



EUROPEAN
COLLEGE
OF LIBERAL
ARTS BERLIN
2010-2011



ecla

VALUE STUDIES

We do not really know how to live, let alone how to live together; political strife, moral dilemmas and existential anxieties haunt our attempts to do so at every other turn.

Furthermore, we often face persons, things and phenomena that matter to us somewhat baffled. An abstract painting or a modern ballet may strike us as interesting, alienating or beautiful, but also resist our attempt to say why. The generosity of a stranger may astonish us, and even inspire suspicion. Many of us fail to understand why there are such things in the world as poverty, war, or evil. We are touched and thrilled by something called 'nature', which we want to respect, protect and sometimes return to – yet also tame and control for the betterment of our lives and the lives of others. Is it love, we may wonder, if not everything about the other person is loved, or if the love does not last? We lose ourselves in a Platonic dialogue, one of Shakespeare's plays or a novel by Tolstoy – then resurface, transformed, unable to say what happened to us. Most of us agree that justice, equality, freedom, and democracy are good things, but what exactly do these abstract words refer to?

In other words, we cannot quite account for the nature of what we call 'values', nor for our own status as beings who are able, or bound, to value what we are confronted with. When we think we understand something, we would like to understand more, or better. We often disagree, even with ourselves, about the best articulations of 'value questions'; so we search, not only for legitimate answers, and useful tools for the pursuit of answers, but for *good questions*. And we are often uncertain whether the best questions we ask have answers, sometimes even whether they are 'real' questions expressive of genuine problems, or authentic concerns, worth our while.

Yet we keep asking, and it seems right to do so. Particular questions are sometimes left behind as naïve or misguided, but new ones tend to present themselves in their stead. We also insist that it makes sense to pursue our questions together: dialogues and discussions continue because we suspect they may not be fruitless. What the fruits are is debated also. Some think it is truth, others are looking for useful consensus, and others again value the process of dialogue itself.

So, we discuss our value questions with friends and family around the dinner table, and these discussions typically express and inspire our most serious interest in the world. At ECLA this fact becomes the starting point for formal education. Serious interest can be educated, we believe, and the fundamental questions about value - in the light of which we live our lives - can be pursued rigorously and imaginatively. And if we allow ourselves to take an interest in the concerns of others – as we read and discuss - we may find ourselves rewarded with an enriched sense of what matters in life. These are the premises for ECLA's vision of liberal education. Our goal is to create a curriculum, classroom, campus, and a community ideal for the deepening, sharpening and broadening of our students' serious interests.

The pages that follow provide an outline of how ECLA translates this vision into practice. To find out more, please consult our website: www.ecla.de

A COLLEGE WITHOUT DEPARTMENTS

In current academia, the fundamental types of value, and the questions and concerns which attend them, are separated out into several departments. Too often, the result is that some of the most important questions we expect academia to address are lost in the pursuit of specialized training. ECLA, in contrast, is a college without departments, where the norms, claims and ideals we live by, and the different forms of scholarly attention they inspire, are brought together in integrated programmes of study. All ECLA students work with faculty from different backgrounds on moral, political, epistemic, religious, and aesthetic questions, with the understanding that such questions are naturally and deeply connected. The result is a curriculum that secures a high level of integrated, general education for everyone.

At the same time, however, it is an important educational principle at ECLA that general education should go hand in hand with the development and pursuit of special interests. This is made possible in ECLA's curriculum with the help of two key structures.

DOMAINS OF INTEREST

First, within Value Studies, ECLA identifies several different DOMAINS OF INTEREST. The current ECLA curriculum is particularly strong with regard to the domains of ART, AESTHETICS, ETHICS, POLITICAL THEORY, LITERATURE and RHETORIC. Each domain can be understood as an area of theory and/or practice that embodies some of the most important human modes of relating to values. Other domains important to the study of values include: ECONOMICS, EDUCATION, EPISTEMOLOGY, LAW and RELIGION. ECLA is already offering some courses relevant for each of these domains, but also plans to expand the faculty in order to improve the curriculum in these areas.

The domain categories provide the pragmatic starting point for a liberal education that aims to reconcile general education with the pursuit of specialized interests. This reconciliation is possible because the domain distinctions are used in a non-departmental framework. Whereas *departmental boundaries* often allow significant value questions to disappear, *domain distinctions* may help us to foreground them. Almost any pair of domains presents us with important questions. Should we teach ethics or religion in our primary schools, for instance? This is currently

a prominent question in public debates about education in Germany, but it is not easy for academia to discuss this issue adequately in a departmental framework. ECLA provides the framework for discussing such issues in the necessary spirit of joint inquiry. And it is possible, accordingly, for students to pursue a special interest in ethics or religion, without losing sight of questions that concern their relation.

APPROACHES

ECLA's educational philosophy, secondly, recognizes a plurality of APPROACHES to the study of values, and emphasizes the importance of appreciating differences and debates among them. All ECLA programmes introduce students to several such approaches, each with its own focus, questions and modes of inquiry. ECLA courses that represent particular approaches are currently listed under five titles:

- CONCEPT
- PLACE & PERIOD
- BOOK, AUTHOR or AUTHORS IN DIALOGUE
- DISCIPLINE or METHOD ASSOCIATED WITH A DISCIPLINE
- GENRE or STYLE

ECLA students may elect to take several courses representing a particular approach. Preferences between approaches are as common as specialized domain interests, and it is taken for granted in the ECLA programmes that these two aspects of our individual interests – the *what* and the *how* – are best developed in tandem.

