*; Austen, *Sense and Sensibility*.

ASSESSMENT TYPES AND WEIGHTINGS

Essay, 45%; Exam, 55%.



Subject descriptions – third year subjects

WCIV301 THOUGHT AND REALITY: IDEALISM VERSUS REALISM

This subject investigates the German and English roots of analytic philosophy. It examines the idealist philosophies of Kant and Hegel and asks how – in importantly different ways – these relate to and oppose the kind of realism defended by analytic philosophers at the turn of the 20th century – Frege, Russell and the early Wittgenstein. It concludes by looking at work of the later Wittgenstein, considering to what extent it breaks faith with or develops themes in his earliest writings.

KEY READINGS

Kant, *The Critique of Pure Reason*; Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Spirit*; Frege, *Sense and Reference* and *The Thought: A Logical Inquiry*; Russell, *On Denoting*, *Logical Atomism* and *The Problems of Philosophy*; Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* and *Philosophical Investigations*.

ASSESSMENT TYPES AND WEIGHTINGS

Essay, 40%; Exam, 60%.

WCIV302 CLASSICS OF THE MODERN ERA

The modern era witnessed incredible artistic and intellectual movements connected to larger changes that swept through Europe and the United States in the 19th and 20th centuries. These changes were a response to the unsettling social, political, and cultural events of that period – including the World Wars. In this subject, students become acquainted with the works of great thinkers and artists of this era.

KEY READINGS

Darwin, *On the Origin of Species* (selections); Marx and Engels, *Manifesto of the Communist Party*; Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*; Freud, *Introduction to Psychoanalysis*, *Civilisation and Its Discontents*; W. E. B. Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk*; T.S. Eliot, *The Waste Land*; Woolf, *A Room of One's Own*; de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*; Greer, *The Female Eunuch*; Lloyd, *The Man of Reason: "Male" and "Female" in Western Philosophy*.

ASSESSMENT TYPES AND WEIGHTINGS

Essay, 40%; Essay, 60%.

WCIV303 PHILOSOPHY OF DEMOCRACY: BRITAIN, AMERICA, AUSTRALIA

This capstone subject examines the origins of the idea of democracy at work in contemporary Australia, examining its philosophical roots and founding of British and American governments. It asks penetrating questions about the assumptions behind democratic government and examines the strengths and weaknesses of democracy in today's world. Students are required to take part in a special capstone project and to complete a major final assessment.

KEY READINGS

Magna Carta; Hobbes, *Leviathan*; Locke, *Second Treatise on Government*; J.S. Mill, *On Liberty*; Hamilton and Madison, *Federalists Papers*; De Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*; Bagehot, *The English Constitution*; Deakin, *The Federal Story*; Hancock, *Australia*.

ASSESSMENT TYPES AND WEIGHTINGS

Essay, 40%; Capstone Project Essay and Reflection, 60%

“

I love the tutorial discussions – I find them to be not only enjoyable and fulfilling, but also elucidating and thought-provoking. They have always been one of my favourite things about this program, and they continue to get better each year. I think the small group sizes work really well and facilitate learning.”

Student feedback



WCIV304
THE SELF IN WESTERN THOUGHT AND ART

In *Measure for Measure*, Act 2, scene 2, 114–123, Isabella speaks of the self as “a glassy essence”. This harkens back to a longstanding idea in Western thought and art, bolstered by Cartesian philosophy, that selves have an essence – whether divine or otherwise– that stands apart from the rest of nature. Students reflect on how this idea is repeatedly portrayed down the ages in great works of art and literature. They then use Charles Taylor’s *Sources of the Self* to structure their investigation into the various sources of modern selfhood, and our tendencies to lean to realist and romantic self-conceptions.

KEY READINGS

Sagas; Blake; Wordsworth; Walt Whitman; Emerson, *Self-Reliance*; Kafka, *The Metamorphosis*; Dostoyevsky, *Notes from Underground* and other selected representations of the self in Western literature and art. Students are also acquainted with contemporary works, such as Charles Taylor’s *Sources of the Self* to guide and inform their inquiries.

ASSESSMENT TYPES AND WEIGHTINGS

Essay, 40%; Digital Object, 60%.

Honours year (optional)

The Bachelor of Arts in Western Civilisation (Honours) involves one additional year of study following the successful completion of a relevant undergraduate degree. An Honours research project allows students to explore an approved research question of their choosing through extended study in the liberal arts. Honours study equips students with marketable skills of value to many employers. On successful completion of an Honours degree, individuals have demonstrable ability to produce a sustained research outcome, meet deadlines, investigate independently, use resources effectively and write coherently. An Honours degree provides the opportunity to conduct an in-depth study which can serve as a pathway to more advanced, higher degree research.

Studying for an Honours degree:

- Equips students with specialised research skills relevant to chosen liberal arts discipline
- Teaches individuals cornerstone research methods for advanced study in the liberal arts
- Provides the opportunity to work closely with, and learn from, an experienced academic supervisor
- Supports students in devising an extended argument on approved topic of study in a dissertation of approximately 15,000 words.



Students



Autumn session

Autumn session began welcoming the new cohort in February, pairing new students with those in older cohorts through the School's successful buddy program, and hosting the new cohort at a fruitful and engaging staff and student retreat in Kiama. The retreat, attended by staff from the University and the Ramsay Centre for Western Civilisation, contained a great mix of academic and networking activities, including a coastal walk. Student have advised they find the retreats invaluable for getting to know each other, the School of Liberal Arts team and the Ramsay Centres representatives.

In April, the School hosted a successful Liberal Arts School for year 12 students. It was a great success and approximately 20% of the 49 attendees completed an application to study the degree in 2024.

Academically there were strong results in Autumn semester, with the School's first Honours graduate receiving First Class Honours and more than 50% of students in each cohort receiving distinctions or high distinctions as outlined in the WAM report.

There was minor movement in Autumn session amongst the scholars and non-scholars. One scholar completed their BWCIV degree in Autumn 2024 and one Scholar withdrew from the 2021 Cohort for personal reasons.



The key advantage of teaching in small classes is our ability to engage the students with the texts according to their own unique interests, perspectives, and intellectual backgrounds.”

Academic staff feedback

Spring session

Spring session began with an overseas experience to Rome for Scholars from the 2020 and 2021 cohorts. The trip was very successful, with students praising the activities they were fortunate enough to experience.

A notable highlight of Spring session was the second UOW Ramsay Annual Dinner for all scholars and students in the program. Held in August, this was a memorable opportunity to reflect on the success of the program and to celebrate our students, with the Vice Chancellor, UOW Executive, School and Faculty staff, and Ramsay Centre Board, CEO and representatives in attendance.

All cohorts continue to perform well in Spring session, with the remaining four BWCIV (Honours) students attaining First Class Honours.

Only a few minor movements occurred – one 2020 scholar transferred from a double BCA/BWCIV degree to a single BWCIV degree, one 2021 non-scholar withdrew from BWCIV due to increased external work commitments and two 2022 BWCIV/BCA scholars transferred to single BWCIV degrees.



Head of Students report

The transition from secondary to tertiary education will always be a difficult one - all the more so given the unique aims, format, and demands of a Bachelor of Arts in Western Civilisation degree. Finding ways to help students in this transition is the consistent focus of the annual meetings which I organise as Head of Students with the entire student body.

