Faculty bio - Dr. Robert Ventresca

Dr. Robert Ventresca received his doctorate in History from the University of Toronto. He is a King's graduate ('93) and has been teaching at King's since 2000. He teaches courses broadly related to modern European history, with a special focus on the 20th century, especially the origins and practices of authoritarian and totalitarian regimes. Dr. Ventresca's research explores the role of religion in European fascism as well as religious involvement in the Holocaust with a particular focus on the Catholic Church.

Dr. Ventresca is the author of Soldier of Christ: The Life of Pope Pius XII (Harvard, 2013) which won the American Catholic Historical Association's inaugural Koenig Prize for Catholic biography. Dr. Ventresca is also the author of From Fascism to Democracy, a study of Italy's democratic transition after the fall of Mussolini Fascism, and co-editor of A Nation of Immigrants: Workers, Women and Communities in Canadian History, 1840s-1960s. His articles have appeared in the Journal of Social History, Studies in Christian-Jewish Relations, Harvard Theological Review, History and Memory and Modern Italy. In 2014, Dr. Ventresca was named a member of The Royal Society of Canada's College of New Scholars, Artists and Scientists.

For more information
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Foundations in Western Thought and Civilization is an interdisciplinary approach to first-year studies that lets you explore the Western tradition from three perspectives, in a fully synchronized program: History, Literature, and Philosophy. You'll study the great events that have shaped the world, the great ideas that have changed how we think, and the great books that have defined the human experience. You'll learn all those things you always wanted to know, and what you need to know to succeed.

Foundations in Western Thought and Civilization is for motivated students who want to spend their entry-year reading, writing, thinking, and talking about important ideas, human possibilities, and universal knowledge. Above all, it's for someone like you: someone who has high expectations of yourself and of your school, who values small classes where you know everyone's name, and who is looking for an intensive and challenging learning experience. It's for those who want to improve not just themselves but the world.

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Annual extra curricular activities include a trip to the Stratford Festival, a Medieval Feast in costume, a visit to the AGO and the symphony in Toronto, attending various musical events including an opera, dinner at a local restaurant, etc.

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It provides a solid foundation for an undergraduate degree that could position you to go on to any number of careers: graduate school, law, policy, journalism, Canadian foreign service, politics, teaching, to name only a few.

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Admission into Foundations in Western Thought and Civilization requires ENG4U. Since Foundations is a competitive, limited enrollment program, meeting the minimum admission requirement to King's University College does not guarantee admission into Foundations in Western Thought and Civilization.

Testimonials

“The program...gave me access to some of the most interesting, eccentric, and thought provoking professors that I've encountered at King's.”

Michael Beastall '11

“My KFH year was one of the best years in my life. I made 18 best friends and the class became my family. I understand so much more of why the world is like it is today thanks to what I learned in my Foundations year...I wouldn't trade this experience for anything. It was the best first year of university I could have imagined.”

Emily Robinson '12

“In Foundations, I was able to look at subjects I'm passionate about and improve myself as a person. I enjoyed going on trips like the ROM or Stratford and working on developing my cultural sense and knowledge. Overall, it is an incredible experience, one that I will hold with me throughout my university career.”

Colleen Sousa '16

“Participating in Foundations set me up for success throughout my time in university as both a student and human being. Foundations instructors support students wholeheartedly, and the students are able to form close bonds and support each other. More than anything else, this program gave me the confidence to fearlessly research, ponder, and chat in order to better understand and contribute to my surroundings.”

Sam Boer '17