WHY APPROACHES?

Justice is commonly understood to be a value, but questions about justice may well be studied in different ways. It is possible to concentrate directly on the CONCEPT itself, subjecting it to different modes of analysis. Others may choose to study a HISTORICAL PERIOD crucial for the development of the idea of social justice, and some historians may even regard the first approach as somehow dependent on the second. Other educators hold the opinion that we cannot gain an adequate idea of the concept of justice except through direct and primary engagement with individual texts – 'GREAT BOOKS' - that have shaped our conception of justice in fundamental ways. A course in a DISCIPLINE or sub-discipline like the philosophy of law, however, or on the development of the political pamphlet as a GENRE may also work well as a course on 'justice'. In each case we are studying values, but the different approaches may teach us something significant both about how we come to know or decide what is of value, and about what values are.



A CURRICULUM STRUCTURED AROUND CORE COURSES

Every term ECLA students spend half their time on a core course, created and co-taught by several faculty members and guest teachers. Core courses are mandatory and, quite literally, form the core of an ECLA education. Premised on the thought that a well-rounded education involves learning to take interest in unfamiliar questions, the core courses ensure that none of the fundamental forms of value remain terra incognita to ECLA students. The courses are dedicated to problems concerning politics, morality, art and knowledge that have a claim on everyone's attention. Rigorous and genuine dialogue concerning such issues is often a real achievement. As Plato's Socrates observed, disagreement about values is a source of anger and enmity. By working together on such problems we are trying to educate ourselves as persons and citizens: it is an ongoing exploration of the extent to which we can find or create common normative ground for shared lives.

ELECTIVES

In addition to mandatory core courses, ECLA students follow individually chosen seminars – 'electives' – every term. These are often designed as complements to one of the core courses, in this manner facilitating integrated studies. An elective on Dante's Divine Comedy, for example, may be offered as a complement to a core course on Values of the Florentine Renaissance. Other electives are independent explorations of more specialized topics. Every elective, however, uses the same format: one to three weekly discussion seminars with 5-12 students, and one-to-one tutorials twice a term for the discussion of student essays.

LANGUAGES

More than 20 countries are represented in the ECLA community. English is taken for granted as the shared working language, but it is a multi-lingual community that values and supports language learning. Most ECLA students study a foreign language and instruction is currently offered in German, French and Spanish.



RECENT ELECTIVES

Numerous electives are on offer at ECLA each term. The titles below represent a selection from the past four years. Course descriptions from these and many other electives are available on the ECLA website.

The Philosophy of Greek Tragedy
Journeys to Selfhood: Reading Søren Kierkegaard
Museums, Collections and Literature
Political Economy
Cosmopolitanism
Fundamental Problems in Aesthetics
Contemporary Theories of Law and Social Justice
Education/Enlightenment
German Art: 1800 – 2000
Methods and Interpretation: the Visual Arts
Introduction to Acting & Directing
Existential Philosophy and Film
The Philosophy of Arthur Schopenhauer
Ethics in Islam: Islamic Law
Issues in Historical Thought
Continental Aesthetics
Introduction to Poetry
Mathematics as a Liberal Art
Jealousy
Mimesis
Ingmar Bergman
Moral Objectivity and Moral Subjectivity
Film Genres
Human/Animal Relations in Historical Perspective
Theories of Narrative: Reading Henry James
Words and Images: Manifestos of the Avant-garde
The Poetics of Melancholy
Bio-Ethics: Biotechnology and the Pursuit of Happiness
Fundamental Problems in Ethics
German Idealism
Music, Politics and Resistance
The Philosophy of Transcendentalism
Dynamics of Spectacle
Fundamental Problems in The Novel
Philosophy and Poetry: the Work of Friedrich Hölderlin
Fundamental Problems in Political Theory
Politics and Ethics: The Phenomenon of Totalitarianism

TEACHING FORMATS THAT FACILITATE ONGOING DIALOGUE

A world-class faculty/student ratio of 1:7 allows ECLA to make use of teaching formats that are particularly effective, but rare in higher education today. Students should expect to spend 12-18 hours in the classroom per week during term. All teaching formats used at ECLA are designed to facilitate ongoing dialogue, in and beyond the classroom.

SEMINARS

Most of the teaching at ECLA takes place in 'seminars', meetings in which a small group of students discuss an issue or a text with each other and their teacher. The normal size of an ECLA seminar is 5-10 students, and the number is never higher than 15. Each seminar is run by a faculty member, but in a manner that relies on active participation from students. The ultimate aim of a seminar is the joint exploration of some common question or text.

LECTURES

At ECLA the lecture format is used differently and less frequently than it is at most colleges. Lectures are used almost exclusively in co-taught core courses, i.e. courses taught by several ECLA faculty together. The lecture will be given by one faculty member or guest teacher, but other faculty will be present too and participate in the discussion afterwards. ECLA students, accordingly, will often see and hear their teachers in discussion. The frequent exposure to discussion among faculty, who represent different approaches to the study of values and defend very different substantial views, is an integral part of every ECLA programme.

