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Schedule

9:30 AM – 5:00 PM: Poster Presentations
   A.B.B. Moore Foyer

2:00 – 3:00 PM: Northrop Frye Centre Undergraduate Fellows Symposium
   VC102
   Presenters: Daria (Dasha) Diakova, Tara Downie, Khulan Enkhbold, Sam Martin, Madeleine Schmuckler

3:00 – 4:00 PM: Research Capstone Symposium
   VC102
   Prof. Shaun Ross
   Presenters: Jessica Stockdale, Gabrielle Tsai, Tara Downie, Khulan Enkhbold

3:00 – 4:00 PM: Mentorship Capstone Symposium
   VC102
   Prof. Ira Wells
   Presenters: Freya Abbas, Nancy Hsiung, Kendal Kandasamy, Misha Khan, Imani King, Julia Pape, Naomi Trick, Sarah Verreault, Emma Wymant

4:00 – 5:00 PM: Keynote Address
   Alumni Hall
   “How Talking Raccoons Will Save the World”
   Professor Paul H. Dietz

5:00 – 6:00 PM: Awards Ceremony
   Alumni Hall
Olfaction as a Messenger of Sentiment and Identity in Madame Bovary
Daria (Dasha) Diakova (Art History and Book and Media Studies)

An interdisciplinary study of Gustave Flaubert's classic novel Madame Bovary (1856) through the lens of its olfactory imagery and its connection to character development in the piece. Placing his work into the cultural and historical context of the tradition of scent in nineteenth-century France, this project considers Flaubert's choice of infrequent yet persistent use of olfactory details to be intentional and reflective of the emotional transformations in the heroine, Emma Bovary, as well as secondary characters. The project also looks into the author's personal correspondence and modern scientific findings on the biological connection between olfaction and psychology in order to prove the intellectual complexity of Gustave Flaubert. Upon analyzing the novel through its olfactory content, Madame Bovary transforms from a textual medium into a multisensory experience.

Fatal Fashion: An Examination of Marie Antoinette Through Dress
Tara Downie (History and French)

Marie Antoinette, one of the most controversial French monarchs, was obsessed with fashion. During her reign as Queen of France, Antoinette broke normal rules of court dress, followed current trends, and used costume as a form of entertainment and self-expression. She set the standard for women across France, from immense luxury to pastoral simplicity. Through this research, I explore the role fashion played in the life of Marie Antoinette, from her early years at Versailles to her execution in 1793. To accompany my research, I have created a historically accurate gown inspired by the public perceptions of the Queen, illustrating the many reasons she was despised by the people of France and its connection to her clothing.

Analyzing Redevelopment-induced Displacement in Ger Area
Redevelopment in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia: A Qualitative Approach
Khulan Enkbbold (Human Geography and Planning and Urban Studies)
The informal neighborhoods of Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia have become legitimate forms of settlement as Mongolia’s land administration system entitles each citizen to 300–700 m² of land in the capital city. Accordingly, what may be referred to as “urban sprawl” also constitutes valuable property that can help vulnerable households overcome poverty. In this sense, Ger is an interesting hybrid between legitimacy and informality. This paper introduces a qualitative analysis of how residents are impacted—potentially displaced—by urban redevelopment and its potential implications on these neighborhoods.

Sapphic Incompletion and Fragmentary Translation

Sam Martin (Literature and Critical Theory and Philosophy)

In 2002, Anne Carson’s skeletal, fragmentary translations of Sappho once again vaulted the Lesbian poet into commercial and critical production and attention. Carson’s translations in If not, winter and her seminal essay on desire Eros, the bittersweet, operated within the Sapphic feminist milieu of the late 80’s and early 90’s, where the fragment as a poetic category is identified with the queerness of the persona, and failures of her desire. Carson inherits the genre of the fragment from modernism – this talk will posit that failure is the substrate of desire in If not, winter, and point to a nondualistic reading of the desiring fragment.

