

Liberal Arts Alumni Testimonials - Why Liberal Arts?

“Switching into Liberal Arts is one of the best decisions I’ve ever made. I had the opportunity to take classes that I never would have taken in my original program. My love for history and philosophy can be credited almost entirely to this program. Having such a small program and teachers that are as passionate as the Liberal Arts teachers are, meant that my relationship to Abbott was significantly different than that of most students. **I was able to connect with teachers about the classes they taught (and even the ones they didn’t teach).** As well, in Liberal Arts, we take classes that are unique to this program. My favourite classes from CEGEP were some of our core Liberal Arts classes (like Ancient Philosophy and Math and Logic). On top of this I met all of my best friends through Liberal Arts. The past two years have given me the most amazing friends, essay writing skills I didn’t know I could obtain, and have helped me decide what to study in university. As much as I wish that other programs could offer the same thing, I know that Liberal Arts offers something unique that no other program has”.

- Madison Blunden, 2020 Graduate

“If you love to read, write, be challenged, engage in discussions, make lifelong friendships, learn about the world around you and the people in it, then Liberal Arts is the program for you.

Liberal arts is a representation of the best way to learn. Surrounded by a group of people who encourage and inspire you to learn and engage with the materials that you are learning and professors who are passionate about what they teach.

For me, Liberal Arts was the first time that I was surrounded by a group of people who were just as passionate about all of the things that I was. The program has challenged me as well as opened my eyes to the fact that I really do love learning. **The classes that we take in Liberal Arts give you an amazing foundation for the rest of your academic career and the rest of your life”.**

- Megan Schmidt, 2020 Graduate

“Liberal Arts was a program that allowed me to better understand the hows and whys of the way things are and allowed me to discuss news ideas I was being exposed to with like- minded classmates and professors. **While I have now left the humanities to study Urban Planning at UQÀM, the lessons in critical thinking and academic rigour that were imparted in me remain useful in each and every one of my courses.** If you, like me, have a curious and socially conscious mind and want to enjoy your time at John Abbott College, I cannot begin to recommend the Liberal Arts program enough”.

- Gabriel Imbeau, 2020 Graduate

“Liberal Arts may not be what you think it is. It is not visual art, but is the study of how we came to this point in human history. We study and critically analyze the works that have shaped the Western conscious, including visual art, literary pieces, philosophical theories, religious doctrine, scientific advances, and historical events. **The skills of critical thinking that you learn in Lib are very, very useful in today’s world. Other skills such as proper writing, citations, research methods, etc., are transferable to any field you may choose to go into.** The program also allows you to meet like-minded people. All us students get along great, and it was actually shocking for me to realize that I was not the “only one” who had certain niche interests. Overall, the program is a challenge, but the professors and fellow students are very willing to help each other out, and so the entire experience, socially, academically, even spiritually and philosophically, is very rewarding, and I recommend at least trying the program to everyone I know”.

- Isobel Saldanha, 2020 Graduate

“Whenever I mention that I am currently studying Liberal Arts, I am always bombarded with the same questions: “What is that?”, “What can you do with that?” and of course, “I guess you don’t want a job in the future?”. It makes me sad that Liberal Arts has such a misconceived reputation. Many people are not quite sure what the program entails, and would rather enter into a S.T.E.M. program in which they believe will guarantee them a successful career and money. However, many underestimate the value of having a Liberal Arts background! **Liberal Arts prepares you for the real world, in many ways other programs cannot. It forces you to question, ponder, investigate and draw conclusions. It allows you to come face to face with the human condition, which will further allow you to navigate the world in a purposeful and conscientious manner. By studying the history, philosophy, religion, logical thinking, art, ethics and methodology of the past, one can come to a stronger understanding of the present and the possible outcomes of the future.** I have always had a passion for reading, writing, art, history and philosophical thinking and knew Liberal Arts was the program for me. At John Abbott, the Liberal Arts program is a small, safe and tight-knit community in which I could express myself freely and dive into meaningful conversations with like-minded, brilliant people. The teachers in the Liberal Arts program are passionate, extremely knowledgeable, well-rounded and open-minded; always ready to converse and help when need be. Overall, the Liberal Arts program at John Abbott has shaped and nurtured my mind, my passions and my understanding of not only myself, but of the Other, the planet and the Universe”.

- Fiona Coughlin, 2020 Graduate

“Although with regard to the various programs at John Abbott my experience is relatively limited, I can assure you that the Liberal Arts program is unlike any other at the college. **It’s not an art program, though students are immersed in the cultural significance of art in the western world through a critical lens; it’s not a math program, yet as a student one is exposed to the harmonious structures of mathematics and logic; it is not a science program, but one comes to truly appreciate the history of scientific thought, leading up to today.** The same is true for the fields of history, literature, and above all for me, philosophy. The Liberal Arts program gifts it’s students with a fresh perspective on their ‘being-in-the-world’, by providing context to their very existence. In this sense, the educational value of the Liberal Arts program is above all else.”

- Diego Caruana, 2020 Graduate

“Liberal arts is a program about a myriad of creative and academic subjects, but more importantly it’s about understanding the people that created the artwork or ideas discussed. From art, to religion, to philosophy, to the common threads of various societies that inform these topics, you learn not just about history or literature, but about humanity itself, and what it means to be a human. **If what you want is a group of tight-knit, like-minded people with whom you can both laugh and learn, Liberal Arts is for you”.**

- Michael Adamo, 2019 Graduate

“Liberal Arts transformed me for the better in only two short years. I became better read and very well-rounded with knowledge of art, history, philosophy, and more. It set the foundation for the rest of my life, & I couldn’t have asked for a better one”.