TUTORIALS

A 'tutor' is a teacher who gives private instruction to a single student, and 'tutorial' refers to the period of private instruction. Due to its high cost, very few universities in the world offer this form of instruction at the undergraduate level. It is therefore one of the rare privileges of an ECLA education that every course involves tutorials. In a tutorial, the student and teacher discuss, one-to-one, an essay written by the student. Tutorials last at least half an hour, often more. On average, ECLA students write one essay per week, and every essay submitted is discussed in a tutorial. This is a particularly intense and efficient form of teaching, made famous by institutions such as Oxford and Cambridge.





PROGRAMMES

INTERNATIONAL SUMMER UNIVERSITY

The International Summer University, ECLA's first programme, has existed since 2000. Because of campus developments, there will be no ISU in 2010. Recent ISU themes include "The Mantle of the Prophet: Demons, Saints and Terrorists" (2008), which had a curriculum focused on Dostoyevsky, and "Montaigne and the Making of the Modern Self" (2009). During the six week programme of the latter, students and faculty explored the impact of Montaigne's moral, religious, cultural and political ideals on our understanding of the modern self. Each week, readings and discussion were organized around a general topic related to Montaigne's Essays, including the birth of the modern self in Renaissance Europe, the discovery of the New World and its consequences for the self-understanding of European cultures, Montaigne's criticism of human presumption and pride as root causes of the Wars of Religion in 16th century France, the relation between morality and politics in modern statecraft, and the place of pleasure, friendship and sexuality, and death in the care of the self. When the summer months are no longer needed for campus developments, ECLA plans to reintroduce an updated version of the ISU.

ACADEMY YEAR PROGRAMME

ECLA's first one-year programme was introduced in 2002, and continues today in a developed version as the Academy Year Programme. Students divide their time equally between core courses and electives, and may study languages if time permits. In 2010-11 the core courses are dedicated to Education and Justice in Plato's Republic, Forms of Love: Eros, Agape and Philia and The Values of the Florentine Renaissance. Most AY students have already studied for 1-3 years elsewhere and typically come to ECLA to engage, or re-engage, their disciplinary training with a broader context of moral, political, epistemological and aesthetic concerns. Some students enrol in the AY Programme immediately after high school, often inspired by a serious interest in politics, ethics, literature or art - and a wish to find an alternative in higher education to what they consider premature specialization. Alumni descriptions of the AY experience may be found at the end of this brochure.

PROJECT YEAR PROGRAMME

Another one-year programme, introduced in 2003, continues today as the Project Year Programme. Students spend almost half their time in core courses, and divide the rest between electives and a year-long individual project after which the programme is named. The individual project, arranged according to individual background and plans for the future, allows the student to pursue an old interest further, or to get acquainted with new intellectual territory. Supervised by one or two faculty members with relevant expertise, the work culminates with a 25-page essay and an oral presentation of the project to the rest of the school. The PY core course is devoted to fundamental questions about the ideals that guide the human pursuit of knowledge and understanding. In 2010-11 the topic is The Idea and Ideal of Objectivity. Normally PY students have 3-5 years of relevant academic experience when they join the programme. Some have finished the Academy Year Programme; others come to the programme with some experience of value studies from disciplines like philosophy, comparative literature, political theory, theology and art history. Many PY students plan to continue with graduate studies, and in the past five years ECLA has helped place students in some of the best graduate schools in the world, including programmes at Oxford University, New York University, Columbia University and Boston University.

BA IN VALUE STUDIES

In October 2009 the first group of ECLA students began their work towards a BA in Value Studies. It takes four years to complete the programme. Students spend the first two years at ECLA, dividing their time between common core courses and foundational studies in two of the following three areas of concentration: ART & AESTHETICS, ETHICS & POLITICAL THEORY, LITERATURE & RHETORIC. The third year is arranged for each student individually and will normally be spent studying or working somewhere else in the world. Students finish their degrees back in Berlin with a year structured around a research project supervised by ECLA faculty. Designed to provide a very high level of general education, the ECLA degree programme is especially good preparation for continued study in philosophy, literary studies, political theory and art history. The degree also provides excellent support for students interested in careers in politics, organizational work, public policy, law, journalism and the art world. Students who enrol in the programme in 2010 will receive their BA degree from Bennington College in Vermont, a Liberal Arts College accredited by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges. ECLA is in the process of applying for German State Recognition. Once recognized, ECLA will be able to grant German BA degrees.

The following pages describe the BA programme in outline. For a complete description visit the ECLA website.

