

# Course Descriptions: Liberal Studies Electives

PLEASE NOTE: Elective options vary from semester to semester.

## Arts and Humanities (LHUM)

### Lower-Level Electives

#### **LHUM 1201/IDC 190 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 1202/PHC 183 Monotheistic Religions: Judaism, Christianity, and Islam**

The practice of religion is widespread and unique to humans. It shapes and reflects people's deepest convictions about what is most important in life. This course explores the nature of religious experience and introduces the world views, ethics, practices and beliefs of each of the major western religions. Three monotheistic faiths are covered: Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. A brief background of the origin and development of each religion is included. Additionally, the course explores contemporary issues relating to the relevance of religion to the personal and public arena. Students are given an opportunity through a research essay to explore and evaluate western religions not explicitly included in the course content.

#### **LHUM 1203/PHC 180 The Pleasure of Inquiry: Philosophy**

This course aims to develop your skills of inquiry by introducing you to the practice of philosophy and basic approaches to key philosophic questions in a lively, accessible manner. The course uses current, everyday examples such as the Karate Kid, detergents, the Toronto Blessing, Matrix, and Woody Allen to raise and discuss philosophic problems regarding knowledge, reality, God, morality, and the human condition.

#### **LHUM 1204 Spanish I**

This course focuses on the development of everyday communication skills in Spanish. Students develop listening, speaking and reading skills through asking and answering questions, providing information, and expressing thoughts and instructions through paired and small-group interactions and role-playing. Through research, videos and discussions, students develop an understanding of key aspects of Hispanic cultures. Students are not expected to have any previous knowledge of Spanish but at the end of the course will be able to use basic vocabulary and sentences in the present tense to deal with simple social situations.

#### **LHUM 1205/IAC 191 The Representation of Power in Western Art History**

In this thematic approach to art history, students explore the history of Western Art through a contextual examination of the political, social, economic, religious, and spiritual representation of power in the arts. Through museum assignments, in-class assignments, and a research paper, students have the opportunity to explore and evaluate Western expressions of power. Emphasis is placed on iconographical, social/political, post-structuralist, post-colonialist approaches to understanding artistic expressions.

#### **LHUM 1207/EGC 181 Imagining Canada: An Introduction to Early Canadian Literature**

This course explores the Canadian character by looking at some of the groups Canadians have defined themselves against and those they have tried to assimilate: Americans, Indians, and immigrants of various races and ethnicities. Guided by the belief that one of the best ways to examine a culture is through the literature it produces, this course uses 19th century Canadian novels, autobiographies and short stories by famous writers to investigate the past and draw parallels with the present. Students enrich their literary reading by looking at current events, famous people, politics, art and architecture of the 19th century. Furthermore, the course focuses on important historical dualities like immigrant/ native, conservative/reform, nation/colony, and country/ city as links are made between the past and similar dualities that exist today. Along the way, students use the tools and methods of literary evaluation, and they consider how to answer questions like: "Why do literature and the past matter?"

### **LHUM 1209 The History of Eugenics**

What is the difference between creating the master race and creating the perfect baby? This course examines the development of the Eugenics movement from its conception in the late 18th century through its current manifestation. Various examples of the application of eugenic principles and their results are analyzed to develop an understanding of the apparent universal elements to eugenic endeavours and the unique aspects found in each situation. This course challenges students to examine their personal values towards others in light of the information discussed in class and gained through the readings.

### **LHUM 1211/EGC 183 Storytelling, Meaning and Influence (online)**

Storytelling has become a significant research topic in fields as diverse as psychology, neurophysiology, law, business and organizational behaviour, as researchers and practitioners try to understand how people construct and convey meaning. With print and multimedia examples drawn from a range of disciplines, this online course examines the stories of individuals, organizations and communities. Through primary and secondary research, students investigate how story-telling creates identity, communicates beliefs and value systems and influences behaviour. Students document stories in their community and create their own multimedia story.

### **LHUM 1214 Spanish II (Prerequisite: Spanish I—LHUM 1204)**

The ability to speak Spanish is significant skill for post-secondary students. This course gives a general overview of the different aspects of the Spanish language. The information that the student receives permits him or her, in the future, to pursue with success deeper study of the magnitude and complexity of this Latin based tongue. With the enormous Spanish speaking population in the United States and the huge travel and commercial trading block with the rest of the Americas, speaking Spanish is no longer a luxury, but a necessity to survive in our ever growing globalized world.

