

Bratislava International School of Liberal Arts
Bratislavská medzinárodná škola liberálnych štúdií

Portfolio







BISLA
Liberal Arts College

Bratislava International School of Liberal Arts
Bratislavská medzinárodná škola liberálnych štúdií

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Donate to BISLA!

Become associated with BISLA and be a part of its mission to promote liberal arts education in Central Europe. All donations are tax deductible in accordance with Slovak law.

PRESIDENT's CIRCLE: € 100 000

Support a professorship for one member of BISLA's faculty for a period of two years in your name. Foster BISLA's effort to attract the highest quality faculty and research.

ENDOWMENT: from € 10 000

Support the creation of an endowment fund for BISLA. These funds are stored in a bank account where they accrue interest, which we can then utilize to cover operational costs and to pursue our endeavors in further elaborating BISLA's portfolio.

BENEFACTOR: from € 3500

Support a gifted student for one academic year with a donation that will cover that student's tuition, academic and living expenses. Consider establishing an annual fellowship for gifted students in your name.

PARTNER: € 300 – € 1000

Support one of the activities in BISLA's diverse portfolio.
(For further information on these activities, please refer to the portfolio section of this document.)

Corporate giving

If your company is in need of creative and critical young minds, connect with BISLA students through our internship program and sponsor BISLA to promote their growth and training.









BISLA

Bratislava International School of Liberal Arts

BISLA
Liberal Arts College

WHAT?

BISLA is the first liberal arts college in Slovakia and the only one of its kind in Central Europe. It opened its gates to the first class of students in September 2006.



WHY?

Our liberal arts curriculum works to produce well-rounded, skills equipped and independently minded individuals through the course of their bachelor-level studies. These studies help our students become responsible citizens, who not only pursue their own benefit but who attend to how their society works and where it's going. Most of the courses at BISLA are in English. BISLA thus serves as a springboard for graduate studies abroad. This opportunity is widely utilized by our alumni.



"Open discussions in small student groups, learning through listening and speaking to colleagues, and a variety of compelling subjects... that is BISLA. BISLA encourages you to think rather than memorize. This approach enables you to understand even the issues that were not covered during the lessons."

Silvia Jurgová-Gajdošíková, BISLA alumna.

Diverse curriculum. BISLA provides its students with a broad introduction to the field of humanities. Students graduate with a Bachelor of Science in political science and can complete minors in philosophy, arts, and international relations.

Small classes. A liberal arts education fosters learning through critical thinking, reading and writing, and it places a lot of importance on discussion among teachers and students. Class size is about 20 students, who are further divided into smaller discussion sections. The focus is on developing skills rather than on rote learning. As a result, BISLA graduates are highly successful in a variety of settings, applying for graduate degree studies and for high-level positions on the job market.

NON-ACADEMIC ACTIVITIES

Internships

During their second year of studies, BISLA students take part in an intensive five week long internship with private firms, non-governmental organizations, the media, government departments and other institutions that are related to their interests.

The Global Liberal Arts Alliance

BISLA is a member of the Global Liberal Arts Alliance (GLAA), founded and administered by the Great Lakes Colleges Association. The GLCA is an umbrella association for liberal arts colleges in the USA, Europe, Asia and Africa, facilitating exchange of knowledge, experience and expertise among institutions committed to education in the tradition of the liberal arts and sciences. BISLA participates in regular conferences, events and projects of the GLCA and utilizes experts from the GLCA network towards its own professional growth.



BISLA has been established and sustained through the generous support of the Christian A. Johnson Endeavor Foundation (CAJEF) in New York. CAJEF has supported BISLA to date and has acquired the buildings on Grösslingova street in Bratislava for BISLA's home. BISLA is currently seeking domestic sponsors to invest in high quality education in Slovakia, supporting BISLA through student or professor fellowships, contributing towards an endowment fund or offering general support for our programs and operational costs.




Katarína Nemcová
Ivana Polakevičová
Jolana Čurejová
Juraj Gyarfáš
Michaela Janková
Natália Polia



ECOLAS

European Colleges of Liberal Arts and Sciences

What is ECOLAS?

The European Colleges of Liberal Arts and Sciences (ECOLAS) is a network of European universities and colleges that are active in developing and strengthening liberal arts in Europe. ECOLAS was founded in 2007 and it numbers 26 university institutions from 14 countries. ECOLAS aims to make bachelor-degree studies a rightful and important part of higher education in Europe. Liberal arts studies are the most suitable model to make the bachelor's degree in Europe – one of the outcomes of the Bologna process – meaningful and independent.

