

THE FORUM ROMANUM

News from the University of Dallas Eugene Constantin Rome Campus at Due Santi



*Spring 2009 UD Rome Students and Dr. Peter Hatlie in Greece.
Photo by Jennifer Brown.*

Greece is the Word

by Brad Blue,
Visiting Assistant Professor of Philosophy

This Spring, Rome students read the *Phaedo*, the *Clouds*, and the *History of the Peloponnesian War*. In the *Phaedo*, Socrates discusses the immortality of the soul. In the *Clouds*, Socrates teaches Pheidippides the art of refutation. And in the *History*, Alcibiades persuades the Athenians to invade Sicily. These texts are important for the separate studies of philosophy, poetry, and history. But what, if anything, do they have to do with each other? During the Rome semester, this sort of question—one that invites dialogue between the various disciplines—is encouraged in many ways. Perhaps the strongest encouragement comes from the very places that are visited in the course of the Rome semester. In March students and faculty traveled together to Athens. There, the prison in which Socrates died, the stage on which Pheidippides beat his father, and the podium on which Alcibiades swayed the Assembly, speak to one other. For those who can hear them, the conversation is worth listening to.

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WHY ROME MATTERS

Dr. Scott Crider

*Associate Professor of English and
Director of the Writing Program*

Like Janus, the word “Rome” has two faces: “Rome” is the city (a “there”), and “Rome” is the moment in your life when you lived there, a moment that stays with you (a “here”). From the here of now, it is ten years since my wife, son and I left then for there.

Cicero would have it that culture gathers scattered humanity, and the city of Rome is such a gathering. Like all great cities, it attracts from afar, and every small epoch is a distinct gathering. What, then, is Rome? For me, it is its streets and piazzas, the outside spaces created by its buildings, spaces in which those attracted to the city move and gather. Rome is the gathering of those there at any moment. I used to take my son—then a little boy—into the city to explore. On a lucid day in a cafe in Piazza Santa Maria in Trastevere, he drank fresh orange juice and chirped about what he’d seen.

Yet the city then scatters many of those who gathered there for a time: it becomes a remembered city of one’s soul, a memory of unendurable beauty. Time is a distension of the mind, for Augustine, and the nostalgia for Rome that Romans feel is the sweet pain between there and here, then and now. Rome is a distension of the mind, an interior city where I see my son, now a young man, as a little boy.

The historical reach of Rome—the presence of its past—figures human life: no moment dies as we pass. We somehow carry it all with us, like Aeneas bearing household gods. Rome is the *caput mundi* because it conquers the gathered; scattered, they remain its subjects.

Those who remember Rome, those who dwell there now, perhaps even those who prepare to arrive: all are gathered together into the city of soul that matters because, as Montale puts it, “*La vita che sembrava / vasta è più breve del tuo fazzoletto* [‘The life that seemed / vast is briefer than your handkerchief’].” The eternal city gathers brief life.



The Death of Socrates by Jacques Louis David, 1787, Oil on Canvas, Metropolitan Museum of Art

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In 399 B.C., Socrates was charged with crimes against the city: he was accused of being an atheist and of corrupting the young. In his defense (recounted in Plato's *Apology*), Socrates claims that these charges arose from an earlier accusation, one made years before in the Theater of Dionysus. The earlier accusation "goes something like this: Socrates is guilty of wrongdoing in that he busies himself studying things in the sky and below the earth; he makes the worse into the stronger argument, and he teaches these same things to others. You have seen this yourselves in the comedy of Aristophanes." The reference is to the *Clouds*. According to Socrates, his first accuser was the poet, Aristophanes.

The *Clouds* tells of a young man, Pheidippides, whose taste for horses and chariots has left his father, Strepsiades, in debt. Unable to pay, Strepsiades sends his son to Socrates to learn the art of refutation. With a Socratic education, Pheidippides will be able to refute the debtors. Unfortunately for Strepsiades, Pheidippides learns too well. "With fine-spun words and arguments," he justifies beating his own father. This is the wisdom of Socrates—Pheidippides has learned "to overturn the just argument by crooked speech," and thereby,

to justify any action. This, in turn, has led him to "despise the established laws." His father rights this wrong by setting fire to Socrates' school. The play ends with Socrates exclaiming, "I'm choking to death, most miserably." The *Clouds* was first performed at the Panathenaic festival in 424 B.C., and would have been seen by most of the city. Those who were persuaded by Aristophanes became Socrates' accusers.

