

School President's Winter Newsletter

Classics Ω Jan 2018

Here you will find a recap of events and activities undertaken by your Class Reps last semester, as well as news and key dates for the rest of the year.

Martinmas Recap: Looking back at the fall semester

1. Event Highlights

- **The Student Internships Info Night** brought together students from the schools of Art History, Classics, English, and Philosophy to hear what their classmates have found for summer experiences during or immediately after their studies. With speakers from *Forbes*, the Guggenheim Museum, Bryanston summer school, and Oxford University Press, this night demonstrated that St Andrews students really do find some great summer gigs! Expect this all-new event to return next year!



- **Gingerbread Temples** brought in the holiday season with gingerbread arts & crafts!



2. Meetings & Policy

- **Student Staff Consultative Committee (SSCC)** meetings raised issues of overcrowded classes, the scarcity of books & digitised readings, and a desire for standardised essay feedback sheets. The SSCC is a School-wide forum where faculty and class reps meet to discuss learning, teaching, and organisational issues. The overcrowding issue seems to have fixed itself, but if overcrowding is still impacting your learning, please contact your Class Rep. If you notice an inadequate stock of a particular book (or ebook) contact our Library Rep, Kirsten (kwwss@), or your Class Rep for help. Some of our tutors already use feedback sheets for their classes, but our Reps agree that we would like to see more use made of them. If you want to contribute ideas, feedback, or general thoughts about how coursework feedback can be more consistently or more fairly delivered, please contact your Class Rep. We are committed to making a permanent improvement in this area and welcome your involvement. We also advanced the introduction of Lecture Capture technology into Classics. Further information about university-wide initiative for Lecture Capture will be available at <https://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/staff/policy/copyright/copyrightandlecturecapture>. I will keep you updated on what these changes may mean for Classics. The full minutes for our SSCCs are available at <https://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/classics/current/representation/>.

In addition to chairing the SSCC, the Classics president sits on other committees. The salient points of my involvement there follows

- **Teaching Committee:** members of the Classics staff and I revisited the extensions policy, discussed lecture capture, and reflected on our National Student Survey results.
- **Equality and Diversity Committee:** The School's efforts to provide all students with fair & full service focused on expanding training courses in unconscious bias, (for PG and staff tutors) and on Athena Swan accreditation. Keep an eye out for upcoming surveys concerning E&D over the semester.
- Through **Education Committee** some Class Reps and I learned more about the programs our counterparts use in other Schools. In particular we collaborated on careers events and mentoring schemes. This body is formed by all School Presidents and overseen by the Director of Education; it is responsible for coordinating student academic representation within the University education structure. The full minutes for these meetings are available at <https://www.yourunion.net/voice/academicreps/minutes/>.

- **Extensions Policy update.** After piloting the new extension policy proposed last spring, staff and class reps agreed to revisit the details. The new iteration of the policy distinguishes between short-term extensions for short periods of illness and equivalent problems, and longer-term extensions for more complicated cases. Submit a 'Request for extension form' at <https://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/classics/current/> . Your Class Reps welcome feedback on how well this new policy works for you.

3. Other affairs

- **Roman Citizenship test** for the *International Classical Journal*. Our own George Davies coordinated this project. We are very proud of this submission; stay tuned to the Classics Weekly emails for the full story!
- **Classics Visiting Day student involvement.** To bring the student perspective into focus on visiting days, volunteers from our Class Reps now share the prospectus presentation with staff. If you would like to get involved with the Wednesday afternoon visiting days, please contact me!
- **School president Weekly office hours:** Mondays 1-2pm in Swallowgate 4 (archaeology room) – stop by and say hello!



Looking forward: upcoming events and news for Candlemas (Spring) Semester

1. Social Calendar for Semester 2

Rebecca, our Social Secretary, has planned a series of exciting events for this spring. If you would like more information, or might be interested in volunteering your skills or time, contact Rebecca or me.

