"All who have meditated on the art of governing mankind have been convinced that the fate of empires depends on the education of youth."

— Aristotle
**Letter From the Chair**

Dear ILS students, alumni and friends:

Another academic year has ended and I would like to take this opportunity to recognize a long tradition in ILS’s outstanding teaching. Our faculty are often awarded the most prestigious teaching awards on campus. In 2015 Prof. Craig Werner, who regularly teaches *The US in Vietnam: Music, Media & Mayhem*, was awarded the Van Hise Outreach Teaching Award. In that same year, Prof. John Zumbrunnen, who has taught *Educating the Democratic Citizen* for ILS, was awarded the Underkofler Teaching Award. In 2016, Prof. Basil Tikoff, who regularly teaches *Contemporary Life Sciences* for ILS, won the Emil Steiger Distinguished Teaching Award.

This year, two more ILS faculty members have been recognized for outstanding teaching with University-wide awards. Prof. Cathy Middlecamp, who regularly teaches *Principle of Environmental Science* and has taught our capstone seminars numerous times, won the Steiger Award. Prof. Daniel Kapust, who taught ILS 206 this past semester, received the Class of 1955 Teaching Excellence Award.

The tradition of ILS faculty winning teaching awards goes back long before my time here. In 1999 Prof. Laura McClure won the Steiger, as did Prof. Joe Elder in 1976. Many of our alumni will remember Prof. Elder’s *Intro to Global Cultures*. Before Prof. Elder, Prof. Booth Fowler won the Steiger in 1969, as did Prof. Charlie Anderson in 1963. Both Fowler and Anderson taught the *Western Culture: Political, Economic, & Social Thought* (ILS 205/206) sequence for many years, in huge lecture halls filled with ILS’ers. Anderson, with wonderful foresight back in the ‘80’s, recorded his lectures; alumni can revisit these amazing lectures on iTunesU.

This month we feature Prof. Booth Fowler in our newsletter. Fowler’s ILS 205 and 206 were legendary! These courses cover the history of political thought, from Homer and Plato to Nietzsche and Freud. I have met numerous alumni who have told me that the first class their freshman year was a lecture with Fowler, and they have never forgotten the learning experience. To sit in a class and be transported back in time, into a conversation with a great political thinker, would have been quite the experience. In the early 2000’s, Prof. Kapust mentored under Fowler; this year, the tradition was revived: Kapust taught ILS 206 with Fowler’s pedagogical approach. We hope he will replicated it in the years to come.

Last semester I mentioned the generous gift ILS received from Terry Co-Babe (Class of ’62). In conversation with Mr. CoBabe’s daughter, we decided that endowing a Booth Fowler Chair would serve perfectly Mr. Co-Babe’s intentions. With the CoBabe gift as a great start, our goal is to grow the endowment to two million dollars. When we reach this goal, we will have a fund that will allow us to hire a permanent ILS faculty member who continue to provide the kind of education that has made a difference in the lives of Badgers for nearly 100 years. If you would like to contribute to this goal, please contact me or the UW Foundation.

Richard Avramenko
ILS Department Chair
The Winter 2016 edition of the ILS Newsletter contained an article about Dr. Cyril Hetsko and Amherst College, where the first two years of every student’s education entailed a unified curriculum of classes. Dr. Hetsko stated: “Everybody had the same experience; it was unifying to the members of the college.” This differs immensely from the experiences of many undergrads today; to find two students with the same schedule and classes under their belt is an arduous task. However, at UW Madison, the First Year Interest Group (FIG) program has provided a perfect blend of a shared curriculum and individual academic freedom.

Pulling directly from Alexander Meiklejohn’s idea of “Thinking independently, together,” these FIGs allow freshmen to sign up for three to four classes centered around a single topic or subject with around 20 other students. In this tight-knit group, they are able to delve into class material together on a much deeper level than any one course ever could. The smaller classes in these FIGs facilitate discussion and the formation of individual ideas, as professors and students create bonds not typically seen amongst faculty and first year students. This also allows for professors and TAs to experiment with new styles and techniques of teaching that they normally couldn’t outside of such a close group, and for students to have a place to go to for help with networking and advising.

