

# Integrated Liberal Studies Newsletter- Fall 2023



Integrated Liberal Studies  
University of Wisconsin-Madison





# The Meiklejohn Experiment



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 the ILS Faculty members and Associate Professor of Classics, Dan Kapust.

## Meiklejohn House

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## Check Us Out on Social Media!

Instagram:  
[@ils.uwisconsin](https://www.instagram.com/ils.uwisconsin)

Facebook:  
UW Integrated Liberal  
Studies - ILS

# A Message from the Chair



Looking outside my window on this cold morning, I see a familiar Wisconsin sight: a fresh blanket, albeit thin, of snow! This familiar and comforting sight means that the Fall semester is drawing to a close, and with it, so too does my first semester as Chair of Integrated Liberal Studies, a responsibility I'm delighted to have taken on. Years ago, I attended UW-Madison for graduate school. While I studied Political Science, I was fortunate to be able to teach in ILS as a graduate student, serving as a teaching assistant for Booth Fowler's ILS 205/206 (Western Culture: Political, Social, and Economic

Thought I and II, respectively), and teaching my own version of ILS 205 as a lecturer. To return to the comfort of the Meiklejohn House, to take up my position with ILS in such good shape thanks to the work of my immediate predecessors, Grant Nelsestuen and Rick Avramenko, and to be able to contribute to the ILS Program once again, brings me great joy!

The Fall 2023 semester has been marked by some continuity, as ILS continues to offer exceptional instruction to our undergraduate students. Some of this instruction takes place in our large lecture courses, such as ILS 201 (Western Culture: Science, Technology, and Philosophy), ILS 203 (Western Culture: Literature and the Arts), and ILS 205; some of it takes place in smaller seminar classes, such as two ILS 110 courses reserved for 1st year students, Sex, Drugs, and Literature in Latin America and Environmental Political Thought; others, such as ILS 255 (Introduction to Sustainability Science) combine lecture-based instruction with laboratory experiences, both on and off campus; and still others combine a large lecture course with intensive training in writing, such as ILS 200 (Critical Thinking and Expression.) Because of our excellent instruction and the hard work of our Academic Advisor, Laura Bradley, the number of students enrolled in the ILS Certificate Program continues to grow: we currently have about 70 students enrolled in the program, up from 28 at the start of the 2022-2023 year, and 17 students will be completing the certificate in Spring 2024. And, we have one of the largest capstone seminars we have ever had on the books for spring 2024!

But the Fall 2023 semester has also been marked by new developments: thanks to the dedication of our Program Administrator, Beth Shipman, ILS has embarked on the first steps of a series of renovations and upgrades to the Meiklejohn House. We have also held the first installment of a new program to enrich our undergraduate instruction, an ILS movie night. In October, students from ILS 201, 203, and 205 gathered in the Meiklejohn House to watch *The Matrix* over dinner, exploring themes common to all three introductory courses: the nature of consciousness, perception, and knowledge, along with the hero's journey. In the spring, students from ILS 202, 204, and 206 will gather in the Meiklejohn House for a viewing of the film *Frankenstein* to explore



# A Message from the Chair

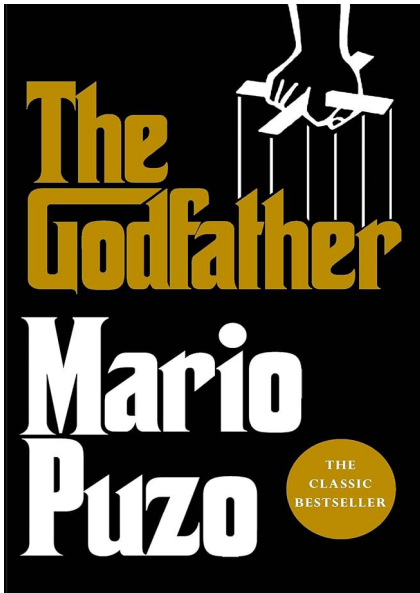
and 206 will gather in the Meiklejohn House for a viewing of the film *Frankenstein* to explore the nature of life, natural and artificial, under the guidance of Professor Eileen Hunt (Political Science, University of Notre Dame).

