



INSTITUT
THOMAS MORE
INSTITUTE

2026-2027

Course Catalogue

Catalogue des cours



www.thomasmore.qc.ca



Atwater

3405 Ave. Atwater
Montreal, Q.C.
H3H 1Y2
(514) 935-9585



UNIVERSITÉ
BISHOP'S
UNIVERSITY



Founded in 1945 by a group of spirited young people that included Charlotte Tansey, Martin O'Hara, Stan and Roberta Machnik, and Veronica Smyth, Montreal's Thomas More Institute (TMI) has for more than 80 years been providing adults of all ages opportunities to cultivate their curiosity about wide-ranging questions rooted in a variety of fields. TMI is a secular liberal arts academic institution that offers university-level discussion courses as well as other opportunities for lifelong learning. Our discussions differ from the lectures offered elsewhere as group members are invited to participate collaboratively in a process of shared inquiry and reflection. At the centre of this process are carefully chosen readings representing different perspectives on the questions each group has come together to explore. Participants engage in dialogue with each other, focusing on readings that typically represent a mix of historical materials, recent multidisciplinary scholarship, and literary explorations on a given theme. At TMI, learning is understood to be driven by questioning, and questioning is taken as emerging out of the practice of careful reading and encounters with the thinking of fellow learners.



Fondé en 1945 par un groupe de jeunes gens dynamiques comprenant Charlotte Tansey, Martin O'Hara, Stan et Roberta Machnik, et Veronica Smyth, l'Institut Thomas More (ITM) de Montréal offre depuis plus de 80 ans aux adultes de tous âges l'occasion de cultiver leur curiosité sur des questions très variées, enracinées dans des domaines divers. L'ITM est une institution académique laïque d'arts libéraux qui offre des cours de discussion de niveau universitaire ainsi que d'autres occasions d'apprendre tout au long de la vie. Nos discussions diffèrent des cours magistraux proposés ailleurs, car les membres des groupes sont invités à participer de manière collaborative à un processus d'enquête et de réflexion communes. Au centre de ce processus se trouvent des lectures soigneusement choisies qui représentent différentes perspectives sur les questions que chaque groupe s'est réuni pour explorer. Les participants dialoguent les uns avec les autres, en se concentrant sur des lectures qui représentent généralement un mélange de documents historiques, d'études multidisciplinaires récentes et d'explorations littéraires sur un thème donné. À l'ITM, on considère que l'apprentissage est motivé par le questionnement, et que le questionnement émerge de la pratique d'une lecture attentive et de rencontres avec la pensée des autres apprenants.

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TMI ADMINISTRATION

(514) 935-9585

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Coordinator | ext. 104

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Marleigh Greaney

Manager of Development | ext. 106

Jennifer MacGregor

Seniors Outreach Program Coordinator

IMPORTANT DATES

Fall 2026

Start of Term

Monday, September 14

Seniors Program Begins

Monday, September 28

End of Term

Tuesday, December 8

Winter 2027

Start of Term

Monday, January 11

Seniors Program Begins

Monday, January 18

End of Term

Friday, February 19

Spring 2027

Start of Term

Monday, March 8

Volunteer Appreciation

Wednesday, April 21

End of Term

Monday, June 1

A Word from the Manager of Academic Affairs and Operations

Over the past year, the Thomas More Institute has continued to thrive in many different ways. We have expanded our reach, grown our academic community, and deepened our commitment to our method of inquiry. None of this would have been possible without the dedication of our volunteers, staff, and participants, whose energy, enthusiasm, and collaboration continue to shape our vibrant Institute.

Whereas the past year offered an opportunity to reflect on our 80-year history, we now look ahead. The coming year presents opportunities to innovate, connect, and engage with topics that resonate with our volunteer course designers and broader community. We remain committed to offering discussion-based courses that explore current issues shaping our world, while continuing to examine the works and thinkers that have influenced society from one generation to another.

While our courses in literature, history, and philosophy remain the foundation of our curriculum, we also offer instructor-led courses in the fine arts and a wide range of writing workshops. Whether you are a new or experienced writer, you will find courses that invite you to explore your creativity and hone your craft along with fellow writers.

Finally, we continue to offer programs that engage directly with the city of Montreal. Look for the “TMI and Our City” logo to discover opportunities to explore Montreal’s natural spaces and connect with its museums and cultural institutions.

Join us for this exciting year ahead!

