



College of Letters & Science

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

 **ILS**  
Integrated Liberal Studies

# THE MEIKLEJOHN EXPERIMENT



WINTER 2015

*“Democracy is the art of thinking independently together.”*  
- Alexander Meiklejohn

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*Support current ILS certificate students by donating to the community fund, which is used to fund student activities and foster relationships between faculty and students.*

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[www.ils.wisc.edu/donate-to-ils.htm](http://www.ils.wisc.edu/donate-to-ils.htm)



*Check out our newly launched website at [www.ils.wisc.edu](http://www.ils.wisc.edu)*



*The Meiklejohn Experiment* is the alumni newsletter of the Integrated Liberal Studies (ILS) Certificate Program at the University of Wisconsin - Madison.

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**Check out our new website!**  
[www.ils.wisc.edu](http://www.ils.wisc.edu)

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## Letter From the Chair

**I** happily relinquish space in the Chair's letter so that we can hear some parting words from Anita Lightfoot, our longtime and relentlessly devoted Department Administrator as she heads off for a well-deserved retirement. No student arrived on our doorstep without being made to feel like part of the ILS community, and few left without an indelible memory of Anita.

In the next Newsletter, we'll profile Anita's replacement, Katrina Peterson, who — in her few short months here — has put her own mark on everything from the look of Meiklejohn House and the program's growing social media presence. On that issue, please take note of the announcements of our new website and Facebook pages, as we are eager to use these to put alums in contact with current students and faculty!

*Mike Vanden Heuvel*  
*ILS Department Chair*

## Letter From Anita



**F**rom the very first moment in Meiklejohn House, I knew the ILS experience was going to be special. The atmosphere was the perfect venue to inspire anyone who walked in the front door. And besides the people involved, what cemented the deal? A double rainbow appeared the second week I was here just as I stepped onto the porch.

There are so many memories involving the students, the TAs and the faculty, each one anchored into my memory forever. I would be hard pressed to choose a couple. It warmed my heart to witness any faculty-student or TA-student exchange, a conversation with anyone who stopped by, and gatherings for quesadilla lunches. So many laughs shared, along with some sorrow too — all a part of life. To choose just one memory or one person would be very difficult. The program is held together by its constituents and it has been an honor to be a part of the ILS community."

*Anita Lightfoot*

# The Meiklejohn Experiment

*The ILS program continues to attract students who share fervor for learning and intellectual questioning. A method of learning community of mentors and peers is a legacy of “The Meiklejohn Experiment” from which this program was born.*

**T**he Integrated Liberal Studies program is the legacy of an unprecedented intellectual experiment led by Alexander Meiklejohn. Meiklejohn had a revolutionary vision for the future of higher education, and in 1927 he launched the Meiklejohn experimental college at UW-Madison.

His plan centered around the idea of a democratic education. Drawing on the Socratic tradition, classes were small and the emphasis was on learning through discussion. His liberal arts curriculum encompassed politics, literature, art, economics, law, religion, science, and philosophy. In the first year, students took classes that focused on the civilizations of ancient Greece. The second year, students applied the classical knowledge to contemporary topics. Teachers, called “advisors,” were considered equals with the students, developing close academic relationships with them.

Ultimately, Meiklejohn’s goal was not to force students to think alike but to persuade them to think together. Students were given free reign to pursue their education, as Meiklejohn states: “The origins of democratic education always lay with the students who chose voluntarily to learn, to enter a process of critical deliberation, to be initiated into the ways of rational self-government.”

Though the program has changed over time, this philosophy is still present in the current ILS program. ILS students have the opportunity to learn and grow both personally and academically in a community of mentors and peers.



*“Education is not the receiving of instruction; it is the contagion of the spirit”*

*- Meiklejohn 1919*

Read more about the Meiklejohn Experiment in Adam Nelson’s *Education and Democracy: The Meaning of Alexander Meiklejohn*

*“I love ILS because there is so much to learn. Through ILS I was able to trace the history of science from natural philosophy all the way up to Newtonian physics, and the impact of science on contemporary art and literature. I really enjoyed being able to study the humanities, and the insights these classes have provided me on the interaction between science and culture. The program was a great way for me to study things that I am interested in, but are unrelated to my major such as astronomy, geology, philosophy, literature, art history, and geopolitics.”*

*- Brad Glasco ‘15*



# *ILS and the Humanities: Finding My Own Way*

*Brett Tietz (B.A. '15, History of Science and Certificate in Integrated Liberal Studies)*



**Bret Tietz** received the Ruth Knatz Memorial Prize for his essay on his essay entitled “*ILS and the Humanities: Finding My Own Way*.” The Ruth Knatz prize is awarded to a junior or senior who has completed at least 15 ILS credits and has the promise of making a valuable contribution to the humanities. This excerpt from his essay highlights the role of ILS in shaping his personal and academic education.