BA PROGRAMME OVERVIEW

YEAR ONE	FIRST YEAR CORE COURSES		CONCENTRATION 1	FIRST YEAR ELECTIVES
TERM 1	Education and Justice in Plato's Republic		Concentration Seminar 1A	Elective 1
TERM 2	Forms of Love: Eros, Agape and Philia		Concentration Seminar 1B	Elective 2
TERM 3	Values of the Florentine Renaissance		Concentration Seminar 1C	Elective 3
YEAR TWO	SECOND YEAR CORE COURSES		CONCENTRATION 2	SECOND YEAR ELECTIVES
TERM 1	The Idea of Character	Core Elective 1	Concentration Seminar 2A	Elective 4
TERM 2	Reason, Faith & Scepticism	Core Elective 2	Concentration Seminar 2B	Elective 5
TERM 3	Property	Core Elective 3	Concentration Seminar 2C	Elective 6
YEAR THREE	Students spend the third year of the programme studying or working somewhere else in the world.			
YEAR FOUR	FOURTH YEAR CORE COURSES		INDIVIDUAL PROJECT	FOURTH YEAR ELECTIVES
TERM 1	The Idea of Objectivity 1	Reading Group 1+2	Project Preparation 1	Elective 7
TERM 2	The Idea of Objectivity 2	Reading Group 3+4	Project Preparation 2	Elective 8
TERM 3	RESEARCH SEMINARS	PROJECT WRITING PERIOD		



THE FIRST TWO YEARS IN BERLIN

The first two years of the degree programme constitute an organic whole. Together they add up to an intensive period of foundational studies in which students build a solid platform for further work, at ECLA and beyond. Students live on campus during these two years and share a room with a fellow student from another country.

CORE COURSES: ANCIENT AND MODERN VALUES

In the 17th century, French and English thinkers vigorously debated whether 'ancient' or 'modern' literature should be considered superior. Descartes and other writers had already undermined the ancient authority of Aristotle in the field of science, and now Homer was no longer automatically considered supreme in the field of literature. These debates, now known as the 'quarrel between ancients and moderns', which eventually included all fields of learning and domains of human concern, have become emblematic for fundamental and general value debates concerning the significance of tradition and the possibility of progress. It is hardly an exaggeration to say that every value discussion today is touched by related issues: discussions about politics, ethics, knowledge, art, literature and language all have their progressives and conservatives, or their moderns and ancients.

Taking their cue from these extant historical debates, the core courses in the first two years are arranged in the light of questions concerning tradition and progress. In what sense, if any, are our values 'modern'? What values did we leave behind as 'pre-modern', 'medieval' or 'ancient'? Do we ever really 'leave values behind'? Where do 'new' values come from? Are 'ancient' and 'modern' values really different? In what sense, if any, can we claim to be better off now, know better, or live in the light of finer values? Each individual core course is devoted to more concrete value questions - about justice, education, love, art, character, reason or property, for instance - but the larger questions about tradition and progress operate in the background throughout.

ELECTIVES

In each of their first two years students choose an area of concentration in which they take a prescribed course each term. These CONCENTRATION SEMINARS constitute foundational studies in the chosen area of concentration. Currently ECLA offers three areas of concentration, each constituted by two domains of interest:

ART AND AESTHETICS

ETHICS AND POLITICAL THEORY

LITERATURE AND RHETORIC

Each second year core course has a conceptual focus, but is complemented with CORE ELECTIVES that normally represent other approaches to the theme of the course. A core term on *Property*, for instance, might be complemented by core electives on *The Novels of Jane Austen*, *An Introduction to Political Economy* or *Paris in 1871*. Students shape their core experience in their second year by choosing among these core electives offered by faculty members teaching the core course.

Degree students choose their other ELECTIVES, one each term, in the light of concentration and distribution requirements. At least three relevant electives must be taken for each chosen area of concentration, and at least one elective selected to represent each approach. Students also choose several electives guided entirely by their individual interests.

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YEAR 3 OFF CAMPUS

Students spend the third year of the degree programme off campus. The standard options available are DISCIPLINARY TRAINING at another university department, LANGUAGE STUDY in another country, and INTERNSHIPS. The different options can be combined, and the distribution of credits is calculated on the basis of the student's individual plan for the year.

YEAR 4 BACK IN BERLIN

For their fourth year the BA students return to Berlin. They still live on campus, but now have a room of their own. The year is structured around a research project that builds on the work done in the first three years and functions as a capstone experience for the degree programme. The central questions of the year concern the pursuit of knowledge, and the ideals guiding that pursuit.

THE 'PROJECT YEAR' QUESTIONS

Why do we desire to know and understand? Which fundamental ideals guide, or should guide, our research – and why? How and why do we come to take an interest in some particular, limited field in which we strive for thorough understanding or expertise? How does one frame a research project? Do different objects force us to ask different questions? How and why do we choose some particular method or discipline as we approach what we are interested in? What is the value of originality, and how should one relate to an intellectual tradition in which relevant work has already been done on one's chosen topic? What do we do with our expertise vis a vis laymen, and how do we, as laymen or generalists, relate to the superior knowledge of others? Does one's expertise shape one's character? Is there such a thing as a 'knowledge society', and how does it function? What is the vocation of a scholar? What is the public role, or moral responsibilities of 'intellectuals' – or the 'educated public'?



INDIVIDUAL PROJECT

Students in their final year of the programme work on these value questions both generally and vis a vis their own special research interests. The central component of the year is a year-long research project supervised by one or two faculty members, arranged in the light of individual background, interests and plans for the future. The main task is to demarcate a field of focused inquiry and pursue it in depth, but students are also expected to reflect on their choice of problems and preferences of method. In the RESEARCH SEMINARS students have the opportunity (and challenge) to discuss the premises and findings of their project with peers whose main interests will typically lie elsewhere. The work on the project culminates with a 25-page research paper and an oral presentation of the project to the entire ECLA community.