—Joseph Vietri
Manager of Academic Affairs and Operations





Across the Korean Peninsula: Identity, Borders, and Resilience

North Korea and South Korea have been in the international spotlight in recent years as two very different countries with distinct societies and images. But they are both part of the same peninsula; their populations have a shared cultural heritage, and they continue to have an impact on one another today. How can we better understand the relationship between these two countries and the lives of their people? What can we learn from the resilience and challenges of those who have navigated displacement, adaptation, and identity changes across borders?

Through an examination of memoirs, academic texts, documentaries, and personal accounts, this discussion-based history and social science course will seek a nuanced understanding of the Korean Peninsula's past and present. We will begin by surveying its history from ancient to modern times, diving into topics such as colonization, war, division, political change, and globalization. This historical focus will aim to shed light on the forces that have shaped the lives of Koreans over the centuries. Next, we will focus on the often less heard voices of North Korean refugees, by reading personal accounts of their lives and experiences in the North and their journey to the South. Throughout the course, we will attempt to answer questions such as the following: How did Korea's historical trajectory and the unresolved Korean War shape the political, social, and ideological systems that define life in South Korea today? What can the stories of marginalized people, particularly refugees, teach us about diverse lived experiences shaped by gender, class, regional origin, and the paths and stages of escape?

HISTORY SOCIAL SCIENCE

Zoom

Tuesdays

1:30 - 3:30 p.m.

12 weeks

3 credits

First Session

September 15, 2026

Discussion Team

Michelle Andrus
Kara Mac Donald
Diane Moreau

Standard Tuition

210\$

New Participant Tuition

150\$

ART HISTORY**3405 Atwater****Wednesdays**

10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

4 weeks

0 credits

First Session

September 16, 2026

Instructor

Anita Grants

Standard Tuition

133\$

New Participant Tuition

133\$

Discovering Art: Chronologies of Painting and Sculpture in Quebec

Have you ever wanted to know more about the wide-ranging permanent collections of the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts (MMFA)? How can we begin to understand the various styles, techniques, and subjects presented? The Discovering Art series at the Thomas More Institute offers guidance on appreciating the works on display through lectures and museum visits, with this course focusing on religious and secular art in Quebec.

In this art history lecture course, we will consider Quebec art in two mediums: painting and sculpture. Our first lecture will study the overwhelming impact of religion on the history of painting in Quebec. When looking at religious works in the province, it is important to realize that much of what was created during the 18th and 19th centuries reflects the views of the more conservative elements of the Church. Our second lecture will explore sculpture beyond the religious. Works by artists such as Laliberté, Archambault, and Steinman will provide a solid chronological survey of the different styles of sculpture adopted by artists. We will consider some of the changes that have occurred over time, and the increasing complexity of contemporary work. The week following each lecture, we will meet at the MMFA to engage directly with the art discussed.



LITERATURE

Zoom

Thursdays

1:30 - 3:30 p.m.

12 weeks

3 credits

First Session

September 17, 2025

Discussion Team

Zsolt Alapi

Harry Hautakoski

Standard Tuition

210\$

New Participant
Tuition

150\$



The Dublin Odyssey: Demystifying Joyce's *Ulysses*

Considered a Modernist classic, *Ulysses* is a difficult, some would say “unreadable,” novel because of its multiple allusions, puns, and seemingly haphazard plot line. However, through a close reading we can come to understand how it all fits together like a giant puzzle, one that takes the reader to the very heart of the human experience. Considered by some to be “plotless,” *Ulysses*—set in 20th-century Dublin—actually parallels the structure of Homer’s *Odyssey* while exploring the themes of exile, love, and the heroic. Joyce’s innovative use of the stream of consciousness technique presents the unfiltered thoughts of his main characters, as the author plays with language, subverting the way a work of literature is usually structured and read.

In order to understand the background to *Ulysses*, we will begin by reading relevant sections of Homer’s *Odyssey*. In this discussion-based literature course, we will ask questions like: What prior knowledge must a reader have to understand the complex nature of this novel? How is Bloom’s journey through Dublin actually a journey through the psychic life of the protagonist? Is Leopold Bloom a “modern” hero, or more an anti-hero? Is *Ulysses* actually a masterpiece or simply hyped by academics, forcing readers to rely on a glossary of references, and, if so, what does it demand of the reader?

SOCIAL SCIENCES PHILOSOPHY

3405 Atwater

Tuesdays

6:15 - 8:15 p.m.

