

Liberal Studies Electives (Degree Level)

Course Descriptions – SPRING/SUMMER 2024 (202303)

Lower-Level Liberal Arts & Humanities (LHUM)

LHUM 1201 – The Evolution of Filmmaking

This film studies course deals with the evolution of film in terms of its historical and cultural development, critical filmic analysis, and technical aspects of filmmaking. The course is divided into five parts, each of which examines a major time period in the development of film in a historical, social, cultural, critical, and technical context.

LHUM 1203 – The Pleasure of Inquiry

This course aims to develop the skills of inquiry and argumentation in a time of 'fake news' and destabilized truth by introducing you to the practice of philosophy and approaches to key philosophic questions in a lively, accessible way. It uses ordinary examples such as learning a martial art, detergents, dreaming, films like *The Matrix*, making money, the rise of artificial intelligence, and everyday consciousness to inquire into ongoing questions regarding knowledge, justice, reality, God, and the human condition, and to consider provocative responses to these questions.

LHUM 1233 – Fact or Fake: Finding Truth(s) in the Era of Fake News

How do we know if news, video, or photos are fake or real? Do we have the time and knowledge to check? Do we want to check? Why should we care? Manufactured and so-called fake news posted on social media have become part of a dangerous new reality. Information spread through social networks is often accepted over traditional more reliable fact-checked news. These manipulations have become powerful tools for politicians, conspiracy theorists, corporations, and ordinary people. The effects can be felt in many fields such as science, the environment, politics, and culture. This course will explore the impact of fake news on traditional fact-checked news media and, in turn, its influence on society. Media from a variety of sources will be evaluated for reliability and validity. Students will learn how to deconstruct media in order to distinguish what is fact vs what is fiction.

Lower-Level Liberal Science & Technology (LSCI)

LSCI 1205 – What's Bugging Us? Microbes, Molecules, and Medicines

This course examines the links between human activities (individual and societal level), environmental factors, and the incidence of infectious diseases on humans, animals, and plants with an emphasis on issues that are locally relevant to Canada. A wide range of concepts from several disciplines (i.e., ecology, epidemiology, human medicine, among others) will be covered in order to illustrate that disease development and transmission result from a complex interplay between host, pathogen, and environment as illustrated by outbreaks in the past, e.g., smallpox epidemics, and more recently, SARS-Covid-2 pandemic. Some of the current topics in ecology of infectious diseases and environmental toxicology that this course explores include diversity of pathogens, antibiotic resistance to bacterial diseases, emergent and re-emergent infectious diseases, as well as how chemicals and pathogens interact to weaken the immune system, reduce vaccine efficacy, and increase pathogen virulence. This course will promote scientific literacy by increasing the ability of students to read and understand science in the news, to discuss current health and ecological issues and to make responsible decisions as citizens.

Lower-Level Liberal Social Science (LSSC)

LSSC 1203 – Introduction to Canadian Politics

How does politics affect your life and future? Is there a Canadian national identity? This course introduces students to major debates and questions in Canadian politics and society, and the more

enduring problems underlying these issues. The aim of the course is to foster the student's capacity to develop their own interpretation of Canadian politics and society.

LSSC 1220 – Race and Racism in the Americas and Caribbean

Racism and the categories of race are pervasive phenomena that occur across the world. Many scholars have argued that the very idea of “race” – the notion that human beings can be divided into groups such as “whites”, “blacks”, “Indians”, etc. – was first invented in the Americas. But what are races? Does it mean the same thing to be “white”, “black” or “Asian” in Canada as it does in Brazil or Jamaica? If colour is rooted in assumptions about biology in parts of Canada, does the same hold for the Caribbean? Is race simply a delusion, a cover for political and economic domination? Can we aspire to eliminate the idea of race altogether or is its hold too pervasive, its appeal to the mind too great? This course looks at various stages in the development of racial categories in the Americas and the Caribbean. Our readings include theoretical, ethnographic, and literary works, but also our own experiences, the popular media, and the language we speak and hear around us.

Upper-Level Liberal Arts & Humanities (LHUM)

LHUM 1310 - Existentialism (Prerequisite: One lower-level Liberal Studies course)

What is worth living for? If we have an answer –say, love, happiness, justice, or eternal life-where did we get this answer from? Are religion, social norms, political and economic ideologies credible sources? If not, are we free to create any value and meaning we want for our own lives? And if we are completely free, what sort of responsibility do we have to other people, if any? In this course, we will be exploring these perplexing but fundamental questions about human existence through an examination of philosophical essays, film, literature and theatre from a movement of thinkers and artists known as the existentialists.

LHUM 1306 – Global Classical and Medieval Literature (Prerequisite: One lower-level Liberal Studies course)

This course introduces students to literature and thought from several major traditions across the globe, spanning roughly the 4th- through the 14th-centuries. The main theme of the course is a cross-cultural comparison of how the emotional lives of individuals are expressed, communicated and shared in and through language. This will require introducing students to basic religious, political and cultural contexts of each area of the world. The course balances an appreciation for each literary tradition on its own terms with an understanding of how religious ideas, moral values, role-models, histories, and fantasies spread across cultures via the oral and written word. Along the way, students will be introduced to various literary forms, such as the allegory, the poem, and the frame-tale narrative, along with the reflections of writers from around the world on the nature and purpose of literature.

Upper-Level Liberal Science & Technology (LSCI)

LSCI 1301 – Troubled Waters: Our Future and the Global Ocean

The global ocean is our life-support system. Covering nearly three-quarters of Earth's surface, the oceans produce half of the oxygen in our atmosphere, regulate temperature and climate, and govern nutrient and chemical cycles that sustain all living things, including you. The oceans, however, are in distress. Pollution and unsustainable seafood harvesting are causing fundamental changes throughout the ocean system that will result in dire consequences unless our habits change substantially.

Students investigate what is happening to our oceans and the ecological consequences of human-influenced changes in ocean temperature, oxygen, acidity, and biodiversity. Through readings, videos, and class discussion, students learn about human impacts on the ocean and how ocean change will affect not only us but life in general. Students learn the importance of scientific study of the world's oceans and apply analysis and critical thinking to issues learned in class and through independent research.

Upper-Level Liberal Social Science (LSSC)

LSSC 1319 – Global Justice (Prerequisite: One lower-level Liberal Studies course)

The onset of globalization has coincided with the emergence of a variety of calls for “global justice”, reform, and alternative forms of globalization. The desire for global justice and alternative globalizations emerges from economic, cultural, ecological, and political trends. This course is interdisciplinary in nature, combining perspectives from history, sociology, anthropology, political science, economics, philosophy, and civil society to explore the meanings of global justice and alternative globalization, their central policy proposals, institutional structures, and the new forms of social experience that are producing the desire for greater transnational and international equality. The course focuses on the intersection between appeals for economic redistribution, cultural recognition, environmental sustainability, and political representation. It pays close attention to the relationship between various forms of social inequality such as racism, sexism, classism, and sexuality. Further issues to be explored include the role that corporations, cultural producers, civil society, states, and Canadian writers and organizations are having in shaping calls for global justice.