A Personal View: Provost Derwyn Owen, in loco parentis and Christian Humanism at Trinity College

Madeleine Schmuckler (European Affairs and Chemistry)

Derwyn R. G. Owen was an Anglican clergyman and professor who served as Head of Religious Studies from 1946-1979, and Provost of Trinity College from 1957-72. As an administrator, he removed the in loco parentis status of Trinity College, which allowed an institution to act as a supervisory body to its students. Owen’s revolutionary decision to remove in loco parentis was hotly contested, and represented a surprisingly liberal decision from a religious college and a religious man. Owen based his decision on his personal philosophy of Christian Humanism, his experiences during the Second World War, and the social reforms of the 1960s. This research examines the scope of Owen’s impact on Trinity College given his status as an important theologian and administrator, and how he contributed to the liberalization of the University.
Transitions to Success: How Access Programs Create Bridges to Science
Jessica Stockdale

The Transitional Year Programme (TYP) is an 8-month University of Toronto access program for mature students facing barriers to higher education. Many graduates enter humanities-based academic programs, far fewer to science, technology, engineering, or mathematics fields (STEM). Current TYP students completed a survey about their perception of barriers to entering STEM programs, their preferred learning styles, and their confidence in pursuing STEM. Descriptive analyses revealed several barriers, personal and systemic, to pursuing STEM and modifications to the current TYP curriculum are explored.

Aging Meaningfully: Ethics of Older Adult Existential Suffering in Healthcare
Gabrielle Tsai

Older adults may experience Existential Suffering (ES) when they lose meaning in life, resulting in decreased well-being and quality of life. Healthcare providers should be trained in identifying and addressing ES based on three fundamental values in medicine—trust, compassion, and beneficence. Evidence-based psychotherapies will be proposed as possible solutions to help older adults regain meaning.
Learning How to be Community Mentors in Higher Education
Freya Abbas, Nancy Hsiung, Kendal Kandasamy, Misha Khan, Imani King, Julia Pape, Naomi Trick, Sarah Verreault, Emma Wymant

For the past academic year, members of VIC451H1Y have engaged in mentoring incoming Vic One Hundred courses. Mentors have engaged first-year students in a variety of ways, on topics including mental health, campus resources, strategies for academic success, and other tips for transitioning to university life, and have provided personalized mentorship support as needed. In this symposium, the mentors of VIC451H1Y will provide a snapshot of some of our main themes, including strategies and theoretical reflection upon communication, assessment, motivation, equity, and meritocracy.
Keynote Address
4:00 in Alumni Hall

How Talking Raccoons Will Save the World
Professor Paul Dietz

The Animatronics Workshop is a different sort of school robotics program where kids develop characters, write stories, and bring them to life with their own robotic creations. The workshop, co-founded by Paul Dietz and his wife Cathy, emphasizes teaching kids to work creatively across both technical and artistic disciplines. This talk will describe the history of the program and current efforts to make it accessible to teachers throughout Canada. It will conclude with a brief look at some other projects that use tech to create compelling experiences with the goal of fostering community.

Paul Dietz spent most of his career in corporate research, including senior research positions at Walt Disney Imagineering, Mitsubishi Electric and Microsoft. He is best known for his early work on multitouch interfaces – now the primary way we interact with phones, tablets, and many other electronic devices. More recently, he invented a way to create displays which can show different images to each viewer, even when many people are looking at the same display at the same time. He founded Misapplied Sciences to commercialize this technology, which you can now experience at the Detroit airport. It was recently named to Popular Science’s list of the top innovations for 2022. Dietz holds over 75 US patents. Currently, he is a Distinguished Engineer in Residence in Computer Science at the University of Toronto where he is focusing on projects that address societal needs.
Repeated Concussions in Female Mice May Trigger Immune Destruction of the Brain

Alishba Afaq (Neuroscience, Immunology, and Biology)

Multiple Sclerosis (MS) is a disease mediated by “autoreactive” immune cells, meaning they mistakenly destroy central nervous system (CNS) tissues like the brain and spinal cord. CNS damage impairs cognition, vision, and movement. MS risk is increased in females and environmental factors such as repeated concussions. It is unknown how concussions increase MS risk and if risk differs between sexes. We found that repeated concussions in female mice increase autoreactive immune cell infiltration into the brain, which may trigger autoimmunity. These findings will help design experiments investigating sex differences in autoimmunity post-concussion and provide a preclinical model to test therapeutics.