- Chloe Florence, 2020 Graduate

“Enrolling myself in the Liberal Arts program was by far the most gratifying choice I’ve made. I have made life-long friends, met amazing teachers and staff, and have learned so much in such little time. The experiences I’ve had in John Abbott would not have been as wonderful as I recall them if not for Liberal Arts. I am proud to be an alumna, and I can only hope that more people decide to enrich their lives and minds by joining the program”.

- Emanuelle Peer-Wininger, 2018 Graduate

“I have nothing but praise for the Liberal Arts program at John Abbott. I came from a small trade oriented high school and had little opportunities to pursue any academic ambitions. **Liberal Arts taught me the value of learning and gave me an abundance of opportunities. The program strengthened my discipline, time management skills and academic writing. These have allowed me to thrive at one of Canada's most prestigious Universities.**

Even though I've now moved to Ontario, I don't consider my time at Cegep a waste. It allowed me to expand my worldview, meet some great people, learn to live on my own and how important the pursuit of knowledge truly is, regardless of your career goals”.

- Alyssa Graham, 2019 graduate and student in History and Art History, Queen's University, Kingston, ON
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“It is difficult to put into words what Liberal Arts has done for me. I feel that the two years I was in the program gifted me with incredible intellectual growth. My way of looking at the world was forever altered. Perhaps most importantly, **Liberal Arts and the community I found while in the program reminded me that learning is a beautiful and powerful thing. This is about as close as I can get to describing what Liberal Arts has done for me. I cannot recommend the program enough”.**

- Anika Audet, 2020 Graduate
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“My experience in the Liberal Arts program at John Abbott was life changing. I don't use these words lightly but in the case of the program, my eyes were opened. **The curriculum was exactly what I wanted, in the sense that it gave me a global sense of understanding of our world and our society.** My mentality changed. I was always interested in philosophy, history, English Literature, and the program encompassed those subjects and many more. **I really found my little family at Abbott. The students within the program had all the same interests as I did and we actually pushed each other to do better.** We struggled together and we thrived together. Since it was a smaller program, we spent all of our time together and truly became a close-knit group. I felt as if I was a part of something bigger than myself. This was because I was able to apply the knowledge of my professors into my everyday life, and question the way things were. I believe the main focus of Liberal Arts is to question authority, question the norm and fight against it. Ask questions as to why things are the way that they are. I can say that this program still affects me to this day and I still am close with the students who were with me in Lib. It changed my perspective on life itself, which may seem dramatic, but it's the truth. It encouraged me to pursue knowledge for the simple pleasure of knowing, I learned how to defend myself with my arguments and articulate my thoughts eloquently”

- Juliette Zoni
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I really cherished my time in Liberal Arts and truly feel that it was what prepared me for university. I am a student at Concordia in Human Relations right now, and I really feel as though all the work done in Cegep has been what allowed me to be able to handle both the workload and course material. Not only were the academics fantastic, but I formed some friendships during my time in Liberal Arts that I still keep in contact with to this day. The close relationship that forms between the students made the experience so much better.

- Emma Sheehan, 2018 graduate

This program was very formative for me at a time when I was feeling uncertain about my future and my skills. It gave me invaluable experience in many subjects, equipped me with crucial skills (especially in essay-writing) that have benefited me in university, and most importantly, it gave me a constant sense of community and camaraderie. The small classes and the support from all of the professors made the program feel like a family.

- Emma Gauthier, 2019 graduate

Liberal Arts has everything you could want in a CÉGEP program: stimulating courses that teach you to think critically and prepare you for university, engaging and encouraging professors, and small class sizes that allow for plenty of discussion and let students get to know one another!

If want an engaging program that prepares you for university, look no further than Liberal Arts! Critical thinking, note-taking, and essay writing are just some of the skills I developed in this program that proved invaluable to my studies in English Literature and Music at Concordia. In Liberal Arts, I got to explore so many disciplines that interested me like literature, history, philosophy, and religion. Because of this, I entered university with a nuanced understanding of western history and culture as well and a clearer sense of my own academic interests. The professors trust you to tackle challenging texts and big questions and are there for you every step of the way.

- Hayley Bleho, 2018 graduate

I can't speak highly enough of Liberal Arts. I loved every single class I took while also feeling like I was always pushing the boundaries of my own capabilities. When I started at the University of Toronto, I felt confident and prepared thanks to what I learned in Liberal Arts and so far it hasn't let me down, even thriving in second-year classes as a first-year student! Although the program is rigorous, it doesn't feel intimidating with all of the extra help that teachers offer and the small class sizes that allow students to improve together. However, what really stood out about Liberal Arts to me was the ability to pursue my own passions, with teachers encouraging me to choose my own research topics and delve deep no matter how weird and obscure. Now that I'm in university, the wide range of topics I studied in Liberal Arts help me bring an interdisciplinary perspective to everything I do. I'm grateful every day that I chose Liberal Arts!

- Cai Mitchell, 2020 graduate

Deciding on Liberal Arts was easily the most impactful decision I have ever made in my life. It has changed me beyond words can describe and I long to be back in the program on a daily basis. The things we learn are humbling and they made me feel like my understanding and position in the world shifted and for the better. The environment we learn them are incredibly inclusive and intimate. I have met some of my closest friends in Liberal Arts. There is not a single thing I would have changed about my years in Liberal Arts and I wish everyday I could do it all over again.

- Erin Smith, 2017 graduate

I have nothing but praise for the Liberal Arts program at John Abbott. I came from a small trade oriented high school and had little opportunities to pursue any academic ambitions. liberal Arts taught me the value of learning and gave me an abundance of opportunities. The program strengthened my discipline, time management skills and academic writing. These have allowed me to thrive at one of Canada's most prestigious Universities.

- Alyssa Graham, 2019 graduate