In his defense to the jury, Socrates points out that the prosecutors have failed to name any young men whom he has corrupted. How could Socrates be convicted without evidence? Even if the jurors had been persuaded by Aristophanes, the prosecutors could hardly depend on Pheidippides as evidence. Or could they? Perhaps the jury recognized Pheidippides in another young follower of Socrates' by the name of Alcibiades.

Alcibiades was a brilliant aristocrat who rose to prominence in Athens as a statesman and general. He was also a close friend and follower of Socrates' (their relationship is described in Plato's *Symposium*). In 415 B.C., Alcibiades persuaded the Assembly to support an invasion of Sicily. He was chosen to lead the expedition; however, before the ships set sail, he was accused of the capital crime of sacri-

lege. After his arrival in Sicily, Alcibiades was recalled to Athens to stand trial. Instead of returning, he fled to Sparta. This decision, no doubt, confirmed his guilt in the eyes of the Athenians, and he was sentenced to death in absentia. The invasion he had advocated was a complete disaster: hundreds of ships and thousands of soldiers were lost. The defeat proved fatal to Athens, and in 404 B.C., the city fell.

Five years after the fall of Athens, Socrates was put to death. The last moments of his life are dramatically portrayed in the *Phaedo*. Why was he convicted? Socrates tells us that Aristophanes is to blame. But a play, however damning, is still a work of fiction. For the accusation to become real, Pheidippides would have to come to life in Athens. Perhaps he did. Consider the character of Pheidippides. He was a young aristocrat who spent excessively on horses and chariots. He made the worse into the stronger argument. He despised the law. And he beat his own father. Is this not Alcibiades? According to Thucydides, Alcibiades indulged his tastes "beyond what his real means would bear, both in keeping horses and in the rest of his expenditures." In his speech to the Assembly, he made the worse into the stronger argument. (Clearly, his argument was the worse—the invasion ended in failure. Nevertheless, his skill as an orator made it the stronger.) He was accused of despising the law. And finally, his counsel to the Spartans was instrumental in the defeat of Athens—he 'beat his father.' Perhaps in the eyes of the jury, Aristophanes' accusation was confirmed in Alcibiades.

In March, the Rome students walked past the Theater of Dionysus, where the *Clouds* was first performed. They walked past the prison where Socrates was put to death. And they ascended the Pnyx, a hilltop overlooking the city, where the Athenian Assembly met. There, Alcibiades had persuaded his fellow Athenians to invade Sicily. And there, the students were asked to consider the relation between Socrates, Pheidippides, and Alcibiades. To do so is to begin to consider the relation between philosophy, poetry and history. It is a question worth considering.

Contemporary Italian Culture Class Gives Students a Taste of Modern Italian Life

By Gabbi Chee, Spring '09 Rome Student

At the University of Dallas, where students and teachers are primarily interested in what the cultures of the past have to offer to those of us living today, a class called Contemporary Italian Culture might seem out of place. But it makes perfect sense on the Rome campus, a place surrounded by Italian culture.

This is the first semester that the one-credit course has been offered on the Rome campus. The class of 33 students, a number that includes several auditors, is led by Dr. Gregory Roper and is structured as 10 class meetings which include lectures, films, and on-site visits.

Dr. Roper was originally planning on teaching a course called People and Places of the European Past as he did last semester. The idea of a Contemporary Italian Culture class was not even conceived until a staff meeting one week before classes started.

Acknowledging that the Due Santi campus can become “an American compound,” Dr. Roper said, “we thought it would be good to give the students more contact with the culture around them.” Office manager Silvia De Simone, a native-born Italian, was very enthusiastic about the class. She, along with Dr. Laura Flusche, helped Roper compile

a schedule with something for everyone, which Dr. Roper hopes will ultimately allow students to have “a little more interaction with the culture and the country they come to call home for four months.”

