

Expert Available

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ACU announces Director of Ramsay Program in Western Civilisation

Australian Catholic University is delighted to announce the appointment of the inaugural Director of the ACU Ramsay Program in Western Civilisation, Professor Robert Carver, who will join ACU on 4 January 2021.

Professor Carver's main teaching and research interests lie in Renaissance literature, Renaissance humanism, the influence of classical texts and ideas on Western culture, and the origins and development of the novel – from ancient prose fiction to contemporary Australian writing.

Professor Carver said he was honoured by the appointment and energized by the prospect of working with the Ramsay Centre and with colleagues and students at ACU.

"The Ramsay Centre has made an unprecedented investment in humanities education in Australia and the funding has come at a crucial time.

"This is a wonderful opportunity to draw on the very best of the Australian and British pedagogical traditions, and stir into that mix something extra – the 'Great Books' approach to teaching liberal arts."

Professor Carver said the Ramsay Program would provide students with an alternative to the "tyranny of presentism".

"One of the functions of a humanities department is to preserve what has been passed down through millennia – to act as a granary or treasure-house, an ark or an armoury. But it must also be a laboratory – a place where texts, artefacts, ideas, ideologies, and so on are analysed, critiqued, dissected, anatomized, and (where possible or appropriate) reassembled.

"The concordat between ACU and the Ramsay Centre provides an opportunity to create, within a Catholic institution, one of the most intellectually diverse and dynamic curricula in the world. In a time of global crisis, intense polarization of attitudes, the erosion of civil discourse, and attacks on the very notion of academic freedom, we aim to reawaken curiosity, to rekindle delight in the richly variegated fabric of the civilisation to which we all happen (whether we like it or not!) to be heirs."

Professor Carver was born and raised in Adelaide. Graduating from ANU with a University Medal in English and Latin, he won a Commonwealth Scholarship to Magdalen College, Oxford, where he was awarded his doctorate (DPhil) in 1992. Following stints as Junior Research Fellow (and College Lecturer) at Trinity College, Oxford, and British Academy Postdoctoral Fellow, he taught at Oriel College, Oxford before moving to the University of Durham in 1997. At Durham, he served as Lecturer, Senior Lecturer, and Associate Professor of Renaissance Literature in the Department of English Studies, taking on the role of Deputy Head of the Faculty of Arts and Humanities between 2007 and 2010.

His publications include an Oxford Classical Monograph, *The Protean Ass: The Metamorphoses of Apuleius from Antiquity to the Renaissance* (OUP, 2007), translations from the Latin writings of the twelfth-century mystic Hildegard of Bingen, and numerous scholarly articles on ancient, medieval, and Renaissance literature.

Current projects include a critical edition of William Adlington's translation of *The Golden Asse of Lucius Apuleius* (1566), and an extended study of the relationship between ancient prose fiction and the so-called "Rise of the Novel". In the field of creative writing, Professor Carver has published poems and short stories in Australia, the UK, and the US.

"The Faculty is very pleased to welcome Professor Carver to lead the Western Civilisation program at ACU. Professor Carver's rich experience and expertise will underpin this very exciting new program. Through the generous support of the Ramsay Centre for Western Civilisation, students will be offered an outstanding opportunity to receive one of 30 scholarships of up to \$30 000 per year. Scholarship students will also be offered sponsored overseas travel. The program will be taught in a new purpose-built space on our North Sydney campus," said Professor Elizabeth Labone, Executive Dean of the Faculty of Education and Arts.

ACU's Ramsay Centre will join with other Ramsay Programs at the University of Wollongong and University of Queensland to form a community of scholars teaching the most exciting texts (from Homer to Walcott, Plato to Wittgenstein, Aquinas to Ratzinger) to students ready to be energised by the rich dialogue and interdisciplinarity of a genuine liberal arts program. The University is delighted to welcome Professor Carver to his new leadership position and is committed to supporting the Ramsay Program in helping revitalise humanities education throughout Australia.

Interested students should apply now for very generous scholarships in the BA (Western Civilisation).

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