6 weeks

1.5 credits

First Session

September 15, 2026

Discussion Team

Marilyn Kaplow

Vincent Leuzy

Esther Spector

Standard Tuition

160\$

**New Participant
Tuition**

115\$



Experience and the Limits of Explanation

This discussion-based philosophy and social science course will explore the methods used and the limitations of our attempts to understand experience. Our experience consists of the ongoing series of events that unfold over the course of our lives. Yet, when viewed in retrospect, certain events—despite being separated in time—seem to manifest a coherence and connectedness that resists explanation in terms of chance. What are we to make of this?

Through discussion and selected readings, we will investigate the nature of raw experience (prior to attempts at interpretation), the limits of causal explanation, the relationship between time and meaning, and the possibility that coherence is not constructed, but revealed.

The following questions will be central to, and will guide, our discussions:

- How do we make sense of events that only seem meaningful in retrospect?
- To what extent do interpretation and memory shape the coherence we perceive in our experiences?
- Is meaning something we actively construct, or something we come to recognize over time?

Our goal is not to provide definitive answers, but to sharpen attention, deepen inquiry, and explore the limits of how we understand experience.

Exploring Montreal's Urban Nature

Join us on a walking journey into the hidden wildness of our urban landscape during this five-week course that will encourage us to experience nature within Montreal. Living in a city, we may feel disconnected from the natural world, but a number of parks and nature preserves, all within Montreal, offer a way for us to reconnect.

During the first four weeks we will explore various parks around Montreal. The walks will run from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m., rain or shine. Our walks will be supplemented by readings that highlight both the historical and environmental significance of the locations we visit. How did they come to be? Who are the people responsible for their creation? What challenges might these locations be facing? Who are the non-human inhabitants of each of these ecosystems and what is their significance to people and to the city?

Our closing meeting will take place at the Thomas More Institute and will provide an opportunity to share our reflections about the sites we visited.

Please come equipped with appropriate walking gear, and be prepared for 90 minutes of walking, at times over uneven terrain. Meeting spots will be announced closer to the starting date. All meeting points will be accessible by public transit. Participants will be encouraged to arrive 10 minutes before the starting time.

SOCIAL SCIENCES



**Various
locations
Fridays**

10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

5 weeks
0 credits

First Session

September 25, 2026

Discussion Team

Jennifer MacGregor
Mariela Tovar

Standard Tuition

100\$

New Participant Tuition

100\$



LITERATURE

3405 Atwater**Thursdays**

10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

10 weeks

2.5 credits

First Session

September 17, 2026

Discussion TeamAndrew Byers
Irene Menear
Veronica Noble**Standard Tuition**

194\$

**New Participant
Tuition**

139\$

Fiction, Film, and F. Scott Fitzgerald

Reconsideration of F. Scott Fitzgerald's most enduring novel *The Great Gatsby* and his final unfinished work *The Last Tycoon* are the focus of this literature and film discussion-based course. Published in 1925, *Gatsby* has been viewed as a definitive depiction of America's hectic and hedonistic Jazz Age. But is this a distortion of Fitzgerald's compact yet complex novel? Is it possible for today's readers to strip away this preconception? And is it then possible to appreciate Fitzgerald's high aspirations for *Gatsby*: "I want to write something new... something extraordinary and beautiful and simple and intricately patterned." Did he succeed? Fitzgerald's style is always graceful and vivid, yet the story is slight: the wealthy bootlegger Jay Gatsby reinvents himself to win back his lost love, Daisy Buchanan. The tragic consequences of this entanglement are observed by the narrator Nick Carraway, whose thoughtful observations subtly suggest an unease about American values. Is this unease still pertinent today?

After the 1929 stock market crash and onset of the Depression, Fitzgerald, the Jazz Age chronicler, seemingly became irrelevant. The popularity of his short stories in high-paying magazines kept him afloat financially and may possibly have assuaged his diminished celebrity. In the late 1930s, Fitzgerald headed to Hollywood in the hope of a scriptwriting career. This disillusioning experience is captured in his satirical *Pat Hobby Stories*. But Hollywood did give Fitzgerald "something new"—the will to create *The Last Tycoon*, a suspenseful story of love, money, and intrigue in the fabled film world. Left unfinished when Fitzgerald died in 1940, *Tycoon* was reconstructed by Fitzgerald's friend, the critic Edmund Wilson, for publication a year later. Wilson's reconstruction will be assigned for reading. In 1993, literary scholar Matthew Bruccoli issued his award-winning reconstruction—*The Love of The Last Tycoon*—which will be discussed in class. Some critics claim that, once completed, *The Last Tycoon* might have been Fitzgerald's finest work.