WHO?

ECOLAS was registered in Slovakia and is active in the whole of Europe. In 2007, it received a grant for two years from the European Commissions' Life-long Learning Program to enhance cooperation of European colleges and programs in liberal arts.

Aims

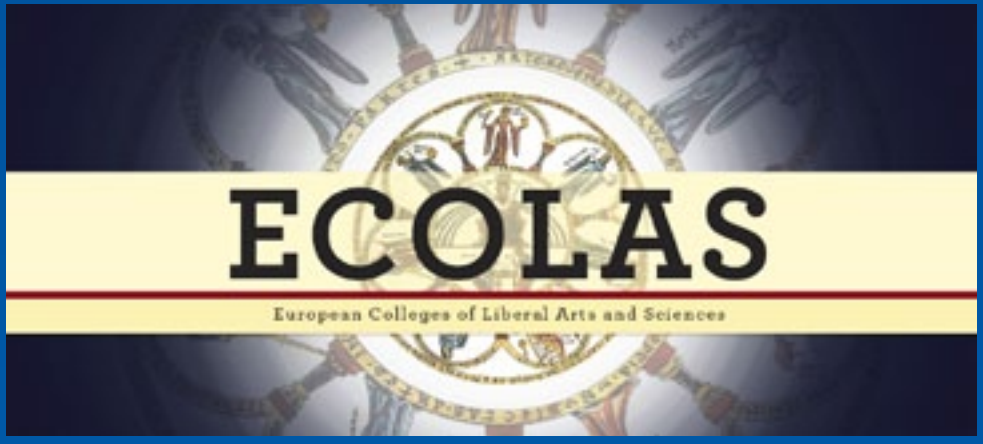
Liberal arts are rooted in European renaissance university education. Today, liberal arts are fundamental to higher education in the USA. Liberal arts help students to foster critical thinking, to probe and evaluate evidence, and to cultivate abilities crucial to the health of a democratic society.

Activities

ECOLAS organizes conferences and workshops for students and educators to discuss experiences and methods in pedagogy and it facilitates teaching and student exchanges in the EU and the USA. ECOLAS offers services not only to its members, but to all European universities interested in introducing elements of the liberal arts into their educational curricula.

ECOLAS

American University of Paris,
Amsterdam University College,
BISLA,
Bucerius Law School, Hamburg,
Catherine's College of Tallinn University,
Catholic University Leuven,
Charles University, Prague,
Collegium Artes Liberales, Warsaw University,
European College of Liberal Arts, Berlin,
Ghent University,
Gotland University, Visby,
Jacobs University Bremen,
John Cabot University, Rome,
Leiden University College,
Liverpool Hope University,
McDaniel College, Budapest Campus,
New Bulgarian University, Sofia,
Roosevelt Academy, Middelburg,
St Mary's University College, Belfast,
Salzburg Global Seminar,
Tilburg University,
University College Maastricht,
University College Utrecht,
Univerzita Hradec Králové,
Uppsala University,
Webster University Vienna




BISLA





BIH

The Bratislava Institute of Humanism Public Debate Series

WHY?

Critical thinking, discussion and openness are the hallmarks of liberal arts. The activities of the Bratislava Institute of Humanism have engaged both the general public and experts in these intellectual traditions over the past 7 years.

WHAT is BIH?

The BIH web site (www.bih.sk) contains a photo archive and a list of past talks. Many of the BIH discussions have been aired through Infonet TV (www.infonet.tv) and are fully available online in the archive.

A non-profit organization, which offers regular public lectures and discussions on the campus of the Bratislava International School of Liberal Arts (BISLA). These discussions are led by top scholars, experts, artists and public intellectuals and have had a steady public audience since 2006. BIH also actively involves students at BISLA.

WHO is BIH?

BIH was founded and is led by František Novosád, Egon Gál and Samuel Abrahám. BIH includes the hundreds of guest speakers and participants who now come to its events regularly.

ACTIVITIES

- **Weekly public debates** (every Wednesday at 5pm). Debates are open to the public and are non-partisan and non-ideological. They provide space for intellectual reflection. Some topics are a part of broader themes: previous themes have included media and journalism, Slovakia in the 20th century, churches and religion, higher education and liberal arts in Europe, as well as Ethics, Law and Justice.

