How does the Core work? What do students gain from it? Marcella shares the story of her academic career.

**1st year**

Summer Internship: Advanced Italian in Rome

- **Autumn Quarter**: Readings in World Literature
- **Italian 101**
- My family speaks a dialect of Italian, but they never taught it to me, so I started from the beginning! Ciao, mi chiamo Marcella.
- **Calculus 131**

**Winter Quarter**: Metabolism and Exercise

- **Italian 102**
- I recently ran into my old professor—over two years since I had him—and he not only remembered me but stopped to talk and wanted to know how everything was going in my life.

**Spring Quarter**: Readings in World Literature

- **Italian 103**
- **Calculus 132**
- I’m interested in broadcast journalism, so I decided to gear my career towards that direction.

**2nd year**

**Autumn Quarter**: Critical Videogame Studies

- **Italian 201**
- Self, Culture, and Society
- We studied great thinkers from Durkheim to Freud. The class progresses from a discussion on the social theories of economics, to one on the lived experiences of culture, to one on the concepts of self and psychology. I really enjoyed conversations with my classmates on issues of class, identity, and even magic!

**Winter Quarter**: Chemistry for an Alternative Energy Economy

- **Self, Culture, and Society**
- Shakespeare II: Tragedies and Romances

**Spring Quarter**: Theories of Media

- **Thinking with Race in Medieval England**
- Global Warming
- I never knew much about the science behind global warming until I took this class.

**3rd year**

**Autumn Quarter (Studies Abroad)**

- **Advanced Italian in Rome**
- Rome: Antiquity to Baroque
- Ho amato l’Italia! We studied in Italy for 10 weeks— we were based in Rome, but also traveled to other parts of Italy for field trips. I walked past the Pantheon every day on my way to Italian class! We maintained the discussion-based class structure from UChicago, but had those discussions on-site at the landmarks we were studying.

**Winter Quarter**: Introduction to Poetry

- **History and Theory of Drama**
- The professor was wonderful! I’d heard he was one of the greatest Shakespeare scholars alive, and after taking his class I definitely believe it.

**Spring Quarter**: Documentary Production I

- **Documentary for Radio**
- We studied great thinkers from Durkheim to Freud. The class progresses from a discussion on the social theories of economics, to one on the lived experiences of culture, to one on the concepts of self and psychology. I really enjoyed conversations with my classmates on issues of class, identity, and even magic!

**4th year**

**Autumn Quarter**: Documentary Production I

- **I’m interested in broadcast journalism, so this class was geared towards my career aspirations.**
- **Beginning Screenwriting**
- **History and Theory of Drama**
- **Theater and Performance Studies BA Colloquium**

**Winter Quarter**: Writing the Graphic Novel

- **History and Theory of Drama**
- **Theater and Performance Studies BA Colloquium**

- The projects in our colloquium were all so different, but we realized that they were all somehow connected. That, to me, is the Core in a nutshell.

- **Multidisciplinary Study of American Culture**

**Spring Quarter**: Acting Workshop

- **Writing the Graphic Novel**
- We explored texts and film from hieroglyphics to Hitchcock and learned about the business side of writing graphic novels.

- **Making Scenes: A Literary History of Small"**

**Experience**

“Education is not to reform students or amuse them or to make them expert technicians. It is to unsettle their minds; widen their horizons, inflame their intellects, teach them to think straight, if possible.”

Robert Maynard Hutchins
President of the University of Chicago, 1929–51

A University of Chicago education is more than a set of skills or a rite of passage. It is a lifelong experience—joining a conversation that spans many cultures and disciplines.

The Core brings undergraduates and faculty members together in this wide-ranging conversation. Small, discussion-based classes and an emphasis on primary texts evoke the debates that have shaped the world we live in. We examine—and reexamine—questions that philosophers, psychologists, economists, biologists, writers, and social theorists have been grappling with for centuries:

- What defines the human experience?
- Are humans molded by genetics, culture, and history, or by an underlying human nature?
- How should we understand rational thought? Is it independent of context?
The Core: The Building Blocks

Most Core courses come in integrated, often interdisciplinary, sequences. Students choose their courses in consultation with their College Advisers and faculty counselors.