Limitarianism: Rethinking Wealth in Society

How much money should people be allowed to have? As debates grow around the world concerning the topic of wealth inequality, the book *Limitarianism: The Case Against Extreme Wealth* by Ingrid Robeyns presents an argument advocating for the limitation of extreme wealth in society. By critically assessing the ethical implications of extreme wealth accumulation and its consequences on equality, democracy, and social justice, the book argues that wealth should not be allowed to grow indefinitely, as it leads to power imbalances and undermines the principle of equal respect for all individuals. In this social science discussion-based course, we will examine the theory of limitarianism as well as its core arguments.

What would limitarianism entail? How would it compare to existing political systems? What are the ethical questions surrounding both the accumulation and the limitation of extreme wealth? We will also consider the frameworks proposed in the book for implementing wealth limits. Would the suggested measures promote a fairer distribution of resources and enhance social cohesion? When, if ever, does one have enough, or at what point does one have too much?

SOCIAL SCIENCE

3405 Atwater

Thursdays

6:15 - 8:15 p.m.

12 weeks

3 credits

First Session

September 17, 2026

Discussion Team

David Dussault

Daniel Paul

Tony Rustin

Standard Tuition

210\$

New Participant

Tuition

150\$

LITERATURE

**3405 Atwater
and Zoom****Thursdays**

6:00 - 8:00 p.m.

12 weeks

3 credits

First Session

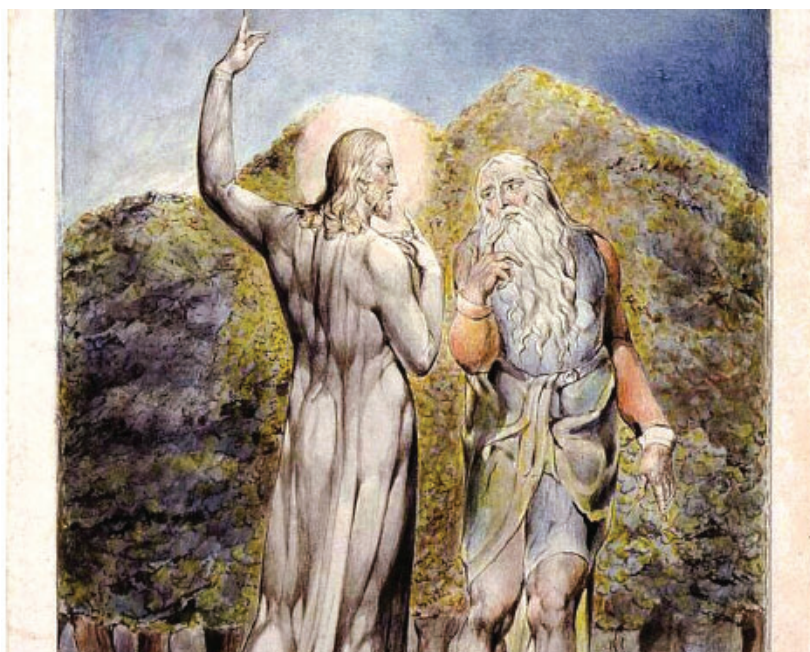
September 17, 2026

Discussion TeamRonika Khanna
Joseph Vietri**Standard Tuition**

210\$

**New Participant
Tuition**

150\$



Milton's Paradises: Liberty, Expression, and Being Human

John Milton (1608–1674) was an English poet and thinker who lived through the political and religious conflict of the English Civil War. Educated at Cambridge, he supported republican government and worked for Oliver Cromwell. Milton's works bring classical epic style into conversation with Christian theology and the politics of his day. His use of blank verse and his focus on freedom, rebellion, and individual conscience strongly influenced later writers, especially the Romantics.

This discussion-based literature course will examine the major works of John Milton, including *Paradise Lost* and *Paradise Regained*, within the religious and political turmoil of seventeenth-century England. Through close reading, we will explore Milton's epic vision of the creation, fall, and redemption while engaging fundamental questions about human agency. Do humans have true free will, or are their choices shaped by divine authority? How does Milton understand obedience, and when does obedience conflict with freedom? How should suffering be understood in light of God's justice? What does poetry reveal about the struggle to reconcile faith with experience? Through figures such as Adam, Eve, and Satan, the course will investigate the tensions between conscience, authority, and moral responsibility.