### **LHUM 1216 The Art of the Short Story**

Students are introduced to the rich world of story and its artistic expression in literature. Brief yet profound and supple, the short-story genre offers a unique perspective on human experience. Students read a variety of works by writers who are established and new, Canadian and international, ethnic majority and minority, contemporary and historical, female and male, in order to explore cultural differences as well as shared human experiences. They examine the stories' form and style (e.g., setting, plot, action, characterization, symbolism, and narration) to gain insight into content. The study of selected literary terms and critical theories, including theories specifically on the short story, allow students to develop a deeper understanding of the genre and the individual stories.

### **LHUM 1222 Comic Books Are All Grown Up: Welcome to the Graphic Novel**

Are graphic novels nothing more than indulgent popular culture stories of teenage fantasy? How can a "comic book" be the subject of legitimate study? What can we learn from the medium of the graphic novel? Can we learn something about ourselves, our cultures, our history, even about how we reshape mythology to address current cultural paradigms? The emergence of the graphic novel has presented a fertile opportunity to analyse the relationship between the graphically driven medium and its relevance to contemporary mythology and contemporary cultures.

The term graphic novel is now generally used to describe any book using sequential art in either an experimental design or in a traditional comic format that resembles a novel in length and narrative development. This course explains the history and development of the graphic novel and its relevance to current trends and issues in contemporary cultures. Students explore how the development of the graphic novel relates to and has been influenced by censorship, traditional literary structures, psychological and sociological understandings of personhood, as well as contemporary questions of existence, aesthetic evaluation, and modes of interdisciplinary inquiry.

### **LHUM 1223/HIC 193 Designing Toronto: Tradition and Transformation**

How have design, architecture, and the use of space shaped our experience of Toronto? This course examines how the city evolved from a colonial military-outpost to an urban metropolis with world-class architecture, vibrant neighbourhoods, and dynamic public-spaces. Students examine the impact of historic, commercial, aesthetic, and socio-political influences on the look, feel, and function of the urban landscape. They explore a range of theories to understand what makes for appealing, functional, or otherwise "good" design in this city, and consider the usefulness of past models to future economic, social, and creative needs. Walking tours of their own and other neighbourhoods, as well as a site visit to Casa Loma, will allow students to experience the city both physically and conceptually.

### **LHUM 1224 Mandarin I**

Mandarin 1 is for non-native speakers who have little or no previous exposure to Mandarin (Conversational). The principal aim of this course is to learn Pinyin (the Chinese phonetic system) and develop conversational skills. Students are introduced to basic Chinese grammar as well as cultural and social conventions. Although students are not required to write Chinese characters, they are encouraged to recognize some of them.

### **LHUM 1225 Mandarin II (Prerequisite: Mandarin I — LHUM 1244)**

This course follows Mandarin 1 and is for students who have some previous exposure to Mandarin (conversational) and Pinyin and can recognize some Chinese characters. In Mandarin 2, students focus on improving their ability to communicate in Mandarin as well as consolidating Pinyin skills after a systematic study of the basic pronunciation and tones. They enhance their conversational skills through extended vocabulary, pronunciation, and sentence structure. Students also expand their knowledge of language and culture through oral comprehension as well as reading, writing, and grammar.

### **LHUM 1226/PHC 192 Global Ancient Thought**

Great thinkers have existed around the world and across time. Their ideas have been an integral part of social, economic, cultural and political life both in the past and in today's global society. This course takes a cross-cultural historical look at some of the most influential philosophical traditions, comparing Western with Egyptian, Chinese, Persian, Indian, Arabic, and African thinkers. In each tradition the course will examine various thinkers' reflections on the following questions: How should we organize our social, economic, cultural and political life? What is the nature of peace and war? What is the ideal society and how should one live one's life? The thinkers that we will primarily study to answer the above questions are Greek philosophers such as Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle, Chinese philosophers Confucius and Lao Tzu, the Indian sage Buddha, the Persian prophet Zoroaster, the African St. Augustine, and the Arab philosophers Avicenna and Averroes.

### **LHUM 1227/EGC 195 Understanding News Media**

Does news shape our perception of the world? Does it build bridges in the era of globalization, or does it divide? We are not only consumers of news: we use our cell phones and video cameras to record events and we broadcast them online. Are we all reporters?

