

INTEGRATED LIBERAL STUDIES NEWSLETTER



Spring 2021



Integrated Liberal Studies
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

THE MEIKLEJOHN EXPERIMENT

Spring 2021

The Meiklejohn Experiment is the Student, Faculty & Alumni newsletter of the Integrated Liberal Studies (ILS) Certificate Program at the University of Wisconsin - Madison. Written by the student ambassadors, with help from ILS Faculty member and Associate Professor of Classics, Grant Nelsestuen.

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Integrated Liberal Studies
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON



LETTER FROM THE CHAIR



Dear ILS Students, Alumni, and Friends,

I think it's safe to say that, for most everyone, 2020-21 has been quite a year. The same is true for ILS, but let me start by introducing myself, as, from a historical perspective, I'm definitely a newer face to the program.

My name is Grant Nelsestuen and, as I write this, I'm wrapping up my first year as Chair of Integrated Liberal Studies. I've been involved with ILS for about five years now – shortly after I received tenure in my home department of Classical and Ancient Near Eastern Studies, where I've been a professor of Classics since 2009. The courses that I teach there—including courses on ancient Rome, ancient religions, conspiracies and conspiracy theory as historical and cognitive phenomena, and the influence of the Classical tradition in America—have always, I'd like to think, been in the Alexander Meiklejohnian-spirit of liberal education. But it was ILS's longstanding commitment to, and excellence in, practicing the liberal arts as the preeminent mode for educating young people to be thoughtful and critical individuals and citizens that called me to the program.

So here I am: wrapping up my first year as chair. Needless to say, it has not been just another year. For one thing, good old Meiklejohn House has not seen its usual share of action, having unfortunately had to temporarily cede its place as the beating heart of ILS to a mostly virtual forum of online teaching and learning. To be sure, ILS did continue to offer in-person instruction where we could—like in the ILS Capstone seminar on the philosophy of food, offered by my colleague (and former ILS Chair) Rick Avramenko. But I'm happy to report that the ILS faculty, in a spirit befitting of the program's "experimental" roots, met the challenges of remote education by coming up with innovative ways to engage students in the active process of making a liberal education their own. I won't say more about those efforts here, as part of our newsletter this year showcases some of them—so please, read on!

Still, I speak for all ILS faculty and instructors when I say that we are looking forward to the return of fully in-person instruction this coming Fall, for nothing can replace the sort of transformative educational experiences that happen in the classroom—for both ILS students and those who have the privilege of teaching them.

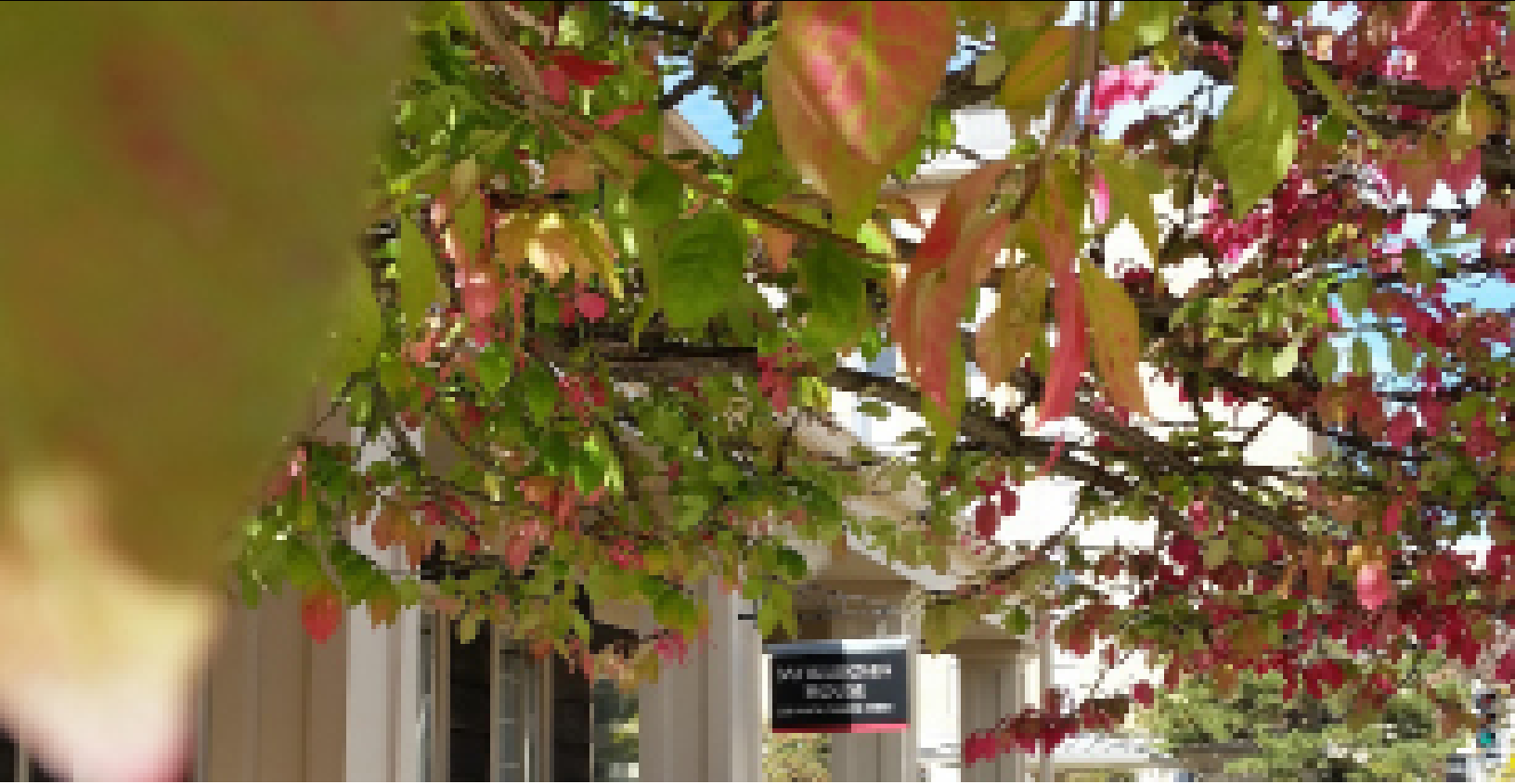
Many of you may have recalled over the past year a passage you likely read at some point in your own time in ILS: Thucydides' famous description of the plague (2.48ff.) that ravaged Athens amidst the Peloponnesian War in 430 B.C. It would be a hyperbole and overly simplistic to equate it with our own pandemic for a number of reasons. Happily though, I am able to report with confidence that, unlike for the Athenians and the horrors they faced, words like "honor" and concepts like "the good" and "the useful" have not changed their meaning for the ILS program. And we look forward to renewing the in-person practice of them this Fall.