*I*t is my strong belief that students who have the desire to learn and wish to challenge the way they think should not be uninhibited in the university. Undergraduate departments in the humanities, such as Integrated Liberal Studies, are vital components of universities to satisfy these students’ desires. If the university fails to do this, what will be left are students who see the university as only a means to some other end, whether it be graduate school or entrance into the professional job sector. Students who wish to get more out of their undergraduate experience should have the freedom to do just that. The freedom of the student to pursue his or her own intellectual interest was a virtue that Alexander Meiklejohn recognized, and it is central to the humanities departments.

## ***Why do I study the Humanities?***

Studying the humanities, if nothing else, has given me the tools to live philosophically. Professor Emeritus in ILS, Charles Anderson, wrote, “The unexamined life can indeed be worth living. The only problem is that it will not be your own.” Exploring the many perspectives of the human experience in my humanities departments has challenged me to live a life that is uniquely my own, while

*“The freedom of the student to pursue his or her own intellectual interest was a virtue that Alexander Meiklejohn recognized, and it is central to the humanities departments.”*

respecting the cultures and creeds of the people around me. The humanities have taught me to question most things and think critically so that I can live a thoughtful and confident life.

During my time as an undergraduate, I have been blessed to have the freedom to search for my own truth. Originally I had matriculated at the University to become a scientist, because that is what I had been conditioned for in high school. Upon arriving here in Madison I discovered that there was a much greater purpose for my studies at this university. The humanities are important in my life because they pushed me to discover things about myself that I would have never known otherwise. When constructing the Experimental College here at UW, Alexander Meiklejohn made democracy its foundation. He believed that the purpose for the university was to produce liberally educated students who could leave the University confident in their abilities to be productive democratic citizens. My education in the humanities has no doubt provided me with this confidence to face any problem that life might present me.

## ***2015 ILS Scholarship Winners***

### ***Meiklejohn Travel Assistance Prize***

Paul Sutherland (B.A. '15, Economics and Political Science)

*Paul is traveling to Rwanda this December for an year-long internship with the International Justice Mission (IJM), which is a non-governmental organization that partners with governments around the world to build functioning justice systems to combat and prevent violence.*

### ***Meiklejohn Travel Scholarship***

Jed Hobson (B.A., English)

*Jed is currently studying abroad at the University of Westminster in England for the 2015-16 academic year.*

### ***Meiklejohn Travel Scholarship***

Andrew McAleese (B.A., Spanish)

*Andrew is teaching English in Colombia with the language instruction company Berlitz and is also studying how certain choices when translating poetry and song lyrics can affect the cultural interactions between differing peoples.*

### ***Ruth Knatz Memorial Award***

Brett Tietz (B.A. '15, History of Science)

*For more information on past scholarship winners and scholarship opportunities, visit our website at [www.ils.wisc.edu/scholarships.htm](http://www.ils.wisc.edu/scholarships.htm).*



## Longtime ILS Professor Retires



**P**rofessor Mike Shank, a longtime faculty member of the ILS community, retired this past May 2015. In addition to his role in the ILS program, Shank served as a Professor Emeritus in the History of Science Department at UW-Madison and was a recipient of the Howe-Bascom Professorship.

As a professor in the ILS program, Shank sought to bridge the gap between the sciences and the humanities, revealing to students the ways they are intertwined.

One of the courses Shank regularly taught was ILS 201: “Western Science, Philosophy and Technology Part I,” where students were introduced to the history of scientific thought through the ages.

“Teaching ILS 201, from antiquity to the twentieth century, was something I was really skeptical about at the beginning,” reflects Shank. “But in the end I could see that it made a big difference for the students. The

scope of the course is such that you see a really significant transformation taking place over time.”

He also taught a special honors course entitled ILS 271: “Pre-Copernican Astronomy and Cosmology in Cross-Cultural Perspective.” Shank describes the class as possibly the only cross cultural physical science course on the books.

“It was a wonderful experience because it stretched my limits, too. I ended up looking at Mayan, Indian, Chinese astronomy; topics that I knew relatively little about, but that I put out there for comparative purposes.”

As a prominent historian of science and a tireless advocate of the liberal arts, it is no surprise that he has stayed involved in the academic community even after retiring. Shank is currently working on variety of academic articles and attending conferences around the world.

“It doesn’t feel like I have retired!” laughs Shank.

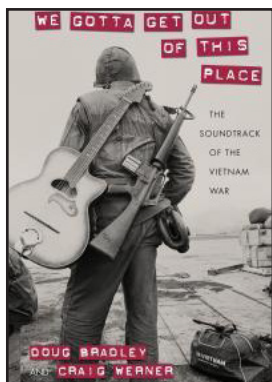
~  
*Thank you, Professor Shank, for all of your contributions to the ILS program!*



### *Astronomers in Training*

*Shank prepares a telescope for the transit of Venus across the sun on June 5, 2012, an event that takes place only once every 243 years. Students and members of the community were welcome to take part in the viewing.*

## Recent Releases



**Doug Bradley and Craig Werner**

**“We Gotta Get Out of This Place: The Soundtrack of the Vietnam War”**

*Released this past October 2015, Bradley and Werner completed “We Gotta Get Out of This Place,” which places popular music at the heart of the American experience in Vietnam. They explore how and why U.S. troops turned to music as a way of connecting to each other and the World back home and of coping with the complexities of the war they had been sent to fight.*

Professor Werner and Vietnam Veteran Bradley teach the class “The U.S. in Vietnam: Music, Media and Mayhem” (ILS 275). The class focuses on the culture and events of the Vietnam war and the Vietnam era.