I continue work closely with other staff, especially Dr. Ainbinder as Academic Program Director, to institute programs that address perennial concerns regarding issues such as time management and communication skills, and as the program matures, we are increasingly well positioned to be properly proactive in addressing these issues, rather than merely reactive.

A key policy instituted in the 2023 academic year to ensure a smooth transition into our program is the Buddy Program. The central aims of the program are to help incoming students:

- to feel accepted into an active community of learners,
- to ensure that incoming students gain familiarity with the University of Wollongong campus, student, services, and other relevant procedures,
- to understand what is expected of a student in our program, both regarding academic achievement and extra-curricular activities,
- to learn how to communicate with their peers, both students and staff.

While the School pursues rigorous top-down approaches in which staff clearly and consistently communicate these matters, the Buddy Program represents our attempt to marry this with a bottom-up approach. The Buddy Program provides an opportunity for incoming students to benefit from the lived experiences of established students in the program.

Shortly before the formal commencement of the Autumn teaching term, students in the second and third year of the program are invited to serve as Senior Buddies for incoming students. The enthusiasm was tangible, as over forty students in these cohorts elected to take part in the program. Following a vetting process, twenty-seven established students, properly representative of the diversity of our student body, were partnered with the incoming cohort; their Junior Buddies. Senior Buddies were then provided with a Buddy Program Guide, which

provides a schedule for meetings with the Junior Buddies over the first term and recommendations regarding what could be discussed including: i) venues to meet, ii) topics for discussion, iii) relevant resources and iv) issues to watch out for.

While established students had been paired with incoming students in 2022, the process was more informal, and no resources were provided to older students. The results were inconsistent, as many students that year reported minimal, and sometimes no regular contact with their younger peers. The development of a formal Buddy Program in 2023 sought to address this, and while Senior Buddies have been invited to provide feedback on its initial implementation at the end of this academic year, initial feedback from both Junior and Senior Buddies suggest that the Program has been a great success. Incoming students have met regularly with their Senior Buddies throughout the academic year, divisions between different cohorts have been relaxed and students report a far greater understanding of the expectations of the program.

As formal feedback is collated I will be eager to adapt the program to ensure it is maximally beneficial, but I consider its initial implementation to be, already, a genuine success.



I love the great feeling of community between Western Civ students, and the close-knit nature of the cohort that arises from it being a small group.”

Student feedback

Student profile



As a member of the University of Wollongong's Student Advisory Council, Carly Lavings of our 2020 Cohort has helped to spearhead a number of changes to student life, with the aim of making the university experience more accessible for all.

In her role as Persons with Disabilities Representative, Carly, along with fellow student and advocate Katherine Minns, founded UOW's first Quiet Space, a place where students who are feeling overwhelmed by the sensory experience of campus, can find solace. She has also ensured equitable academic consideration for all students, promoted greater inclusivity, and actively worked to increase the profile, and the needs, of students with disabilities.

But when Carly is asked how she feels about having made such inroads, she demurred: "There's still so much more I want to do."

On Friday 28 April 2023, Carly was named the recipient of the Volunteer 2023 Award by Wollongong City Council in the annual Wollongong Youth Week Awards. She was recognised for her strong advocacy for students with disabilities and for her passion for volunteering.

Receiving the award was an honour for Carly, who said she was inspired to get more involved with campus life after watching friends experience mental health issues and experiencing them herself.

Carly began a double degree Bachelor of Arts in Western Civilisation/Bachelor of International Studies in 2020. The first year of her degree, which coincided with the first year of the pandemic, was, she said, tough and "stagnant", and gave her the impetus to become an advocate for her fellow students.

"I wanted to do something meaningful with my time," she said. "I wanted to become an advocate for mental health, but also to help all students."

Elected to the Student Advisory Council (SAC), Carly said the role gave her the opportunity to take on feedback from students about what was needed on campus to make their lives more enjoyable and their experiences more inclusive.

That led Carly to help create the Students' Hub, now located in the Makers Space in the UOW Library, where students could come and ask questions of other students, who were ambassadors. It was such a simple idea, but one that has been well received by the campus community.

Carly said since she became a representative on the SAC, she had been approached by many students asking for a quiet space, a place where they could find some solace from the sensory overload of campus life.

She is proud to say that the first quiet space has now opened on Wollongong Campus, in Building 19. But Carly is hopeful that it is the first of many.

"Starting university and being on campus can be an overwhelming experience, especially for students who experience sensory overload, so a quiet space is so important to be able to unwind and recuperate. It is so critical for students to have spaces like this on campus, and I would like to see more across Wollongong campus and at UOW's other campuses," said Carly, who also has volunteered for Lifeline South Coast as a telephone crisis supporter.

"The feedback has been so positive and really shows that there should be quiet spaces everywhere."

In addition to her role on the SAC, Carly has co-founded a new club: UNiQue UOW. Aimed at students with physical and invisible disabilities, neurodiverse individuals, carers, and allies, UNiQue UOW will provide a place to develop ideas and advocate for greater accessibility on campus.

Carly is Co-President, alongside a "brilliant executive team" of Co-President Katherine Minns and Vice President Laura Warwick.

UNiQue UOW will be a vital network for students, providing them with support, advocacy and community.

"For people with disabilities, physical or invisible, university can be a difficult experience," Carly said. "But it shouldn't be made more difficult by accessibility issues."

UOW Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Vice President (Academic and Student Life) Professor Theo Farrell said Carly has made a vital contribution to University life, particularly for students with physical and invisible disabilities.

"I've worked with Carly on the Student Advisory Council and her tenacity, her passion for helping others, and for making a true, tangible impact in the lives of her fellow students is second to none," said Professor Farrell.

"Carly is a hardworking student who has devoted her time to helping others. I'm sure it is the start of much more to come. Her work will continue to have an impact long after her graduation from UOW. Congratulations Carly on being named Volunteer of the Year. It is very well deserved."

A long-time volunteer for Lifeline South Coast, Carly has worked as a telephone crisis supporter. It is an experience she describes as confronting but meaningful.

"It involved taking calls from those in imminent crisis," she said. "You never knew who was going to be on the other side of the line. I learned so much from everyone who I talked to that it felt that I gained more than I gave. I would encourage others to volunteer if they have the time and mental capacity for it. Lifeline is doing extremely important work."

Alongside her extracurricular roles, at the end of 2022 Carly travelled to Rwanda alongside other UOW students as part of the Humanitarian Engineering project. While there, she was part of a student team who helped to install a water tank and sink for Maria, a genocide survivor who was paralysed from the chest down in 1994 due to physical and sexual violence. Maria has been in the same room for 28 years. It was an eye-opening experience for Carly, and also reaffirmed her commitment to helping make the world better for people with disabilities.

"I was worried before I went, thinking 'am I the right person to do this?' But I can definitely say I learnt so much more from that experience than I could from studying a textbook. The practical challenges and the emotional experience of getting to make a tangible difference, and at times, reconciling with the fact that I might not see the outcomes of that," she says.

"I was just so lucky that we did see the change while we were over there, and that we got to immerse ourselves in that culture and change our own lifestyles. I really can't sell the benefits enough – it was a life-changing experience and I would already love to go back."

