

General Education Electives (Certificate & Diploma Level) Course Descriptions – FALL 2020

Arts & Humanities (GHUM)

GHUM 1016 – Art Explores Psychology

This course demonstrates how to journey into the world of contemporary art. Artists who address psychological issues in their lives and work and psychologists who look to the arts for insights are explored as models for developing lifelong research and creative practices. Students experiment with reading, drawing, photo-based work, installation art, writing, and art dates as forms of inquiry, expression, persuasion, and aesthetic pleasure in the art of living.

GHUM 1017 – Children’s Literature

This course focuses on 19th and 20th century children’s literature. It begins by looking at early European children’s literature with authors such as Perrault, Grimm, and Anderson. The classic nature of the studied works is emphasized in the course, along with significant themes found within each work. A variety of genres of children’s literature are explored, including fantasy, realistic fiction and prose.

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 1034 – Toronto: Studies and Stories

Toronto has been called the city that works - a city of neighbourhoods. The city will certainly continue to be a city of immigrants living in relative harmony. Like any large city in our changing world, Toronto faces challenges and opportunities, and competing ideas and disagreements on how to face them in order to create the best possible quality of life for its citizens. This course examines Toronto’s issues and stories with a focus on the built environment, transportation, the transition to a post-industrial economy, and a related emphasis on creative occupations. Another key theme is immigration and resulting changes in civic culture. Students develop the skills to decide for themselves what is important in redesigning Toronto and how they could participate in creating that future.

GHUM 1035 - 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 – 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 1079 – Film Studies

This introductory course in film studies looks at technical aspects of filmmaking, historical development in film innovation, and interpretive models of film analysis. The course is divided into two parts: the first part deals with such micro-level filmic elements as the use of the camera, lighting, editing and related technical aspects that comprise film structure; the second part focuses on such macro-level filmic elements such as modes of screen reality, the influence of Hollywood, and film theories, from which meaning may be derived.

GHUM 1082 – Disability Discourse: The Experienced Life

This course invites students to explore disability and identity as it relates to the everyday lives of people with disabilities. Students examine the impact of power inequities, inclusion/exclusion and marginalization using a social justice, socio-political perspective. Students have the opportunity to examine the ways that people with disabilities are disadvantaged in society, not because of their particular impairments, but because of the ways in which social institutions define and respond to their condition. Through the analysis of first person narratives, students will be able to reflect on the experience of people with disabilities, highlighting the realities of living with disability, and to critically examine the intersection of how we, as a society, view "illness", disability, and identity. A key component of this course is examining the rarely explored perceptions of disability next to actual histories of disability and their comparative positions in social and civil movements. Students will learn about resistance, advocacy, arts, cultural liberation, and empowerment.

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 1169 – Hope and Hardship: A Labour History of Immigration to Canada

Canada's history is one of wave after wave of immigrants from all over the world. Hope and Hardship gives students the opportunity to analyze “case studies” of specific groups of new arrivals, the reasons they came, the work they did, the struggles they encountered, and the impact of Canada's First Nations. The course links the overall patterns of immigration to Canada with the work that immigrants have done and the unions they have formed in building our social and economic base. This innovative view of Canada's working history gives students a chance to document themselves and their family within this history. They will also develop a critical awareness of historical accounts by examining whose achievements, losses and disappointments are highlighted or left out. Films, oral history, historical accounts, recent Canadian literature, material from guest speakers, along with assigned readings will form the core materials for the course.

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 1003 – Truth and Lies: Understanding Statistics

Have you ever thought about how statistics affect you and the way you think about things? For example, do you think crime is increasing or decreasing? Is it safer to drive or fly? Should you have much confidence in political pollsters? Does gambling really pay off? This course will introduce students to the concepts of statistics, how statistics can affect the decisions we all make, and how scientists arrive at conclusions or make predictions. Students will learn the basic methods of data collection, organization and presentation, and different techniques that can be used to analyze and make sense of data.

GSCI 1006 – 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 – Muskets, Maps & Model Ts

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 unharmed 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 1029 – Science of Conquest

The Science of Conquest focuses on the role of science and technology as tools for the acquisition of knowledge and power over nature and the environment. Through a series of contemporary subjects, such as genetic manipulation, nuclear research, endangered species, antibiotic resistance, global warfare, and environmental disasters, students consider the ways in which the pursuit of consumerist and expansionist ideologies have affected the future of the earth and its inhabitants. Students also explore how science and technology can be employed to create visionary solutions for planetary health.

GSCI 1030 - Mind Your Brain: Neuroscience for Everyday Life

Your brain is as unique as your fingerprint and designed to change throughout your life. It is your command centre that mediates your daily experiences at every level, controlling who you are, what you do, how you feel, and even how your brain changes. Every sustained physical, sensory, and mental activity — including thinking, learning, and imagining, as well as feeling, attitude, and perception — changes your brain. The brain's inherent ability to change itself is called neuroplasticity. You will explore topics and concepts in neuroplasticity to understand the workings of your plastic brain. You will become familiar with discoveries in neuroscience that refute persistent myths about the brain, as well as unanswered questions and unresolved problems that continue to baffle neuroscientists. Understanding brain plasticity will enable you to apply that knowledge to your everyday life and personal goals.

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 1045 – Nutrition

In this course, students learn the basic principles of nutrition. The scope of the course ranges from a review of the gastrointestinal system, energy sources, and macronutrients to socio-cultural aspects of food. It also includes a more detailed discussion of nutrient function, dietary sources, recommended intakes, deficiencies, and excesses. Students consider behavioural aspects of diet and weight management as well as the effects of modern technology, cultural diversity, and aging on views of nutrition. They also examine aspects of nutrition related to disease and to physical and mental health, as well as controversial topics such as alternative therapies. Upon completion of this course, students have the basis for assessing their own diet for nutritional adequacy, and for putting concepts into practice for overall better health.