Radical Universalism: Principle and Practice in American Political Thought

In political terms the question is whether human powers, wills, and authorities should be guarded not just by constitutions, checks and balances, and international treaties—they all belong to the political realm and bend to its principles—but also determined by truth's external authority.

—Omri Boehm, *Radical Universalism: Beyond Identity*

In the year 2026, two hundred and fifty years after the penning of the Declaration of Independence, do Americans still believe in its principles? Some people may still quote with reverence the lines “we hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness,” and yet the very ideas expressed in this document are under attack from both the populist right and the intellectual left. What did the Declaration mean to Americans and why are its principles in doubt now? Must a democracy be based on universal claims? Does the Declaration of Independence defend American democracy in a more fundamental way than the American Constitution does?

Omri Boehm, in his 2025 book *Radical Universalism: Beyond Identity* argues against the dilution of the fundamental principles laid out in 1776. What we need are not ideas that fit our times better, he argues, but radical universalism, the external authority of truth.

This 12-week discussion-based course will begin by considering three defining moments in American Political thought: The signing of the Declaration of Independence, the rededication of the country to the principles of the Declaration by Abraham Lincoln during the American Civil War, and the work of Martin Luther King, Jr. and the Civil Rights Movement in the 1950s and '60s. How was the country shaped by each of these moments? How are we to understand the political compromises that betrayed the principles time and again throughout American history?

In the second half of the course, we will carefully read Boehm's book and seek to understand his argument for radical universalism. What does he mean by this concept and why does he look to Kant and Maimonides to understand it? Is he right to argue that we must move beyond identity politics and return to some version of a higher authority? Why does he associate that authority with the biblical prophet Abraham?

SOCIAL SCIENCE

**3405 Atwater
and Zoom**

Tuesdays

6:15 - 8:15 p.m.

12 weeks

3 credits

First Session

September 15, 2026

Discussion Team

Carol Fiedler
Catherine Jenner
Rina Kampeas

Standard Tuition

210\$

**New Participant
Tuition**

150\$



SOCIAL SCIENCE

3405 Atwater

Mondays

1:30 - 3:30 p.m.

12 weeks

3 credits

First Session

September 14, 2026

Discussion Team

Sara Pistolesi
Moirah Rehmer
Kathryn McMorrow

Standard Tuition

210\$

New Participant Tuition

150\$

Rethinking Fast Fashion: Ethics, Sustainability, and Innovation

In the past 25 years, fashion has changed faster than ever before. Cheap, mass-produced clothing—what we call “fast fashion”—has reshaped the industry, very often with devastating consequences. From polluted waterways to unsafe labour practices, from mountains of discarded garments to the erosion of personal creativity, the cost of fast fashion is high. Can we imagine a world where style doesn’t come at the expense of ethics or the environment?

In this discussion-based social science course, we’ll dig into these pressing questions together. How did fast fashion come to dominate? What does it mean for the planet and for people? And most importantly, what can we do about it? We’ll discuss innovative solutions that could reshape the industry: Could 3D printing revolutionize garment production? Can lab-grown materials or fabric recycling save resources? Is hyperlocal manufacturing or “right-shoring” the future? How can technology help us create fashion that is ethical, sustainable, and still inspiring? Join us as we reimagine fashion—not just as something we wear, but as something whose ethical impact we care about.

MUSIC

3405 Atwater

Saturdays

1:30 - 3:30 p.m.

5 sessions

0 credits

First Session

September 26, 2026

Discussion Team

Ossama El Naggar
Irene Menear

Standard Tuition

133\$

New Participant Tuition

100\$

Saturday Afternoons at the Opera

This course on opera will be held in conjunction with the HD simulcast from New York’s Metropolitan Opera. Starting in the fall, we will enjoy eight operas, including works such as Mozart’s *Così fan tutte*, Verdi’s *Macbeth* and Puccini’s *La Fanciulla del West*. This course will take place at the Thomas More Institute for listening and discussion in preparation for the operas shown, and at the Cineplex of your choice where the Met Opera HD is simulcast. See our website for the full schedule of operas. Participants are responsible for their own ticket purchase.