Now in the fourth year of her degree, Carly is proud of how far she has come and how much she has contributed during her time at UOW. But there is still much more she wants to do.

"I feel so lucky to be on the Student Advisory Council and to be able to help others. I feel privileged to be in the position to advocate for others, and it's because of that that I am inspired to make a difference.

"I would highly recommend to those who are worried about taking the steps to volunteer that there are so many opportunities out there. If you have the finances and the time to contribute, volunteering not only makes a difference to someone else's life, but the benefits you get from helping others out are immeasurable. You gain strengths and can learn about yourself.

"More than anything, I hope my story and my actions can inspire others to pay it forward and help in the ways that they can in the capacity that they can."



UOW Ramsay Scholarship

Scholarship interviews

Scholarship interviews were conducted in person on 25th September 2022.

2023 Student Cohort – applications and scholars		
19 Aug	Scholarship applications as of closing date	85
20 Sept	Eligible for scholarship interview	48
12 Oct	Scholarship offers	38
1 Mar	Total enrolled first day of Autumn session	27
31 Mar	Total enrolled at HECS date	27
1 Jul	Total enrolled at end of Autumn session	27
1 Dec	Total enrolled at end of Spring session	27

Leadership, People and Governance

School of Liberal Arts staff

Staff Members	Positions	Governance Roles
Senior Professor Daniel Hutto	Senior Professor	Head of School
Dr Michael Kirchhoff	Associate Professor	Deputy Head of School
Dr Julian Lamb	Senior Lecturer	International Program Coordinator
Dr Glenda Satne	Associate Professor	Head of Research
Dr Bernardo Ainbinder	Lecturer	Acting Head of School Academic Program Director Assessment Officer Academic Integrity Officer
Dr Tristan Bradshaw	Lecturer	Acting Head of Research Career Development Coordinator
Dr Sophie Frazer	Lecturer	Honours Coordinator Workplace Health and Safety Officer
Dr Anthony Hooper	Lecturer	Head of Students
Dr Talia Morag	Lecturer	Head of Postgraduate Studies
Dr Elena Walsh	Lecturer	Acting Head of Postgraduate Studies Academic Integrity Officer Recruitment & Events Coordinator EDI Advocate
Professor Shaun Gallagher	Professorial Fellow	
Meaghan Koch	Interim School Manager	Staff and Student Support
Kirsten Mawby	Student Success Officer	Student Support
Sally Cole	Head of School Assistant	Staff Support



Scholarly activities

SOLA's academics brought several projects, both individual and collaborative, to completion in 2023. They also launched new projects and presented their work at conferences and workshops in Australia and around the world, often with the support of hard-won competitive grant funding. Below are some highlights.

Each of our early-and-mid career academics made their mark in 2023.

Dr. Bernardo Ainbinder published two new articles in 2023. 'For the sake of Dasein. Praxis, Self-understanding, and Life' was published in volume six of the *Australasian Philosophical Review*. Another co-authored article, 'Sleep and the Limits of Naturalization. An Exercise in Grenzphänomenologie' was published in *HUMANA.MENTE, Journal of Philosophical Studies*. Dr. Tristan Bradshaw continued his work as co-director of the Critical Antiquities Network, whose research forum, the Critical Antiquities Workshop, hosted nine events with researchers from around the world, including Stanford, Princeton, and the University of Chicago in addition to several universities on our own shores. He also produced the first publications outlining and implementing the critical antiquities research agenda, with three articles completed this year, two of which were co-authored with Dr. Ben Brown of the University of Sydney.

Dr. Sophie Frazer has a forthcoming article, 'The Antinomies of Imagining: The Desiring Body in Spinoza's *Ethics*,' in the *Australasian Philosophical Review*. In the media, Sophie contributed to *The Conversation's* Guide to the Classics series, with an essay on Thomas Hardy's pastoral romance, *The Woodlanders*, as well as a forthcoming essay on Simone de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex*. Sophie was successful in securing her first funding award from UOW's Early-and Mid-Career Researchers grant scheme, for the purposes of presenting a conference paper in Adelaide.

Dr. Anthony Hooper submitted the full manuscript of co-edited volume, *Plato and Comedy*, to Cambridge University Press. He has a chapter in it entitled, 'The Comic Worldview: Plato's *Symposium* 189c ff.'

Dr. Julian Lamb presented research in Sydney and in Hong Kong. He also delighted hundreds of people with his performance of T. S. Eliot's *The Waste Land* with internationally renowned cellist David Pereira at UOW, which was funded by an Early-and-Mid Career Research grant.

Dr. Talia Morag published her edited collection *Sartre and Analytic Philosophy*, which includes her own chapter and a substantial introduction. She organized an online international conference on Liberal Naturalism at UOW and gave twelve talks on her research, including at leading US venues, including Columbia University, The New School, the University of Syracuse, and Tufts. One of Talia's papers was the focus of a special session with a panel of senior academics as commentators at the Australasian Society for Continental Philosophy Annual Conference.

Dr. Ronald Planer was appointed as a Research Fellow in the Words, Bones, Genes, and Tools: DFG Center for Advanced Studies at University of Tübingen, Germany. While in residence there, Ron collaborated with world leaders in archaeology, biology, and philosophy of cognitive science. This year, he also published articles and book chapters and gave presentations of his research in Germany and the United Kingdom.

Dr. Elena Walsh was a visiting researcher at the Edinburgh Futures Institute and the Centre for Technomoral Futures, where she presented her work on emotion recognition AI. She also presented this work for the Inaugural Sino-Australian Philosophy of Life Sciences Network (SAPoLSN) conference. In addition, Elena published work this year in *Philosophy and the Mind Sciences* and *Philosophical Psychology*.

Dr. Michael Kirchoff and Dr. Glenda Satne were both promoted to Associate Professorships in 2023. Michael was recognised as a field leader in two areas of research – Philosophy and Epistemology and Scientific History – by The Australian Research Magazine. Michael completed an entire book manuscript, which is now under consideration with a leading university press. Glenda obtained an UOW AEGIS Renew grant to support her research on collective actions in 2023-2024. This enabled her to host a workshop entitled, 'Cultural Practices, Social Norms and Human Uniqueness.' Glenda was also invited to speak at the Australasian Association of Philosophy, AAP, and at various other workshops and academic events in Europe and Australia. In addition, she completed numerous book chapters, was interviewed for the new 'Woman in Philosophy' video series of the AAP, and began her position as book reviews editor for the journal, *Phenomenology and the Cognitive Sciences*.

Professor Shaun Gallagher published a new monograph, *Embodied and Enactive Approaches to Cognition*, with Cambridge University Press, in addition to many a new articles and book chapters. He has also been busy as head of the organizing committee for the Philosophy of Cognitive Neurosciences at the World Congress of Philosophy in Rome in 2024.

Senior Professor Daniel Hutto hosted the final capstone conference of his ARC funded Discovery Project, *Mind in Skilled Performance*, in December 2022. He and members of the team discussed its major findings in an ABC Radio National interview for *The Philosophers Zone* in January 2023. In addition to bringing out a string of new publications and delivering keynotes and invited presentations internationally on his signature research, Professor Hutto was appointed to the Australian Research Councils College of Experts in 2023. He has been busy with panel work related to that appointment and providing many tenure and promotions reviews for external institutions, including: ANU; University of Amsterdam; University of Exeter; University of Edinburgh; University of York, Canada.