In closing, I'd like to invite you to reach out to me (nelsestuen@wisc.edu) if it ever strikes your fancy to share about your time in ILS or you'll be finding yourself in Madison—I'd love to hear about your experiences, especially as we continue to provide 21st century students with an evermore critical foundation in the liberal arts through some of the premier teaching and learning experiences here at UW-Madison.

Here's to a bright future for all of us,

Grant

Grant A. Nelsestuen
Chair, Integrated Liberal Studies
Associate Professor of Classics
UW-Madison

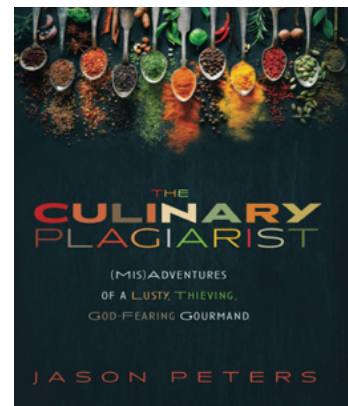


ILS RECOMMENDS...

The Culinary Plagiarist: (Mis)Adventures of a Lusty, Thieving, God-Fearing Gourmand Jason Peters

A book about food, friendship, and community. Actually, a book about the provenance of food, friendship, and community. With Chapters like “Casting Asparagus on Another Person’s Character,” “The Lamb Shank Redemption,” and “Carbonara-Based Life,” how could you go wrong? My blurb on the back cover: “This book is delicious—every chapter a little amuse-gueule. If Roger Scruton was a beer connoisseur, he would have written this book. If Robert Farrar Capon weren’t high church, he would have written this book. Put this on your shelf between Supper of the Lamb, and I Drink, Therefore I Am. Wonderful!”

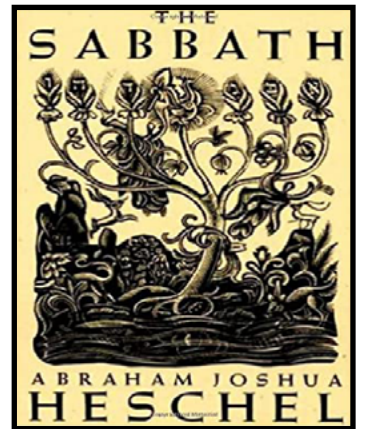
Recommended by Richard Avramenko (ILS Faculty)



The Sabbath: Its Meaning for Modern Man Abraham Joshua Heschel

“Heschel does a wonderful job making the case for God in time and not in space through the tradition of Sabbath. He does this in an elegant and hopeful manner perfect for modern readers. This is an excellent book full of rich and provocative ideas about what is sacred in a secular world. It also happens to be wonderfully written and beautiful to read. I cannot recommend Sabbath enough!”

