

Welcome to Zeitgeist. Yes, that is one of those relatively amorphous German words, roughly meaning the “spirit of the times,” or of the “age.” It is a neat projection of the early 19th century European urge to place the unknowable, the “feeling,” into words. And words in any of the formats that writers engage in. With that in mind the term makes a good title for this effort to sweep together a sample of writing, gathered from the willing, here at IMSA. These are student writers, expressing ideas, feelings and making an effort to understand some fragment of the world around them.

Perhaps the part that might fit least does the best to summarize what is here. There are several interview replies from a few humanities instructors. They were broadly asked: Why do you think the humanities and social sciences are valuable in general and at IMSA? The answer is here, you just need to give in and spend a half-hour reading. Pick an essay and a poem and read. Don’t think about time or space for this. Just read – read the text. If it’s a poem, slow down. Maybe read it out loud. If it’s an essay with footnotes, leave the notes go until the end. Don’t read to embrace, read to question. Is this true? Do I agree with the author because I find it agreeable, or because it seems true, because there is an effective argument and evidence. So allow the reading, the thinking, to be that part of the humanities, which is research and argument that lack a definitive answer, to act as a challenge. It’s here if you read, promise.

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