Staff feedback

Each year the School undertakes an anonymous survey of its academic staff for the purpose of providing insight into what our academic staff regard as the strengths and weaknesses in the way the degree is being taught and the support and mentorship they receive. Their replies inform potential improvements.



Left to right: Dr Elena Walsh; Dr Julian Lamb; Dr Michael Kirchoff; Senior Professor Daniel Hutto; Dr Glenda Satne; Dr Bernardo Ainbinder; Dr Talia Morag; Dr Sophie Frazer; Dr Tristan Bradshaw.

Q1. DO YOU FIND THERE ARE SPECIAL EDUCATION CHALLENGES ARISING FROM THE BACHELOR OF ARTS IN WESTERN CIVILISATION?

The key challenge as a teacher in this program is to do justice to the text in our teaching for students who are already so engaged. That is to say, the students are so engaged, attentive, and reflective, we always need to demonstrate to the students how much *more* there is to these texts beyond their already prodigious engagement.

Having to teach several great works in a single subject often means that we cannot consider the texts in their entirety. This is largely unavoidable. Indeed, a deep dive into selected passages is preferable to a cursory consideration of an entire text. However, it would be of pedagogical value to introduce subjects into our curriculum that consider single texts in their entirety. Given that they are both the products of influence, as well the agents of influence, the great masterworks transcend their historical moment, and can be pedagogically utilised to draw together much of what students have encountered over the course of their degree.

The program is both challenging and rewarding for the same reason: bright students and timeless masterpieces to discuss. But in the end, making the challenge into a reward is what makes teaching in this program so great.

Trained in theory and critical practices, it can be difficult to work with a period-specific syllabus of books that cut across sometimes vastly different hermeneutic regimes and theoretical perspectives; much of the theoretical apparatus remains hidden from student view, which I think is a shame.

Q2. DO YOU FIND THERE ARE SPECIAL ADVANTAGES TO TEACHING SMALL CLASSES OF STUDENTS?

Yes, notably the way in which it generates and allows for an intensity and intimacy of discussion. I get to know each of my students dispositions, critical approaches and characters, which helps me better help them. They also shape in turn the way I approach the material.

Absolutely. It allows for the teaching and learning experience to be a genuine conversation where knowledge is collectively built and where all parties equally contribute to it.

Numerous. 1. Students become more responsible for coming to class with things to say. 2. Teachers can remember what students have said over the course of a semester, and refer back to it.

The key advantage of teaching in small classes is our ability to engage the students with the texts according to their own unique interests, perspectives, and intellectual backgrounds.

Q3. DO YOU FIND THERE ARE SPECIAL ADVANTAGES OF TEACHING STUDENTS WHO ARE TAKING A COMMON CORE CURRICULUM TOGETHER?

This is one of the best features of the program, since it allows us to plan the whole course as a unity, encouraging dialogues between texts discussed in different subjects, picking up on discussions that took place maybe a year or two ago and keeping the conversation alive

Knowing what the students have read allows teachers to draw connections between texts and thinkers.

I teach in a stream of related courses, examining in turn classic texts from Greece, Rome, and the Medieval period. Taking the same group of students through this continuous journey is really to transform individual studies of texts into a multi-textual, multi-cultural, multi-epochal conversation regarding recurring, pressing issues raised by the human condition.

Yes. The relationships our students develop are richer for the fact that they move in time with each other chronologically through the subjects (with the exception of those combining law with our degree). They share the same textual and pedagogical field, as it were, and can bond in a communal space of learning. They can also better appreciate the structure of the program, moving through it together. It makes manifest the kinds of values we hope to impart in our teaching, of community and collaboration.

Q4. DO YOU FIND THE PROGRAM HAS HELPED DEVELOP YOU AS A TEACHER?

Indeed. By pushing me to be a better, more capable, teacher; by offering me the opportunity to engage with great works; by allowing me to be part of a community of academics and students that can think and produce knowledge together.

Yes, dramatically so. I have learned to teach more effectively, valuing clarity and precision, over the more theatrical aspects of academic teaching. I have learned to be more responsive to my students, listening to what they need to help them learn.

I feel my main development as a teacher in the four years delivering this program is to strike an increasingly operative balance between distilling complex ideas into something immediately comprehensible, while also preserving the allure of these ideas, regarding how much more there is to understand regarding their subtleties.

Q5. DO YOU FIND STUDENTS ARE ABLE TO TAKE THE LEAD IN CLASS DISCUSSION?

It is a thrilling experience for me as the first term of each year progresses to move from teacher-led class discussions which more reflect the students' experience in school, to one in which they are very much dictating the terms of the discussion, and facilitating its development. It takes a few weeks each year, but it reliably happens.

Yes, but it varies across cohorts. The first two cohorts were strong leaders, capable of determining and maintaining the direction and substance of the conversations in tutorials and seminars. The third cohort have tended to defer to me and I've had to work to build their confidence in their own perspective and voice.

They are. After two or three weeks, first year students already know how to take the lead in the discussion, nourished by the safe environment of a small classroom and a stable cohort they know well.

Q6. DO YOU FIND THAT YOU PROFITED FROM THE MENTORING OFFERED TO YOU BY THE HEAD OF SCHOOL?

Yes. Professor Hutto is a wonderful supervisor: compassionate, generous, and flexible. He encourages my professional development, my research, and my teaching success. I know I can go to him about anything that concerns me and he will offer advice.

Absolutely. Dan has been a clear role model for my growth as university lecturer.

Dan has been an invaluable resource as a Head of School. He strikes a wonderful balance between being supportive, directive, and providing license to express and develop my own capacities.

Q7. DO YOU FIND THAT YOU BENEFITED FROM TEAM TEACHING AS A GENERAL PEDAGOGICAL STRATEGY?

Having the opportunity to co-teach with Bernardo has been an experience of unparalleled benefit to me. I note particularly his lead development of Classics of Ancient Rome, which demanded that I re-engage with familiar texts in ways that led to hitherto unappreciated depths of their quality.

Absolutely. This does not only allow to balance the teaching time but also provides a variety of perspectives that allow each of us to become better teachers.

Yes, I love collaborating with and learning from colleagues. The subjects I co-teach are a highlight of the teaching year.

Q8. WHAT DO YOU LIKE BEST ABOUT TEACHING INTO THIS COURSE? WHAT HAS WORKED BEST?

All of it.

Teaching great books to students who are motivated, respectful, and willing to learn

What I like best, or appreciate most, are the students I work with: I adore them. They challenge, stimulate, and inspire me, every week. I also love the books I read with them and the autonomy I have in the classroom.

I enjoy engaging every day with students who are so engaged with the humanities. It is an experience that will never lose its luster!

Q9. WHAT DO YOU LIKE LEAST ABOUT TEACHING INTO THIS COURSE? ARE THERE ASPECTS THAT COULD BE IMPROVED?

Really nothing.