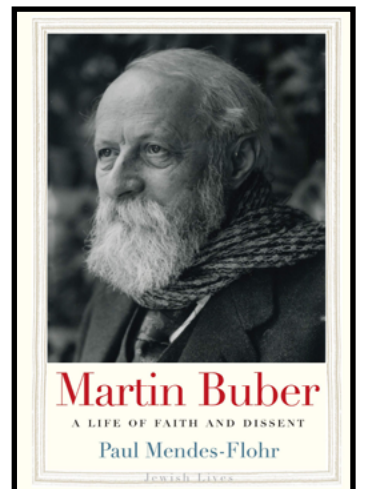
Recommended by Alicia Rolsma (ILS Student Ambassador)



Martin Buber: A Life of Faith and Dissent Paul Mendes-Flohr

“I like reading biographies, especially intellectual biographies, which are as much about a person’s ideas as his or her life. This one is about the 20th-century German-Jewish philosopher Martin Buber (1878–1965). Among other things, I learned that Buber gave a lecture at the University of Wisconsin when he first came to the US in 1951. I found a lot to like in Buber’s defense and reinterpretation of the socialist tradition that Karl Marx dismissed as utopian. Buber looked for genuine forms of community that might serve as the “cells of a new socialist society.” That left me wondering, where do we find the cells of a new society today? Mendes-Flohr’s biography also inspired me to read the inaugural address that Buber gave at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem in 1938 on sociology. Mendes-Flohr describes it this way: “Though [sociology is] a uniquely modern discipline, its ‘calling’ may be understood as analogous to the role of the biblical prophets as social critics, that is, sociology is as much an ethical and spiritual endeavor as a purely academic discipline.” You probably won’t hear that perspective in the Sociology Department at UW–Madison. You’ll have to read Buber to find it. I learned a lot from this well-written and fascinating biography, and it inspired me to read further. If that’s not a good recommendation, I don’t know what is!”

Recommended by Chad Alan Goldberg (ILS Faculty)



Connecting in an Age of Pandemic

Ask most any alum about their favorite memories of the ILS program and they are as likely as not to mention the extracurriculars: the informal chats in the living room of Meiklejohn House, or at a faculty member’s house over food and drink, and so on. But in an age of mandated social distancing and remoteness, how does one go about fostering community?

Far from abandoning this crucial element of the program, ILS tried a number of things this year. In October, a post-first presidential debate debrief on Zoom with Howard Schweber, UW-Madison Professor of Political Science and ILS faculty member, got a lot of ILS students thinking critically about the various rhetorical goals and audiences of American politicians. But as the mostly online semester went on, attendance at other planned “virtual” events—including a viewing of “The Godfather”-esque “Birds of Passage” connected with Beatriz Botero’s “Literature and Violence in Latin America” and a trivia night—tended to fall off.



The reason? Zoom fatigue, as it’s now widely known. When most everything curricular is already virtual and on-screen, little room for the “extra” remains.

Hence, ILS rolled out the first-ever “ILS Meikle-Hunt,” a weekly scavenger hunt that got students outside and about Madison, learning about the history of ILS, the University, and their community along the way. Each Monday, a new clue about a location was sent out to students, who had the following week to tease it out and document their find “selfie”-style. And for a bit of added incentive? The

undying glory that attends permanent enshrinement by way of having the ILS Meikle-Hunt trophy named ever them and standing evermore in the halls of Meiklejohn House.

Below is a breakdown of the clues for each week. Check out the key on p. 17 if you get stumped.

Week 1: “Social justice paints the streets, take a picture with this recent history.”

Week 2: “Legend tells us that this lumberjack carved the Grand Canyon with his ax, can you find his room in Memorial Union?”

Week 4: “The lands were shaped and formed long before the University began, you’ll need a birds-eye to ‘observe’ this venerable location from a respectful distance.”

Week 5: “Before there was ILS, there was the ‘Experimental College’; in what residence hall did students and ‘advisors’ commune as they talked democracy?”

Week 6: “‘Stacked’ away in Memorial Library is a tome about Alexander Meiklejohn, written by UW-Madison’s own Prof. Adam Nelson.”

Week 7: “The work of Madison’s most famous architecturally-inclined son inspired the edifice that overlooks the smaller of the isthmus’s two lakes.”

Week 8: “In the beginning of UW-Madison’s history of architecture, there was but one building...”

Week 9: “Being passionate can be great... too an extent. Find where previous students took their passion too far back in 1970.”