This course focuses on the impact of news media on society, and how the same events are covered in different ways, with varied meaning and impact in different parts of the world.

Understanding news media uses various theoretical approaches to analyse and define the current news media reality; for example, how McLuhan's Global Village and technologies as extensions of man, and how Chomsky's and Herman's propaganda model theory can be used to understand and criticize the changing world of news media.

Various theoretical approaches to media are employed to investigate the role of reporters and the power of news media to inform, influence, educate and mislead. This course combines the study of the news media's impact on our lives and a hands-on production with Web 2.0 (Web design using Google Sites, Wikis and Blogs).

## **Upper-Level Electives**

### **LHUM 1302 Sacred Nature: Examination of Cultural Ecology (Prerequisite: One lower-level Liberal Studies course)**

This course offers an introduction to the principles and fieldwork behind cultural ecology. Cultural Ecology uses research approaches from cultural anthropology, archaeology, and historical ecology to understand humans' culturally-shaped behaviors, and their interactions with the environment. By studying various strategies of cultural adaptation as patterns of subsistence and flexible techniques for exploiting resources, students develop an understanding of and an analytical approach to modern environmental issues.

### **LHUM 1303 Philosophy of Love and Sex (Prerequisite: One lower-level Liberal Studies course)**

In this course, we will be reflecting on Western theories concerning some of the feelings, behaviours and ideals that we are most familiar with, but remain the most mysterious. What is it that we really want when we fall in love, and when we feel sexual desire? How are love and sex connected to pleasure, to power, to loneliness, to family relations, to friendship, to religion and spirituality, to death, to nature as a whole, and to wisdom? We will explore such questions by reading philosophical,

psychoanalytic, and mythological texts, complimented by analysis of representations of sex and love in contemporary music, film and television.

#### **LHUM 1304 Evolution of Mind (Prerequisite: One lower-level Liberal Studies course)**

Is the mind distinct from the body? Do only humans have minds? Is there such thing as a 'collective mind'? What can studies of the brain tell us about the mind and its evolution? Can the evolution of the mind be studied by inquiring into the origins of language and technology? This course responds to such questions by examining the concepts of 'mind', 'body', 'soul' and 'life'. Then, after reviewing Darwin's theory of human evolution, students will investigate the evolutionary interplay between the mind, language, technology, society, art, science, morality and religion. We will end by reconsidering notions of agency, intelligence and personhood in light of post-colonial and feminist thought.

Students can expect to learn from a wide variety of disciplines in the humanities and evolutionary sciences, with the goal of understanding the complexity of the concept of mind and the challenges facing questions of its evolution.

#### **LHUM 1305 Gothic and Horror Culture: The Need for Fear (Prerequisite: One lower-level Liberal Studies course)**

Ghosts, vampires, monsters, haunted houses, and possessed children: why do humans need to scare themselves in so many "gothic" ways? One answer is that the Gothic provides a useful metaphor for the anxieties and traumas of the human condition (Groom, 2012). In other words, scary situations on the page and screen work effectively to provide insight into the anxieties in our daily lives as well as in the life of our culture in various periods. For example, we can read a movie like *Carrie* as a reaction to the "threat" of 1960s women's liberation, and *Poltergeist* as a reaction to the rampant capitalism of the 1980s.

Reading literature and watching movies thus helps us understand the society we live in and normalizes the changes that take place within it. We'll look at some of these changes by investigating classic Gothic concerns such as doubleness/repression; haunted houses and their ghosts; monsters from vampires to werewolves; children, women and horror; and cultural melancholy. To do so we'll use texts from the past like Edgar A. Poe's "William Wilson", Robert L. Stevenson's *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, as well as contemporary narratives like Angela Carter's *The Bloody Chamber*.

#### **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.

## **Science and Technology (LSCI)**

### **Lower-Level Electives**

#### **LSCI 1204/IAC 192 Preserving the Planet**

A personal computer running 24 hours per day adds about two tonnes of carbon dioxide to the atmosphere each year. When one considers the explosion of computer ownership alone, one can appreciate the growing impact people have on the environment. Preserving the Planet is an environmental science course emphasizing environmental awareness, conservation, and sustainability. This course provides students with an understanding of the major principles in the biological and physical sciences. Students also learn how technology and schools of thought can have both negative and positive impacts on the environment. With this information, students gain an understanding of environmental problems and solutions. Students learn the role of scientific inquiry in environmental studies and apply analysis and critical thinking to environmental issues and their own research.