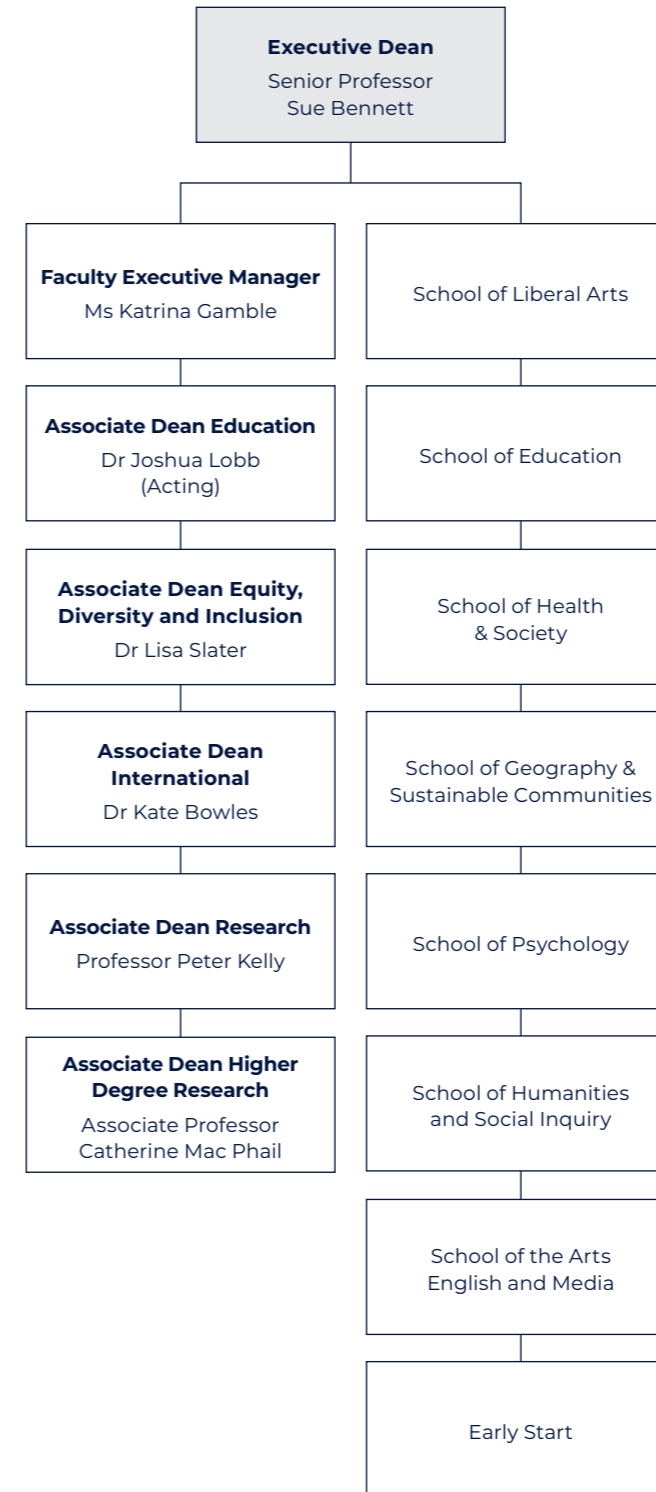
Not really.

I would love to see a module or subject on the novel; I find that students at all levels are largely ill-equipped to understand the particularities and special-ness of fiction. More emphasis on literature and its beauty would foster a stronger love of fictive literature.

The school-wide teaching methodology does not encourage growth and development, either of individual pedagogical practices, or subjects. It is a methodology that encourages the teaching of the same texts the same way, year after year.

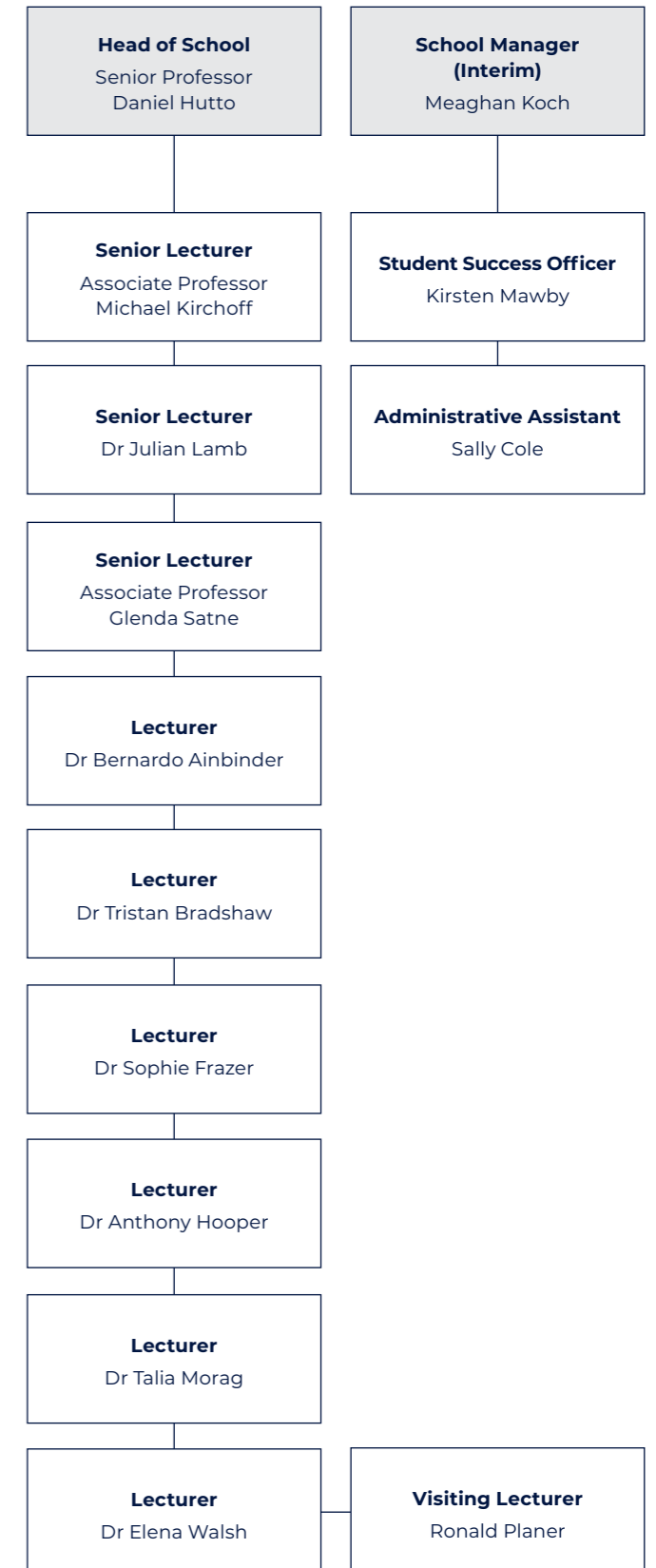
SCHOOL WITHIN THE FACULTY ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

FACULTY OF THE ARTS, SOCIAL SCIENCES AND HUMANITIES



SCHOOL ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

SCHOOL OF LIBERAL ARTS



Events

School of Liberal Arts



School of Liberal Arts

School of Liberal Arts



Scholars contemplating on the coastal walk in Kiama

2023 UOW RAMSAY SCHOLARS WELCOME

The fourth cohort of UOW Ramsay Scholars and their families were welcomed at an event held in the Jillian Broadbent Building on Monday 20 February 2023.