- **Events**. BIH also organizes bigger events, workshops and conferences, often in cooperation with partner institutes and universities from Slovakia and abroad.

We are looking for your sponsorship to keep the weekly public debates, intellectual events and projects of BIH running and growing.



Among BIH guest speakers to date are:

John Baron,
Rado Baťo,
Vaclav Bělohradský,
Martin Bruncko,
Jean-Marie Bruno,
Ján Budaj,
Martin Bútora,
Ján Čarnogurský,
Veit Dengler,
Slavenka Drakulič,
Béla Egyed,
Jochen Fried,
Fedor Gál,
Pavol Holländer,
Ján Hrubala,
Rudolf Chmel,
Jozef Jablonický,
Tomáš Janovic,
Eugen Jurzyca,
Ivan Kamenec,
Juraj Karpiš,
Martin Kocúr,
Robert Kotian,
Dušan Kováč,
Miroslav Kusý,
Kenan Malik,
Darina Malová,
Miroslav Marcelli,
František Mikloško,
Karol Moravčík,
Peter Morvay,
Teodor Münz,
Waller Newell,
Ľudovít Ódor,
Claus Offe,
Kalman Petöcz,
Lenka Procházková,
Theodore Sedgwick,
Brigita Schmögnerová,
Ernest Stredňanský,
Richard Sulík,
Zuzana Szatmáry,
László Szigeti,
Andrej Šabík,
František Šebej,
Tomáš Štrauss,
Ernest Valko,
Magda Vašáryová,
Stanislav Vidovič,
Richard Warner


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Kritika & Kontext

Magazine of Critical Thinking



WHAT?

Kritika & Kontext (K&K) — the journal of critical thinking — was founded in 1996 and has published over 40 issues in both Slovak and English. It provides a forum for scholars, thinkers and students from Slovakia and allows them to compare and contrast their views and works with those of their prominent counterparts in various fields from all over the world.

www.kritika.sk

The motto of K&K:

"To realize the relative validity of one's convictions and yet stand for them unflinchingly is what distinguishes a civilized man from a barbarian."
(J. Schumpeter)

WHO?

The journal was founded and is edited by Samuel Abrahám, but several individuals have been co-editors, major contributors or subjects of review in the various issues, for example: Milan Kundera, Egon Gál, Václav and Ivan Havel, Richard Rorty, Peter Zajac, Petr Pithart, John Hall, František Novosád, Miroslav Kusý, Miloslav Petrusek, Zuzana Szatmáry, Ludvík Vaculík, Teodor Münz, Miroslav Marcelli, Ján Čarnogurský, Peter Sýkora, Ladislav Kováč, Fero Guldan, Ivan Kamenec, George Blecher, Ivan Kadlečík, Béla Egyed, Pavel Hrúz, Adam Bžoch, Ľubomír Lipták, Vladimír Leško, Jaques Le Goff, Alma Münzová, Bogdan Bogdanović, Jiřina Šiklová, Russell Jacoby and many others.

Eurozine

Kritika & Kontext is published with the financial help of the Christian A. Johnson Endeavor Foundation in New York and the Ministry of Culture of the Slovak Republic. Since 1996, *K&K* has been actively involved in a network of European Cultural Journals, grouped around the internet journal *www.eurozine.com* and is among its founding members. Joint issues in English are published in cooperation with magazines in V4 countries, such as *Host, Respublika Nowa* and the *Hungarian Lettre Internationale*.

Please support this unique publication with a long history and verified quality by placing an advertisement in the magazine or by direct contribution towards its costs.











Amenca – S nami

Student Roma Magazine



WHAT is AMENCA?

AMENCA (*With Us*) is the first Roma student magazine in Slovakia and possibly in the world. It is a magazine created and written primarily by students of Roma origin and is intended for Roma and non-Roma alike. AMENCA was created in 2006 under the auspices of the Society for Higher Learning and is now published by the students of Constantine the Philosopher University in Nitra together with the students of the Bratislava International School of Liberal Arts (BISLA).

WHY?

AMENCA is devoted to mapping the Roma question within Slovak society and its manifestation in daily life around us. Themes covered in the magazine include the problems of open and hidden discrimination as well as education and employment, covering larger social issues as well as issues related to everyday student life. The magazine's goal is to share the observations and insights of Roma students and experts, and to provide the community of Roma students with a platform for voicing their concerns as they emerge from the experiences of one of the largest ethnic minorities in Slovakia.