## Faculty Awards



**Cathy Middlecamp**

**2015 American Chemical Society Award for Encouraging Disadvantaged Students into Careers in the Chemical Sciences**

*This award recognizes Catherine Middlecamp’s 30+ years of passion, energy, dedication, and scholarship in the service of encouraging and mentoring disadvantaged chemistry students.*

Professor Middlecamp regularly teaches “Principles of Environmental Science” (ILS 126), a hands-on and interactive course where students ask questions about the air we breathe, the energy we consume, the food we eat, the goods we purchase, and the waste we create.



**Lynn K. Nyhart**

**Named Senior Fellow at the UW - Madison Institute for Research in the Humanities**

*Nyhart is currently working on a book on the history of biological individuality, asking “What makes a human, biologically speaking?”*

Professor Nyhart teaches “Western Culture: Science, Technology, Philosophy II” (ILS 202). Nyhart uses her background in History of Science to introduce students to the history of the sciences between the late seventeenth century and the early twentieth century, with the aim of understanding the varied ways of knowing that have come to be known as “science.”



## Ford Scholar's Reunion



### *Reunited*

*Ford Scholars pose for a group photo at the reunion. (L to R) Mike Hinden; Joe Elder; Earl Dolven; Bing Cady; Louise Trubeck; Charlie Holbow; Irene Bernstein; Harold "Ed" Edwards; and John Israel.*

**O**n October 9th, the Fords Scholars reunited to share their stories, experiences, and advice they have gained from the rare opportunity they took advantage of many years ago.

The Ford Scholars program began in the 1950s: a young group of students were given a special academic offer to go to college at the age of 15 or 16. The program worked with several fine universities, including the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

One of the scholars, Louise Trubek, a Clinical Professor Emerita at our own UW-Madison Law School said, "The Ford program gave me a unique perspective on myself...being able to get a head start on my academic career helped me develop a sense of myself and where I wanted to go in life."

Absorbing what these scholars had to say in reflection of their years in the Ford Scholars Program makes it clear that a liberal education such as the one that is offered by the ILS department here is

worthy of pursuing. With its wide array of subjects ILS can play an essential part in aiding students to realize their life's aspirations as well as open doors to a plethora of opportunities that will guide students in their career goals and teach them how to view the world from countless perspectives.

On a final note, if we can learn from the expert opinions of the Ford Scholars, and take command of what is at hand for every student on this campus through the Integrated Liberal Studies education; then there is no doubt that this generation can do as the Ford Scholars' generation did, and usher in a new era of brighter, more well-rounded individuals.

Ford Scholars are still involved with the ILS program by funding the Howe-Bascom Professorship that ILS awards to high-achieving ILS instructors. They also continue to spread the word about the value of a liberal arts education.

# *In Remembrance*

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## *Professor Bob March*

**R**obert March of Madison, WI passed away on August 4, 2015 at 81 years of age. Bob had a long and fruitful career of more than 40 years as a professor of physics at UW-Madison, where he was a researcher on international high energy and astrophysics projects. He had a knack for explaining difficult concepts to a general audience, which made him a popular teacher and frequent commentator on scientific topics on Wisconsin Public Radio.

In 1980, Bob joined the team of faculty at UW-Madison to revitalize the Integrated Liberal Studies Program, designing the science component of its curriculum. He was curious about all disciplines and eager to collaborate with faculty from other fields. After retirement, Bob continued to work with students as volunteer faculty in the Bradley Learning Community, a residential program for freshmen. He made undergraduate teaching the focus of his efforts. Mike Hinden visited Bob shortly before his death to reminisce about their time in ILS, and Bob told him these were his most fulfilling years in academia.



## *Professor David Lindberg*

**D**avid Lindberg passed away at age 79 at Covenant Oaks Memory Care on Jan. 6, 2015 after a long, arduous journey with Alzheimer's. David Lindberg lived in the Midwest for most of his life, growing up in Minnesota and spending his career in the Department of the History of Science at UW-Madison. He was instrumental in developing the syllabus and textbooks for large undergraduate survey courses, spanning the classical origins of scientific inquiry up to the development of modern scientific thought.

Dave was another member of the ILS team that rescued and revitalized the program in the 1980s. ILS has since been noted for the quality of its teaching, and Lindberg's lectures were among the most highly rated in the program. He had a lively sense of humor and often lightened his delivery with folksy jokes. He was admired by campus administrators as well as by his students and colleagues, and his counsel helped guide the reemergence of the program at a crucial period. A masterful teacher, scholar, and colleague, he remained a pillar of the ILS program until his retirement.