Week 10: “The birthplace of a tasty treat for the dairy state...”

Week 11: “Bucky is great, but where can you find a real badger?”

Week 12: “Originally constructed in 1928, this place has a claim to offering one of UW-Madison’s most beautiful—and iconic—vistas by day or night. Curds and libations optional (but preferred!).”





Student Highlight

Meikle-Hunt Winner: Emma Kramlinch

Nelgestuen: So, you're a graduating senior and the winner of the inaugural 'ILS Meikle-Hunt.' Congratulations! But Which one is the bigger accomplishment?"

Kramlich: Definitely the scavenger hunt! <laughter>

Nelgestuen: Thanks for humoring that question. But yes, congrats on both, especially the graduation. So what was your area of study here at UW-Madison?

Kramlich: I am a social work student and then legal studies as well, with a criminal justice minor, and an ILS minor of course. But when people ask, I primarily say social work, because that's what I'm going to graduate school for.

Nelgestuen: So how did you get interested in social work?

Kramlich: I've always been very much into human behavior, studying psychology and stuff like that, even in high school. But I wasn't sure coming into college how that could be translated into an actual career. So I talked to my advisor, she recommended social work, because she was previously a social worker, and that's kind of how that got the ball rolling there.

Nelgestuen: I want to hear more about your plans in a minute, but turning to ILS for a moment, how did you get into the ILS program in the first place?

Kramlich: It was recommended coursework for my freshman year, when I didn't know what I was doing, and I think I think I hit some requirements I needed along the way. It was ILS 205 with Professor Avramenko, and it actually happened to be my first college class based on how the week broke down. So, it was like 10 AM on a Tuesday morning after Labor Day, and I'm extremely nervous because it was my first college class and it's in the lecture hall in the Psychology Building, and I'm like: "This is a huge room!" and it was completely packed. And then Professor Avramenko gets up there, and I feel like he's known for his humor a little bit, so he made it a really fun first college class experience. And, it's a bit serendipitous now, because I'm having him for the ILS capstone class, my last class of college.

Nelgestuen: Was it at SOAR that the course was recommended?

Kramlich: Yeah. I didn't know what I was doing and the advisors were just like, "Well, these classes fulfill these requirements, just take them and figure out what you like," and I liked ILS, so I stuck with it.

Nelgestuen: Great! That's obviously what we love to hear. Aside from the Capstone and 205, what other ILS courses have you taken?

Kramlich: I took ILS 206, which was the sister course obviously to 205's political, economic, and social thought class, and then I took ILS 201

Kramlich: ...and philosophy - the history of how science has evolved. And then I took ILS 371 with you last year, the Classics course on conspiracy in the ancient and modern worlds.

Nelgestuen: The final paper you wrote in my class was excellent. Out of curiosity, what's something you feel like you took away from taking ILS classes?

Kramlich: Whenever someone like my parents or someone that's not affiliated with the University, they always ask what ILS is because it's not a common acronym, and when I say it's Integrated Liberal Studies, they still look confused! But then I explain that it's essentially Classics, literature, philosophy, all of those texts that the well-rounded adult knows and stuff like that. So to answer your question, ILS has helped me to get a well-rounded education in that capacity, because based on my social work curriculum, I would have not have received this sort of well-rounded liberal education. ILS really facilitated that!

Nelgestuen: That's great. We also love to hear that. So yeah: ILS gave you a foundation in the liberal arts alongside your major in something that may be a bit more directly vocational in orientation.

Kramlich: It definitely helped me become a well-rounded, college-educated individual - everyone should have read Plato and Aristotle! I was actually sitting in my capstone class, and we're at a restaurant on the square, because Professor Avramenko wanted to take us out for the last class, and one of my classmates pretty much said the same thing out of the blue: "This ILS department as a whole has been great in giving me this liberal arts education that I definitely wouldn't have gotten in my major," and I was like, "I'm glad we're on the same page, because I feel the same way"! <laughs> But I think that's an

almost universal understanding of the program.

Nelgestuen: Okay, great. That's excellent fodder for alumni! <laughs>

Kramlich: I'm here to help you out, but it also is true.

Nelgestuen: That's great to hear. That's obviously one of the paramount things we're trying to do here - to be the sort of program at UW-Madison that can slot in alongside something like social work or engineering maybe, that helps students fulfill various general education requirements, and that, most importantly, gives students a foundation in the liberal arts, which works alongside with, and enhances, a more vocation-oriented major.

So then, you already touched on this, but what are your plans for after graduation?"

Kramlich: So I'll be attending UW-Madison's Social Work graduate program.

Nelgestuen: Oh, congratulations!

