



INSTITUT  
**THOMAS MORE**  
INSTITUTE

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# More News



SCULPTED STORIES: PRE-COLUMBIAN HISTORIES AND  
POSTCOLONIALISM WITH CERAMICS ARTIST KIMBERLY  
ORJUELA

## This Edition's Highlights:

### Looking at the Academic Year Ahead: An Interview with Joseph Vietri , Manager of Academic Affairs and Operations

Have a sneak peek at the 2025-26 programming ahead, and discover some courses to look out for! P.2.

### Filling in the Gaps: Lenore Beitel's Pursuit of a B.A. at the Thomas More Institute

*"Lenore Beitel arrived at TMI with impressive credentials. She held a PhD in Biochemistry from McGill, and had a professional career in molecular biology and genetics. In her final working years, she was contributing to neuroscience research at the Montreal Neurological Institute. However, she had always been curious about other subjects as well, and wanted to know more about the world..."* P.3

### The Thomas More Institute Turns 80 Next Fall

*"In November of 1945, what would become the Thomas More Institute began offering courses for adults. Charlotte Tansey, Veronica Smyth, Stanislaus Machnik, and Roberta Soden Machnik, supported by professors from Loyola College and elsewhere, founded Thomas More in response to a lack of opportunities for adults wishing to continue their education into adulthood."* P.5



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## Preview of the 2025-26 Curriculum

### **Looking at the Academic Year Ahead: An Interview with Joseph Vietri, Manager of Academic Affairs and Operations**

As the 2024-25 academic year winds down, MORE News had the opportunity to sit down with Joseph Vietri to get a taste of what TMI's 2025-26 programming will look like. Read on for an exclusive look at the year ahead!

**TMI often offers courses that relate to current events. Are there any this year that you feel are particularly timely?**

One of the literature discussion courses coming up is "America Through the Looking-Glass: Questioning the U.S. as Superpower in Fiction". I think many of the course's topics, such as American identity and the narratives that exist around it, will resonate with people who are observing what's happening in the U.S. currently. There will also be a social sciences course titled "Eastern Europe: An Out-of-Fashioned Idea?" which will offer lots of food for thought to anyone wanting to know more about recent events in Europe. And for an even broader perspective, the bilingual social science course "La défaite de l'occident?" will take a sharp look at some of the very foundations of Western civilization. Of course, these are just three of many courses—we will have many more on other subjects such as history, art and philosophy, just to name a few.

**TMI is also known to offer various writing courses. Any sneak peeks you can give?**

TMI has a very vibrant writing community, so we've planned several fun writing courses. One of them is "The Moments That Shape Our Lives", a memoir course on writing about the transformative events in our lives. Another is "How to Finish Your Novel", for writers who have unfinished novel drafts in the works. And finally, "Creative Writing: Hybrid Forms" will allow participants to explore the blending of different writing genres such as fiction, poetry, playwriting and others. I hope these courses will encourage writers to pursue their projects regardless of which stage they are at in the creative process.

**Over the last few years, TMI has also been offering courses that allow participants to explore the city around them. What can we look forward to from these TMI and our City courses?**

Our *Discovering Art* series will return with two new topics: "Discovering Art: The Rise of Landscapes", and "Discovering Art: The Beginnings of Contemporary Art". One of our walking tours will return for a second edition, so if anyone didn't get a chance to take "Exploring Montreal's Urban Nature" last year, this will be another opportunity to do so. And for those who love both art and walking, there will be a brand new course that combines both of these things: "The Art of Close Looking: Sketching at the Border of Shaughnessy Village and Westmount".

**Thank you for these special insights! We look forward to seeing the full list of courses, which will be revealed in the first week of July!**

## TMI Student Profile

### **Filling in the Gaps: Lenore Beitel's Pursuit of a B.A. at the Thomas More Institute**

Lenore Beitel arrived at TMI with impressive credentials. She held a PhD in Biochemistry from McGill, and had a professional career in molecular biology and genetics. In her final working years, she was contributing to neuroscience research at the Montreal Neurological Institute.

However, she had always been curious about other subjects as well, and wanted to know more about the world. Her studies had left her little time for non-science subjects, but even as a student she had felt that something was missing, so after completing her BSc, she travelled around Europe for three months, visiting churches, museums and historic sites. Once she started working, she continued to love travel, visiting places as diverse as Peru, Egypt, Jordan and Turkey.



It was a natural step for a woman who had always shown such curiosity in her life to sign up for a course in Basic Essay Writing at TMI. After the Essay course she chose one on Leonardo da Vinci. "Leonardo da Vinci is my inspiration," she says. "Renaissance man, scientist and artist, and left-handed (like me)." Unfortunately, that course was interrupted by the Covid pandemic, but Lenore was hooked.

"I always liked school," she tells me, "and I like the reward of getting a flat hat!" she adds, with a laugh. She decided to apply for a B.A. degree, because she felt that the additional effort involved would be more rewarding. "You learn so much more, going over the material, synthesizing it, and writing about it," she explains.

Her courses to date have ranged from The Bronze Age to Reading Machiavelli, Ancient Chinese Philosophy and A Stitch in Time: The History and Practice of Textile Arts. Her quiet, thoughtful enthusiasm as she talks about the courses is palpable. She has strong praise for many of her discussion leaders, and for the books and readings chosen. She especially liked the way the textiles course included a visit to the Visual Arts Centre in Westmount, to learn about weaving in a practical way.

