

General Education Electives (Certificate & Diploma Level)

Course Descriptions – SPRING/SUMMER 2022

Arts & Humanities (GHUM)

GHUM 1024 – Women in Film: Scandalous Sisters

How are women represented in film? What kinds of stories are told about women's experiences – and who is telling these stories? What kinds of women are represented in films – and what kinds of women don't we see in mainstream movies? Women in Film: Scandalous Sisters explores and analyzes representations of women in a range of mainstream historical and contemporary films. Our focus is on movies that were seen as "scandalous" or controversial when they were released because of the "unconventional" behavior and/or appearance of the central female character(s). We explore the historical, social, and political factors that influenced both the representations of women in these films and the controversies that arose when the films were released. We also discuss how and why representations of women (both "scandalous" and "proper") in film have changed over time and consider the future of women in film. Issues of gender, race, class, and sexuality are central to our discussion and analysis.

GHUM 1035 – Introduction to Indigenous Studies

This course will provide an overview to the order of events of Canadian Indigenous people beginning with pre-contact and moving through the centuries to current events including the Truth and Reconciliation process, report, and recommendations. This course will address the complexities of Canadian Indigenous identity and provides a worldview. Participants will begin to develop a perspective through an examination of the historical context for specific government policies and their influence on past and current conditions for Indigenous people.

GHUM 1052 – World Religions

This course explores the nature of religious experience and introduces the worldviews, ethics, practices, and beliefs of each of the world's religions. It includes a brief background of the origin and development of each religion. Additionally, the course explores contemporary issues that have relevance to the personal and public arena.

GHUM 1065 – Introduction to Sexual Diversity Studies

This course is an introduction to the discipline of sexual diversity studies or queer studies. Contemporary debates among lesbians, gay men, bisexuals, trans, two-spirit, intersex and queer people are featured. Questions of sexual diversity - and intersecting forms of difference (including race, gender, ability, age) - are discussed and analyzed, along with queer culture, politics, and thought. Students explore these issues by analyzing a wide variety of cultural productions (video, magazines, digital media, books, visual art). This course focuses on histories of Canadian and Toronto-based queer communities.

GHUM 1078 – Photography: Shooting the Truth

Photography has been a tool for documenting reality, spreading information, and capturing fragments of everyday life. Photography does not lie! Is this a true statement in the era of digital photography? Was this ever a true statement? Despite the fact that it was presented to the world as a technology that doesn't lie, photography has been used as a political tool that has misguided the public even before the invention of digital images. Documentary photography, which claims to present reality, has been manipulated throughout the years. Photography: Shooting the Truth explores the impact of photography on society. The course will examine photography's role in politics, media, science, communication, and culture, as well as how it shapes our real and virtual lives. Photography: Shooting the Truth combines study of the work of practicing photographers and hands-on production using

current web technologies (Google Sites, Wikis, Blogs, etc.). This course requires access to unrestricted Internet access.

GHUM 1088 – Ancient Great Thinkers

The ideas of the ancient great thinkers and texts in the Greek, Chinese, Indian, Egyptian, Mesopotamian, Indigenous, and other classical philosophical and literary traditions have remained an integral part of social, economic, cultural, and political life across the world. Their philosophical and literary contribution has shaped their specific communities and have extended to shape our global society today. This course takes a cross-cultural historical look at some of the world's most influential philosophical and literary traditions and compares the major texts of various traditions. In each tradition the course will examine various original writings on the following questions: What is human nature? What is the nature of society? And what is the nature of the universe? Some of the texts that we will review to answer the above questions are from Plato, Aristotle, Confucius, Lao Tzu, Sun Tzu, the Buddha, as well as the Epic of Gilgamesh, the Popol Vuh and others.

GHUM 1112 – Journeys in Writing: Exploring Travel Stories

From personal narrative to factual article, travel writing allows us to “journey” into different lands and gain new understandings of people, places, and ideas. In this course, students will explore the different forms and purposes of travel writing as well as its personal and cultural significance. They will read commercial articles from newspapers in order to understand the business of informative travel-writing. Moreover, they will read personal accounts of travel, as well as travel fiction, in order to analyze the important themes raised therein, themes such as knowledge, discrimination, politics, religion, morality, and human bonds.

GHUM 1122 – Conspiracy Theories: From Politics to Paranoia

This interdisciplinary course explores the diverse group of pop culture phenomena known as “conspiracy theories”. The student's perspective is both that of a social scientist and of a media literacy analyst, a critical observer who must sift through the many layers of doubt created by a culture steeped in daily lies, false identities, and systemic disinformation. The thesis of the course is that conspiracy theories exist precisely because Western culture has normalized the use of misrepresentation and false narratives, in daily interaction, social networking, romance, business, news, politics, and government. Through a critical media literacy study of readings, documentary films, cinema, television, and computer sources, students learn to be critical about differentiating between disinformation, ‘factual data,’ rumour, and fantastical sources. Implicit in the study is a values education model that attempts to guide students through the murky waters of post-modern ethics and ethical media conduct.