Spellbound by Story: Hitchcock and His Sources

Join us in this discussion-based film and literature course as we explore several of Alfred Hitchcock's masterful cinematic adaptations. Focusing on films such as *The Lady Vanishes*, *Rebecca*, *Spellbound*, *Strangers on a Train*, *Vertigo*, and *The Birds*, we will examine how Hitchcock transformed literary and artistic sources into cinematic experiences by comparing textual and visual storytelling techniques.

When Hitchcock adapts a work, is he primarily interpreting the source material or asserting authorial control over it? In what ways is an adaptation an "original" text? How do cinematic conventions shape how narratives are transferred and expressed? In other words, how do cinematic adaptations express point of view, interiority, ambiguity, irony, and symbolism? How do issues of censorship, audience expectation, and studio production shape the final film? Furthermore, Hitchcock often adapted the work of female authors, so how do we evaluate his legacy considering contemporary revelations about the way he treated his female leads? By exploring these questions, we will gain a deeper understanding of adaptation as both interpretation and creation.

FILM LITERATURE

**3405 Atwater
and Zoom**

Wednesdays
6:15 - 8:15 p.m.

12 weeks
3 credits

First Session

September 16, 2026

Discussion Team

Valerie Amyot
Karen Staudinger
Faye Trecartin

Standard Tuition

210\$

New Participant Tuition

150\$

MUSIC**3405 Atwater****Tuesdays**

1:30 - 3:30 p.m.

6 weeks

0 credits

First Session

October 6, 2026

Instructor

Rob Lutes

Standard Tuition

170\$

New Participant Tuition

170\$

Tin Pan Alley: The Birth of the Modern Music Industry

The beginnings of the modern American music industry can be traced back to “Tin Pan Alley,” an iconic group of New York music songwriters and publishers that set up shop on West 28th Street, between Fifth and Sixth Avenues in the Flower District of Manhattan. Between 1885 and 1930, thousands of songs were published every year. With affordable printing, high music literacy, the explosion of piano sales, and the dawn of recorded music, this window of time saw a fascinating evolution in American popular song with an evolving harmonic complexity and lyrical sophistication over the years.

In this music history lecture course featuring recordings and live song performances by the instructor, we will explore this era of American music—the styles of music that emerged and the composers, lyricists, and performers who came to represent it. Through our exploration, we will ask ourselves: How did Tin Pan Alley set the foundations for the fast-paced pop music industry of today? How did the social realities of the time shape the industry and the songs it produced? We will discuss the Tin Pan Alley ethic—a drive for popularity above all else, and a focus on melody and lyrics and ephemerality—and how it incentivized composers and lyricists to explore a wealth of subjects and genres in popular song, from ragtime to jazz and blues.

We will also consider the influence of characters such as Cole Porter, the “rich rich,” highly literate writer from Peru, Indiana; Irving Berlin, who immigrated from Russia and lived on the streets before rising to become perhaps the most important songwriter in American history; Richard Rodgers, the gifted composer who, together with Lorenz Hart and, later, Oscar Hammerstein II, created some of the most enduring Broadway songs of all time. Tin Pan Alley also included notable Canadians who relocated south to join in on the action, including Shelton Brooks, who wrote Sophie Tucker’s signature songs, and Geoffrey O’Hara, who had the biggest hit of the late World War I period.

We will discuss the guerilla-style marketing of the time, including the first use of images to promote songs—and how every possible method was exhausted to chase success.



Türkiye, an Empire Reborn?

In this discussion-based history course, we will survey the history of the modern Republic of Türkiye, also known as Turkey. We will ask various questions, beginning with the following: How did the dramatic decline and collapse of the Ottoman Empire—a once formidable empire extending from Algeria to Iraq and from Hungary to Sudan—shape the foundations of modern Türkiye?

The Republic's founder, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk (1881–1938), managed to revive the country within its present boundaries. Major modernization reforms included transitioning away from the country's Islamic identity towards a secular European one (with a pan-Turkic flavour) after having been the seat of the Muslim Caliphate for over four centuries (1517–1924). In what ways did Atatürk's reforms transform Turkish society and identity, and how are these changes perceived today? How has Türkiye balanced its Islamic heritage with its secular political system?

After a turbulent and unstable period characterized by the interference of the military, Türkiye eventually achieved significant economic progress in recent decades under the rule of the controversial Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. How has the role of the military evolved over time, and what impact has it had on democratic development and economic growth?

A member of NATO, Türkiye possesses the alliance's second most powerful army after the United States. Though it applied for membership in the European Union in 1987, it is still waiting to be admitted. How does Türkiye's NATO membership shape its global influence? Why has its bid to join the European Union faced ongoing challenges?