Trust in Science: Conceptualizing Public Trust in Light of the COVID-19 Pandemic

Elmirah Ahmad, Katerina Carrozzi, Caroline Carruthers, Adrian Chow, Jacinda Kalaher, and Chloe Eunice Panganiban (Life Sciences)

Trust in science (or the lack thereof) is a pressing issue faced by the public in this age. Our research aims to conceptualize the notion of public trust and situate it in the context of public health, policymakers, and society. We argue that the commonly received view and definition of trust is inadequate to conceptualize the relationship between the institutions of public health and the public at large, leading to misunderstandings that function to divide the two entities and drive mistrust.
Mechanical Stress Affects Epigenetic Regulation of Fibrotic Genes in Mesenchymal Stromal Cells

Nicole Berezyuk (Biochemistry and Human Biology)

Mesenchymal stromal cells (MSCs) possess regenerative properties that accelerate wound healing and reduce scar formation. However, MSC expansion on scar-stiff surfaces converts MSCs into a scar-forming cell type called myofibroblast (MF). We found that prolonged growth of MSCs on skin-soft silicone prevents MF activation and maintains MSCs regenerative features. We concluded that inhibiting molecules responsible for these scar features protects MSCs from becoming MFs and enhances their impact in cell therapies.

Do anxiety & depression affect how people who are gay, bisexual, and other men who have sex with men (GBM) protect themselves against HIV?

Aisling Brody (Immunology)

Gay, bisexual, and other men who have sex with men (GBM) are disproportionately affected by HIV. Over the past ten years, the HIV infection rate has not declined. HIV pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) is a widely available medication that is highly effective in preventing HIV from replicating. PrEP is one of several HIV prevention strategies. This study examines whether people in this at-risk population, who have symptoms of anxiety or depression, are less likely than those without symptoms to engage in HIV preventive measures. To date, it is the largest Canadian study including GBM on this topic.
Canadian-Trinidadian Activism: Navigating Intersectional Identity in Queer Care
*Julia Chapman (Political Science and English)*

This project explores Trinidadian Canadian QTBIPOC (Queer, Trans, Black, Indigenous, People of Colour) allied activism and care in Canada and how complex intersectional identity informs this activism. The research was conducted under the supervision of Professor Tara Goldstein and postdoctoral fellow Jenny Salisbury as part of a Research Opportunity Program (ROP) towards a larger project on 60 Years of QTBIPOC Activism and Care. Research was conducted through the ArQuives, Canada's LGBTQ2+ Archives. Focusing on Toronto-based activists Richard Fung, Anthony Mohammed, and Deb Singh it appears complex navigation of intersectional identities informs complex community work and artistic expression as activists.

Exploring the Politics of Campus Foodscapes
*Amelia Collet (Public Policy and Peace, Conflict, and Justice)*

"Exploring the Politics of Campus Foodscapes" seeks to understand the political commitments and implications of student-led campus food systems. Oftentimes, Universities do not have the plan to address food insecurity on campus, and student-led food groups try to take on this responsibility. Through interviews, this project looked at how leaders in these groups see the connections between societal structures and our food systems.

Hearing versus sensing the subaltern: the search for hidden voices in the material
*Hannah Guiang (Classical Civilization)*

Throughout their nine-year residency in Casa Loma, the Pellats were served by maids and servants whose impact on the history of the house is minimally recognized. Using objects in their collection, this research questions their role, as the subaltern, in the care of everyday objects in the castle through a creative process that allows one to not only read about their experiences, but to also sense and feel them for oneself. It examines how histories are contained within an object and how they can be recognized and retrieved in a way that offers different levels of accessibility, relatability, and interactivity.
Rupert Raj’s Written Act of Activism and Care Throughout the 1980s and 1990s
*Mia Jakobsen (Book and Media Studies, and Sexual Diversity Studies)*

In researching acts of activism and care in Canadian queer and trans racialized history, I examined how Rupert Raj advocated and cared for other trans individuals through his writing in the 1980s and 1990s. Raj provided critical support to and for other trans men through his easily accessible publications and letters, serving as an information broker between the medical/psychological community and trans individuals and their loved ones. His writings shared vital transgender research, literature, and expertise from across the globe. As best illustrated by the letters from and surrounding David Liebman, Raj's activism nurtured an ostracized community.