The biggest news out of ILS this year, however, is that 2023-2024 marks the 75th anniversary of the ILS Program! To celebrate the history of ILS and the countless individuals, beginning with Alexander Meiklejohn, that have made it the success that it is, we will be holding a day long event on April 19, 2024. The event will feature current members of the ILS community – faculty, staff, teaching assistants, and students – along with emeritus and emerita faculty and alumni and alumnae from the ILS program. Please do mark your calendars for this event!

I'd like to close with a message of thanks to all the members of the ILS community whose hard work and dedication make the program what it is, and to all of those who have worked so hard for ILS in the past to bring us to where we are today. And I would be remiss if I did not also thank our devoted network of alumni and friends of ILS, along with our current students, whose passion for an interdisciplinary liberal education is what we serve. Please do feel free to send me an email ([djkapust@wisc.edu](mailto:djkapust@wisc.edu)), as we truly hope that members of the ILS community, present and past, will keep in touch.



# Entertainment Recommendations



## *The Godfather*, by Mario Puzo

“I read *the Godfather* book over the summer at the recommendation of my father, but it is genuinely one of my favorite books I’ve ever read. Most people don’t realize that the popular movie is based off of the book, but I was determined to read prior to watching. However, I really didn’t like the movie after reading the book because there is so much context missing that the movie feels unfinished. As I watched, my mom, who had never read the book, tried explaining things to me and I realized she had a totally different interpretation of what was happening that what was actually going on. That being said, I 1000000% recommend reading *the Godfather*. It is a truly fabulous book.”

Sally Conroy, Student Ambassador

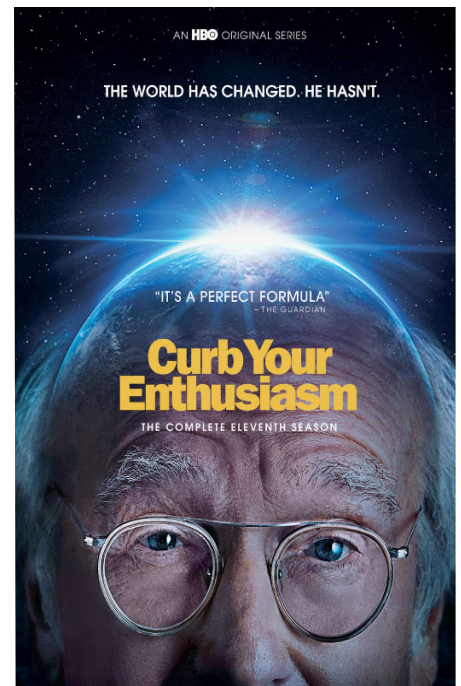
## “Curb Your Enthusiasm”

““HBO’s *Curb Your Enthusiasm*” is a show I can only recommend to those both fascinated and frustrated with the “unwritten rules” of society; that is, anything that Larry David’s unfiltered, self-righteous character deems as so. Well, you might agree with him. For example, what person in their right mind asks for ten different samples at an ice cream place? Unlike you, and usually, myself, Larry sees no problem in boldly asserting what he views to be correct, thus providing an easy answer to the most common social dilemma: would you rather be accepted or be right?”

Through a well-devised plot that focuses on motifs, each episode provides a purpose to every interaction, every detail, circling back just in time to avoid the most insufferable aspect of any TV series: a cliffhanger. Clever ironies and minutia that we may overlook are examined through the lens of a fed-up and impassioned Larry David with too much time on his hands.

Therefore, if you like sitcoms, but are fed up with trite humor and laugh-tracks, this may be your next weekend binge endeavor.”

Justin Peikin, Student Ambassador



# Get to Know Our Staff:

## Beatriz Botero

On October 23, our student ambassador Sally had the opportunity to interview Professor Beatriz Botero. Professor Botero is one of ILS's greatest! She teaches two courses- ILS 110: Sex, Drugs, and Lit in Latin America and ILS 367: Migration and the Migrant Experience in the Americas. She has one PhD in Contemporary Hispanic American Literature from UW-Madison and another in Psychoanalysis. She likes to incorporate her studies into her classes and thus provides a fun and fascinating environment for her students.