CORE COURSE

The core course runs as a seminar for two terms and provides an occasion to study, reflect upon, and discuss current debates about the normative foundations of the human pursuit of knowledge. The fourth year core course is identical with the PY core course, currently titled *The Idea and Ideal of Objectivity*.

READING GROUPS

Reading groups represent an element of choice within the framework of the fourth year core course. The aim of a reading group is to close-read a book that might have been on the core syllabus, or that complements the syllabus in a fruitful way. Faculty are encouraged to offer reading groups that are relevant to several individual projects. Like the core course, all reading groups invite the students to reflect on the methods and ideals of research. Attendance in reading groups is restricted to fourth year students, which ensures that their level fits the advanced requirements of fourth year research projects.

FACULTY

While ECLA faculty represent significant strengths in disciplines like philosophy, literature, political theory and art history, faculty members are selected not only on the basis of excellent academic credentials, but – just as importantly – for their ability to engage in joint work on value problems that defy departmental comfort zones.

In 2009-10 the permanent faculty members are:

Aya Soika - Germany
PhD in Art History
University of Cambridge

Bruno Macaes - Portugal
PhD in Political Theory
Harvard University

Catherine Toal - Ireland
PhD in English and American Literature
Harvard University

David Hayes - USA
ABD at the Committee on Social Thought
University of Chicago

David Levine - USA
ABD in English Literature
Harvard University

Ewa Atanassow - Bulgaria
PhD from the Committee on Social Thought
University of Chicago

Geoff Lehmann - USA
ABD in Art History
Columbia University

Laura Scuriatti - Italy
PhD in English Literature
University of Reading

Matthias Hurst - Germany
Habilitation in Literature and Film Studies
Universität Heidelberg

Peter Hajnal - Hungary
PhD in Philosophy
Columbia University

Thomas Nørgaard - Denmark
DPhil in Philosophy
University of Oxford

Tracy Colony - USA
PhD in Philosophy
Katholieke Universiteit Leuven

ECLA also has a Postdoctoral Programme. In 2009-10 the Fellows are:

Judith Tønning - UK
ABD in Theology
University of Oxford

Julia Peters - Germany
PhD in Philosophy
University College, London

Sophia Vasalou - Greece
PhD in Arabic and Islamic Studies
University of Cambridge

Recent and current visiting academics include:

Bartholomew Ryan - Ireland
PhD in Philosophy
Århus University

Christian Bumke - Germany
Professor of Law
Bucerius Law School, Hamburg

Jarrell Robinson - USA
ABD at the Committee on Social Thought
University of Chicago

Katalin Makkai - Canada
PhD in Philosophy
Harvard University

Steven Maurer - USA
Department of Mathematics
Swarthmore College



GUEST TEACHERS

Whenever needed, and often just to enrich the discussion, expertise is brought in from the outside. ECLA students are taught, not just by the faculty and postdoctoral fellows, but by a stream of guest teachers who join the discussion for a day, a week or a term. Guests in recent years include:

Horst Bredekamp - Winter Term 2006-7
Department of Art History, Humboldt Universität
Core course lecture: The Symbolology of Piazza della Signoria in Florence

Terrell Carver - Spring Term 2006-7
Department of Politics, University of Bristol
Core course lecture: On Marx

David Colander - Fall Term 2008-9
Professor of Economics, Middlebury College
Evening Discussion: Economics and Liberal Education

Lorraine Daston - Fall Term 2008-9
Director, Max Planck Institute for the History of Science, Berlin
Core Seminar: On Objectivity

Edith Hall - Fall Term 2006-7
Department of Drama and Theatre, University of London, Royal Holloway
Core course lecture: Euripides and the Fragility of Virtue

Stephen Halliwell - Fall Term 2005-6
Department of Classics, University of St. Andrews
Core course lectures: Plato on Tragedy and Aristophanes' Frogs

Ira Katznelson - ISU 2009
Department of Political Science, Columbia University
Core course lecture: On Toleration

James McAllister - Fall Term 2009-10
Department of Philosophy, University of Leiden
Core course lecture: On Beauty in the Sciences

Steven Mulhall - Spring Term 2004-5
New College, University of Oxford
Core course seminars: On Stanley Cavell and On Film

Stephanie Nelson - Fall Term 2008-9
Department of Classical Studies, Boston University
Core course lecture: On Hesiod's Works and Days

James Redfield - Fall Term 2009-10
Committee on Social Thought, Chicago University
Core course lecture: Plato's Phaedrus

Jens Reich - Winter Term 2009-10
Biologist, Member of the German Ethics Council
Elective: Bio-ethics

Roger Scruton - Spring Term 2007-8
Philosopher and Writer
Evening discussion: Hegel on Property

This is just a selection.
See ECLA's website for a more complete list.

AN INTEREST IN THOUGHTFUL PRACTICE

ECLA is, first of all, a place for intellectual work. The focus on value problems, however, invites us to take an interest in thoughtful practice as well. This interest is evident in several parts of the curriculum.