If the idea of a small group of students engaging in discussion while integrating several disciplines into their learning experience sounds familiar; that’s because it is. The ILS program has been using this format to educate Badgers for nearly a century, and the two inform each other heavily. In fact, the two are so tightly bound together that the completion of a FIG automatically earns a student six credits in ILS, putting them a third of the way through the ILS certificate program. This also means that almost 20% of students at the University have earned those six credits by taking a FIG.

Many students feel that their FIG motivated them even more than they would have outside of those core classes, elevating their educational experience.

As one student put it, “I felt that I was learning with a purpose. I was focused on one idea that canvasses multiple classes. “Few and far between are the students who leave a FIG wishing they hadn’t done one, and some even describe them as the best choice they made their freshman year.

Field to Table

Members of Professor Richard Avramenko’s ILS capstone course “Friendship, Food and Community” (ILS 400) and the Undergraduate Political Theory Association share a meal with guest speaker Dr. Mark Mitchell. Students read and discussed essays by agrarian writer Wendell Berry with Dr. Mitchell.
In 1993 on a perfect morning in early September, I marched the incline up Bascom Hill to Birge Hall. I made the walk the day before, nervous that I wouldn’t be able to find the building on my first day. This day, I entered the lecture hall.

It was a large conical shaped room that looked just as you imagined it looked 60 years previous. Wooden chairs, a green chalkboard, and a distinguished looking gentlemen in what I now imagine was a tweed coat that had honest to goodness professor elbow patches. That gentleman was Professor Charlie Anderson. Anderson used his mellifluous baritone to tell us that in the next 12 weeks he would guide us through 1900 years of political, economic, and social thought. We would read Plato, Aristotle, Cicero, the Bible, St. Augustine, St. Thomas Aquinas, Luther, and Machiavelli. And if we stayed in his class for the next semester, as I did, we would cover another block of centuries by reading Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau, Adam Smith, John Stuart Mill, Karl Marx, and John Maynard Keynes. I was in college – and I thought – epiphany! – this was what college is supposed to be. I didn’t know it before I went into that classroom, and I don’t know if I was the product of what behavioral economists might call an availability bias. It was the only college class I had attended. But later I knew for certain, my instinct was dead on.

It was far more than the syllabus that made it college. It was what he asked us, as students, to do with the information that we were reading and learning in lecture. First, he asked us to understand the theories and the thinker. To be able to identify the modes of thinking and reduce them to a central theory: what holds this theory together. We read first not as a critic, but as a student. Second, after “trying on” the theory, he asked us to deliberate the theory. Not to provide a ready-made response, but to determine how far to accept or reject an idea and most importantly why. Criticism, affirmation, denial, but reasons, always reasons.

Don’t just give me an opinion, Anderson would say. “Parrots have opinions.” The difference between opinion and judgment is justification. And not every reason will do. There is a difference between reason and inherited belief, reason and motive, reason and emotion. Reasons are based on certain principles, sometimes competing, sometimes themselves inconsistent, but there for all to see – and for all to test and debate. There is an objectivity to judgment in such a process.

This was the start of a liberal education. This was the beginning of looking at deeper themes, at understanding concepts that at first seemed foreign and upset some of your convictions. But sometimes your beliefs became strengthened through this rigorous process in such a way that they might endure against the less noble, less free means in which one loses one’s convictions and belief. This
was an education that focused on what makes humans different than all animals – the appreciation for abstract truth, the capacity for moral understanding and judgment, the quest to identify what is right and what is wrong.

From this beginning, as students in the ILS curriculum, we attempted to order and integrate this knowledge, picking up themes from across disciplines; for the social sciences, natural sciences, and humanities we used a common language and core, the great texts of Western Civilization, the same raw materials that had trained the minds of generations.

This is a liberal education – some might say the only “education” for the rest is merely training. In contrast to “career education” it has no immediate consequential purpose other than this thing itself – to educate the student.