**Notes on an International Cinema: Pasolini and the Third World**
*Palvasha Khan (History and Literature and Critical Theory)*

This study aims to reconstruct and analyze Italian filmmaker Pier Paolo Pasolini’s mid-century volte-face in his poetics—a point at which, beginning in the 1960s, Pasolini’s artistic sensibility turned towards the “Third World” as the source of universalist-humanist inspiration. It is through this lens of a borderless, egalitarian cinema that Pasolini’s later documentaries, Notes Towards an African Orestes and The Walls of Sana’a will be considered. In doing so, this study aims to place Pasolini among the artists promulgating a new artistic impulse birthed from the 1955 Bandung Conference, in which national and linguistic differences were attempting to be effaced to foster a cultural internationale.
Exploring the Relationship between Attention and Word Reading in Elementary French Immersion Students
Jiayuan Lin and Riley Alvarez (Sociology and Education)

Among French Immersion (FI) students, this study examines the relationship between attention and word reading performance. Despite the fact that attention improves language learning in monolinguals, little is known about its impact on FI students. A sample of 185 elementary FI students was used in this study. Using measures of attention, other literacy and demographic variables were used as control variables to predict word reading performance. Both English and French word reading accuracy are significantly influenced by attention. These results provide important insight into the impact of attention on reading performance among FI students, which may inform teaching practices.

Characterization of macroplastics in the Don River, Toronto, Ontario
Mary Long (Biology and Global Health)

Plastic pollution can now be found in all ecosystems and is emerging as a threat to human and planetary health. While the field of plastic pollution research is rapidly growing to understand this threat, the prevalence of large plastic litter, or macroplastic, in freshwater ecosystems remains understudied. Our research aims to address this gap by quantifying macroplastics in the Don River watershed in Toronto. By studying the polymer composition, product categories, and retention zones of macroplastics, we hope to further insight into plastic pollution on a local level as well as determine characteristics of freshwater plastic retention.
No ovaries? More sleep medication
Sarah MacPherson (Physiology and Psychology)

Women with the BRCA gene mutation have a greater risk of developing ovarian and breast cancer, and they are often recommended to have ovarian removal as a preventative surgery. Due to this surgery, they experience early loss of the hormone, estradiol. Past studies have found that early estradiol loss is related to cognitive decline, sleep problems and increased inflammation. Therefore, this study examined the levels of inflammatory molecules in women with and without ovarian removal and found significant differences. Furthermore, analyses of self-reported sleep quality showed that the use of sleep medication was significantly increased in women with ovarian removal.

A Changing Meaning: Exploring the history, circulation, and usage of a WWII Nurse's Suitcase
Reva Mai (History and American Studies)

This research focuses on the suitcase of Kay Christie, a Canadian nurse who was a WWII prisoner of war. The Royal Canadian Military Institute currently has possession of the suitcase. The study explores how objects like a suitcase can hold meaning beyond their intended use, with a focus on concepts such as kinship, memory, and museum operations. By examining Christie's suitcase, the research uncovers the connection between the object's changing meaning through its association with a person, its circulation, and ownership. It also highlights how such objects can help preserve people's legacies, even after they pass away.
The Theme of Class Collaboration and its Contexts in the novels of Kazuo Ishiguro
Samir Mechel (English and Literature and Critical Theory)

Class collaboration is a prominent theme of Kazuo Ishiguro’s novels, class collaboration defined here as collaboration toward a goal, consciously or unconsciously, coerced or voluntary, by two diametrically opposed economic classes, where the upper one’s benefit must come at the expense of the other. Ishiguro’s works depict capitalism in a variety of settings since the second World War as becoming increasingly focused on class collaborationism to achieve further profits and domestic docility. This is especially noteworthy considering the contemporary British contexts of his writing, including third way politics, neoliberalism, and New Labour.

