

Gregory J. Grappone

Humanities

Institute







The Humanities: more relevant than ever

We are living at a time when people across all sectors of society are expressing concern that the humanities and arts have lost their relevance. We have seen economic pressures persuade some schools to diminish their commitment to traditional humanistic areas of study. At this moment more than ever we at Saint Anselm College recognize how vital the humanities are to feeding and nurturing the human spirit in its quest to provide for the common good. And we also know that people are hungrier than ever for the thought and inspiration the humanities provide.

That is why we are boldly reasserting our commitment to the Humanities by founding the Gregory J. Grappone Humanities Institute. Saint Anselm is making this investment not just because the Humanities are integral to providing a Catholic Liberal Arts education, but because we appreciate — from over a century of experience — that the Humanities:

- Encourage people to attain a richer understanding of what it means to be human
- Lead people towards fulfilling vocations and professional careers
- Help people to discover their individual and shared purpose is in this world
- Liberate people from prejudicial barriers that keep us apart from one another

Read on to see how you can join us in this creative, timely, and exciting endeavor!

Our Vision

HUMANITY:
EVERYONE'S A MEMBER



At the new Gregory J. Grappone Humanities Institute, we are developing innovative ways to integrate humanistic thought and understanding into people's lives. We know that humanity is one title we can all share in common and we believe that we are all called to be engaged students seeking to understand the world and our place in it.

We welcome and encourage your thought, energy and wisdom, no matter your profession, your background, or your field of study. We know that none of these things define who you are. We appreciate that the life you have lived, the experiences you have had, and the things you have learned all prepare you to take part in the common conversations we seek to foster.

We seek to challenge and inspire our campus community with questions and consolations that arise from our lives and from the wisdom that the arts and humanities offers us. We also extend to our wider New Hampshire community the affirming and challenging riches that arise from shared experiences in integrated humanistic thought.

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**“With the Humanities Institute, we honor
Greg’s lifelong quest for learning and for
meaningful human connection.”**

—Robert and Beverly Grappone

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“A gentle and selfless heart”

—Professor Bindu Malieckal

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Who Was Greg Grappone?

Greg Grappone graduated from Saint Anselm College in 2004 as a Great Books major. Great Books were not just the foundation of Greg's education, they were his steadfast life companions. He relished the stories they told, the wisdom they proffered, the challenges they presented, the conversations they provoked, and the love they encouraged. After a heroic struggle with cancer, Greg's life was cut sadly short when he succumbed to his illness at only 35 years old, leaving behind his wife Amy, their young daughter Briar, and a heartbroken circle of family and friends. Greg spent his life appreciating and seeking to understand life and the world around him. He cared deeply about cultural and social issues, politics, and the environment. He constantly scouted for new music, movies, books and television. He was kind, humble, and to the many who relished his company, just plain cool. Like his mother, he loved nothing more than entertaining and cooking for friends and family. And like his father, he enjoyed philosophical discussions. In honor of their son and in commemoration of the good and great books and wisdom-filled conversations that were at the heart of Greg's life, his parents Robert and Beverly Grappone made a generous gift that has helped establish the Gregory J. Grappone Humanities Institute at Saint Anselm.

Innovative Learning Opportunities

In January of 2019 the Grappone Humanities Institute launched a new Minor in Humanities that features team-taught, interdisciplinary courses with faculty from twelve different departments. Students enrolling in HU courses will be building upon their first year *Conversatio* seminar experiences where they examined life's big questions with their classmates. They will also have the opportunity to complement their major area of study with a minor that examines in a variety of ways the values, beliefs, history, and art that shape our humanity. The following Humanities courses are currently in the Saint Anselm catalogue or in the approval stages:

Gender in Literature and Music
Leo Tolstoy, Art, and Modern Russia
Crime Films in American Society
Paris – New York in the 1920's and 1930's
Mid-Victorian History and Literature
England's Early Modern Catholic Underground
Confucian Thinkers
The Benedictines
Catholic Education
Hispanic American History
Shakespeare and Political Power
The Qu'ran, Culture, Conflicts: An Introduction to Islam
The Art of Science: Using Homer to Heal Wounded Warriors
Spatial History: Mapping Politics, Economics, and Culture with ArcGIS
Ancient Democracy in Theory and Practice



OPPORTUNITY

to explore themes in the humanities

The Grappone Humanities Institute was honored to partner with New Hampshire Humanities recently to bring the Chair of The National Endowment for the Humanities, Mr. Jon Parrish Peede, to the Saint Anselm campus for a day of dialogue with our faculty and people from the surrounding communities.



Crossing the Digital Divide

In the last months of Greg Grappone's life, he and his father corresponded each day by e-mailing to one another daily reflections on Leo Tolstoy's final compilation: A Calendar of Wisdom. Tolstoy's wisdom has continued to serve as an inspiration to Greg's father and we have made it a foundational element of the Grappone Humanities Institute, so that people within and beyond the Saint Anselm community are invited to offer their reflections on a new page of calendar wisdom each week. As we grow, we hope to engage people through a variety of other digital platforms, including student podcasts, online discussion forums, and support for the rich variety of digital humanities that are helping us to better comprehend the past and appreciate the hopes and challenges in our world today.