Welcoming the students on behalf of UOW were the Head of School, Senior Professor Dan Hutto; Head of Students Dr Anthony Hooper, and the School of Liberal Arts academic and professional staff. Key Ramsay Centre for Western Civilisation representatives were also in attendance to celebrate the new UOW-Ramsay Scholars – CEO Professor Simon Haines and board members Peter Evans and Dr Michael Easson AM.

Head of School, Senior Professor Dan Hutto congratulated the scholars gaining acceptance into the program and noted that students in the School of Liberal Arts are challenged to think deeply – to plumb the philosophical depths as they explore carefully chosen selection of some of the greatest works of the western world.

The speech delivered by current scholar Ben Taaalo, was a major highlight of the event. Ben reflected on his first year of study and had the following to say about the program itself – *“The Bachelor of Arts in Western Civilization is the broadest and most free-thinking program I have witnessed or engaged with. A space to respond appropriately and respectfully in discourse with thinkers from all walks of life, this is the new, improved and utterly transformed version of Plato’s Academy. It is not often in contemporary society that you are gifted an opportunity to freely discuss your informed opinion without causing offence or having uneducated rebuttal.”*

Head of Students Dr Anthony Hooper closed the evening by introducing each scholar of the 2023 cohort, who were also presented with a certificate.

2023 ANNUAL STUDENT AND STAFF RETREAT

The 2023 annual Student and Staff Retreat was held at The Sebel Harbourside in Kiama, on the weekend of April 21-23 2023. The event was attended by SOLA’s Head of School, academic staff, the School Manager and Student Success Officer, students enrolled in graduate research within the School, and all of our first-year students.

Professor Simon Haines, CEO of the Ramsay Centre for Western Civilisation, opened the event on the Friday night with a thought-provoking discussion of the value of liberal arts education, contextualised in terms of an eye-opening history of the development of universities.

Saturday morning began with a series of short presentations from our new intake of PhD students: Benedetta Cogo, Marco Degano, Josef Kohlmaier, and Lorena Sganzerla. Ian Robertson, who submitted his PhD in April 2023, also presented his research. There was an excursion to the Kiama Blowhole, with an opportunity to take photos and enjoy local markets. Following lunch we welcomed our first keynote speaker, Associate Professor Melissa Merritt from UNSW, who gave an interesting talk on Kant and Stoic moral psychology. This was followed by a trivia quiz show hosted by first-year volunteers Callia Spreitzer, Will Ursino, Emily Pisanikovski, and Amy Miners. In the evening we welcomed our second keynote speaker, Dr. Tom Geue, who spoke on the enslaved muse in Roman poetry, discussing the ways in which the true authorship of a great work can be obscured by relationships of power.

The next morning, Bharathi Gotyal, Mark Russell and Emma Cranby led students and staff in a debate focused on the question: Do we have to be free in order to be good?. While many initially felt that goodness was separable from freedom, a good number of the audience later shifted to the view that being good requires choice, which in turn requires freedom. Following this rich discussion, the event wrapped up with closing remarks from Head of School, who gave appreciative thanks to everyone involved in making the event such a great success.



SOPHIA ANNUAL PUBLIC LECTURE

The third Sophia Annual Public Lecture was held on 5 October 2023. It was delivered by Professor Gillian Russell, Professor of Philosophy at the Dianoia Institute at ACU, Melbourne. Gillian, the author of numerous books and articles in logic, the philosophy of language, and epistemology, presented a lecture on what an alternative logic might look like, introducing those attending to the concept of alternative logics, the motivations logicians give for making changes, and the problems that new logics sometimes run into.

AGORA SPEAKER SERIES

The 2023 Agora Speaker Series events have been well attended by students and other members of the UOW community, with some of the recent talks even attracting local high school students. The Autumn series included the following speaker and talks.

- 23 February 2023 – Dr Mandi Astola (Delft University of Technology, Netherlands) – Moral Creativity
- 9 March 2023 - Professor Simon Penny (University of California, Irvine) – Skill: Know-how, Artisanal Practices, and Higher Cognition.
- 23 March 2023 - Associate Professor Andrew Poe (Australian Catholic University) – Sources of Possession: A Reading of Locke's Second Treatise of Government
- 20 April 2023 - Dr Elizabeth McDougal (Nan Tien Institute) – The Words and World of Gebchak Nunnery: Tibetan Buddhist Meditation in Context
- 18 May 2023 - Dr Regina Fabry (Macquarie University) – Narrative Gaslighting
- 1 June 2023 - Professor Alastair Blanshard (University of Queensland) – Surveying the Reception of Rome: Sex, Violence, Myths, and Factoids.
- 10 August 2023 - Professor Joseph Rouse (Wesleyan University, USA) - Sociocultural Animals
- 24 August 2023 - Dr Adam Piovarchy (University of Notre Dame)- Signalling, Sanctioning and Sensitising: How to Uphold Norms with Blame
- 7 September 2023 - Professor Jeanette Kennett (Macquarie University) - The Privilege of Self-Control
- 21 September 2023 - Dr Sophie Frazer (University of Wollongong) - Passionate Perversity and Perverse Passion": The Aporia of Emily Brontës Wuthering Heights
- 19 October 2023 - Professor Glenn Most (University of Chicago) - The Horrific Body in Sophocles



High school students engaged in the Liberal Arts School Experience.

LIBERAL ARTS SCHOOL EXPERIENCE

On 14 April 2023, SOLA hosted our third Liberal Arts School Experience (also known as Summer/Winter School), held on a single day as a supplementary program.

This year's Liberal Arts School took high-performing HSC students on a journey through Shakespeare's *Hamlet* and Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, focusing on the themes of isolation, knowledge of other minds, and the scepticism produced by excessive doubt. Students were also introduced to the radical doubt of Descartes, and considered how his scepticism might usher in new forms of knowledge.

Professor Dan Hutto, our Head of School, and Professor Diana Glenn, Academic Director of the Ramsay Centre, gave inspiring introductions to the School of Liberal Arts and the value of studying great books. This was followed by an icebreaker led by Aislinn McArdle and David Allen, who asked students to work in pairs to identify something they felt they knew with certainty, and to consider whether, and the conditions under which, they might ever have cause to doubt it.

The students were then led through two academic activities, the first led by Dr. Sophie Frazer on *Frankenstein*, and the second jointly led by Dr. Julian Lamb and Dr. Elena Walsh on Shakespearian scepticism and the methodology of radical doubt instituted by Descartes.

In the afternoon, Dr Tristan Bradshaw spoke with students about the value of critical thinking and of literary and philosophical modes of inquiry for employers, and of the intrinsic value of a liberal arts education. This was followed by a Q and A session with two senior SOLA students, Philippa Graham and Andy Cameron, and an introduction to the structure of the three-year BA in Western Civilisation led by Stewart Mailer.

Overall, it was an exciting and enjoyable day for all, with students appreciating the opportunity to engage in critical inquiry with like-minded peers and learn about the value of critical thinking and literary reflection.

