On May 22 in Los Angeles the Pangles were given the American Freedom Alliance’s “Heroes of Conscience” award for 2012, in recognition of their establishment of the Great Books program at the University of Texas. In connection with the award, the director of the Alliance, Avi Davis, interviewed Lorraine and Tom on Internet radio.

- [Interview with Lorraine Pangle](#)
- [Interview with Tom Pangle](#)
The Jefferson Scholars program has continued to be a successful and central part of our program over the last year. The scholarship provides students with a stipend so that they can expand their own great books library, as well as have the opportunity to attend cultural events in the Austin area. This year, students attended a number of performances of Shakespeare’s plays, including *Love’s Labour’s Lost*, *Julius Caesar*, and *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*. Some also saw Tom Stoppard’s play *Arcadia* at the Long Center. Scholars also met for informal lunches with professors, as well as some of the Center’s visiting lecturers.

The Jefferson Undergraduate Book Club is flourishing in the hands of its new co-presidents, Austin Choate and Jacquelyn Walker. The club has met roughly every three weeks for the past year outside of class for great-books-based discussions. Readings from the past year have included Gibbon’s *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, Francis Bacon’s *Great Instauration*, Euclid’s *Elements*, and Proust’s *Remembrance of Things Past*, among others. This fall we are readings selections from Confucius, Kafka, Nietzsche, Montaigne, and the physicist Werner Heisenberg.

The first class of Jefferson Center seniors graduated last fall. We wanted to highlight just a few of the accomplishments of our exceptionally talented graduates.

**James Lamon**

James Lamon graduated in May 2012 with a degree in English, Philosophy, and Government, and was a Dean’s Distinguished Graduate. In Spring 2012, he attended the Illinois State University Conference for Students of Political science, where he presented an independent research paper entitled “Race as Political Metaphor in Tocqueville’s *Democracy in America,*” which he had initially written for a CTI seminar with Professor Jeffrey Tulis. The paper presented an argument that Tocqueville’s treatment of the different races in America actually represents some of his deepest reflections on the nature of democracy and aristocracy. James’s work won the Best Paper Award at the conference. James now plans to pursue an MFA with a view to finding a career in screenwriting.
Lindsey Smith graduated from the Liberal Arts Honors program with a degree from the Department of Government, while also specializing in Arabic. She was awarded a Fulbright Grant to attend CASA (the Center for Arabic Study Abroad) in Cairo, Egypt during the 2012-2013 academic year. While there, she will continue her language study. She also plans to prepare research on the influence Western political theory has had on the Egyptian revolution. She expects to be able to put the training in political philosophy she received through the CTI program to good use.

Matthew Levinton

Matthew Levinton, the first president of the Jefferson Book Club, graduated from the Liberal Arts Honors program with a dual degree in Government and History. Under the supervision of Lorraine Pangle, he wrote a thesis on Tocqueville’s assessment of American democracy. He was also selected as student speaker at the Department of Government’s commencement ceremony, and will begin law school at the University of Virginia in Fall 2013.

“...if I may be so bold, we have learned something of the enduring qualities of humankind that we might say make up that nebulous phrase “human nature,” as our studies have allowed us to appreciate both humanity’s greatest shortcomings and greatest capacities for good. In realizing the limitations imposed upon us by our own humanity, we have therefore received a great gift of intellectual liberation—one that frees us to seek a future where we might realize our potential to its fullest, where we might reach our farthest by knowing our limits.”

— Matthew Levinton, May 2012
Tom van Malssen

Tom van Malssen is in his second year as a post-doctoral fellow with the Jefferson Center. A native of the Netherlands, he holds a Ph.D. from the Ludwig-Maximilians University in Munich, Germany. He is interested in philosophy’s encounter with politics, morality, and religion, and wrote his dissertation on the political philosophy of Francis Bacon. This year he is teaching “The Theoretical Foundations of Modern Politics” and “Early Modern Political Philosophy” for the CTI program.

Elon Lang

Elon Lang has a Ph.D. in English from Washington University in St. Louis. Elon is interested in the intersection between the study of manuscripts and book production and the study of medieval reading and performance. His research is currently focused on the fifteenth-century English poet Thomas Hoccleve. This year he is teaching "Masterworks of World Drama" and a seminar on "Satan and the Idea of Evil" for the CTI program.

Lesley-Anne Dyer

Lesley-Anne Dyer specializes in medieval Biblical and Platonic exegesis. She recently graduated with her Ph.D. in Medieval Studies from the University of Notre Dame. Her current book project for the Pontifical Institute for Medieval Studies, Toronto, is entitled Translating Eternity in the Twelfth-Century Renaissance, which examines the interpretation of Genesis and Plato's Timaeus in twelfth-century thought from Anselm of Canterbury to Bernard Silvestris. This year she is teaching “The Bible and its Interpreters” and “The Poetic Pursuit of Justice in the Middle Ages” for the CTI program.
Anima Meier

Anima Meier works at the Jefferson Center as a visiting researcher. She holds a Master’s degree in art history, and her research revolves around the translation of ideas from the great books into the fine arts.

