Marcella shares the story of her academic career.

SPRING 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, m chiffaro Marcella.

Calculus 131

WINTER QUARTER

Metabolism and Exercise

Such a cool class! 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.

Readings in World Literature
Italian 102

Calculus 132

SPRING QUARTER

Metabolism and Nutrition

Readings in World Literature

This was a great chance to dive into books I might never have picked up otherwise.

Reading the Suburbs

We approached classic 20th century American literature with an eye to the role that place and space play in shaping the American experience.

Italian 103

1st year

AUTUMN QUARTER

Readings in World Literature

Italian 101

Self, Culture, and Society

We studied great thinkers from Dunhuang 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!

Calculus 131

WINTER QUARTER

Self, Culture, and Society

Italian 102

Calculus 132

SPRING QUARTER

Theories of Media

Global Warming

I really didn’t know much about the science behind global warming until I took this class.

Self, Culture, and Society

2nd year

AUTUMN QUARTER

Critical Videogame Studies

Italian 201

Self, Culture, and Society

We studied great thinkers from Dunhuang 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!

Calculus 131

WINTER QUARTER

Italian 202

Chemistry for an Alternative Energy Economy

Self, Culture, and Society

Shakespeare II: Tragedies and Romances

SPRING QUARTER

Introduction to Genre: Wizards

Italian 211

Strategy

Summer Internship: Fox News Chicago Investigative Unit

Self, Culture, and Society

3rd year

AUTUMN QUARTER

Advanced Italian in Rome

Rome: Antiquity to Baroque

He amoato 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.

Calculus 131

WINTER QUARTER

Documentary Production I

Italian 201

Critical Videogame Studies

Cinemania: Movies and Madness

Academic and Professional Writing

SPRING QUARTER

Introduction to Poetry

Italian 211

History and Theory of Drama

Drama: Embodiment and Transformation

Introduction to Genre: Wizards

Italian 211

Strategy

Summer Internship: Fox News Chicago Investigative Unit

Self, Culture, and Society

4th year

AUTUMN QUARTER

History of Smell

Making Scents: A Literary Indulgence

Patterns in Chemistry

El Dorado: The Spanish American Experience

History and Theory of Drama

Self, Culture, and Society

WINTER QUARTER

Documentary Production I

Italian 201

Critical Videogame Studies

Cinemania: Movies and Madness

Academic and Professional Writing

SPRING QUARTER

History of Smell

Making Scents: A Literary Indulgence

Patterns in Chemistry

El Dorado: The Spanish American Experience

History and Theory of Drama

Drama: Embodiment and Transformation

Introduction to Poetry

Italian 211

History and Theory of Drama

Self, Culture, and Society

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?

Robert Maynard Hutchins
President of the University of Chicago, 1929–31

“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.”

The Core offers broad exposure to the >
> arts and sciences so that all students gain a multitude of perspectives regardless of their major. In the University of Chicago community, a building mathematician, a biology research assistant, and a linguistics enthusiast can gather around the same table to examine a given issue or text. In the classroom, students bring their growing exposure in a multitude of fields to bear on a piece of literature, a painting, or a philosophical tract. Students enrich the communal reading of a text by using mathematical principles or laws of physical science to examine a writer’s musings on memory, for example.

Discussions that start in the classroom quickly spread to coffee shops, House Tables, and residence hall lounges, where veterans of the Core, professors, and students currently enrolled in Core courses continue to develop and share ideas. This conversational experience kindles enduring relationships between undergraduates and faculty, while the Core’s methods of inquiry help students develop passions that guide them in their academic choices.

Students complete the Core with a heightened appreciation of enduring questions and sharpened skills in close reading, analytical writing, and critical thinking. By learning how others have posed big questions, they take up the challenge to ask their own. The result is transformative: students better understand themselves, their lives, and society, all while gaining skills applicable to their academic and professional futures.

Larry McEnery AM’80, Senior Lecturer, Humanities Collegiate Division; Director of University Writing Programs

> “I treasure my Core courses because they carve out time and space for complexity. To be sure, we’re often pushed to simplify—the need to act often justifies seeing things as simple. But we’re complex creatures; our lives are complex experiences; the world is a complex place. For me, the Core is a rare and precious opportunity to uncover complexity and give it power; I hope my students walk away with the skills, and perhaps a taste, for grappling with it.”

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: A Critique of Political Economy
     - Simona 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

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

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

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

“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 ‘outsider perspective’ is important because to believe in the incomparable power of a 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

Fairfax M. Cone Distinguished Service Professor; Department of English; Center for the Study of Race, Politics, and Culture; and Committee on Interdisciplinary Studies in the Humanities