AMENCA (With Us) is a magazine created and written by university students of Roma origin. It is the only magazine of its kind in Slovakia and possibly in the world.

www.amenca.sk

WHO and HOW?

AMENCA is maintained by many volunteers from various fields, all of whom support AMENCA out of a belief in the project and without any financial reward.

- **Students** write, edit, publish and disseminate the magazine.
- **Experts** from various fields contribute their analyses, commentaries or advice on a voluntary basis.
- The **Advisory council** includes **Samuel Abrahám**, the founder of AMENCA and the President of the Bratislava International School of Liberal Arts; **Stanislav Daniel**, a Roma activist and consultant; **Irena Bihariová**, lawyer and Chairperson of the non-profit organization People Against Racism; and **Rastislav Pivoň**, cultural anthropologist and Roma studies expert.
- In 2012, an electronic version of the magazine has been created at **www.amenca.sk.**

AMENCA was launched in 2006 thanks to the support of the Christian A. Johnson Endeavor Foundation in New York and the Embassy of the United States. Recently, its publication has been supported by the Office of the Plenipotentiary of the Slovak Government for Roma Communities.

BISLA is seeking sponsorship to support this unique publication, to help deepen its impact via printed and online media and to secure its sustainability.






ROMA WINTER SCHOOL



High School Essay Competition

WHAT?



The Bratislava International School of Liberal Arts (BISLA) organizes an annual high school competition in essay writing. The competition provides a platform for young people to voice their views and share their concerns. In the first year, the students were asked to write on the topic "**What is your message to the adults?**" In the second year, the topic concerned taboos in our society: **"What's not talked about and should be?"** Participation exceeded all expectations. Nearly 300 essays were entered into the competition.

WHY?

- Competition inspires students to think seriously about current problems in an innovative manner.
- Students are encouraged by financial and material prizes awarded to the best essays. The second annual student competition was co-sponsored by DELL.
- The most successful essays and extracts from some of the others are published in the magazine of critical thinking, *Kritika & Kontext*.

WHO?

The essays are evaluated by an independent committee, consisting of known personalities from the cultural life of Slovak society. The members of the committee so far have included:

