



The Aristotle Project

Connect and Communicate

Overview

The Aristotle Project combines the academic disciplines of Sociology, Psychology, English and Philosophy. Students are challenged to understand and use complex concepts which require abstract, creative, critical, linear and lateral thinking. Elements from the QCAA senior subject of Sociology are integral to the course.



Urban Immersion Excursions

Twice a year, Aristotle students travel to Brisbane to enjoy educational and cultural experiences that are not available in Dalby. The aim of these excursions is to empower students to see Brisbane (and cities in general) as interesting and accessible environments – places in which they may choose to spend time when studying, travelling or following a career path in the future. The independence, maturity and confidence that students have gained from the Urban Immersion trips have exceeded even our high expectations. See the end of this section for more Urban Immersion details and photos.



Semester Units

There are five semester (twenty week) units of study in the Aristotle Project. These are summarised below. The order of the units is determined according to the make-up of class groups. However, new units may be developed and existing units may be adapted in response to the interests and abilities of students and the opportunities for learning which arise during each semester. For example, students are currently engaged in a new 10 week journalism unit (*Creating the News*). Assessment tasks include writing news articles for a student-journalism edition of the Dalby Herald (an opportunity that arose at short notice at the beginning of this term) and making documentary films to be shown on school assemblies. Selected aspects of the scheduled semester unit (*Unit 5: Fast Forward – Creating the Future*) will be taught and assessed in term 4.

1. Shape Shifter – Who thinks what and why?



- Psychological theories of human development and learning
- Theories of personality
- The influence of the media on attitudes to gender, behaviour and perceptions of success

Literary texts

- *Lord of the Flies* (novel)
- *The Social Network* (film)

Assessment

- Written exam
- Assignment – Student-negotiated investigation into an aspect of human cognition or behaviour. Production of a research report, a feature article and a seminar presentation.

2. Exploding Stereotypes – What is ‘normal’? An examination of social behaviour.



- The shaping of culture by individuals and communities
- Attitudes, values and societal taboos
- Mainstream culture vs subcultures

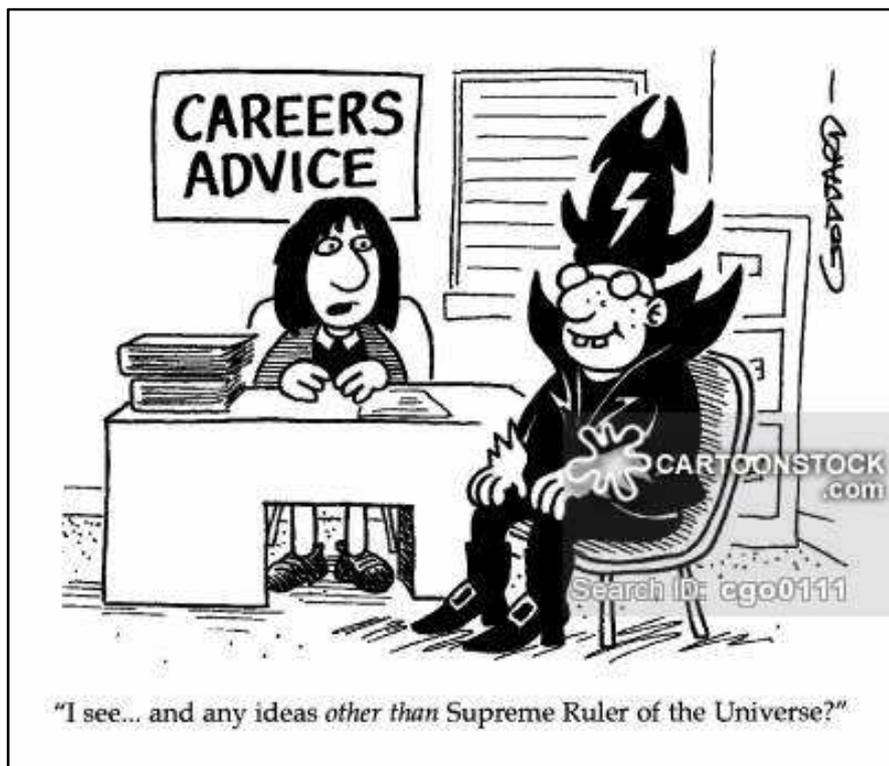
Literary texts

- *Looking for Alibrandi* (novel)
- *The Breakfast Club* (film)

Assessment

- Written exam
- Assignment – Student-negotiated investigation into an aspect of social or cultural conflict between mainstream culture and a sub-culture in Australia. Production of written, spoken and media texts expressing different points of view on the conflict.

3. How to Rule the World – A study of power and popular culture



- What is power? Uses of power in popular culture, political and religious extremism
- How leaders exploit greed, pride, hatred and fear
- New propaganda and the power of subversion

Literary texts

- *The Wave* (novel)
- *Animal Farm* (film)

Assessment

- Written exam
- Student-negotiated investigation into the use of personal power and social networking to create a positive change in people's thinking and/or behaviour. Application in a real-world context.

4. The Ideas Factory – Applications of linear and lateral thinking in the fields of sociology, philosophy, psychology and cognitive theory



- Wisdom and wickedness – religion as a sociological, psychological and philosophical phenomenon
- What is real? – the nature of reality through the eyes of scientists, mystics, psychologists and philosophers
- The fine line between genius and delusion
- Applications of theories of social psychology in school environments – how perception influences reality
- Applications of cognitive theories in learning

Literary texts

- *1984* (extracts from the novel)
- *A Beautiful Mind* (film)

Assessment

- Written exam
- Student-negotiated investigation into recounts and research of an unsubstantiated phenomenon. Creation of psychological, sociological and philosophical focus questions. Production of written and spoken responses to the focus questions, encompassing analytical and creative texts.

5. Fast Forward – Creating the Future



The Future

- A moment in time – interpreting the present for the future
- Time travel – physical and philosophical paradoxes
- Artificial intelligence and the nature of consciousness
- Utopian and dystopian futures

Literary texts

- Short stories
- *The Matrix* (film)

Assessment

- Written exam
- Student-negotiated investigation into a current sociological or philosophical issue that is challenging humanity. Projection of this situation into a utopian and a dystopian future in the form of a creative and an expository text.

Urban Immersion Excursions



There have been three urban Immersion trips since the Aristotle Project began in 2013. Experiences have included:

- Using public transport (trains, buses, ferries)
- Visits to campuses of the University of Queensland (UQ) and the Queensland University of Technology (QUT)
- A guided tour of college accommodation at UQ led by ex-Dalby SHS school captains
- Exploring different parts of the CBD and Fortitude Valley on foot
- Visits to the Qld Museum and the Gallery of Modern Art
- Navigational challenges
- Indoor rock climbing
- Historical tour of Boggo Road Gaol
- Ice skating
- Guided ghost tour of the CBD at night
- Culinary adventures: group dinners at interesting Tibetan, Mexican and Italian restaurants and a choose-your-own-Asian-restaurant challenge for lunch in China Town
- Free time in the Queen Street Mall (street performers, shops, food, people-watching, self-navigation)

Possibilities for upcoming Urban Immersion trips include live music and live theatre performances, visits to other tertiary education providers (such as the Southbank TAFE or the Qld School of Film and Television) and a tour of the historic site on St Helena Island in Moreton Bay.