Before the Greece trip, students enrolled in the class had the chance to go to a Roma soccer game, to attend lectures on Italian food and politics, and to visit the Marino Instituto D’Arte. An economics lecture, a few films, and a walking tour of governmental buildings are features of the second half of the semester.

Sophomore psychology major Leslie Eslava sees the class as a way to keep from being “touristy.” Eslava “really enjoyed getting to go to the art school and getting to see what Italian students do and what they learn.” And for Eslava, the class “helps add contrast,” in terms of both ancient to modern, and American to Italian culture.

Chris Burton, a sophomore business major, said, “it’s really nice to know what’s going on in the modern world.” Burton was particularly interested in the hands-on approach of the course. His experience as a student of the Italian language has also helped to enrich his Rome experience.



UD Rome's Much-Loved "Mensa Ladies" Labor Tirelessly Each Semester to Prepare Delicious Meals but They Also Provide Students with Important Lessons About Eating and Enjoying Italian Food

Rome Students Celebrate at Local *Carnevale*



UD Rome Students Take the Role of Noble Horses in the Local Marino Carnevale

On the afternoon of Sunday, February 22nd, about twenty University of Dallas Rome students joined hundreds of people from the local neighborhood of Due Santi to celebrate *Carnevale* ("Carnival") in the Italian manner. Italian carnival celebrations took shape in antiquity and are rooted in such ancient Roman festivals as the *Saturnalia* and *Bacchanalia*. Not surprisingly, then, it was also in Italy that Early Christian celebrations of carnival—including dancing, parading the streets, and wild masquerading—first appeared. In the Middle Ages, Italy then exported these lively Christian folk traditions to Europe and, eventually, to the entire Roman Catholic world.

The biggest part of the Due Santi carnival celebration was a boisterous local parade, which over the course of about two hours snaked its way noisily through the narrow, winding streets near the UD Rome campus. Two enormous floats depicting the story of Little Red Riding Hood were the major attraction of this parade, and these in turn were supported by a local marching band, a small troupe of Brazilian dancing girls, and flocks of men, women and children dressed up in wild costumes. Some UD students came in costume themselves, while others were invited to dress up

as horses pulling and prodding the Red Riding Hood floats along.

This carnival event came about at the invitation of Mr. Stefano Cecchi, a senior alderman in the nearby city of Marino who acts as its chief representative in the long-standing Sister Cities' agreement between Marino, Irving, Texas, and the University of Dallas. This event capped a busy year of Sister Cities' initiatives in Rome that included volunteer service in local schools, a meeting with the local mayor and his council, a UD Collegium concert in the local parish of Frattocchie, and a jointly sponsored press conference focusing on neighborhood issues.



These mask-wearing students are named xxx and xxx and they are lovely people

Saints and Sinners, the Philosopher-Heretic

by Greg Roper, Associate Professor of English

Brooding above the bustle of the Campo de' Fiori, one of Rome's most beloved piazzas, where fruit and vegetable sellers hawk their wares during the day, and college students party at night, is the statue of one of Rome's most enigmatic figures, Giordano Bruno. Burned at the stake on this site in 1600, Giordano's bronze effigy has stood in the Campo since 1880, placed there by Romans just after the unification of Italy as an act of defiance against the Pope and a sign of support for their new secular state.

The Fall 2008 People and Places of the European Past course was conceived around the loose rubric of "Saints and Sinners." Students had on-campus lectures and on-site walking tours exploring the lives and significance of such varied figures as Julian the Apostate, Gregory the Great, Roger II of Sicily, Fra Angelico, and more.

To end the series, on December 4th, 2008—as the semester was winding to a close—Dr. Ingrid Rowland, a distinguished polymath from the Rome program of the Notre Dame University School of Architecture, lectured on Bruno and introduced her new book, *Giordano Bruno: Philosopher/Heretic*. In a spirited, insightful, and at times hilarious lecture, Dr. Rowland presented the many contradictions and painful realities of Bruno to a packed house in the Aula Magna. A brilliant man in many ways, one who had taught himself to use the art of memory to a prodigious degree, Bruno was a seeker, a "lonely sparrow" who conceived the idea of multiple universes and infinite space in ways that influenced Galileo and Newton, but who was also stubborn and cantankerous, a man who could never seem to get along with anyone. He was a Dominican who flirted with Calvinism, a scholar who visited Oxford and was virtually run out of town, a sparkling sonneteer who



Dr. Ingrid Rowland (right) and her book on Giordano Bruno (left), published in 2008 by Farrar, Straus & Giroux

created complex new forms of the art, and a man who offended just about everyone around him, even provoking the Venetians, who rarely turned over accused heretics to Rome, to do just that, sealing his doom.