2. Refresher's Event *February 2*
Kick off the semester and reunite with your *amici* at this low-key event. Free food, good company, and a raffle for one ticket to this year's Ides Ball!
3. Lupercalia *February 15*
St Valentine who? Join us for the real main event of February, with a toga-clad pub crawl in honour of the ancient ritual of Lupercalia!
4. Movie Night *March 2*
Celebrate surviving the first half of the semester with a casual, classics-themed movie night. We will poll for which movie to screen, but current contenders are *Gladiator*, *Troy*, *Spartacus*, and *Ben-Hur*. Snacks and drinks provided!
5. Ides Ball *March 9*
Beware, the biggest event of the year has come but not gone! Join us at the Hotel du Vin for a fancy sit-down dinner, music, dancing, and the best night of the classics calendar! Ticket Sales will be 16th February and the price is TBA. We have two live bands performing this year: Ricky Thunder and the Thought Police (of Christmas Ball fame) and Me & My Old Men, who performed last year.



6. Cerealia *April 6*
In Ancient Rome, this night-time ceremony April featured torches tied to foxes' tails, plebeian circus-games, and horse races. In St Andrews, we celebrate with friendly circus-games at sunset on East Sands, leading into a night-time bonfire. So join us for fox sake!
7. Alumni Event *April 13*
Make the most of the Alumni Weekend by attending the seminar from 4:00-5:30 and the catered reception immediately after! This unique event allows faculty, alumni, and current students to come together and learn from one another, so be sure to come!
8. Symposium *April 20*

BYOLP (Bring Your Own Lyric Poetry). Join us for wine, a historically accurate feast, and reclining pillows!

9. Vinalia *April 27*
Don't miss the final event of the school year! Celebrate the end of teaching with this Roman festival of wine!
-

2. Policy Goals

*Where first semester is often dominated by raising issues and interpreting surveys, Semester 2 is when the real work begins. I have selected **two** attainable goals that with the support of our Class Reps (and others) we will see through.*

- More **Standardised Essay Feedback** makes coursework marking more clear and consistent. The Class Reps and I agree that more use needs to be made of feedback sheets in Classics. To me this means popularising feedback conventions already used in some modules and perhaps working towards a general feedback sheet for essays (especially subhonours essays) in the School. Whether subtle or dramatic, the changes to feedback will equip students with a better understanding of the criteria used to mark their work, help identify areas for improvement, and lend a greater sense of equity to the marking process.
- **Lecture Capture** provides a second chance to students who missed a lecture to catch up on material, and gives everyone access to a minimum of content during revision. Within Classics, my hope is that Lecture Capture will apply to introductory and revision sessions of subhonours lectures. This would mean that information about module organisation, exam structure, and any 'mock essays' outlined in lecture could be called up with just a few clicks! Some students and faculty are rightly concerned about how recording lectures might change how they act—and how comfortable they feel—in lectures, but I am optimistic that we can address these concerns. Ultimately the amount of Lecture Capture that Classics adopts will be the best match for our students and staff. Keep an eye out for surveys and emails related to Lecture Capture, and feel free to share your thoughts on this policy with your Class Reps.

Please do not hesitate to contact me with any comments or questions about these goals.

3. Other Affairs

- **Representing your interests:** The results of last year's National Student Survey revealed that St Andrews tied for 1st in student satisfaction across the UK, but also that not all students believe that their interests are being represented by the Student Union. Whether Class Rep, School President, or Sabbatical Officer, we Student Union representatives are committed to providing you with the best support, advocacy, and leadership that we can. In addition, we are here to help make your event, project, or activity a reality, and especially poised to promote academic events. I am happy to assist organisers with funding applications to the SU and can sponsor events held within Swallowgate or United College.
- **Grounding Ancients submission:** Would you like to be published in a student-led academic journal? *Grounding Ancients* Scottish universities? Submissions will follow a specific theme. In this new Issue, the theme is MEMORY AND RETELLING. The theme can apply to a host of subject areas and the maximum word count is 4,000. The deadline for submissions is 14 February. For more details contact our team's spokesperson, Sverre Tidemand at scot@st-andrews.ac.uk. General details and previous volumes of the journal can be found at <http://www.groundings-ancients.co.uk/>.

Whether this is your first spring semester or your last, I wish you the very best for 2018.

Sincerely,

Julian Frink