

# Media Release



UNIVERSITY  
OF WOLLONGONG  
AUSTRALIA

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## Transformative degree to examine intellectual foundations of Western civilisation

### **UOW THE FIRST UNIVERSITY TO PARTNER WITH RAMSAY CENTRE**

The University of Wollongong (UOW) will partner with the Ramsay Centre for Western Civilisation to deliver a new Bachelor of Arts in Western Civilisation that will provide students with a world-class liberal arts education.

Through a specially designed curriculum, students will engage directly with great works central to Western civilisation, asking and evaluating possible answers to some of the deepest and most abiding philosophical questions.

UOW is the first Australian university to sign an agreement with the Ramsay Centre and is expected to be one of a select group of universities nationwide to eventually offer a version of a Western Civilisation degree.

The University intends to create a new School of Liberal Arts within its Faculty of Law, Humanities and Arts, under the directorship of Senior Professor Daniel Hutto, who has led successful Philosophy programs in Australia and the UK. The School will be housed in a specially refurbished space on its Wollongong Campus and staffed by academics specifically recruited to teach the new degree.

The interdisciplinary curriculum will focus on a detailed examination of the classic intellectual and artistic masterpieces of the Western tradition that demand and repay careful philosophical attention.

The degree, to be taught in small classes, will encourage critical reflection and include opportunities for students to travel overseas to have first-hand experience of exemplars of Western culture, art and architecture.

The Bachelor of Arts (Western Civilisation) program has been designed to enable students to combine their studies with other disciplines or to complete the program as part of a double degree.

The Ramsay Centre will fund around 150 scholarships for students to undertake the program and the appointment of 10 academics to teach it.

Professor Theo Farrell, Executive Dean of the Faculty of Law, Humanities and the Arts, who has led UOW's engagement with the Ramsay Centre over the last 12 months, said: "This partnership will see a major investment in humanities and the arts at UOW, enabling us to provide an exceptional educational experience for our students by offering study opportunities not currently available in our Faculty.

"I wish to commend Simon Haines and colleagues at the Ramsay Centre for their constructive spirit and gentle civility throughout our discussions, all of which augur well for a most successful partnership."

Professor Farrell also emphasised UOW's track record in recruiting students from disadvantaged backgrounds.

"We aim to have a diverse pool of students in our new Bachelor of Arts (Western Civilisation). A dedicated UOW recruitment officer will seek out the brightest inquiring minds for this degree, and the generous scholarships provided by the Ramsay Centre will enable students to undertake this degree regardless of their financial circumstances."

Professor Farrell added, "What I find especially exciting about this partnership is the potential to contribute to the life-enhancement and social mobility of our students and the nurturing of future leaders."

Senior Professor Hutto emphasised the ways that this philosophically-focused Bachelor of Arts in Western Civilisation is designed to challenge students intellectually:

“By entering into conversation with some of the greatest thinkers down through the ages, the Bachelor of Arts (Western Civilisation) will intimately acquaint students with the central ideas, values and traditions of Western art and thought.”

“Our liberal arts program will employ innovative teaching methods designed to challenge students to think critically about the material they encounter throughout their studies. All of our students will be asked to reflect upon and give reasons for holding the particular perspectives they choose to adopt.”

The Ramsay Centre for Western Civilisation was launched in 2017 following a generous endowment by the late Australian businessman Paul Ramsay AO. Mr Ramsay, who founded Ramsay Health Care, sought to invigorate the study of humanities and liberal arts in Australia and promote interest in, and awareness of, Western civilisation.

Vice-Chancellor Professor Paul Wellings CBE said the partnership between the University and the Ramsay Centre was a testament to UOW’s academic and teaching excellence, and its global reputation.

“It’s an honour to be the first university to partner with the Ramsay Centre as the recipient of this major philanthropic gift and to be one of a small number of universities selected to offer this sort of unique and transformative program,” Professor Wellings said.

“UOW has long been committed to offering a learning environment that supports academic freedom and equips students to become broad-minded, intellectually fearless, and independent thinking graduates.

“Our personalised approach to students has repeatedly delivered excellent results in the Australian Government’s Quality Indicators for Learning and Teaching (QILT) and this year earned international recognition with a Global Teaching Excellence Spotlight Award.

“The world-class academics who will be recruited to teach this degree will embody this same commitment to teaching and research excellence as they inspire talented students to engage with and critically examine the ideas and intellectual works that underpin Western civilisation.

“We look forward to working with the Ramsay Centre to realise our ambitious vision for this new interdisciplinary degree.”

The Bachelor of Arts in Western Civilisation will be offered from 2020.

## **ABOUT THE UNIVERSITY OF WOLLONGONG**

The University of Wollongong (UOW) is a research-intensive university with campuses in Australia, Dubai and Hong Kong, and teaching and research partnerships across the world.

UOW enjoys an outstanding reputation for teaching across a broad range of disciplines, with its commitment to students evident in its graduates - widely recognised for their capability, quality and success. UOW’s 149,000-strong alumni community spans 179 countries.

UOW ranked 16th in the world in the QS Top 50 under 50 Rankings 2019; number 1 in New South Wales in the Australian Government’s Quality Indicators for Learning and Teaching (QILT) 2018 and is among the top 250 globally ranked universities. UOW received a Spotlight Award in the 2018 Global Teaching Excellence Awards and was the only Australian university shortlisted for the award in two consecutive years.

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