Erik Dempsey

Erik Dempsey holds a Ph.D. in political philosophy from Boston College. For the past four years he has been a mainstay of the CTI program, teaching courses on ancient and modern political philosophy, the American founding, and the political and moral teachings of works ranging from the Bible to Homer. He is completing a revision of his Ph.D. thesis on the place of virtue and prudence in Aristotle’s thought, including a discussion of the reception of Aristotle’s thought in the Middle Ages among both the Thomist and Averroist schools.

Faculty Enrichment Group

During the 2011-2012 academic year, the Jefferson Center sponsored a faculty-enrichment reading group on Alexis de Tocqueville’s *Democracy in America*. Under the guidance of Erik Dempsey, faculty from different disciplines gathered once a month to discuss Tocqueville’s seminal work on American politics and society. This program was a part of the Jefferson Center’s continuing attempt to spread the study of the great books and of core questions about the American founding on the UT campus, and to make it possible for more teachers to include texts like *Democracy in America* in their

Executive Seminars

In Austin and in Houston, faculty from the Jefferson Center guide alumni, professionals, and other interested people in small group discussions of great books. Last spring, the seminars studied America’s founding principles by looking at key writings by the Federalists and the Anti-Federalists, as well as major texts in political philosophy that influenced both opposing parties. This Fall the seminars deal with some of history’s great debates as they are presented through core texts. The readings range from clashes and controversies in classical Athens to the Lincoln-Douglas debates.
Curricula.

**Constitution Day 2012**

In celebration of Constitution Day on September 17, the Jefferson Center hosted Professor Michael Zuckert of the University of Notre Dame, speaking on the topic: “Completing the Constitution: The 14th Amendment.” The man now known as the Father of the Constitution, James Madison, saw the Constitution as a magnificent but incomplete achievement, and Zuckert argued that the 14th Amendment served to fulfill his original vision. After the lecture, Prof. Zuckert joined several of the Jefferson Scholars and affiliated faculty for continued conversation.

**Lectures**

The Jefferson Center continued its lecture series this year with a wide variety of scholars who specialize in different, great-books related areas. Our featured speakers included John Rumrich of UT speaking on “Milton’s Satanic Verses;” Adam Schulman of St. John’s College speaking on “The Discovery of Entropy,” and Fred Baumann of Kenyon College speaking on the topic, “Goethe and Schiller — and Us?” Webcasts of past lectures are available on our website, as are announcements for future lectures and other Jefferson Center events.

- [Past Lectures](#)
- [Future Lectures, Upcoming Events](#)

**Our Mission**

The aim of our Center is to realize Jefferson’s vision of educating citizens and leaders to understand the meaning of liberty and to exercise it wisely. We share Jefferson’s conviction that one of the best ways to attain a liberal education — an education suited for a free individual in a free society — is through a serious study of the great books. In our courses, students engage in a direct, respectful, but probing and critical study of major creative and theoretical works that have shaped human thought and history. They enter into debates — about human nature, ethics, and humanity’s place in the cosmos — that have unfolded over centuries. They learn skills of critical reasoning, close reading, and clear, cogent writing. They join a community of scholars drawn from many departments and many schools of thought, united by a passion for fundamental questions, a spirit of friendly debate, and a willingness to engage in critical self-scrutiny.

Contact Us At:

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On the Web: [www.utexas.edu/cola/centers/coretexts](http://www.utexas.edu/cola/centers/coretexts)
The Jefferson Center relies entirely on the generosity of departments to provide faculty to teach our courses and on the generosity of donors to fund our postdoctoral fellows program, lecture series, book club, discussion sections for lecture courses, Jefferson Scholars program, and executive seminars for adults. We welcome gifts both to cover current year expenses and to begin building an endowment. Specific ways you can help with targeted donations:

**Support a course:** donations in any amount can be designated to support particular courses that are taught by our lecturers and post-doctoral fellows. These regularly include “The Bible and its Interpreters,” “Jerusalem and Athens,” “Ancient Philosophy and Literature,” “Masterworks of World drama,” “Classics of Social and Political Thought,” “America’s Constitutional Principles,” and “Might and Right Among Nations.”

**Fund a discussion section:** $1300 provides a discussion section for a great books lecture course for one semester.

**Support a Jefferson Scholar:** $400 supports a Jefferson Scholar for one semester. If desired, scholarships can be named for the donors or individuals they wish to honor.

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**A Message from the Dean**

Since my late adolescent years, I have considered study of the great books of the Western tradition to be an essential part of my own education. With strong support of the College of Liberal Arts, the Jefferson Center provides an important venue for the serious discussion of core texts and ideas by students, post-doctoral fellows, and faculty members. The Center will certainly be a model for other institutions to aspire to emulate.

Randy L. Diehl  
Dean, College of Liberal Arts  
David Bruton, Jr. Regents Chair in Liberal Arts