Seen by some as imperialist due to its involvement in Syria, Libya, and even sub-Saharan Africa, the country continues to assert its regional and global ambitions. How should Türkiye's foreign policy be interpreted—in terms of strategic necessity, regional leadership, or expansionism? What opportunities and risks come from its position between East and West? What direction might Türkiye take in the future?

HISTORY

**3405 Atwater
and Zoom
(Alternating)**

Thursdays

1:30 - 3:30 p.m.

12 weeks

3 credits

First Session

September 17, 2026

Discussion Team

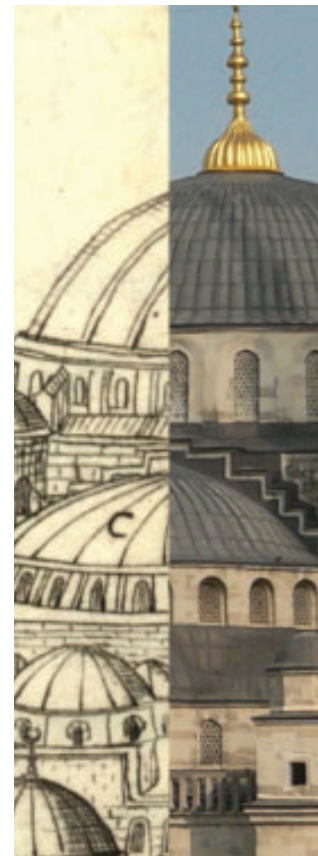
Ossama El Naggar
Heather Stephens

Standard Tuition

210\$

New Participant Tuition

150\$



SOCIAL SCIENCE THEOLOGY

3405 Atwater

Wednesdays

6:15 - 8:15 p.m.

12 weeks

3 credits

First Session

September 16, 2026

Discussion Team

Imogen Brian

Matte Downey

Claire English

Standard Tuition

210\$

**New Participant
Tuition**

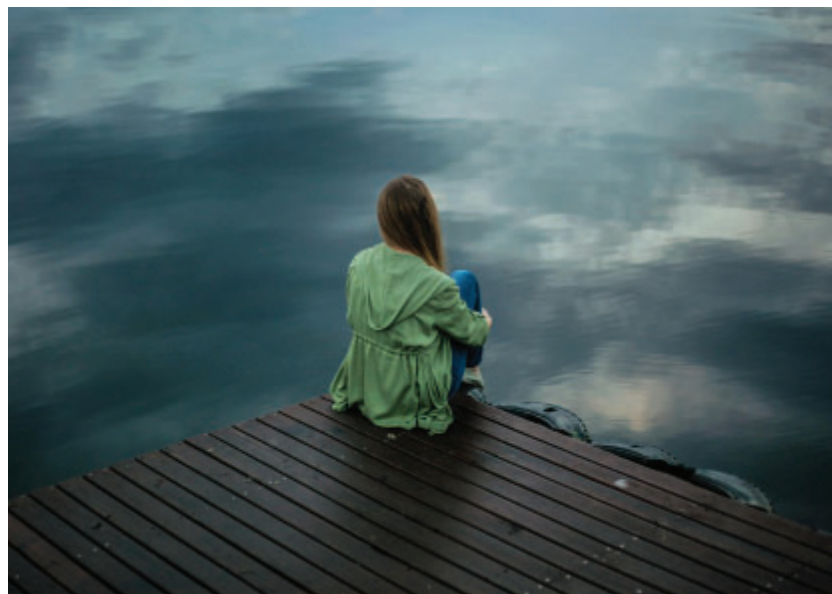
150\$

The Universal Experience of Loss

Grief is as much a fundamental part of being human and developing as a human being as love is.

— *Loss, Grief, and Existential Awareness*
by Mai-Britt Guldin and Carlo Leget

Loss comes in many forms. We can lose keys, games, jobs, homes, relationships, independence, pets, youth, mobility, potential, loved ones, innocence, and more. During our lives, we all encounter loss and are visited by its close companion, grief. In this discussion-based social science and theology course, we will explore the nature of loss in a broad sense and pursue a holistic understanding of this universal human experience. What impact does loss have on us? How is it related to grief? Why are we so often reluctant to admit or face loss? Can we ever “get over” loss? What can we learn from experiencing it? Readings will include insights from psychologists and scholars, a brief look at cultural and religious traditions, and personal accounts of those who have navigated loss. How might we journey through life’s inevitable losses in a meaningful way? Our guiding text will be *Loss, Grief, and Existential Awareness*, which addresses the physical, emotional, cognitive, social, and spiritual dimensions of loss and grief. Please note that this course will approach the topic of grief from an academic perspective and is not professional mental health assistance.