## TMI Student Profile (continued)

However, some aspects of the TMI learning method were a bit of an adjustment for Lenore. “I had no trouble with the reading, as I’ve always liked to read,” she says. “But it took me a while to get used to expressing an opinion in the discussions. I’m more of an introvert.” Essay writing was another challenge. In the sciences her papers were based on research, experiments and results, with a focus on the results. She had more flexible deadlines and often worked with contributions from several people.

“Writing in the humanities is more opinion-based, and you need to develop a thesis statement,” she says. She found it challenging to link together a large variety of readings, and to meet fixed deadlines. Lenore now sets herself goals of writing a certain number of words per day, and she has become more comfortable summarizing specific points from the readings. She has also learned not to take too many courses with overlapping deadlines at the same time.

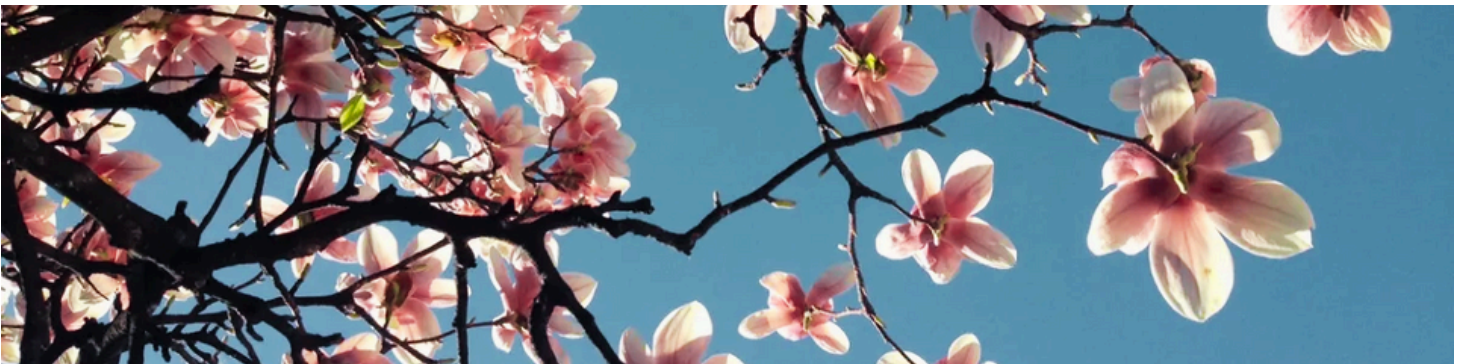
After a rewarding career in the sciences, Lenore is thoroughly enjoying her new venture in the Liberal Arts world, bringing her into contact with other lifelong learners. “I like the chance to get together with other people who want to learn. I have met people who felt they were missing something, and studying the humanities filled a gap,” she says. “I wasn’t expecting the range of viewpoints,” she adds. “There are people in the classes from many different backgrounds, so we hear many different viewpoints.”

She has some final advice for anybody who, like herself, might be interested in pursuing a B.A. at TMI, even if they already have an advanced degree in another field. “Be curious. Be open. Share what you think. Listen to other people. Develop your writing skills.” Lenore will graduate in about six more years. After that? “I’ll probably be back for different classes,” she says with a smile. “And I’d be happy to mentor any new degree students.”

– *Pauline Beauchamp*

*Pauline, together with colleague Karen Nesbitt, offered a very successful series of writing workshops at TMI in the 2010s.*

*Interested in TMI’s degree program? You can learn more [here](#), or make an appointment with Joseph Vietri, Manager of Academic Affairs and Operations.*





## 80th Anniversary Preview

### The Thomas More Institute Turns 80 Next Fall



MARTIN O'HARA, CHARLOTTE TANSEY, AND ERIC O'CONNOR IN DISCUSSION, 1940S

In November of 1945, what would become the Thomas More Institute began offering courses for adults. Charlotte Tansey, Veronica Smyth, Stanislaus Machnik, and Roberta Soden Machnik, supported by professors from Loyola College and elsewhere, founded Thomas More in response to a lack of opportunities for adults wishing to continue their education into adulthood. For these spirited young people, education wasn't something that ended with a high school diploma or the even rarer bachelor's degree of the time, it was a lifelong pursuit aiming at "[t]he acquisition of truth and basic principles, coherent thinking, clear expression, relevant judgement, and discrimination in values" (1947-48 Brochure). Eighty years later, the Thomas More Institute remains dedicated to pursuing these goals through critical thinking and informed, inclusive dialogue.



ON PHOTOGRAPHY DISCUSSION LEADERS AND PARTICIPANTS, 2025

At our fall open house on September 6, 2025, we will kick off our celebration with a presentation of eighty years of education at the Thomas More Institute. Other offerings throughout the year will include: a poetry reading event, a wine and cheese fundraiser, an interview series on Encountering the Other Through Dialogue, and an Emerging Writers Award leading to free courses for young writers in Thomas More's 2025-26 Writing Courses. Join us in celebrating 80 years of sharing curiosity and looking forward to 80 more!

## Office News

### Introducing Melissa Otten



TMI was sad to see long-time employee Katie Hautakoski leave in February. We wish her a productive career as she pursues the creative life in New York City.

We are pleased to have welcomed the gregarious and multi-talented Melissa Otten as our new Academic Services Coordinator in March.

*Welcome, Melissa!*



TMI Staff of 2025





## Past Events

### Volunteer Appreciation Day

TMI toasted its cadre of dedicated and talented volunteers at an afternoon tea this year. We are so grateful to have all of you at the center of our organization!