1. Humanities (2–3 courses)
   Students engage with literary, historical, and philosophical texts through the Humanities Core in the first year.
   Sample courses
   - Greece and Rome: Texts, Traditions, Transformations
   - Readings in World Literature
   - Human Being and Citizen
   - Reading Cultures: Collection, Travel, Exchange
   - Media Aesthetics: Image, Text, Sound
   Sample texts
   - Homer, Iliad
   - Aristotle, Poetics
   - Ralph Ellison, Invisible Man
   - Fritz Lang, Metropolis (1927)
   - Susan Sontag, "Notes on 'Camp'

2. Social Sciences (3 courses)
   Students examine how societies are organized through the Social Sciences Core, usually in the first or second year.
   Sample courses
   - Self, Culture, and Society
   - Power, Identity, Resistance
   - Mind
   - Classics of Social and Political Thought
   - Social Science Inquiry
   Sample texts
   - Frantz Fanon, Black Skin, White Masks
   - Adam Smith, The Wealth of Nations
   - Karl Marx, Capital: Critique of Political Economy
   - Simone de Beauvoir, The Second Sex
   - Plato, Republic
   - Thomas Hobbes, Leviathan

3. Civilization (2–3 courses)
   Students encounter the history, culture, and literature of an area of the world either on our campus or through one of our study abroad programs.
   Sample courses
   - History of European Civilization
   - Jewish Civilization
   - America in World Civilization
   - Jerusalem in Middle Eastern Civilizations (in Jerusalem, Israel)
   - Beijing: East Asian Civilizations (in Beijing, China)
   - Civilization in the Western Mediterranean (in Barcelona, Spain)

4. Art, Music, or Drama (1–2 courses)
   Students choose among courses in the theory or practice of the arts in our Art History, Music, Theater and Performance Studies, Creative Writing, or Visual Arts programs.
   Sample courses
   - Frank-Lloyd Wright in Chicago and Beyond
   - Introduction to Western Art Music
   - Visual Language
   - Staging Terror

5. Biological Sciences (2–3 courses)
   Students choose among course options that explore the process of scientific inquiry in the biological sciences.
   Sample courses
   - The Principles of Microbiology/Global Infectious Diseases
   - Metabolism and Exercise
   - Life through a Genomic Lens
   - Introduction to Social Neuroscience
   Credit may be granted through Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate, or placement exams.

6. Physical Sciences (2–3 courses)
   Students are exposed to scientific observation and reasoning in Core physical sciences courses.
   Sample courses
   - Modern Physics
   - Global Warming: Understanding the Forecast
   - Black Holes
   - Chemistry and the Atmosphere
   Credit may be granted through Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate, or placement exams.

7. Mathematics (1–2 courses)
   Students develop skills in formal reasoning and logic in mathematics courses.
   Sample courses
   - Calculus
   - Elementary Statistics
   - Multimedia Programming as an Interdisciplinary Art
   - Honors Introduction to Computer Science
   Credit may be granted through Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate, or placement exams.

8. Foreign Language
   Students are expected to demonstrate language skills equivalent to one year of college study.
   Among the many languages offered are
   - American Sign Language
   - Arabic
   - Chinese
   - Portuguese
   - Urdu
   Credit may be granted through Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate, or placement exams.

“The Core is premised in part on the conviction that there are key critical skills necessary not only to prepare you to master a discipline once you’ve decided which one you’d like to take up, but also to give you the capacity to view your chosen discipline from a point a little bit outside of its claims and justifications. This ‘disciplinary methodology’ is to take ideas quite seriously. (And if there’s anything that defines the University of Chicago, it is taking ideas seriously.) To take one’s ideas seriously is to believe that they will produce good results when applied to the world.”

Kenneth Warren
FairTaxr Core Distinguished Service Professor; Department of English; Center for the Study of Race, Politics, and Culture; and Committee on Interdisciplinary Studies in the Humanities