Božidara Turzonovová
actress

Ľubomír Feldek
poet, writer, dramatist and translator

Dušan Hanák
film director and script writer

Darina Abrahámová
dramaturgička

František Novosád
philosopher, Dean of BISLA

Samuel Abrahám
Editor in Chief of *Kritika & Kontext* magazine, Rector of BISLA



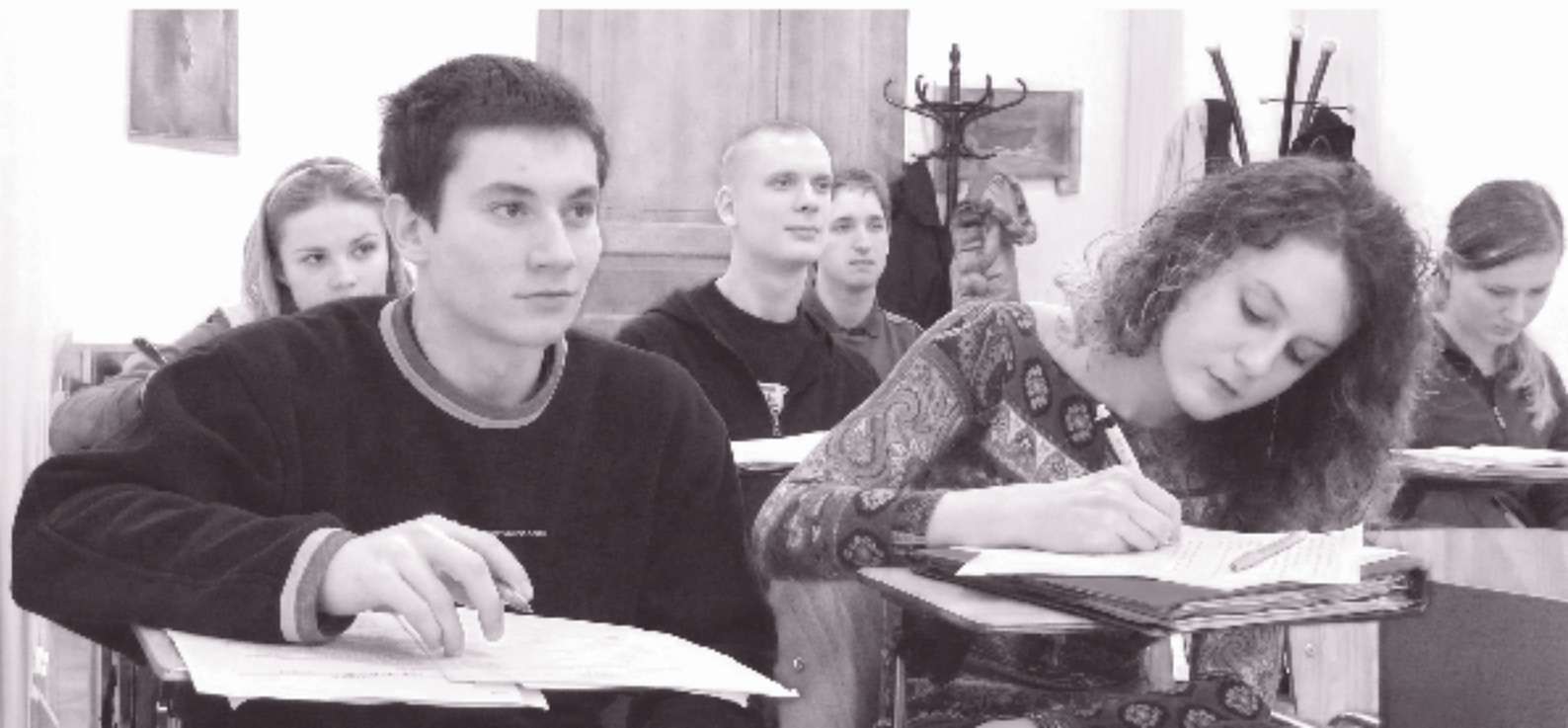
Winners of the first year of competition

The committee also includes BISLA students:
Jarmila Mikušová, Silvia Jurgová, Nikola Revická, Tatiana Blazseková, Viktória Mihalovičová.

Donations contribute to the prizes awarded to the most talented students and to the organizing costs of the essay competition.



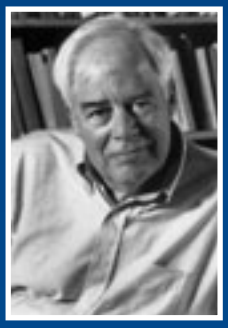




Richard Rorty Prize

WHAT?

The Bratislava Institute of Humanism (BIH) plans to award an annual Richard Rorty Prize to prominent individuals who are concerned with political, environmental and social problems on a global scale, that is, to people otherwise known as "public intellectuals".



The Richard Rorty Prize includes a financial and an artistic award. Besides a public lecture and roundtable debate with BISLA students, each Prize laureate will publicly debate one of Richard Rorty's texts with a few prominent guests from Slovakia and abroad.

WHY?

Rorty is known in Slovak philosophical circles and has visited Bratislava twice. He was a personal friend to Egon Gál. At the same time, he was a member of the editorial board of the magazine *Kritika & Kontext*, to which he contributed regularly until his death in 2007. One issue of *Kritika & Kontext* was devoted to the work and life of this crucial philosopher.

> "Open-mindedness should not be fostered because, as Scripture teaches, Truth is great and will prevail, nor because, as Milton suggests, Truth will always win in a free and open encounter. It should be fostered for its own sake."
>
> (Richard Rorty)

WHO?

Richard Rorty (1931–2007) was one of the most important American philosophers and thinkers of the 20th century. His academic career is connected with the universities of Princeton, Virginia and Stanford. Although he came from the analytic tradition, he eventually shifted away from it and devoted himself to another American philosophical tradition: pragmatism. Besides philosophy, he was also interested in poetry, politics, culture, and, later in his life, he was concerned about (and often wrote about) social and humanitarian problems. He was a significant influence not only on other philosophers, but also on political thinkers and men of letters.



The Richard Rorty Prize will be given out by the Bratislava Institute of Humanism (BIH). Well-known individuals will become members of the selection committee. The Richard Rorty Prize has been endorsed by his widow, Mary Rorty.

BIH is seeking sponsors to support the establishment of this high profile annual award, in particular, to contribute to the prizes.



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