STATE OF THE WORLD WEEK

ECLA's annual STATE OF THE WORLD WEEK, held in term 2, brings together students, faculty, alumni and invited guests for the exploration of some important, perhaps urgent, theme in current affairs. Lectures and seminars are given not just by academics, but by politicians, artists, social reformers, diplomats, lawyers, journalists and other people who spend their (professional) lives in close practical contact with the fundamental issues studied theoretically at ECLA. It is assumed that the voices of thoughtful experience will enrich theoretical discussions, and that theory may in turn inform practice. Recent State of the World Week topics include: New Forms of War (2006), Social Entrepreneurship (2007), Water (2008) and The Politics of Cultural Ownership (2009). Twice, in 2007 and 2008, the event won a UNESCO award for education in sustainable development. The next State of the World Week, in February 2010, will focus on The Translator. For more information about State of the World Week, see the ECLA website.

THE ITALY TRIP

The annual ITALY TRIP is perhaps ECLA's most ambitious attempt to bring theoretical and practical explorations together. The trip – which takes all AY and first year BA students to Florence – is an integral part of a term-long core course on The Values of the Florentine Renaissance. During the term, students read Dante, Machiavelli, Alberti, Boccaccio, and other authors crucial for understanding the period, the city and its aesthetic objects. Relevant works of art are studied and discussed in seminars each week. In Florence, faculty members lead tours for groups of students; and students, in turn, participate as guides by introducing works of art they work on during term. The ultimate aim of the course is to make the traditional pilgrimage to Florence more meaningful by combining it with a prolonged reflection on fundamental questions about art which this particular period and place

confronts us with so powerfully. These questions include: What sort of claim does art make on us? Does it make demands at all, or are we as human beings free to engage with art on any terms we like, or even to live a life without any real contact with art? Is the reception of art always historically conditioned? If so, does our response as viewers become richer and more meaningful when we become better historians? Is there value-free reasoning about art, or is thinking about art irreducibly aesthetic, and thus thoroughly embedded in aesthetic values, however defined? Are the creation of and response to works of art ipso facto ways of knowing?

THE STUDIO PROGRAMME

The studio programme is yet another variation on ECLA's interest in thoughtful practice. Twice a year, the director of the programme, David Levine, a New York & Berlin-based artist whose own work fuses performance, theater, and visual art - teaches electives at ECLA that ask students to engage in these practical activities in a manner that involves direct theoretical reflection on their meaning. In 2009-10, the programme includes an Introduction to Acting & Directing, an introductory visual arts class entitled Installation, and an Advanced Studio course. The first elective focuses on scene-work and staging, supplemented by readings from Stanislavski's An Actor Prepares. The class also includes a careful examination of a Chekhov play, through which participants gain a practical understanding of scene analysis and the principles of stage naturalism. In the second elective, students acquire the means to manipulate sound, light, space and video by creating a series of room-based installations. Participants are given their own studio space for the term, and when the installations are revealed, the whole community comes together to view and discuss the results. The Advanced Studio, for students with some experience in visual arts, allows greater autonomy in creating artwork, combined with theoretical readings and visits with Berlin artists.



BERLIN PROGRAMME

*Berlin ist eine Stadt, verdammt dazu,
ewig zu werden, niemals zu sein.*

Karl Scheffler, 1910

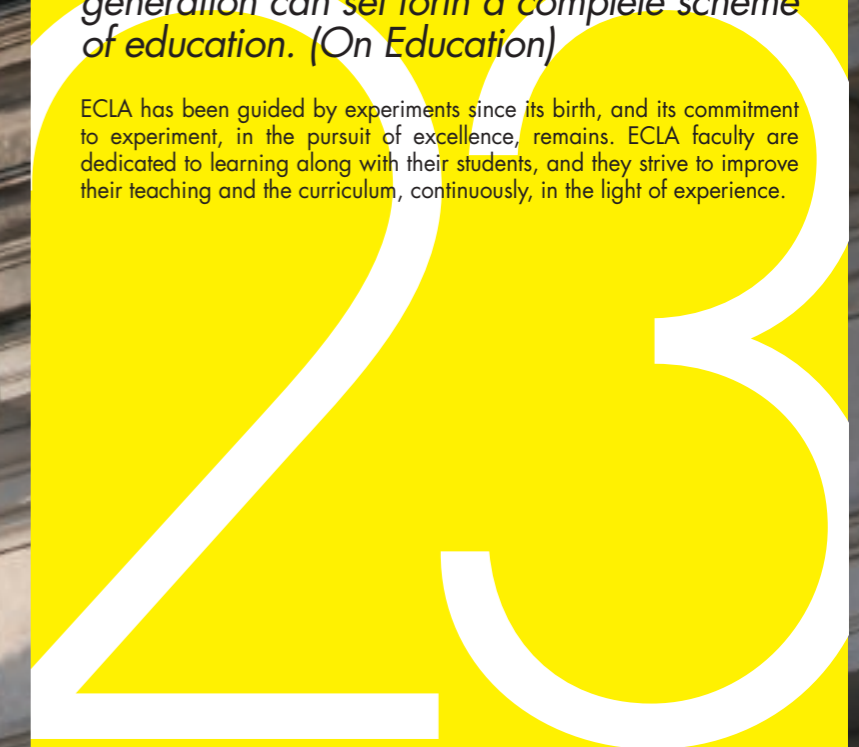
'Berlin is a city condemned forever to become, and never to be.' Interesting sites of urban development and new architecture are a tram-ride away from campus. So are the museums, concert halls and monuments of an old cultural metropolis renovated and remade. In order to make Berlin's cultural and intellectual riches an integral part of our education, we have created the Berlin Programme. In the frame of this programme, students and faculty come together to explore Berlin's cultural heritage and continued development. All students receive museum cards for the year, and may attend selected dance performances, classical concerts, lectures, plays and Berlinale films at subsidized prices. Nights out in Berlin often end with coffee and conversation in a café.