**Sally: What is your involvement with ILS and how long have you been a part of the department?**

Beatriz: I've been involved in teaching ILS classes since the fall of 2019. I started off teaching just one class then in 2020 I started teaching two classes when Covid came. I taught during that time using Zoom and my students and I learned a lot. Since then, I've been here happily.

**Sally: What made you decide to teach?**

Beatriz: I always wanted to be a teacher. I love to teach and to have the attention and make connections and have the opportunity to make a difference because [the students] always have a different point of view than I do. So with the subjects that I teach, which [focus heavily] on cultural and social problems, we need to have deep conversations and that's what I like to have in my classes. Like a conversation where I can learn and my students can learn also.

**Sally: What drew you to UW-Madison?**

Beatriz: Love. I was in love with my now-husband. He said "come!" I had already done one PhD before I came here and he said "Come and why don't you do another Master's!" and I said "ok!" But it was love. It wasn't my first idea for learning but then I got involved in the Master's and then I did another PhD so in the end I loved the city and the vibe of the people and my students are so good. All of my students are very good, so it's always very rewarding being a teacher here at UW-Madison.

**Sally: What classes do you teach and what makes those classes so special to you?**

Beatriz: I have two PhDs, one is in psychoanalysis and the other is in Latin American literature. I tried to combine both disciplines in order to learn about society and about culture. In my opinion, artists are always in their own world. They always perceive the future better than the rest of the mortals and they do that in art... In my classes then, I use all of this art, literature, and films, and then I use some concepts in order to present some material to my students. That can be seen for instance in one of the classes I'm teaching (Sex, Drugs, and Lit in Latin America). I divide the class into two big parts. The part about sex will be talking about prostitution problems, domestic abuse, and all of these parts from the society that we know has to do with violence. The second part, the drug part, talks about all of the branches of culture relating to the narcos, to the drug dealers, so there is a lot of narco movies, narco literature, and Narcocorrido, which is music related to the narco world. So we learn all of this in the same class. The other class [I teach] is "Migration and the Migrant Experience in the Americas" and it's a class that has other requisites like for ethnic studies and in that class we learn about migration. We start with the Odyssey by Homer





# Get to Know Our Staff: (cont'd)



Among other impressive projects, Beatriz is working in Bogota on a project with an Afro Communal leader on “cuddling” destroyed buildings that previously had historical significance. She beautifies these buildings by stitching tapestries to bring more love to the buildings.

and we talk about the nostalgia of Homer when he was in the Calypsoized land. From there, we start talking about the Bering Strait. How in the North the people from Asia and ultimately from Africa came and then I do a big jump into Christopher Columbus’s diaries, so how the Europeans saw the first Americans and what their impression was. They wanted to bring their religion, their language, their customs; they want to erase everything. Then, I do another jump into Ellis Island and the Statue of Liberty and how during the wars (WWI and WWII) a lot of European people migrated and how they had to deal with migration. At the end, we are seeing the south coming to the north and how in South and Central America all of these countries are trying to come here and how it is portrayed in tv, series, movies, and novels.

**Sally: Do you have any advice for future badgers and future teachers at UW-Madison?**

Beatriz: Yes! I will say that trying to have hope even though everything that surrounds us has a challenge. Just keep swimming! Have the hope of life and we need to be more in contact with nature. We humans forget the importance of nature in life. We should stay there for half an hour at least.

**Sally: What is your favorite spot on campus and what’s your favorite part of UW-Madison?**

Beatriz: my favorite part is the students. I have amazing students who if you have the opportunity to have a little conversation with them not about the class, but about other topics, you always learn something, so the conversation is really important for me. My favorite spot on campus is definitely the arboretum. I also like Picnic Point. I go there to celebrate or cry or whatever. On campus, I also really like the arts library because every book that you choose randomly you will learn something from.

The first photo (above) is an event in 2022 in the Plaza de Bolivar (downtown Bogotá). It was an event honoring the victims of the Justice Palace on Nov - 1985.

To the right, see some of the Day of the Dead projects that Beatriz’s students put together this fall!