GHUM 1145 – From Galleries to Graffiti: Putting Art to Work

This course examines the roles of workers and the arts in our society. Examples of popular culture, visual art, textiles, film, video, music, literature, and theatre give students a chance to analyze how these reflect workers' concerns. By examining contemporary art and meeting local artists, students develop a critical perspective on various social and labour issues, and they gain some tools in analyzing art, media, and our political and economic world. Students also have an opportunity to create artwork on some of the social themes discussed.

GHUM 1180 – Pop Culture: The Politics of Media Literacy

This interdisciplinary online course explores North American popular culture and its effects on the world. The student's perspective is that of a cultural researcher, an observer seeing the Northern way of life for the first time. Through a political study (gender, race, and class analyses) of film, television, computer technologies, music, and advertising, students learn connections between these media and their political, historical, social, and economic contexts. Also studied will be the idea of popular iconography, which is the idea that numerous icons and symbols have their own unique and powerful political, social, or ethical connotations and influences. While most readings will be available on Blackboard, attendance is critical because it will enhance the learning experience, allow for in-class discussions, collaborative learning exercises, and promote opportunities for successful meeting of the course outcomes.

GHUM 1189 – Introduction to Western Philosophy

What does it mean to be human? Is anything really right or wrong? What if there is no God? What if there is a God? Is the practical world we usually focus on truly the “real” world? This introductory philosophy course invites students to experience both the fun and the challenge of learning to think clearly and critically about basic questions that are a part of our human heritage and our own lives. Students will work through texts written by various philosophers from different schools of thought throughout Western history. The course begins with an overview of the rise of philosophy in the ancient world and follows the development of philosophical ideas through the medieval period and into the early modern and modern eras. Key themes in the first half of the course include the nature of wisdom, the place of friendship in a philosophical life, rationality vs. faith, and the nature of knowledge and reality. In the second half of the course, we examine themes relating to ethics and the relationship between the individual, God, and society.

Science & Technology (GSCI)

GSCI 1006 – Understanding Drug Use and Abuse in Canada

This course presents the problems associated with drug use and abuse from an interdisciplinary perspective. The central theme to this course is that a drug's effect is determined not only by its chemical structure and interaction in the body, but also by the drug user's unique biology and psychology, as well as the setting and circumstances in which they are using the drug(s). Core concepts in the sciences, sociology, and psychology will be used to help in understanding many of the human costs involved with drug use in our society. Pre-requisite readings will accompany each lesson to provide the necessary science background to help the student fully understand these concepts and issues.

GSCI 1007 – History of Technology

This course traces the history of technology from the year AD 1000 to the present and explores how technology has shaped our values and thinking. Agricultural, military, communication, and transportation technologies and their defining influences are dealt with. As well, this course investigates our Western cultural attitudes towards these technologies and compares them to attitudes from other cultures.

GSCI 1009 – Astronomy: Unraveling the Mystery and Science of the Universe

In this course, students will explore the science of Astronomy. They will learn about the history of the discipline and discover the ways in which human beings have observed and experienced the universe for thousands of years, including all aspects of the solar system. In addition, students will gain an appreciation for the new discoveries that constantly refresh our understanding of the cosmos.

GSCI 1014 – So that's Physics

What holds a sandcastle together? How do professional wrestlers manage to go unhurt when they throw each other down onto the mat? The value of physics is that it explains much about the world around us and the rules that govern behavior. In this course physics is presented in a conceptual way. It is hoped that this course demystifies physics and shows that physics can be interesting, useful, and enlighten our understanding of the natural properties that govern the world. Students expand their critical thinking and problem-solving skills throughout the course. They learn about physical laws that govern familiar objects and activities, and begin to appreciate connections between science, people, and the world.

GSCI 1024 – Environmental Science

Environmental Science explores the basic ecological concepts that govern the natural world. It analyses the cause and effect relationships underlying environmental issues. The many ways in which humans affect the environment are investigated. Concerns about various types of pollution are examined and possible solutions discussed.

GSCI 1035 – Science of Sustainability

"We are the change. And the change is coming." - Greta Thunberg, environmental activist. Environmental degradation has accelerated as a result of human activities, including urbanization, industrialization, and ineffective policies. In this asynchronous course, as a global citizen, you explore intricacies of current and emerging environmental threats, how science supports sustainable solutions to these challenges, and apply sustainable practices in personal and professional lives by creating a sustainability plan.

GSCI 1044 – Boundaries of Science

This course is an introduction to science across traditional scientific disciplines. It is designed for non-science students (just a bit of math). Topics in physics, chemistry, biology, astronomy, cosmology, geology, and anthropology may be covered, with a focus on relevance to everyday life and the wonder of our universe. Science will be presented as an evolving and self-correcting body of observation and theory central to life in the 21st century. Current developments and new discoveries will be of interest.