EXPERIMENTS IN EDUCATION

Like Berlin, ECLA is in the making. With the introduction of the degree programme, both the student body and the campus will grow. In order to accommodate the expansion, three new properties have been acquired in 2007-8, including an old tyre factory. But that's just the physical frame; ECLA is committed to growth in a much more fundamental sense. As Immanuel Kant once said:

People imagine, indeed, that experiments in education are unnecessary, and that we can judge from our reason whether anything is good or not. This is a great mistake, and experience teaches us that the results of an experiment are often entirely different from what we expected. Thus we see that, since we must be guided by experiment, no one generation can set forth a complete scheme of education. (On Education)

ECLA has been guided by experiments since its birth, and its commitment to experiment, in the pursuit of excellence, remains. ECLA faculty are dedicated to learning along with their students, and they strive to improve their teaching and the curriculum, continuously, in the light of experience.



CAMPUS LIFE

ECLA students live and study together on a small, green campus in a residential area of northeast Berlin. Life here is safe and materially easy, and there is plenty of time and space for the solitary part of the life of the mind. A library, a reading room and several computer rooms make it easy for students to find a calm and quiet spot for reading and writing. At the same time, occasions for dialogue and discussion abound, and not just in the classroom. A discussion begun in class might continue in the cafeteria, where students, faculty and administration have lunch together. A theme pursued in the core course may crop up again during an informal poetry night. Students and faculty get to know each other well, so discussions tend to be informal, straightforward and friendly.

ECLA is an international residential college. Every student lives on campus, and most of them share a room with a fellow student from another country. Favourite leisure-time activities include choir practice, film nights, badminton games and sauna sessions at the local sports centre, and international dinners. In the warmer months of the year the pleasant gardens lend themselves to soccer games and evenings of chess, wine and cheese.

ECLA's campus is designed as a frame for this close-knit intellectual community. 8 former DDR embassies have been renovated and now function as dorms, a library, and teaching and administration buildings. No building or garden (and so no event) is ever more than a short walk away.

The best way to get a good sense of campus life is to visit ECLA during term. If you live far away, however, have a look at the Interactive Campus Tour on the ECLA website.

IS ECLA FOR ME?

ECLA is for you if you would like to attend a college that expects students to reflect on the meaning of their education. If you are happy at a big university which 'leaves you alone', ECLA may not be for you.

ECLA is a place where performance is measured by intense and ongoing participation and preparation. If you feel comfortable at a place that asks you to prepare intensively only during examination periods, and otherwise 'leaves you alone', ECLA is not for you.

ECLA is a place where besides sharing your room with another person, you will be meeting and working together with a small group of your peers all the time. If you feel comfortable at a place where it is unnecessary to learn the names of the people that sit next to you for years on end, ECLA is not for you.

ECLA is not for everyone. Both socially and academically, it is an intense experience. But if you like what you read in this brochure, ECLA is probably a place for you!

ADMISSIONS

APPLICATION PROCEDURE

If you would like to apply for one of the ECLA programmes, follow the instructions on the ECLA website. The deadlines for application are:

DEADLINE I: 15 February 2010
Recommended for all, but particularly for students who are required to file visa applications.

DEADLINE II: 30 April 2010
Regular deadline.

LATE APPLICATIONS FOR WAITING LIST: 15 July 2010
Only possible for applicants who do not require a visa. Late applications will be processed as received, provided there are still spaces available.

FINANCIAL AID

Philanthropic grants allow ECLA to have a need-blind admissions policy and no qualified student is turned away for lack of funding. Financial aid decisions are made on an individual basis and do not influence the admissions process.

NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY

The European College of Liberal Arts Berlin admits students of any race, colour, national origin, ethnic origin, sex, gender identity, religion, sexual orientation, and age to all the rights, privileges, programmes, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the college. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, colour, national origin, ethnic origin, sex, gender identity, religion, sexual orientation, and age in administration of its educational policies, admission policies, scholarship and loan programmes, and athletic and other school-administered programmes.

European College of Liberal Arts
Platanenstrasse 24
13156 Berlin, Germany
Phone + 49 (0) 30 437330
Fax + 49 (0) 30 43733100

ADMISSIONS INQUIRIES

admissions@ecla.de, www.ecla.de



ALUMNI

We have asked a number of our alumni to reflect on their ECLA experience in terms of academic and personal growth. You will find several of these accounts - which are unedited - on the ECLA website, but here are two...

DIANA MARIAN

*Attended: Academy Year 2002/03 & Project Year 2003/04
After ECLA: PhD student, Political Theory, New York University*

Before I joined ECLA, I had already experienced a few good years at a major public university. I saw myself as having some of the important skills that prepare a student for the usefulness of life – a decent mastery of my discipline’s academic jargon, a reasonably analytic mind and some doses of sarcasm to supplant the lack of the rest.