## Upper-Level Electives

### **LSCI 1301 Troubled Waters: Our Future and the Global Ocean (Prerequisite: One lower-level Liberal Studies course)**

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. The oceans regulate temperature and climate, and govern nutrient and chemical cycles that sustain all living things, including you. The oceans, however, are in distress. Our tendency to endlessly pollute and harvest seafood unsustainably is 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 potential ecological collapse resulting from human-influenced changes in ocean temperature, oxygen, acidity, and biodiversity. The course includes readings, videos, and class discussion about how we affect 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 ocean and apply analysis and critical thinking to issues learned in class and their own research.

### **LSCI 1303 Cognitive Science (Prerequisite: One lower-level Liberal Studies course)**

Why do you turn off the radio when you're driving to a new destination? Why is learning to speak easier than learning to read? Is eyewitness testimony reliable? This course examines the cognitive structures and processes involved in perception, attention, memory, language, reasoning and problem solving. This interdisciplinary course incorporates psychology, neuroscience and linguistics to explore the theoretical, empirical and practical applications of human thought and behavior.

### **LSCI 1304 The Story of Food: Growth of the Modern Meal (Prerequisite: One lower-level Liberal Studies course)**

Unlike nature's other eaters, humans have developed enormous control over their food chains. Through the use of various technologies, such as agriculture, synthetic fertilizers, and food processing, we have profoundly modified our food chains and, as a result, created entirely new eating possibilities for ourselves. Today our food is abundant and comes from all over the world. Much of what is consumed in the modern world is heavily processed, making it easy to store, quick to prepare, and convenient to eat. This industrialization of food production has given rise to a new type of consumer – the industrial eater. What implications does eating industrially have for our health and for the health of our environment?

In this course, students investigate changes in human food chains from the hunter-gatherers to present-day industrialized agriculture and learn about the impacts of modern food production on people, ecosystems, and biodiversity. The critical role of biodiversity within and beyond human food chains is emphasized. Students analyze and think critically about issues explored in class and through independent research.

## Social Sciences (LSSC)

### Lower-Level Electives

#### **LSSC 1202 Working in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century**

What is happening at work and why? How has work changed over time and what will it look like in the future? How do I secure my future in the midst of economic and job market changes? What roles do government, unions and corporations play in work and production, service economies? Given what we usually hear from media sources, the answers to these questions may surprise you. This interdisciplinary social science course examines the history and future of work, the changing economy, and the role of both unions and management involved in constructing and analyzing current changes.

#### **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 1204 Sociological Inquiry**

This course introduces students to the language and practice of sociological inquiry, and uses it to understand and challenge their everyday experience of the world and ordinary views of society. By investigating topics such as everyday life rituals, the socialization process, social inequality, media, religion and the rise of postmodern society, sociological inquiry explores the strange nature of the familiar world students live in.

### **LSSC 1206/IAC 193 Aboriginal Education in the Canadian Context**

This course offers an overview of Aboriginal Peoples and education in Canada. The course looks at education in a historical and present-day context, including ways in which Indigenous communities educated their children prior to European contact. It examines the Canadian state's policies on education of Aboriginal peoples and explores education in Indigenous communities today. Specifically, the course provides an understanding of residential schools and their impact on the lives of Aboriginal peoples, families and diverse communities. Additionally, students look at the various ways in which Aboriginal people continue to challenge and resist colonial education and reclaim education for themselves and their communities. The main aim of Aboriginal Education in the Canadian Context is to provide students with a framework for understanding the historical and contemporary issues surrounding Aboriginal education in Canada. It is hoped that through this course students gain critical insights into the lives and educational attainment of Aboriginal peoples.

### **LSSC 1209 Social Psychology**

Why does the presence of others influence the way we behave and think? How do stereotypes develop? Does the way we behave change the way we think? This course provides a survey of topics examining social influences on an individual's cognition, emotions and behaviour. Topics include social thinking (the self, social beliefs and attitudes), social influence (persuasion, conformity, group influence), and interpersonal relations (aggression, altruism, prejudice). Students analyze predominant theories and research in the field of social psychology and their applications.