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**Name:**

- **Zachary Anderson**
  - Philosophy
- **Manman Ding**
  - Political Science
- **Hannah Frank**
  - Communication Arts--Radio, TV and Film
- **Daniel Goldfield**
  - Political Science & Legal Studies
- **Lukas Heins**
  - Biochemistry
- **Jed Hobson**
  - English
- **Daniel Karlov**
  - Philosophy
- **Sam Landes**
  - History
- **Francisco Martinez**
  - Life Sciences Communications
- **Elena Mederas**
  - Environmental Studies & Geography
- **Garrett Pauli**
  - Sociology
- **Bianca Ricker**
  - Human Ecology: Retailing & Consumer Behavior
- **Alex Topel**
  - Communication Arts--Science & Rhetorical Studies
- **Amy Yang**
  - Biology & Psychology

**ILS Certificate Graduates**
Some things are unfamiliar at first – the torrential downpours followed by oppressive humidity, waking to the bustle and babble of the morning crowd making their way to the Saturday market. With the hum of another language in my unaccustomed ears and the steamy embrace of the ocean set loose in the skies, it is easy for me to point out the differences between the small, Costa Rican coastal town and my own home in Madison, WI. Yet the beauty of entering a new place is the process through which a sense of estrangement is replaced by a fragile sense of belonging, and this comes about through open-mindedness towards diverse human experiences.

In my own perspective, an education in the humanities develops both this quality and an ethic of civic engagement. This combination of open-mindedness and civic engagement is essential for developing healthy and productive relationships across racial, economic, and cultural divides in the globalized world. Attaining an interdisciplinary, humanistic education has allowed me to delve into the complexities of the human experience, which has been crucial for the formation of my identity and direction of my academic and professional goals – and this experience is not mine alone. The promise of the humanities is the ability for all students who attain an interdisciplinary education to delve into the experiences of our fellow humans and reflect on own responsibilities to the world and each other.

As a student of human geography, I have been immersed in research on the interactions between community members, non-governmental organization (NGO) employees, and government in the management of natural resources. My interest in environmental governance and the way law and policy in shape how people interact with each other and their environments was reinforced after I spent a summer conducting research on the governance of marine fisheries in a small, coastal community in Costa Rica, interviewing fishermen and non-governmental organization employees on the challenges of working together to achieve both economic prosperity and ecological integrity.

As I learned from the months spent conducting research in Costa Rica and through lessons in previous humanities courses, opportunities to create lasting and meaningful ventures in a community depend on building trust with community members and being receptive to alternative points of view. Assimilating into a community, listening to the needs of the people, and working with pre-existing social and political institutions to manage natural resources is an approach that aligns with my own values and professional interests in environmental governance – and these are qualities nurtured through an education in the humanities.

Ultimately, I and others who dedicate their lives to public service are guided by the belief that purpose of life is to leave the world a better place than one has found it, or as Ralph Waldo Emerson, states, “to know that even one life has breathed easier because you have lived – that is to have succeeded.”

Trusting in the capacity of humans to treat each other with empathy, respect, and kindness has allowed me to form relationships with people from diverse backgrounds and beliefs, which is a value instilled in me through my education in the humanities. Though I may find myself in foreign settings, the knowledge that what is unfamiliar can become deeply familiar and that one can make meaningful and positive change in others’ lives is what motivates me to pursue a career in public service. Sharing the significance of the humanities is inevitable after attaining an interdisciplinary, liberal arts education because every reflective thought and action is a testimony to the values of open-mindedness and civic engagement that have been cultivated within each of us.
**Student Achievements**

**Jed Hobson**  
**Ruth Knatz Memorial Prize**  
Hobson is a senior majoring in English with an emphasis on creative writing. He has served as an ILS ambassador for five semesters and has previously received the Meiklejohn Travel Award and Pooley Prize. Throughout his time in the ILS program, he completed over 30 ILS credits.  

“The enthusiasm that the professors and teaching assistants have for the subject matter is truly infectious, and it fosters an environment of curiosity and free-thinking that is crucial for liberal academic development.”