But then I ended up at ECLA – a revolutionary, and by most standards, an antiquated place. A place which, in spite of the wide range of disciplines of its faculty, had some coherent and unfashionably concrete ideas about education. A place that professed a peculiar suspicion against mental props of all kinds – whether in the shape of ideological mottos, fancy slogans or received shortcuts. A place with doubters and seekers who insisted on seeing the world in terms of problems rather than methods. A place where no degree would grant you anything by default, whether exclusive access to truth or a privileged place at the cafeteria table. Finally, a place with a strong sense of community, built around equals with a rare capacity for serious thought and just as serious sense of fun.

After a year of ECLA, my possession of an academic jargon felt more like a handicap than a virtue. My previously ‘analytical’ mind seemed, in retrospect, a mere sleepwalker through a jumble of received ideas. And in the middle of it all, I was gaining friends about to become lifetime friends, a hopeless infatuation with Berlin and a constant awareness that I was living through the best years of my young adult life. Three years after ECLA, part of a major institution of higher education in the United States, I am still holding on to those unfashionable ECLA things. And those ECLA teachers and lifetime friends are still my signposts for how well I am doing.

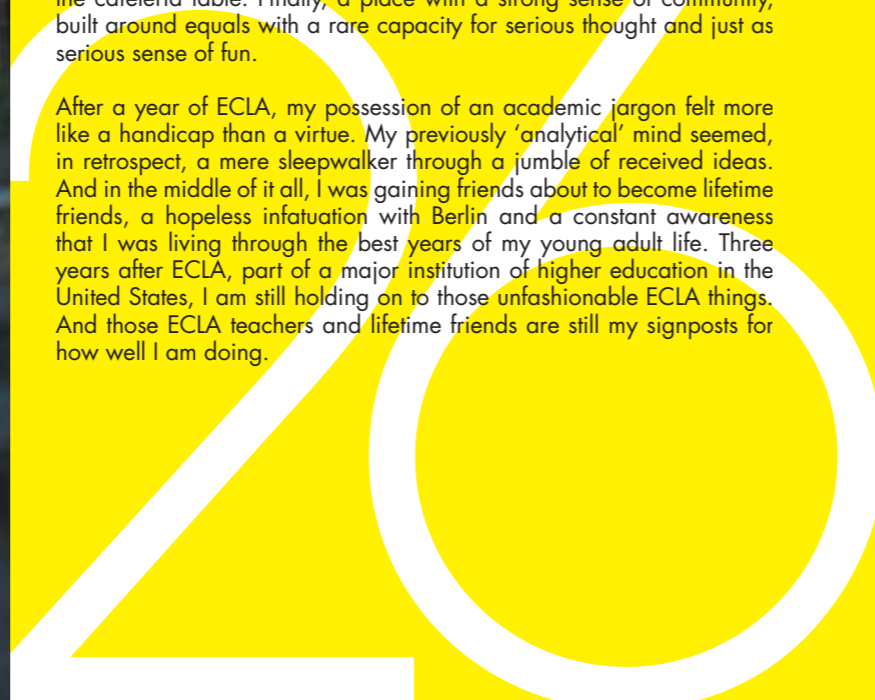
ADINA SCORTESCU

*Attended: Academy Year 2004/05 & Project Year 2005/06
After ECLA: Student, Le Cordon Bleu - Académie d’Art Culinaire, Paris*

I first came to ECLA for the summer university because I needed an efficient broken-heart remedy; then I returned home for one year to finish my journalism studies. I came back for the academy year with the conviction that journalism is not my thing and that I should explore my other interests. I stayed for the project year thinking it would be a good preparation for a Master’s degree in London. When I graduated, I was sure about two things: I don’t want to go back to the ‘regular’ type of schooling; I’d like my children to have the chance of attending ECLA.

I got a lot during that period of time: the pleasure of working directly with the text, devoid of the crutches of secondary literature, then the stress of dealing with many sources; an addiction to German rye bread, a new sport – going to the sauna, some friends, one boyfriend, the time to think, a space where I could pursue my theatre-related fantasies, the chance of having the teachers I had dreamed of; and also three extra kilos, an interest in ethics, an inclination towards basic, sensual activities that pushed me to go on to study pastry, which is what I’m currently doing. If it’s hard for you to imagine a connection between philosophy or literature and baking cakes, then - I’m sorry to let you know - you’re not the ECLA type; not yet at least. If you come to ECLA and you’re not that type of person, then you’ll probably experience it as a continuous stepping on your toes which is painful and doesn’t let you move on with your normal life. But if you are, your experience will be more like having received a blow to your head that made you suddenly feel excited, if not happy.

I was lucky; to me it felt like happiness. However, I did need more than one blow before I became comfortable with being surrounded by the same small group of people all day long, in the cafeteria, in the lecture hall, in the garden, even in the sauna. ‘Being at ECLA is like being in your pyjamas all the time’, this is how one of our teachers once explained why it is so demanding. As far as I’m concerned, I can’t think of a better way to spend my life.





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Phone + 49 (0) 30 437330, Fax + 49 (0) 30 43733100, Admissions Inquiries: admissions@ecla.de, www.ecla.de