Kramlich: Thank you. I actually, fortunately, got into the BSW program this past year, so the program that I was in this year also doubles as the first year of a Master's degree, which means I only have to go for one more year now, which is nice.

Nelgestuen: Wow, that's great. So you'll be around Madison for another year then, and you'll have a chance to experience semi-normalcy once again. <laughter>

Kramlich: Hopefully! It makes it pretty hard to do field work, I can tell you that.

Nelgestuen: I can only imagine. How has social work been affected by the pandemic? Now,

Nelsestuen: ...what is one thing in college you could do over again if you had the chance?

Kramlich: You know -- I'd probably just live in the dorms for one more year, during my sophomore year, because that experience living in the dorms was really interesting, and it helped me to get a lot of friends, and it was a very fun experience.

But I can also say that the older that I get – and I'm still obviously not that old! -- but when I was 18 as a freshman, I was not very interested in meeting my professors, and going to office hours, and I tend to be pretty shy, so it's also a bit daunting in the first place. But the faculty of ILS are quite different from the staff of Social Work, or from all the other departments that I've interacted with, in the sense that they're just friendly and more down-to-earth, and it kind of just goes along with what they teach. So I think I would have tried to get to know my professors more.

I can also say that I also really enjoyed the TAs in the ILS department. They are still my favorite TAs and I'm still in communication with a lot of them. Some of them have written letters of recommendation for me. Yeah, it's just been a really good experience.

Nelsestuen: You know, when I look back at my college experience, I feel the same way about wanting to get to know some of my professors better. If you had to describe college at UW-Madison to, say, a parent or grandparent, what would you say?

Kramlich: You know, I found the campus community to be very welcoming and inviting – with faculty, staff, TAs, the university as a whole trying very hard to be inclusive and make everyone feel welcome. I got that feeling right off the bat. I remember my freshman year, everyone's trying

to get you to go to so many activities as a freshman, so we can get out to see the campus and what it has to offer. Even the ILS scavenger hunt – I almost wish that we had it four years ago because I'm a senior now, I've been living here for four years, and I was finding out landmarks and places that I didn't know about, that I didn't really know the history of.

Nelsestuen: That's good to hear. UW-Madison is a big place, and the University in general – and ILS specifically – has really been trying to enhance student engagement.

Kramlich: It's so important. Without those efforts, I can imagine it be completely different experience. It really made me feel that I'm not only taking the right steps to get my degree, but I also felt like "Okay, I can live here and make friends, I've established my own little network of important people." And then there's Madison: it's just beautiful here – the location and everything, having a college right in between two lakes, right by the capital.

Nelsestuen: Here's the point where I ask the annoying pandemic-related question. For two-thirds of your college career, you took classes in person. But the last year fundamentally changed things. What are the biggest differences? Downsides? – you should just be honest about this! <laughter> Any silver linings?

Kramlich: The downside, of course, is being online makes it more difficult to stay engaged. The biggest thing for me, though, is when we're in-person, you get to know your classmates, you can develop a study group, and I don't know, you just see people, you say hello to them when you see them on the street, and you really obviously don't have that now. I guess it just makes you feel a little bit more isolated.

....

But you do have more free time though, which has been nice! I have developed my hobbies a lot more in the past year, because I seem to have way more time on my hands now, which has been nice.

Nelsestuen: Yeah. Okay, I think you hit everything there. Do you mind sharing what hobbies you've developed during this time?

Kramlich: Yeah, I got really into yoga because you couldn't obviously go out to the gym—at first at least—so I just started watching YouTube videos and got really into yoga. Also I'm very into arts and crafts in the adult way! <laughter>

So practical arts and crafts, like things that can be useful or they look good on my wall, so if you saw my room right now, a bunch of the stuff in here, it's just handsome rugs and I don't know. Furniture, stuff like that.

Nelsestuen: Nice! Any final thoughts on ILS and your time here?

Kramlich: I just really enjoyed the ILS professors. The ILS professors are very different from the other areas of study at Madison, and the TAs have just been brilliant – how well-educated and down-to-earth they are, and I can talk to them like people, which has been nice.

The other thing is that until I was enrolled in the course, I never thought how interesting it is to learn about how science has developed from ancient world until now [i.e. in ILS 201 and 202]. Those history of science courses stick out in my mind as some of my favorite courses.

Nelsestuen: UW-Madison was actually one of the pioneers of the History of Science as a discipline, and their faculty have had a long illustrious history of involvement with ILS.

Kramlich: You know, you might not think that it's a relevant topic to go into at first, but I still remember Professor [Florence] Hsia just going crazy on the blackboard, writing really fast all these old science concepts, and tracing how they've changed over time, and I was like, "Okay, this is fascinating."