Anticancer Nutrition Guidelines and Informatics-Directed Supplementation
Aria Panchal (Physiology, and Health and Disease)

Cancer affects 20% of North Americans but can be prevented by improvements in diet. Current nutritional guidelines lack consistency, specificity, and accessibility. We aim to develop a comprehensive and quantitative guide and database for anticancer nutrition recommendations. We hypothesize that a cancer preventative diet can be supplemented in an evidence-based manner. Anticancer nutritional recommendations from 15 major cancer institutes were analysed and condensed into quantitative suggestions for general and specific cancers. Cheminformatic analyses were conducted for 10 common supplements. Existing nutritional guidelines should be detailed and standardized to improve consistency. Accessibility remains a concern. Knowledge translation to the public is underway.
Do Foreign Experiences Make Us Wiser? The links between wise reasoning and multicultural experiences and foreign travel
Rodrigo Pimentel (Neuroscience and Psychology)

Psychological research has explored the many benefits of wisdom, but less is known about how it is acquired. This study investigated whether multicultural experiences and travel exposure, by exposing individuals to new perspectives and situations, can foster wisdom. Using an online survey, 389 participants were asked about their multicultural and foreign travel experiences. They also completed the Situated Wise Reasoning Scale (SWIS) to measure wisdom. Analyses revealed that multicultural experience and breadth but not depth of foreign travel were positively related to wise reasoning. These findings support the lay belief that connecting with foreign cultures can make us wiser.

Lotteries - Putting the Fun in Science Funding? Stakeholders’ perceptions of a new approach to science funding
Hannah Rajput (History and Philosophy of Science, Astronomy and Astrophysics)

Science is substantially funded by grants. Funding bodies typically use ‘peer review’ to award grants: academic peers assess applications to determine funding-worthiness. Peer review is criticized for being inefficient and ineffective. Lotteries, which explicitly introduce random elements into funding decisions, have been proposed as an alternative funding mechanism. However, peer review is typically seen to ‘safeguard’ science, so stakeholders may be hostile towards lotteries. We identify three key stakeholders - scientists, reviewers, and publics. We analyze how stakeholders’ perceptions of funding mechanisms may impact science and review the current evidence on their perceptions to identify gaps for future pertinent research.
Myths and conservation: mythmaking and its role on the preservation of Rockwood Academy
Josefina Novoa Reategui (Anthropology and Material Culture and Semiotics)

The focus of my research is Rockwood Academy, a 19th-century boarding school that, in the mid-20th century, became the home of the artists Yoseph and Andreas Drenters. The building and grounds have been described as mythical due to their rich history. I argue Rockwood’s acquired mysticality reflects and reinforces western society’s dedication to preserving the past, and the magic surrounding Rockwood has also led to its acquisition by the Ontario Heritage Trust, thus reinforcing social order; By transferring the responsibility of Rockwood’s conservation to a provincial agency, the government is seen as the appropriate moral authority in preserving history.

Towards a database of natural knowledge in 18th-century England
Grace Shan (History, Classical Civilization, and Physics)

Relying on sources from 18th-century England, this project proposes methodologies for building a database of historically accepted theories and questions in natural knowledge. To this end, and as an exercise in integrated history and philosophy of science (HPS), it examines philosophical meanings of "theory acceptance" and "question acceptance" and attempts to empirically identify evidence of such phenomena within 18th-century scholarly journals, encyclopedias, and university texts. Employing linguistic corpus analytics and socio-historical considerations, it demonstrates the usefulness of digital humanities for integrated HPS, but also brings to light the certain challenges of applying philosophical frameworks to studies of nuanced historical landscapes.
OHT’s Management of Natural Heritage Sites: Ellis & Nochemowenaing Properties

Erica de Souza (Anthropology and Indigenous Studies)

The Ontario Heritage Trust (OHT) is a provincial heritage agency which maintains and protects properties. The OHT is empowered by the Ontario Heritage Act (R.S.O., 1990, c. O. 18.), which aims to conserve heritage sites. As an intern at OHT (2022-2023) this research summarizes my understanding of the differing management processes specifically on two specific natural heritage sites: the Ellis and Nochemowenaing properties. Ellis is a natural heritage site in the process of developing Indigenous educational signage. Nochemowenaing is a sacred site that is maintained via a co-management agreement with the Chippewas of Nawash Unceded First Nation.