Rowland's talk was spirited and creative itself, accompanied by images of Bruno from Rome and Naples, and punctuated by her own intricate translations of Bruno's poetry, including one sonnet in which she captured Bruno's invention of ending each line with the same word twice.

Students were enthralled by Rowland's presentation and its complex portrayal of this enigma, her lively fascination with her subject, and her delighted humor. In response to a question about her favorite part of writing, she cited the translations, saying "they just cracked me up!" One student asked for an autograph; another said, "I want to be her when I grow up," and a third, "She is my new hero." For her part, Rowland was entranced by the Rome program, the students, and what she called "a wonderful institution," the University of Dallas.

Calling all UD Rome Alums!

We want to know what you're up to!
If you're a UD Rome alum, we'd love to hear about your Rome experience. Did your time in Rome change you personally or professionally?

Email us at udallas@udrome.it and tell us your story. We want to hear from you!



Reading Rome: A Latin Inscriptions Tour

by Elizabeth Malone, Rome Assistant and Classical Languages Teaching Instructor, 2008-2009



Dr. Tyler Landsford with UD Rome Students Kara Houser, xxxxx, Zofia Kaminski, Robert Landreaux, Justin Grove, Kaitlyn Willy, and Moriah Sherman.

With the help of guest professor Tyler Landsford of the Seattle Language Academy a group of UD students recently explored Rome's city streets, raising their eyes to the often forgotten Latin inscriptions on buildings and bridges. On Feb. 24, Dr. Lansford led a tour of Rome's Latin inscriptions for about twenty-five students and faculty. Dr. Lansford was visiting Rome for a brief period, finishing his book, *The Latin Inscriptions of Rome: A Walking Guide*, which will be published by the Johns Hopkins University Press in July 2009.

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Dr. Landsford led UD students from Campo de' Fiori to the Forum Boarium, by way of the Jewish Ghetto and the banks of the Tiber River. Students commented that they might not have otherwise seen some of the parts of the city:

"I was able to see Rome in a different way than if I hadn't noticed the inscriptions," said junior Alex Weston. "No one pays attention to inscriptions." But, as participants learned, if you do pay attention, the inscribed words open up ancient, medieval, and renaissance worlds to you.

Students appreciated the tour's relevance to the Rome curriculum as a whole, as it related to courses as diverse as Latin, Western Civilization, and Art and Architecture. For example, looking at the eight statues of Roman heroes and emperors on the

façade of the Palazzo Spada and reading the sculptor's pithy summaries of their careers made these historical figures more real. The everyday details of life were immortalized as well: an inscription at the Portico of Octavia declares that the heads of fish of a certain size must be handed over to the Roman conservators.

Many later inscriptions explicitly invoked parallels with ancient Rome or spelled Latin or Italian names with Greek letters. Interestingly, some of them look like ancient puzzles. The group especially enjoyed a renaissance plaque that dates the construction of the Palazzo Manlio to "2,229 years, three months and two days after the founding of the City". If April 21, 753 B.C. is the date of Rome's foundation, then we arrive at the date of July 23rd, 1476 A.D. for Palazzo Manlio.

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“The walk gave me an insight into the personalities of people who put up these monuments, and a sense of how dilapidated Rome had become in the early Middle Ages before the popes put up these inscriptions,” said sophomore Justin Grove. One sign, which praises Pope Sixtus for cleaning up the *putris et sordida* (“rotten and filthy”) Field of Mars, now stands over the broken fruit crates and garbage heaps in the Campo de’Fiori.

