

MEDIA RELEASE

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International authority on Simone Weil to explore philosophy as antidote to violence at annual lecture

Renowned philosopher and Simone Weil expert Dr Rebecca Rozelle-Stone will deliver Australian Catholic University's 2026 Simone Weil Lecture in Human Value next month.

Dr Rozelle-Stone will give a two-part free public lecture on violence, the good, and radical friendship, inspired by one of Weil's most celebrated works, "The Iliad, or The Poem of Force".

For her first lecture in Brisbane on 18 August, Dr Rozelle-Stone will explore the phenomenon of force in a technology-dominated and power-obsessed world. Her second lecture in Melbourne on 20 August will then analyse Weil's ideas on friendship as a remedy to political impotence, fear, and passivity.

"It can often feel like philosophy is impotent to neutralize a violent world," Dr Rozelle-Stone said.

"We need to think about the power of philosophy on a more local level, beginning with our closest associates - how we use or don't use power in our personal relationships, or how we might approach friendships in a way that centres truth as opposed to just comfort."

Initially challenged by the radical ideas of Simone Weil, Dr Rozelle-Stone is now a leading expert on the French philosopher, having authored and edited numerous books and chapters on her and her philosophical vision.

"While my philosophical interests have been expansive in my 20-plus year career, as I get deeper into issues of concern in our world, I keep being drawn back to Weil and her writings for their incisive analyses and diagnoses," Dr Rozelle-Stone said.

"Weil is a unique figure who truly embodied her ideas, like attention, even to the extent that this arguably brought about her death at age 34."

The University of North Dakota professor is the editor and author of several books on Simone Weil, including *A Very Short Introduction: Simone Weil*, and served as the Vice President and President of the American Weil Society.

She said Weil consistently claimed the ego as the source of all evil and destructiveness, an insight highly relevant to today's violent and fragmented world.

"Weil's philosophy is entirely relevant to the many issues we face in our time," Dr Rozelle-Stone said.

"Her idea of attentiveness is compelling because we are living in such a distracted, technology-infused, entertainment-focused, and force-filled time.

"Elon Musk has even said that 'the fundamental weakness of Western civilization is empathy' which is convenient for him. There is an attention economy that companies such as his are trying to dominate and exploit, but Weil recognized that attention is a moral capacity, not just something to be extracted and manipulated for commercial purposes."

The 26th Simone Weil Lecture is hosted by ACU's School of Philosophy, and honours one of the most influential twentieth-century thinkers of philosophy, religion, spirituality and politics.

Executive Dean of the Faculty of Theology and Philosophy Professor Richard Colledge said the university was thrilled to host one of the world's leading experts on Simone Weil.

"Dr Rebecca Rozelle-Stone has invested much of her scholarly work into studying the philosophy and life of Simone Weil, in particular making her provocative ideas accessible to non-philosophers," Professor Colledge said.

"Since 2000 the Simone Weil Lecture has featured some of the world's leading moral philosophers, each of whom has illuminated key elements of social ethics in contemporary contexts, inspired by Weil's radical vision.

"We are delighted to welcome Dr Rozelle-Stone to unpack the legacy of Simone Weil for audiences in Brisbane and Melbourne."

The Simone Weil Lecture series was launched in 2000 by former ACU Professor of Philosophy Raimond Gaita.

Registrations for the Brisbane and Melbourne lecture are now open on [the ACU website](#).

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