GSCI 1146 – Plants and Society

Plants form the basis of our health, economy, and environment and yet we often overlook the important impacts that plants have on the society in which we live. Plants and Society is an introductory science course about the essential role plants play in the everyday lives of people. Students will learn about society's historical connections to plants and how traditional knowledge of plants, the development of agriculture, and biotechnology have changed how people live today. The course reveals the basic structure and physiology of plants and highlights the economic or applied aspects of plants as sources of food, commercial products, and pharmaceuticals.

GSCI 1172 – Bodyworks

This course provides the student with a basic background in anatomy and physiology. The two major themes emphasized throughout the course are how structure (anatomy) determines function (physiology), and how homeostasis of the human body is achieved and maintained. Unique to this course is the application of selected course concepts, using medical terminology, to the students' understanding of the promotion of health and well-being and the prevention of illness.

Social Sciences (GSSC)

GSSC 1028 – Politics and Contemporary Issues

How does politics affect your life and future? What happens to Canada if Quebec separates? Can aboriginal self-government work? Is Canada even governable any longer? This course introduces students to major debates and questions in Canadian politics, and fosters confidence in students' abilities to both participate in, and effectively influence, the political choices that are shaping Canada now and in the future.

GSSC 1054 – Forensic Psychology

The abundance of television police and legal dramas reflects and promotes an interest in forensic issues in Canada. This course is designed to help students understand the role of psychology and research and practice in law-enforcement and legal settings. Theories, research findings, professional practices, and real-life cases will be discussed and analyzed throughout the course.

GSSC 1058 - Introduction to Psychology

This survey course introduces students to psychology - the scientific study of behaviour and mental processes. Students will examine the basic principles of psychology and their application to everyday life. Topics include biology and the brain, consciousness, learning, memory, health and social psychology, psychological disorders, and therapeutic approaches.

GSSC 1066 – How the Weekend Was Won: Canadian Labour History

Do you know how Canadian workers talked their bosses into giving them the weekends off? Or when it became legal to join a union in Canada? What do unemployment insurance, health and safety laws, and maternity leave all have in common? This course answers these, and many other, questions about the history of working people in Canada in the past 150 years. Through readings, films, online activities, and discussions, students look at how unions have helped win rights, benefits, and social programs (like public health care) for today's workers. The course examines how unions are formed, how they have evolved and changed with the Canadian and global economies, and what relevance they have for young working people today.

GSSC 1072 – Indigenous Education: Insights and Perspectives

This course aims to provide a critical understanding of the experiences of Indigenous people in the education system in Canada. The course examines the methods and highly developed systems of teaching and learning used by Indigenous peoples in Canada prior to European contact. The focus is on the historical and present-day experiences of Indigenous peoples under the broader theme of colonialism and colonial education. Students are required to critically reflect on the history and impact of Canadian education policies in the lives of Indigenous peoples. The course also provides examples of the ways in which Indigenous peoples have reclaimed education from their own perspectives making it meaningful and relevant to them.

GSSC 1083 – Understanding Globalization

Globalization is a term that is frequently utilized in the mass media and political discourse in general, yet we are rarely told what globalization actually means. This course explores the global nature of contemporary society, its impact on Canada, and the way it fosters social and political change. Globalization is a multi-faceted process that affects economic, political, social, technological, legal, artistic, and spiritual trends. The course is interdisciplinary in nature, combining perspectives from sociology, anthropology, political science, economics, and philosophy to explore the meanings of globalization and its central processes and institutional structures. It pays particular attention to the relationship between globalization, inequality and poverty, the notion of cultural diversity in a globalizing world, and issues such as gender, ethnicity, the environment, social justice, and human rights.

GSSC 1084 – Psychology of Human Relations

This course examines theories of social and interpersonal psychology as they apply to the individual in society. Some of the major topics discussed include self-esteem, social psychology, psychological defensiveness, interpersonal communications, personality theories, learning theories, lifespan development, psychological disorders and treatments, attachment theory and parenting styles, adult relationships, violence, theories of moral development, and conditioning. The emphasis is on applied psychology to help students gain self-awareness and improve their ability to communicate in meaningful ways with others in order to live a more purposeful life. Emphasis is placed on personal growth and development of awareness.

GSSC 1183 - Food and the City: An Investigation of Food Systems

We know that food doesn't grow on grocery store shelves, but where does food come from? This course examines the origins and impacts of modern food systems on individuals, environments, and cultures. Blending ecology, political economy, environmental studies, community development, and nutrition, students will investigate food systems - conventional and "green" alternatives - from field to table, uncovering hidden relationships along the way. Using Toronto's food system as a case study to illustrate global phenomena, students will explore the benefits and challenges of addressing global issues through local actions. Through critical analysis, creative problem-solving, hands-on application, and reflexive practice, this course takes a holistic approach to building food literacy and environmental consciousness.