Nelsestuen: Yeah – I really should take her courses myself! <laughter> Thanks for meeting with me, Emma, especially during finals week! Good luck with finishing up, congratulations, and be sure to keep in touch – we'd love to hear about your accomplishments down the road.

Kramlich: Thanks for interviewing me.





Student Highlight

May 2021 Graduate: Alicia Rolsma

Nelsestuen: What is your area of study?

Rolsma: I have been studying political science for the past four academic years. My Freshmen and Sophomore years I focused primarily on comparative politics where I studied instances of ethnic cleansing and the potential effects of federalism on inter-group tensions. Later during my Junior and Senior years I shifted my concentration to political theory and began the ILS program here at UW.

Nelsestuen: Why did you choose that?

Rolsma: I chose politics broadly because I thought, and still do, that understanding people as political animals was foundational to becoming a lifelong learner. My earlier research focused on ethnic conflict was sparked by the refugee crisis in 2017 when thousands of Rohingya people were being persecuted in their home country. I was lucky to study the crisis with a professor specialized in federalism at my previous university. After coming to UW, I developed a longing to understand the theory behind crises. ILS has been a wonderful program to explore political theory across academic disciplines.

Nelsestuen: What led you to ILS?

Rolsma: One of the reasons I transferred to UW was to be part of the ILS program. I knew people in the program and wanted to be part of a community that pursued education for its own sake. I enrolled in three ILS classes my first semester

and couldn't get enough of the faculty or the class material!

Nelsestuen: Throughout your time at UW what ILS courses have you taken?

Rolsma: I took ILS 205: Political, Economic, and Social Thought, ILS 365 Machiavelli and His World, ILS 371 Myth: From Gods to Cyborgs, ILS 235 Genres of Religious Writing, ILS 372 Modern Jewish Thought, and the ILS Capstone that was arguably the best class I have taken as an undergraduate.

Nelsestuen: What did you learn by taking ILS courses? What were you surprised by?

Rolsa: I was repeatedly surprised by how interconnected areas of study are even though we segment them so intently on the academic level. The world is complex and messy, you cannot categorize everything and I think every ILS course I took touched on the interconnected nature of the world and society.

Nelsestuen: What are you planning for after graduation?

Rolsma: I am moving East with my husband where I hope to continue my education in graduate school. I know that I want to be involved in education either as a teacher or a policy researcher, I just need to figure out which <laughs>

Nelsestuen: How did ILS change your college

Rolsma: ILS courses helped keep me grounded. The classes, the faculty, and especially the Meiklejohn House gave me a sense of belonging and purpose and a large city campus. The Madison campus can often feel overwhelming and isolating. In the before time, you could cross paths with a hundred people you don't know. The Meiklejohn House was always a welcoming place where I was at home away from home. I know that sounds really sappy and silly but that is how it always felt!

Nelsestuen: How have ILS classes shaped your vision of the future?

Rolsma: My ILS classes make me feel prepared to continue learning. I don't feel constricted to a single discipline or department because I have been able to engage with ideas and people across academia. I feel ready for whatever is next thanks to ILS.

Nelsestuen: Here's the pandemic-related question: what are the biggest differences between in-person and online learning?

Rolsma: The downside is the alienation that happens between the teacher and student. Connecting, even digitally, has been a huge challenge this past year.

Overall I have been very lucky this past year to be able to continue my education online. Although I am even more motivated now to continue learning after this because I am so hungry for learning in the post-COVID world!

One silver lining during this time has been to see the commitment of some faculty to pursue their students in creative ways.



ILS Faculty News: Nandini Pandey



Perhaps the biggest challenge for ILS this past year was finding ways to keep students engaged in meaningful learning experiences in spite of the challenges imposed by the pandemic and the turn to online-heavy modes of instruction. Happily, ILS faculty and instructors rose to the challenge in various ways, but perhaps none more creatively so than Prof. Nandini Pandey, whose ILS 203: Western Culture: Literature and the Arts course not just surmounted these difficulties but turned the world of remote instruction to the students' benefit.

In a typical year, ILS 203 enrolls 150 students, who meet twice a week for lecture and once a week in small discussion groups of 10-15 students—all in-person and all committed to grappling with the transformative complexities of such foundational texts as the epic of Gilgamesh, the works of Homer, and Dante's "Divine Comedy." Pandey's course did preserve in-person discussion sections for those students who chose them, but the size of the lecture precluded an in-person setting and, in any case, even those in-person discussions were subject to the ongoing disruptions of, among other things, students observing quarantine protocols and one temporary University-wide suspension of all in-person instruction.