Building Partnerships

Since its founding The Grappone Humanities Institute has enjoyed fruitful partnerships with New Hampshire Humanities, The New Hampshire Writer's Project, and the Currier Museum of Art. These partnerships are helping us to bring the arts and humanities into the lives of people of all ages and backgrounds in our surrounding communities. If you belong to a school, organization, or business enterprise and have a good idea of how to build a bridge from our campus into your community that can enrich the lives with the sort of learning opportunities that Greg Grappone relished, please contact us so that we can begin a conversation. You bring the ideas — we'll pay for the coffee!



Come Friday

and Join the Human Conversation

Every Friday at 12:30 from September to May the Grappone Humanities Institute hosts an open, informal discussion led by Saint Anselm faculty or staff. Called “Come Friday” this weekly forum invites people from all parts of campus to come together with others who are willing to open their lunch bags and their minds to a question about our humanity. Here’s a sample of the questions we consider. Come Friday, pack a lunch and join the human conversation:

Does your dog have a soul?

Is it really worth listening to people who disagree with you?

How do we enjoy great art created by very bad people?

Why do we love or hate country music?

Are we living at a time when things are worse than they have ever been?

Does Marxism still matter?

Are there any questions that science can’t answer?

Why Did *Frankenstein* Affect Everything After *Frankenstein*?

Do more people suffer from depression and mental illness than in the past?

Is there any such thing as love at first sight?

Do trees communicate with one another?

Is there really such a thing as a just war?

Are books a thing of the past?

Is the Civil Rights Movement in America over?

Will the poor really always be with us?

Do we need wilderness?

Is Post Traumatic Stress a new thing?

Why should everyone go on a pilgrimage?

Why do we make bad decisions?

Who were the best and worst U.S. presidents?

Does everything really happen for a reason?

What is a good Death?

What do I do in an art Museum?

Are we finished with Freud?

Why do we like horror movies and books?

What makes really good friendship?

Seeking a Permanent Home

The Benedictines at Saint Anselm have a gift for retaining their campus history even while giving historic structures new life and making them homes to new enterprises. As our Institute hosts more learning opportunities and events, and as it becomes a center for activities in the humanities year-round, we aspire to transform a centrally located, historic building on campus to house the Institute. Architects have been engaged and funding is being sought to make this a reality. Contact us to learn how you can help support this effort to give the Grappone Humanities Institute a permanent home.





GREGORY J. GRAPPONE HUMANITIES INSTITUTE





Why a Humanities Institute at Saint Anselm?

Providing a distinctive liberal arts education has been at the core of Saint Anselm's mission since our founding, and key to fulfilling that mission has been furnishing students with a foundation in humanistic thought. Curricular revisions over a dozen decades have not changed this essential mission. For nearly forty years (1978 – 2015) Saint Anselm's emphasis in humanistic education was represented in its hallmark two year Humanities Program, Portraits in Human Greatness. This interdisciplinary program provided a central curricular vehicle by which all students participated for four semesters in an integrated study in the great questions, conflicts and advances of human civilizations through the aperture of various humanist disciplines. The success of this program made it a central part of Saint Anselm's identity, such that many alumni lamented its retirement as part of curriculum reform in recent years.



However, while faculty who participated in the program were aware of the programs' great possibilities as well as its many limitations, only occasional thought was given to how closed our conversations sometimes were; how we were inadvertently segregating the humanities from rather than integrating them into the rest of the College's curricular and co-curricular life. As the College embarks upon a new academic era and begins to graduate students from a reformed curriculum that has as its foundational course *Conversatio*, a first year experience that is more integrated than *Portraits*, this is an ideal time to complement and help invigorate this curriculum with a Humanities Institute that engages all members of the Saint Anselm community and people beyond our campus in shared formal and informal inquiry that enriches our individual and communal understanding of what it means to be human.

JOIN THE CONVERSATION



As we embark on this exciting enterprise to strengthen the core of our mission and extend our reach beyond our campus, we invite you to join with us by adding your voice, your vision, and your support to our efforts. If you are a student, make the life of the Humanities Institute part of your Saint Anselm experience. Consider strengthening your Liberal Arts foundations by taking integrated humanities courses and pursuing a Humanities Minor. If you work on campus, join us for our weekly Come Friday conversations. If you are in the wider community, support our programming on and off campus and let us know how we can partner with your school or organization to help enrich the humanities in your community. If you are a Saint Anselm alum tell us your humanities story. Let us know how your foundation in the humanities has advanced your career, enriched your life, or even led to life-altering decisions. If you are someone who shares the same enthusiasm for great books, performance, art, and ideas that Greg Grappone had, help us honor his memory. If you are someone who values the humanities like Robert and Beverly Grappone do, help us extend Greg's legacy to a new generation by making a gift to the Gregory J. Grappone Humanities Institute at Saint Anselm. Let's keep the conversation going!



Contact Executive Director Dr. Gary Bouchard at
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Visit us at or follow us on Facebook and Twitter @STAHumanities

“At their essence, the Humanities
cultivate human wisdom by engaging
us in the ageless conversation about
the meaning of our lives.”

— *Dr. Gary Bouchard*

Cover image from the statue of St. Benedict
by sculptor Sylvia Nicolas HD '91

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