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 1026 – Psychology of Consumer Behaviour

This course introduces students to the psychology of consumer behaviour. Through an investigation of perception, learning, memory, motivation, attitudes, and group influence, students learn how marketers attempt to influence a consumer's decision-making process. Students also learn how possessions influence the way they feel about themselves and others, and they gain an understanding of marketing strategy from the perspective of the marketer and the perspective of a discriminating consumer.

GSSC 1027 – Personal Finance

This is a course in personal finance through both lectures and classroom discussion. The course is both a practical and theoretical course in personal financial planning. Topics covered include overall financial planning, income tax, wills and estate planning, insurance, retirement income, saving and investment, debt securities, stocks and mutual funds, as well as consumer credit, loans, and home mortgages. The course will also look at some of the socio-economic issues surrounding these topics.

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 1040 – Understanding Violence Against Women Partners

This course gives learners the information they need to understand and support women and trans people who have experienced abuse from their intimate partners. It provides learners with the opportunity to develop entry level knowledge and skills necessary to understand the work of agencies such as shelters, rape crisis centres, community-based programs for abuse survivors, advocacy services (such as victim/witness programs), social action groups, etc. Learners will be exploring a feminist, gender-based analysis of intimate partner violence. While this course concentrates on the topic of male (partner) violence against women, other contexts of violence, such as violence perpetrated by women against other women, will be addressed.

GSSC 1041 – No Escape: Understanding the Impact of Violent Environments on Children

In this course students will explore a variety of contexts in which children and youth may be exposed to violence, including homes, school, multi-media, life working or living on the street, refugee camps, and armed conflict zones. Students will learn how cognitive, social, and emotional development can be affected by exposure to violence. Using a global children's rights framework, learners will critically investigate a variety of approaches to mediating the effects of exposure to violence. Approaches will include recent government legislation to protect child witnesses to violence in homes, local arts and community-based prevention and trauma-informed support programs, and global initiatives focused on children's exposure to public violence.

GSSC 1052 – Visual Communications

Why do we remember some images and quickly forget others? How can we know if what we see in a visual representation is an accurate reflection of reality or one person's filtered view? Visual literacy is becoming increasingly more important in our visually intensive world. The most powerful, meaningful, and culturally important messages are those that combine words and pictures. In this course students learn about light, the eye and the brain, theoretical approaches to visual perception, ethical issues related to persuasive images, and procedures for analyzing visual images. Visual Communications explores how visual messages with text have the power to inform, educate, persuade, and even mislead individuals.

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, we will 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 1071 – Understanding Intercultural Communication

The goals of this course are to increase understanding of culture as a framework through which communication is created and interpreted and to develop knowledge and skills in intercultural communication. Intercultural communication theories and their supporting research are used to examine the challenges of intercultural communication and to provide specific examples and suggestions for effective intercultural communication and culturally appropriate behavior. Activities are designed to help students think critically about intercultural communication issues and actively involve students in the practical application of intercultural communication principles.

GSSC 1072 – Indigenous Education: Insights and Perspectives

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

GSSC 1077 – Music Psychology and Appreciation

This course is about the unique capacity humans possess to create and appreciate music. Students will learn about the various components that define music and study theories of music psychology that examine the brain's capacity to perceive, process, and interpret 'meaning' from music. Topics include theories about the role music may have played in human evolution, music's effect on memory, emotions and cognitive functions, musical intelligence, theories of music development in children, music enculturation and training processes, and music therapy with its myriad applications. Students will reflect upon their reactions to music in the cognitive and affective domains in order to enhance their listening abilities, and to broaden their appreciation for music and its profound effects. Students will research principles of entrainment and learn how to create specific music playlists for various psychological/emotional issues that can be used for self-help, or in a broader therapeutic context. These may include, but are not limited to, rhythmic synchronization, mood management, focus, mindfulness, memory recovery or enhancement, physical well-being, and spiritual awareness.

GSSC 1080 - An Introduction to Deafblindness and Its Impact

Helen Keller was an individual who was deaf and blind; her story was portrayed in the film "The Miracle Worker". Though this disability is considered unique, many do not realize there are thousands of individuals who are living with deafblindness today. Society has become more aware of disabilities and the rights of individuals living with disabilities, but still deafblindness is relatively unknown to many, including professionals working in such areas as healthcare, education, social work, personal support, and government services. This course will serve as an introduction to deafblindness and the variety of ways it can affect an individual. Students will develop an awareness of, insight into, and familiarity with the characteristics and applied terminology used with deafblindness through the use of interactive and thought-provoking materials.

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 1112 – Deviance and Society

Sex work, mental illness, surveillance, media, restorative justice, and Canada's correctional system: these are some of the topics we will explore in order to better understand deviance and social control in our society from a sociological perspective. We will examine how deviance is socially constructed, informal and formal means of social control, the role of the media in constructing deviance and legitimizing social control, and various social issues related to deviance and social control.

GSSC 1159 – The Strange World of the Familiar: Sociological Inquiry

This course introduces students to the basic problems, language, and practice of sociological inquiry, the workings of modern society, and the rise of globalization, with an emphasis on Canadian society. Some of the topics we will address as we explore the puzzles and contradictions of our social world include everyday social rituals, performing in social settings, family life, gender, poverty and inequality, the workplace, and the question of Canadian culture.

GSSC 1178 – Never Done: Women's Work Around the World

This course examines women's paid and unpaid work in Canada and internationally. Students explore issues that affect women's working lives, such as inequality of pay, the "double day" (combining work inside and outside the home), discrimination, and other barriers to women's full participation in the workforce. Students also evaluate worldwide strategies to improve women's status in the workforce.

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.