# COURSE HIGHLIGHT:

## Introduction to Sustainability Science

“In Introduction to Sustainability Science, we position ourselves with our feet on the UW–Madison campus and ask questions about the energy we use to heat and cool our buildings, the food we eat, the air we breathe, the electricity we use to power lights and appliances, the goods we purchase, and the waste we create. Using the UW–Madison campus as a living laboratory for sustainability exploration, students will encounter global environmental problems and solutions at the scale of our campus, which can then translate to the wider world. Ultimately, the goal of the course is to give students the tools to see the world around them in new ways, noticing things they may have missed and encouraging them to seek paths that both care for themselves and for all with whom they share this planet.”

Professor Tim Lindstrom, PhD



### Areas of Study:

- Unit 1- Energy & Sustainability
- Unit 2- Carbon Cycle & Air Quality
- Unit 3- Food & Supply Chains
- Unit 4- Waste and Plastics

### By the Numbers:

4

credits

66

total students

75

minutes of lecture

3

hours of lab  
(once per week)



# CONGRATS TO OUR FALL 2023 GRADUATES!

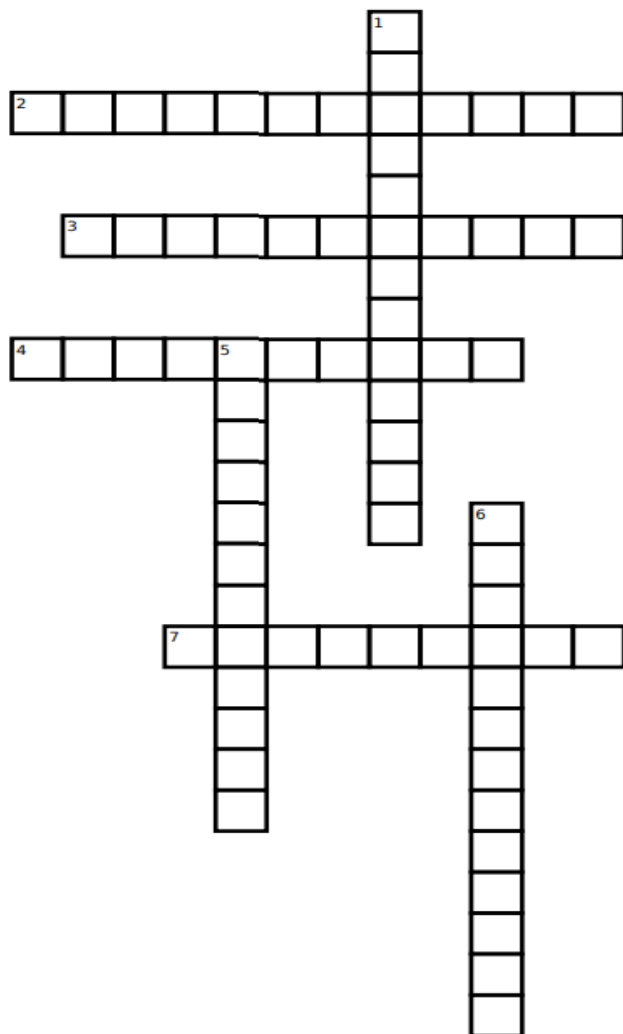
JACOB NIER  
PERSONAL FINANCE

MIRANDA SALAZAR  
SOCIAL WELFARE

ZOE ZULEGER  
EDUCATION STUDIES



# ILS BONUS CROSSWORD!



## DOWN

1. ILS featured staff member
5. ILS program advisor
6. the ILS instagram

## ACROSS

2. Sally's book recommendation
3. ILS Department Manager
4. the house where the ILS department is located
7. ILS chairman

ANSWERS: 1. Beatriz Botero 5. The Godfather 3. Beth Shipman 4. Melkelyohn 6. ilswisconsin 7. Dan Kapust



# THANK YOU!

Your donations make a difference.

Help support current ILS Certificate students by donating to one of our general funds. To help foster a community between student and faculty, ask for your donation to be sent to the **ILS fund**, which is used to fund student activities.

<https://ils.wisc.edu/donate/>