### **LSSC 1212 Introduction to Psychology**

This course introduces the student to psychology, the scientific study of behaviour and mind, by examining the basic principles of psychology and their application to everyday experience. The course surveys various fields in psychology including, the brain and genetics, learning, consciousness, memory, stress and health, psychopathology and psychological therapies.

### **LSSC 1213 Introduction to Geography**

This first year course introduces students to the major themes in physical and human geography. With a focus on Canada, students survey and investigate the role of maps and location, urban, regional, physical, cultural and environmental topics. The course provides a framework to explain and familiarize students with geographical concepts, including the breadth of geographic inquiry. Students learn about the relationship between the various branches of geography and place and space. An Introduction to Geography is an integrated course that studies many aspects of the physical and cultural environment. This course provides students a basis for understanding the spatial organization of the world in which they live.

### **LSSC 1214 Development Across the Lifespan**

This course will provide an introduction to the major themes and theories underlying developmental psychology across the lifespan. The processes of development, from conception to death, will be covered, including physical growth, perception, cognition, personality and social development. The application of developmental psychology to educational and social issues will be discussed.

### **LSSC 1215 Understanding America**

Alongside the many popular images of "America" presented to both Americans and the world there is an "other America" – a complex society of competing convictions, ideas, and institutions that Americans live within and experience every day. This course explores this phenomenon by providing a general introduction to American society and culture through seminars and field visits to sites in central Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, and Washington, D.C.

The course examines the "idea of America" in an historical context, and investigates the cultural practices and ideas, social values and institutions, as well as the political and economic systems central to how the United States is organized. Topics include social class, race and ethnic relations, crime and punishment, the military, religion, and popular culture in the United States.

### **LSSC 1220/ SYC 184 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 it 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 Electives

### **LSSC 1301/SYC 191 Deviance and Society (Prerequisite: one lower-level Liberal Studies course)**

Street gangs, punks, homicide, sexual assault, the sex trade, mental illness and corporate crime. These are some of the examples this course explores in order to better understand deviance, social control, ourselves and our society from a sociological perspective. Analytically, we examine the social construction of deviance, informal and formal means of social control, and the issue of deviance in relation to the human condition.

### **LSSC 1304 Death, Dying and Bereavement (Prerequisite: one lower-level Liberal Studies course)**

This is an advanced elective examining some of the most provocative taboo topics for humans: dying, death and bereavement. The anxiety which this 'forbidden subject' promotes in many people drives the topic into the realm of the never seriously discussed, except when confronted by the dying or death of a relative, friend or one's self. This course provides the student with opportunities for developing understanding of dying, death and bereavement practices, insight into current issues in the broader field of thanatology and potentially an enhanced ease with the topic. Employing psychology, sociology, cultural studies and anthropology the student explores a range of topics including: the roots of current orientations to dying, the rise of the modern dying and death industries, changing trends in memorialization, the potential symbolic meaning of recent past and present funeral practices, and our developing understanding of bereavement.

### **LSSC 1308/HIC 181 Genocide: The Holocaust, Cambodia and Rwanda (Prerequisite: one lower-level Liberal Studies course)**

This course focuses on three genocides which occurred in the 20th century: the Nazi holocaust, 1933-1945, which inspired the creation of the term genocide; the Khmer Rouge and Cambodian genocide, 1975-1979; and the Rwandan genocide, 1994. As an introduction, the course explores the various elements creating the conditions leading up to and the carrying out of the genocide. The contemporary response by people within and outside the various countries where the genocide occurred are reviewed. The course provides an opportunity to examine the similarities and differences between the three genocides, as well as some of the key issues within the field of genocide studies.

### **LSSC 1310 The Bedrooms of the Nation: Queerness and State Regulation (Prerequisite: one lower-level Liberal Studies course)**

This course examines contemporary Canadian scholarship in the field of queer theory. Through readings, lecture, discussion, presentation and video, we explore the ways that the Canadian state has been formed through and by the regulation of acceptable bodies and sexualities and the exclusion and disciplining of unacceptable bodies. Students query the shifting relationship between queerness and citizenship, asking questions such as: how does the Canadian state construct, categorize and regulate sexuality and race through policy and legislation? Which bodies are considered worthy of inclusion in Canada and which bodies have been excluded and/or punished? What strategies have various groups used to address their exclusion and/or contest state regulation?

### **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.