**Mitch Deitz**  
**Meiklejohn Travel Award**  
Deitz is a sophomore majoring in Communication Arts and History with a certificate in ILS. After college he hopes to pursue a career in documentary and fiction film making.  

“The Meiklejohn Travel Award will allow me to attend and participate in the Kino’00 Kabaret Film Festival in Montreal. This prize money will fund my plane ride, lodging and food as I collaborate with filmmakers from across the world to make short videos that will be screened at the end of the festival.”

**Rachel Gruenke**  
**Pooley Prize**  
Gruenke is a junior majoring in Physics, Math, and Astronomy with a certificate in ILS. After she finishes her undergraduate degree, she plans to pursue a PhD in Physics.  

“My ILS education has helped me connect aspects of the world around me by using the type of critical thinking that I started developing in my math and physics courses. It has led me to become a well-rounded and deep thinker, which I value greatly.”

**Michael Kelly**  
**Pooley Prize**  
Michael is a freshman in the School of Education, and plans on majoring in Theatre & Drama and Political Science with a certificate in ILS. His belief that performance through the ages has directly informed communities and political landscapes motivates him now more than ever.  

“I have been interested and active in both theatre and politics my entire life, and I find that the ILS program allows me to bring my experiences in both of these fields together to further my learning.”
The Legacy of Booth Fowler

Jed Hobson

Professor Emeritus Robert “Booth” Fowler retired from UW-Madison in 2002 following an illustrious 35 year career working for both the Department of Political Science, and the ILS Program, where he served as a professor and as chair. Highly regarded for his contributions to political theory, religious studies and theology, Fowler’s most famous works include The Greening of Protestant Thought; Religion and Politics in America, The Dance With Community: The Contemporary Debate in American Political Thought, and Enduring Liberalism: American Political Thought Since the 1960s. Here on campus, Fowler’s legacy shines brightest in the eyes of those fortunate enough to have been taught by him. Professor Fowler pioneered a unique style where he would embody the thinkers that he would be teaching that day in class. Innovations such as this have put him among UW’s most remarkable and most beloved teachers. Professor Fowler was kind enough to sit down with me and reflect on his time with ILS.

(It is a late afternoon when we meet on the third floor of Union South. The building is full of students studying for final exams, socializing with friends, and enjoying the beautiful sunlight streaming in through the large windows.) “When I was fortunate enough to be in ILS, those were solid days,” Fowler says, gazing out the window and pausing, as if lost in thought. When he speaks, his words are slow, and deliberate. There is a sense that everything he says carries weight, and I find myself leaning in, so as to miss nothing. “I had nothing but good experiences in ILS. It really was a good program, as far as I was concerned.”

As a professor with ILS, Fowler taught Western Social Economic and Political Thought I and II, two classes in which he pioneered a unique pedagogy that has solidified Fowler as one of UW’s most legendary faculty. Rather than lecturing about great thinkers, i.e. Socrates, Freud, or Rousseau, Professor Fowler’s method was to lecture as them. “When I started in ILS I developed this idea of teaching these thinkers by speaking as if I were they. I really enjoyed that, I really enjoyed thinking to myself, ‘how would say, Freud want to present his political ideas? How would he want to do that?’” He is quick to point out however, that “It’s not that I had the nerve to say that I could see into it […] but you do the best you can.”

For Fowler, doing the best that you can means having fun with it and even being a little bit selfish too: “To me, teaching is often approached in the framework of the student. But I think of it also selfishly. If I’m not enjoying it, then why the hell am I doing it? I’m selfish in that way, I want to be getting a lot out of it myself.” Doing his best to accurately represent these thinkers provided a fun challenge for Fowler, who believes that “If you’re doing liberal arts […] the most important thing is your own personal enthusiasm and your involvement in the material. There’s plenty of studies that show that if you’re really enthusiastic about the material, and about teaching, you can carry a lot of people with you.”