Anticipating those challenges from the get-go, Pandey leveraged the forced shift to online instruction in ways that facilitated student engagement, expanded their understanding of what rewards a traditional liberal arts education may reap, and brought them into contact with internationally renowned scholars across campus and beyond.

Take her once-a-week "lectures" on

Tuesdays as an example. The loss of those non-verbal cues we all take for granted in face-to-face conversations may mean that Zoom is not the most conducive medium for encouraging everyone's spoken participation, but Pandey's dynamic integration of the chat feature into an admixture of lecture and question-and-answer made for a classroom that retained the dialectical and conversational qualities so important to the critical thinking and questioning at the heart of the liberal arts—and even encouraged a more democratic degree of participation, especially on the part of shyer students who might otherwise hesitate to speak up in a physical classroom.

Complementing this weekly conversation on the course's ancient texts and art was an interactive engagement with various faculty and scholars from UW-Madison and beyond. Billed as "Adventures in Applied Classics," this speaker series got students thinking through the relevance of classical antiquity in the modern world and grappling with contemporary issues (e.g. racism, multiculturalism) by way of the texts they were reading.

The list of speakers was impressive and would make even the most well-heeled academic department envious. Dr. Curtis Dozier of Vassar College kicked off the series with a conversation about various modern hate groups' appropriations of classical antiquity to advance their own agendas, while UW-Madison's Dr. Chontel Syfox, a faculty member in Department of Classical and Ancient Near Eastern Studies, brought the Hebrew scriptures and ancient Judaism into the semester's ongoing consideration of the multicultural world of the ancient Mediterranean. In turn, Dr. Joel Christiansen of Brandeis University introduced students to the therapeutic value of reading Homer—as a way to diagnose and work through contemporary anxieties and issues. cilitated a discussion with Dr. Johanna Hanink of

Brown University, who spoke about overly idealized conceptions of ancient Greece in modern political debates and the legacy of colonialism in modern Greece. Carly Sentieri, Research Services Librarian for Special Collections, brought the world of digital humanities to life for students by having them examine Elzevier's 1656 edition of Homer, an 1698 printing of Dryden's Works of Virgil,

and the Wisconsin Papyrus Collection—all the while engaging students to think critically about the colonial underpinnings and modern politics of such collections. Dr. David Crane, of Grand Valley State University, facilitated a discussion of the Theater of War's The Oedi-

pus Project, which, among other things, included a community staging of Sophocles' Antigone to an audience comprised of Black Lives Matter activists, police officers, and their families against the backdrop of the shooting of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri. Dr. John Hopkins of New York University spoke about contemporary debates surrounding classical architecture, especially in relation to recent political issues, and Dr. Sarah Scullin, former editor of the online magazine "Eidolon," helped students to think about translating their knowledge of the ancient world for contemporary public audiences through the world of new media. Finally, Dr. Suzanne Lye of UNC-Chapel Hill shared how her path as a chemist-turned-classicist has facilitated her research into ancient Greek conceptions of

the underworld, while Dr. Kelly Nguyen of Brown University discussed her groundbreaking research on the engagement of Greek and Roman antiquity by various Vietnamese communities as they grappled with Western imperialism from the late-19th to the mid-20th centuries.

The result? A series of conversations that brought to life the enduring legacy of the ancient



How (Not) to Grieve, a Helpful Analysis of Grief and Coping Mechanisms in Classics

[Click here for an eclectic, Iliad-inspired playlist to listen while you read](#)

 Clara Schroeffer
Dec 14, 2020 · 9 min read



world, both the good and the bad, for ILS students—all thanks to Prof. Pandey's guidance and efforts, the students' commitment to thoughtful participation throughout, and ILS alums' dedication to the program, whose financial generosity provided modest honoraria to all these speakers.

No course, however, would be complete without some form of learning assessment. Here again Pandey's ILS 203 set new benchmarks: combining traditional assignments (read: good old-fashioned essays and the like) with innovative collaborative digital projects (e.g. Wiki-style entries), student engagement culminated with the digital publication of public-facing articles and podcasts, geared for a non-specialist audience and showcasing the value of closely reading classical literature for understanding, and flour-

ILS Faculty News

New Faculty Member Dr. Beatrice Botero

Rolsma: Can you tell me a bit about what you did before coming to ILS?

Betero: I grew up in Columbia and studied Psychology and then Literature as an undergraduate. I did not double major but received two bachelor's degree one after the other. After I finished both of my undergraduate degrees, I went to Spain to study psychoanalysis. I followed the person I loved to the United States and began another graduate program in Madison, Wisconsin.

Rolsma: What are the main differences you have observed between teaching styles in America and other countries?