CAREER CHATS AND NEXT STEPS

The Careers and Networking Event was organised for SOLA students on Tuesday, 24 October 2023 at UOW's Wollongong Campus.

The purpose of the event was twofold. First, to allow SOLA students to see the world of work through the eyes of people who have experienced it and know it better than they do. Second, to help SOLA students identify and understand the ways their WCIV degree translates into the world after university.

The event was a huge success. Around 40 of our students attended, with a particularly strong attendance from SOLA's first-year students. The panellists were outstanding - each generously and honestly shared their views based on experience across Non-Government Organizations, government, education, and business.

A few key themes emerged from their comments. Perhaps most prominent was the view - shared by Dr. Vafa Ghazavi, Rhiannon Kernot, and Seamus King - that the opportunity our WCIV students have is utterly precious. That is, the chance to read and write closely, widely, and deeply on esteemed and impactful books for the sake of deeper engagements with the world and oneself is something that is seldom afforded in the realm of work. Their message was unequivocal: enjoy this time for what it is and make the most of it.

But many of the panellists also revealed how meaningful this kind of study can be in the world of work. As Vafa put it, SOLA students will emerge from their degrees with highly valuable capacities. Specifically, he identified:

1. A sensibility to values that inform decision makers but that are seldom made explicit or critically examined.
2. An ability to get to the heart of problems rather than deal only with their symptoms.
3. A unique capacity to synthesize different kinds of knowledges and wield them in the diagnosis and treatment of varying kinds of issues.

A highlight was the moment that Rhiannon shared that she has a unique level of confidence in her workplace owing to her WCIV training. Specifically, it is a confidence to inquire and contribute ideas where others refrain. She reported, however, that having asked questions and contributed ideas, she is regularly affirmed and thanked for being brave enough to ask what others were either feeling or thinking themselves. Moreover, she can see how outcomes are often improved because of the contributions that all stem from this confidence.

For their part, Naomi Spinks and Coreena Schwartz gave abundant practical advice on the ways our students can get to where they want to go. Naomi spoke about the application process for the Ramsay Centres postgraduate scholarships and provided invaluable insight on what the students ought and ought not to do in preparing their applications. Coreena laid bare all the wonderful services that UOW's Careers and Employability provides to our students, including careers counselling, help with CV and interview preparation, and building Career Action Plans.

All in all, the event "was fabulous!", as Coreena put it to me in an email after the event. Naomi also followed up with an email to say that the School "brought together a wonderful panel!" The students, for their part, deeply impressed our panellists, too. As Naomi put it: "It was great to meet the students and see how engaged they all are. I had great conversations with a few of them at the end as well."

The School is looking forward to the next and third Careers event for SOLA students to be held next year.

Panellist Biographies:

1. Dr. Vafa Ghazavi ([linkedin.com/in/vafaghazavi](https://www.linkedin.com/in/vafaghazavi)) is a super nice and very experienced guy who has made a great career for himself on the back of a deep arts/social sciences education. He got his education in philosophy and public policy at Usyd, Harvard, and Oxford and now he's Executive Director, Research and Policy at the James Martin Institute for Public Policy in Sydney ([jmi.org.au](https://www.jmi.org.au)). He is especially well placed to talk about what an education in the liberal arts means in the public/civil service, broadly understood, but can also speak about all academic-related things based on his wide experience.
2. Naomi Spinks is the Postgraduate Scholarship Manager at the Ramsay Centre for Western Civilisation ([linkedin.com/in/naomi-spinks-4279b217b](https://www.linkedin.com/in/naomi-spinks-4279b217b)). Naomi knows all about the seriously amazing postgrad scholarships that the Ramsay Centre offers and how one can be competitive when applying for them. Anyone who has a mind to do further study, whether for a career in academia or elsewhere, will greatly benefit from her presence.
3. Coreena Schwartz from Careers and Employability here at UOW ([linkedin.com/in/coreena-schwartz](https://www.linkedin.com/in/coreena-schwartz)). Coreena is awesome and intimately knows about all the ways Careers and Employability can make job applications really sing. So, if you want to know what an effective and brilliant CV looks like, what kind of language to use on applications, what kind of skills you want to be developing for the world of work and more, she's got a lot to say to you.
4. Rhiannon Kernot ([linkedin.com/in/rhiannon-k-8ab836196](https://www.linkedin.com/in/rhiannon-k-8ab836196)). Many of our students already know lovely Rhiannon as one of our precious few WCIV graduates. But what a graduate! Rhiannon is making a stellar career for herself in the corporate world and now knows how a WCIV graduate functions in the corporate space.
5. Seamus King ([linkedin.com/in/seamus-king-524287176](https://www.linkedin.com/in/seamus-king-524287176)). As with Rhiannon, Seamus is another of our WCIV graduates. You may know that Seamus has chosen to pursue further study, this time in a profession. He's now studying medicine at ANU now knows what further study in a professional field looks like with a WCIV degree under the belt.



Students demonstrate their knowledge through a captivating panel presentation on James Baldwin.

ANNUAL DINNER

On the 31 August 2023, the University of Wollongong and The Ramsay Centre for Western Civilisation celebrated five years of partnership with four cohorts of UOW-Ramsay Scholars and students at the annual UOW and Ramsay Centre Dinner.

Held at the Innovation Campus, the dinner was hosted by UOW Vice-Chancellor and President Professor Patricia Davidson, with the Ramsay Centre represented by board members including the former Prime Minister The Hon John Howard OM AC, Mr Peter Evans, Joe de Bruyen AO and Michael Siddle, accompanied by Ramsay Centre Chief Executive Officer Professor Simon Haines, Academic Director Professor Diana Glenn and other Ramsay Centre staff.

Deputy Vice-Chancellor Warwick Shanks, UOW Council member Professor Nina Reynolds, Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Vice-President Professor Theo Farrell and the Head of the School of Liberal Arts Senior Professor Daniel Hutto were among the guests from the University.

It was also attended by 111 of the scholars and students who are currently on the program.

Vice-Chancellor and President Professor Patricia Davidson noted "As we reflect on the success of this partnership, I am proud of what we've accomplished so far. It's truly remarkable to witness the results of this initiative: outstanding graduates already out there making significant contributions, with more on the brink of entering the world beyond university as well-rounded and informed citizens."

The real stars of the evening, however, were the Bachelor of Arts in Western Civilisation students and scholars. UOW Bachelor of Arts in Western Civilisation Alumnus and MC for the evening Seamus King engaged the audience by recounting his experience of the Bachelor of Arts in Western Civilisation course and how his studies at UOW have enriched his current studies in medicine and his understanding of life outside UOW.

Four other scholars participated in a lively panel presentation, sharing their reflections on a quote from the American civil rights activist and novelist, James Baldwin: "You think your pain and your heartbreak are unprecedented in the history of the world, but then you read." In doing so, the audience was given a window into the small-group teaching style practiced in the School of Liberal Arts, the textual focus, and the rigorous debate concerning the issues raised.

Overseas experience

“Reading Rome” was a four day experience and three day conference which was held in Rome on the campus of the Australian Catholic University. Participants included 27 students, and three members of staff: Dr Anthony Hooper, Dr Elena Walsh, and Dr Julian Lamb. Each day of the conference considered a different theme – public spaces, violence, death – which was related to the sites we visited in the mornings, and which was addressed in keynote presentations we heard in the afternoons.