The idea to embody these thinkers just came to him, he said. “There wasn’t any great mystery, but I thought, well, what the hell. I’ll do it. Any job, if you do the same thing over and over again, starts dying on you. That’s how it is. So I got to the point where I thought, well, I needed to change the way I’m doing it, so I can be fired up.” For Fowler, the ILS program was a great teaching environment because it opened its arms to new styles of teaching. “I have to give ILS credit because it was really ILS where I felt […] I could really do it. It was just one more aspect of WHY ILS was so important for me.”

Fowler was also encouraged by the intimate class sizes that are typical in ILS. To foster these closer interactions with students, He made great use of the Meiklejohn House which has been the home of the ILS Program for nearly fifty years. “It really is kind of unique. I think it has a charm of its own,” says Fowler of building. “The more [discussion] sections in the [Meiklejohn] House, the better it is,” Fowler says, “because you form some connections with ILS, with the building, with the space.” Aside from discussion sections, Fowler also hosted potlucks every semester at the Meiklejohn House. “It’s a building where you can have a pot-luck without it seeming cold and sterile.” And, Fowler adds with a smile, this gave “a little more of a sense, if nothing else, who can cook.”

While on the topic of the Meiklejohn House, I asked Professor Fowler if he believed any of the rumors that the old boarding-house-turned-faculty-office was haunted. He simply smiled and said: “I never saw any ghosts. Never heard or saw. And I was often there late at night.”

When asked to compare the ILS Program today versus when he worked there, Fowler says, “It’s much more of a challenge to keep the program going, to make it work, than it was in my time.” This is due to many factors, Fowler says. “It’s harder to get that faculty commitment, it’s easier to fill your distribution requirements in other ways […] All of these departments and programs are now into assertively raising money because they need it in order to make programs go.” This, in conjunction with the current political climate, “makes the future not entirely clear.”

However, Fowler says, “I’m very impressed with what I’ve heard and seen from [Professor and current ILS Chair, Richard] Avramenko. So I’m pretty hopeful about the future; […] Things are definitively, I think, on the way up.” He continues, saying that “I think every few years it helps to have someone come in with new ideas and new energy […] When I came in as chair it was time for some new energy, new ideas. And I’m really happy that Avramenko is out there trying to stir the pot.”
Faculty Awards

Cathy Middlecamp
2017 Emil Steiger Distinguished Teaching Award
This award recognizes Middlecamp’s dedication to enhancing the learning experiences of his students. Middlecamp engages students in the process of scientific inquiry and prompts exploration about our environment.

Cathy Middlecamp is a faculty member in the Nelson Institute of Environmental Studies, the Department of Chemistry, and ILS. She regularly teaches ILS 126: Principles of Environmental Science, which explores topics related to energy, water, and land use. Students are challenged to investigate energy and food production, consumption, and distribution on the UW-Madison campus at places such as the Charter Street heating & cooling plant and campus dining halls.

Daniel Kapust
Class of 1955 Teaching Excellence Award
This award recognizes Kapust’s ability to create inclusive classroom environments where students are immersed in conversations about political theory and how it relates to contemporary problems.

Daniel Kapust is a professor in the Department of Political Science. This semester, he taught ILS 206: Western Political, Economic, and Social Thought II. The course examines the development of Western political, economic and social thought from the Reformation to the present day, including the origins, logic and evolution of liberalism, Marxism, and organic conservatism as the principal systems of thought of the modern age.

James Barnes
2017 ILS Teaching Assistant Excellence Award
This award recognizes Barnes’ excellent teaching style that engages students in thoughtful discussion. He is currently the TA for ILS 201 and 202: Western Culture: Science, Technology, Philosophy I and II.

James Barnes is working towards his master’s degree in History of Science. Barnes studies the social, intellectual and institutional history of science in the Middle Ages. His specific interests include scientific and technological innovation in medieval universities and craft guilds, and the interactions that took place between scientists and craftsmen.
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Help support current ILS Certificate students by donating to one of our general funds. To help foster a community between students and faculty, ask for your donation to be sent to the Sense of Community fund, which is used to fund student activities.

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