Betero: It is so different. You can teach the exact same subject and it is the students that differ in how they receive it. In Asia students are much more respectful and traditional in the way they receive knowledge. While, in Europe and America the material flows back and forth from student to professor like it is more of a conversation. In Latin America there is more defiance among the students, in the best way, you have to prove to the students that you know what you are talking about. All of these contexts are so different and yet I love teaching in all of them.

Rolsma: What books have been the most influential to you as an academic and person?

Betero: Don Quixote by Miguel de Cervantes has played a huge role in my life, and I think it is the best book ever written. I hope to one day teach an entire class on this book because it is funny and deals with every human issue. It is like reading Shakespeare, every word is carefully constructed for the sake of the reader. You can give a synopsis in one sentence but you have to read it slowly to really understand what Cervantes is doing

with his words. I really believe in the power of words.

Rolsma: What brought you to ILS?

Betero: I started teaching a class for ILS and fell in love with the program. Being part of it is important because we can connect past to present in a way that emphasizes humanity holistically.

Rolsma: What has been your favorite part of working with ILS faculty and students?

Betero: Because of the pandemic I have not been able to meet much with my colleagues in person. Yet, we are all connected in what we want for ILS and the students in the program. We all continue to prioritize students even though everything is digital and try to understand the past in a new way for the future. Overall, I feel very welcomed in the program and I am happy to be here.

Rolsma: Can you tell me a bit about the classes you have introduced to the ILS roster? How have students responded to the topics?

Betero: I think that the students really like it. Whenever I introduce a new class I think about two things—academics and the person taking the class. When it comes to academics, I am really pleased with how much my students are learning from so many different genres. By choosing a geographically location for the classes we can choose so many different ways to approach and teach it. When it comes to the person, the relationships I have with my students is the most important part of the class for me. I do my best to emphasize relationship and ethics. Knowledge is not the role for me but to open my heart to each individual student. Because of my background in psychology, I want to teach students how to care for themselves and one another.

Rolsma: What has been your favorite class to teach in ILS so far?

Betero: I loved teaching both Magical Realism and Postmodernity. Because I am thinking about both of these things in life and society right now.

Rolsma: What are your thoughts about teachings online? Do you have any stories that you would like to share?

Betero: This past semester I was able to meet some of my students socially distanced and in-person. It was such a wonderful opportunity. When online classes began it was horrible for me but the students and I have both adapted. I try to give each student a larger role in the class so that they can participate in this novel format. When students take time leading the class they can be more invested in the content.

Rolsma: What have you done to re-cultivate that close student-faculty interaction during the pandemic?



ILS Faculty News

Florence Hsia: ILS Faculty Member and Professor of History of Science

Affiliated with ILS since 2001, Prof. Hsia is the recipient of the Herbert and Evelyn Howe Bascom Professorship, which was established by the diligent efforts of UW/Ford Foundation Early Admissions Participants (1951-1959) in 2000.

As many of you know firsthand, Herbert and Evelyn were monumental figures from the earliest days of Integrated Liberal Studies through the early 1980s. Each also played important roles as faculty advisors to the Ford Scholars, providing

Betero: Office hours have been really great for touching base with my students. Although, during the pandemic I cannot have traditional office hours at set times. For my international students, office hours are at 9 pm for me, and early morning for them. I have also been reading independent from coursework with my students. During these unprecedented times, I am so open to try new things with my students. Because this experience is hard for us all and I want to be there for my students.

Rolsma: What are you most looking forward to as a faculty member in ILS?

Betero: I am looking forward to making more connections with my fellow faculty. Also, movie nights with students! I love the kind of discussions about ideas that I can have with students. When we return to campus that is one of the first activities on my list!

mentorship (and the occasional meal!) to the pioneering 16- and 17-year olds who matriculated to UW-Madison in the early-to-mid 1950s.

Within ILS today, Prof. Hsia's signature ILS course is ILS 201: "Western Culture: Science, Technology, Philosophy I," which engages some 160 students each year to think critically about science and its evolving historical relationships with religion, politics, and finances from Homer to Newton.



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Connecting in an Age of Pandemic

ANSWER KEY:

WEEK ONE: Capitol Art Murals

WEEK TWO: Paul Bunyan room in Memorial Union

WEEK THREE: Frank Lloyd Wright Church

WEEK FOUR: Mound - Bird Effigy near Observatory Hill

WEEK FIVE: Adams Hall

WEEK SIX: Adam Nelson's "Education and Democracy" in Memorial Library

WEEK SEVEN: Monona Terrace

WEEK EIGHT: North Hall

WEEK NINE: Sterling Hall bombing site

WEEK TEN: Food Sciences, Babcock Hall ice cream

WEEK ELEVEN: The badgers at the Madison Zoo

WEEK TWELVE: The Terrace at Memorial Union