The students were in at least their third year of study, and so many saw the conference as a capstone experience. In our final discussion on the last day, one student remarked that the Western Civilisation degree had begun with studying Roman literature and thought, and was now ending in the actual place. To her, this made the Overseas Experience the fitting culmination of the degree; a degree which prompts students to imagine places and times that are remote from them, and which culminates with their being physically present in the city which stood for many centuries at the heart of Western Civilisation. The relationship between the imagined and the actual, the speculative and the physical lay at the heart of this 3-day conference. Students were directly challenged to consider this relationship when, on the evening before the first day of the conference, they assembled on the balcony of the ACU campus, and were asked: “What can we learn from being here that we could not learn remotely?” The broad theme of the conference was designed to prompt them into meaningful responses: “Reading Rome” captures the dual sense that Rome is a place that one might read about, but also one which needs to be read *in situ*.

On the first day, we spent the morning on a walking tour of Rome: the Spanish Steps, Trevi Fountain, and the Pantheon were among the highlights. The latter was especially memorable. Our tour guide, Matthias Bruno, an expert in marble, was able to explain that the marble on the floor of the Pantheon had been quarried from all over the empire, and that an ancient Roman would have felt great pride at being able to walk upon the spoils of Roman power. This was one of the moments when the imagination and the physical artifact became powerfully engaged – a theme which continued in the afternoon in a keynote presentation by Dr Emlyn Dodd (University of London) who, as an archaeologist, is engaged in reconstructing and reimagining human life from physical artifacts. He spoke to us about the notion of “public spaces,” including the Pantheon, and about the way such spaces were a “crossroads.” But he also spoke of the way such spaces were contested, and evidenced the Roman Forum as a space which became increasingly inward facing and surveilled, especially in the shift from Republic to Empire.

This was especially apt as our second day included a tour of the Forum, Palatine Hill, and the Colosseum. Matthias spoke of the construction of the Colosseum by the Flavians, and even shared his own experience of restoring it! This was taken up in our second keynote, given by Dr Barbara Ravelhoffer (University of Durham), who focused on the theme of violence. She noted that, in building the Colosseum, the Emperors Vespasian and Titus had turned what was a private space into a public space, and that the games held there were a means by which authority could consolidate its popularity, and show its power. But she also noted objectors to violence, including Seneca, who was distressed at what the spectacle of violence did to a large audience of spectators: he wrote that one leaves “more cruel and inhuman – for being among humans.” However, though showing deep reservations about violence, Seneca’s plays, such as *Medea*, seem intended to shock with violence. Dr Ravelhoffer exposed this anomaly in Seneca’s thinking, and this prompted the students to think of the anomalous ways in which violence is treated in Roman literature, not least the *Aeneid*: both praised and derided.

The final day of the conference took us to the catacombs of St Sebastian. These labyrinthine burial grounds were a striking contrast to what we had previously seen: hidden underground to go unseen by the authority whose power was so present above ground. The hour-long tour took us to the earliest part of the catacombs, the necropolis, a collection of three burial chambers for pagan families, which had since served as the starting point of extensive Christian burial chambers. The integration of pagan and Christian was an ongoing theme of the conference, and was taken up by Dr Evan Jewell (Rutgers University, Camden) in his keynote that afternoon which considered the broad theme of death. He considered the origins of what we now take as a common practice, the inclusion on tombs of age at death, and suggested this was a means by which an individual’s lack of success in life could be justified. He also drew attention to the uses of tombs, including as a means of way-finding, or of posting notices. One tomb he considered was graffitied with instructions on how someone might retrieve a lost horse! These observations reminded us that even sacred objects exist in the ordinary world, and can be co-opted for commonplace uses. This was a further reminder that Rome, and perhaps civilization itself, is not simply lived out as texts and monuments, but as ordinary people doing ordinary things.

In our final discussion, students returned to the issue of why it is important to be in Rome. Some students noted the importance of knowing how ideas were lived in, and made reference to “embodied understanding.” Some reflected on their ambivalent responses to Rome’s displays of power: both allured and repulsed by it. For some, the experience made them realise how far away Australia is from “Western civilisation.” Others said they looked forward to returning so that they could “do something with the experience.” For many, “being there” was intellectually humbling – a profoundly valuable experience. Reading about a place might goad one into the misconception that one can fully conceive of it, and contain it within one’s imagination. But the experience of being *in situ* taught us that Rome is vast, complex, and elusive, and exceeds anything that can be imagined.



STUDENTS HAD THIS TO SAY ABOUT THEIR EXPERIENCE:

“When studying the literary and philosophical legacy of Western civilisation in class, we speak to the texts, however, going on this Overseas Experience allowed the texts to speak back to us. The power of witnessing the great and not-so-great aspects of Rome’s historical legacy inspired thoughts about my own generations legacy: What beauty do we have to leave behind? What will live on? Will we be proud of it? Will we inspire a generation? Visiting Rome allowed the texts to come alive in this way, which couldn’t be achieved in the classroom alone.”

Zaynab Raad
BAWCiv/Laws student

“Our stay in Rome was a refreshing way for me to reconnect with Ancient Rome (and Classical politics, poetry, theatre, art, and architecture more generally), as well as with fellow students and staff. It was exciting engaging with a new and different city as both student and tourist. We not only reassessed our perspectives and thoughts on Rome in an academic context thanks to three guided tours and subsequent lectures but learnt about Rome in our free time by participating together in its cultural life. Exploring the physical spaces where the ideas we studied originated or developed and significant historical events took place reshaped how I see the history of Rome: it seems less distant and more tangibly real, which is both confronting and inspiring. The overseas experience thus brought more of my attention to the relationship between contemporary Rome and its past. The running theme in lectures of layering – whether that be archaeological or conceptual – was illuminating and felt especially relevant after seeing buildings, ruins, and archaeological sites from different periods of history side by side with a contemporary Italian city.”

Jesse Lane
BAWCiv/Creative Arts student

“The Overseas Excursion to Rome was one of the most authentic learning experiences I have been a part of. Throughout our studies we have read and discussed Roman classics, however, continuing these conversations as we walked across the stone-paved roads passing structures including the Colosseum created an intimacy and appreciation for these works that pen, and paper simply cannot. Not only was it incredibly immersive to walk through the same streets as the authors and heroes we’ve studied, but to have such knowledgeable archaeologists and lecturers guide us through Rome brought the Ancient Roman world to life. The lectures perfectly complemented our sightseeing experiences where we would immerse ourselves the Roman ruins and sites and then discuss and explore the daily lives of the Ancient Romans. Being able to visit sites, like the Roman Catacombs, and then discuss the nature of death in Ancient Rome allowed me to really understand and appreciate the unique nature of death in Ancient Rome. This was an amazing experience to be able to share with our Arts in Western Civilisation cohort, being able to reflect on the relationship between archaeology and literature, the legacy of Rome to us as members of the contemporary world and the conversations that these classic texts and the civilisations they depict continue to inspire.”

Phillip Gigliotti
BAWCiv/Laws student

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