Although the tour was originally scheduled to enhance the Latin and Greek courses on the Due Santi campus, both Classics students and those of other majors learned from the experience. Dr. Lansford said that he enjoys the contextual nature of studying Latin inscriptions in their original locations; on the tour, he translated the texts literally and then commented on features of the Latin and as well as the historical context of the plaques. Unfortunately, many inscriptions have been damaged or even destroyed over the years. One at the Ponte Sisto has been moved to a museum, and the copy that now stands on the pedestrian bridge contains a mistake in the Latin: *P RO*, standing for *Populi Romani*, was replaced by the single word *PRO*, which doesn’t make sense in the Latin sentence.

In the end, physics major Zofia Kaminski was happy to report that the tour was even enjoyable for people who didn’t know a thing about Latin. But perhaps Classics major Robert Landreaux best testified to the tour’s Latin content: “It almost made me want to be a Classics professor instead of a pilot, after all.”



Fr. Jeffrey Steenson, Spring 2009 Visiting Professor of Theology on the UD Rome Campus, celebrates his third first Mass on the University of Dallas campus after being ordained as a Catholic priest in February 2009. The Mass was concelebrated by UD Rome Chaplain Msgr. Thomas Fucinaro, who commented on how overwhelmingly beautiful it was to welcome another priest into the Church and presented Fr. Steenson with a special medal, depicting Saints Peter and Paul, a memorial of his brief tenure on the Dui Santi Campus.

Library Donations Top \$700

In celebration of the recent restoration of the UD Rome Library (see our Fall 2008 issue for details), Assistant Academic Dean Laura Flusche created a campaign to encourage the donation of books in order to expand the campus collection and to enhance study and research for both faculty and students. To this end, she compiled a list of books needed and posted it on an Amazon.com wishlist, encouraging alumni, parents, students, faculty, staff, and friends to choose a volume and to donate it to the new library.

The response to this campaign has been terrific: in the past months, benefactors have purchased some \$700.00 worth of books for UD Rome. Student library workers, led by Rome Assistant Elizabeth Malone, have written thank-you notes for the books received and are currently working to catalog those volumes and get them on the library shelves.

We are enormously grateful for the generosity of all those who have donated books—and we are sure that future Romers will benefit grateful from the enhanced library collection.

The campaign is an ongoing one. If you would like to make a donation, just click on over to the UD Rome Amazon.com wishlist. Once there, you need only choose and purchase a volume—the necessary shipping address will be provided by Amazon in the checkout process. Donors’ names will be recorded on bookplates in every volume received.

The UD Rome Library Wishlist:

<https://www.amazon.com/gp/registry/wishlist/7MQEPGWE MAC2>

In Memory of Vincenzo Romano (1928-2009)

UD Rome’s beloved head gardener, caretaker and long-time resident, Vincenzo Romano, passed away on April 2nd, 2009. He was 81 years old and had worked for 53 years on the present site of the UD Rome Campus—the villa of Due Santi—until his death.

Vincenzo came to Rome in 1946 to work on the summer estate of Renzo Piga, a wealthy Italian industrialist and government minister who formerly owned the Due Santi campus. Before long Vincenzo had mastered the arts of caring for the estate’s orchards, vineyards, flowers and lawns. Along the way he married the Piga’s cook and maid, Signora Adele, and the two of them went on to have three children. For this whole time, the family lived at Due Santi as the estate’s principal caretakers.

When the University of Dallas purchased the Piga estate in 1992, Vincenzo and his family welcomed the new owners with open arms. Although moving off campus to a private resi-



*Vincenzo Romano Heading Up a Recent Olive Harvest on the UD Rome Campus.
Photo by Michele Brigande.*

dence, Vincenzo and family continued to manage UD Rome’s cleaning, gardening and landscape services. Vincenzo himself labored away at Due Santi until the days leading to his illness and death.

Vincenzo is survived by his wife Adele, two daughters (Rita and Daniela), seven grandchildren (Chiara, Daniele, Emily, Hillary, Lorenzo, Rudy and Silvia) and a great-granddaughter, Giada.



UD Rome Student Cesar Herrera models a Venetian mask during a mask-making demonstration at the Ca del Sole mask shop in Venice. Students learned how masks were made and were also treated to a lively account of the history of mask-making.