Transitions to Success: How Access Programs Create Bridges to Science

Jessica Stockdale (Bioethics, and Cell and Molecular Biology)

The Transitional Year Programme (TYP) is an 8-month University of Toronto access program for mature students facing barriers to higher education related to race, class, Indigenous status, or legal issues. Many graduates enter humanities-based academic programs, far fewer to science, technology, engineering, or mathematics fields (STEM). Current TYP students completed a survey about their perception of barriers to entering STEM programs, their preferred learning styles, and their confidence in pursuing STEM. Descriptive analyses revealed several barriers, personal and systemic, to pursuing STEM. Modifications to the current TYP STEM curriculum are discussed to improve access to STEM undergraduate programs.
Communicative need shapes choices to use gendered vs. gender-neutral kinship terms across online communities
Sarah Walker (Computer Science)

Social media forms a rich environment to study how people use language, which can be useful both for understanding social attitudes and for developing effective AI. We investigate whether different online social groups vary in their choices to use gendered kinship terms (like “mom” and “dad”) vs. gender-neutral ones (like “parent”), and what factors influence these decisions. Our work reveals that certain communities discuss gender-relevant topics (such as stereotypes) more frequently, influencing their use of gendered terms. Understanding these community differences can help understand a social group’s values and contribute to developing AI that can better engage with people.

Observable Trends and Issues in Sex Research on ADHD and Autism
Seavey van Walsum (Literature and Critical Theory)

Historically, sex research on neurodivergent communities focuses on rates of abuse or participants’ lack of comprehension of gender norms and social-sexual cues. Such a focus pathologises neurodivergent sexuality as “paraphilic” and perpetuates an idea that ADHD and autistic people cannot consent or are otherwise too prurient. Literature reviews in the past twenty years — mostly the past ten — urge for expansive research questions to avoid researcher prejudice and strengthen scientific rigor. One such exemplary work is an honours thesis project which examines the crossover of autistic traits and BDSM behaviours. Sex-positive research like this helps us understand the relationship between certain symptoms of neurodivergence and lived sexual experience rather than demonise them.
"The Answer Is In The Nearby: Between Boundaries of Class and Borders" An analysis of class mobility in China and Chinese middle class immigration
Zhehui Cici Xie (Literature and Critical Theory and Contemporary Asian Studies)

As seen from the title, the research project is a qualitative study on class mobility, immigration, and inter/intra-border movements of people. Specifically, I am building a case study snapshot of an example of one Chinese Middle-Class family's movement (e.g., looking at motivations, results, and processes). An international and inter-disciplinary analysis of patterns, resurfacing themes, and connections between the micro (e.g., case studies through interviews) and the macro (e.g., migration theory, class and capital theory, and socio-economic/political literature) is the focus of the project. This will be done through data coding and looking for specific points that correspond to, contradict, or support trends happening on a macro level transcending one nation’s boundaries.

Walter Benjamin and Kabbalah: Reconsider the Influence from Esotericism
Wei Zhao (University of Amsterdam)

Walter Benjamin is a multi-facet thinker and key figure in modern literary and cultural criticism. While Benjamin’s ideas (for example, on translation, law and redemption) have often been employed by the humanities, scholarly reception tends to marginalize Benjamin’s intellectual engagement with Kabbalah (a form of Jewish esotericism) and shapes him as who finally converted to a “mature” Marxist thinker. Through a historical-textual analysis of Benjamin’s three key texts, my research tries to refute this narrative and shows a knowledge of Kabbalah is indispensable in understanding Benjamin’s "original intention" under his theorizations. In a broader sense, I call for attention to esotericism as the "rejected knowledge" in doing intellectual history and other humanities research.
Poster Prizes and Judges

Dean of Student’s Social Impact Award
Awarded to projects demonstrating potential for positive social impact.

E. J. Pratt Library Primary Sources Prize
Awarded to projects involving the study of "primary sources" as defined in the humanities and social sciences.

Science, Technology, and Society Program Prize
Awarded to projects involving some consideration of the relationship between Science, Technology, and Society.

Principal’s Science Prize
Award to projects demonstrating excellence in any area of the sciences.

Victoria College Student Choice Research Prize
All Students