Who Paid for the Art? Patronage in Renaissance Venice

Venetian art in the late 15th century and well into the 16th century represents a golden age of painting. Pictures by Bellini, Giorgione, Carpaccio, Titian, Tintoretto, Veronese, and scores of others define the era and separate Venice from the Renaissance in other Italian cities. The paintings we now see in museums and churches were commissioned from the artist, as commercial art dealers and exhibitions were a thing of the future. In this art history lecture course, we will look at the four main patrons of Renaissance art in Venice and their commissions: the Venetian Republic government, the Catholic church and the clergy, the various secular confraternities, and lastly, private or unknown individual Venetians. We will ask questions such as the following: How did the motivations of art patrons influence the subjects and symbolism of Venetian painting? In what ways did paintings reflect the social, political, and religious values of Venice at the time?

ART HISTORY

3405 Atwater

Wednesdays

1:30 - 3:30 p.m.

4 weeks

0 credits

First Session

November 4, 2026

Instructor

Sandra Paikowsky

Standard Tuition

123\$

**New Participant
Tuition**

123\$

WRITING**3405 Atwater****Mondays**

6:15 - 8:15 p.m.

12 weeks

3 credits

First Session

September 14, 2026

Instructor

Matte Downey

Standard Tuition

235\$

**New Participant
Tuition**

235\$



Writing Life: The Craft of Memoir

There are memoirs that provide us with interesting details about the author's life, and there are those that do much more. These are the memoirs that draw us in with their precisely chosen words, their evocative metaphors, and their intriguing narratives. The author's distinctive voice rings true, at times as familiar as an old friend, at times extraordinary and exciting. These works of literature live with us long after we finish the last page. What elevates a personal story to something greater than a series of facts? How can memoirs educate, entertain, inspire, and promote empathy? And how can we learn to write in such a way?

In this writing course, we will look at literary memoirs, memoirs that are works of art as much as they are personal stories. We will notice how sentences, paragraphs, and storylines come alive when crafted with care and expertise. We will observe what experienced writers bring to the page when they turn their attention and artistry to their own story. Using *We Are the Words* by Beth Kephart as a guide, we will examine the craft of writing, different writing forms, what it means to become a self-aware writer, and what the writing life involves. We will also read from a wide range of memoirs by respected authors. Participants will engage in weekly in-class writing exercises and writing assignments.

Aeschylus and Sartre on Justice in Ancient Greek Tragedy

Aeschylus' *Oresteia* is an ancient Greek tragedy of revenge, violent familial strife, and justice. Written in the 5th century BCE, it is a trilogy of plays that begins with the character of Agamemnon and the story of how he was murdered by his wife, Clytemnestra, after returning home from the Trojan war; and how his son, Orestes, killed Clytemnestra in turn, condemning Orestes to be forever tormented by the Furies. Two thousand years later, Jean-Paul Sartre reimagined this story through his work *The Flies*, adding his own existentialist theme to it.

How do the two works compare to one another? In this discussion-based classics course, we will read and discuss both stories, exploring them not only in relation to one another, but also in relation to the times in which they were written. What does *Oresteia*'s story have to do with the democracy emerging in Athens at the time? What is the significance of the court trial in the story? Why would Sartre take this ancient tragedy and rewrite it for a 20th-century audience? How did he use Orestes' journey as a platform to express his own ideas about existentialism?

CLASSICS PHILOSOPHY

3405 Atwater

Wednesdays

1:30 - 3:30 p.m.

12 weeks

3 credits

First Session

January 13, 2027

Discussion Team

Paul Billette
and another

Standard Tuition

210\$

**New Participant
Tuition**

150\$



LITERATURE**Zoom****Wednesdays**

6:15 - 8:15 p.m.

6 weeks

1.5 credits

First Session

January 13, 2027

Discussion TeamImogen Brian
Claire English**Standard Tuition**

160\$

**New Participant
Tuition**

115\$

Alive in Ice and Fire: The Poetry of Gwendolyn Brooks

Over the course of a career that would see her become the first Black writer ever awarded the Pulitzer Prize, Gwendolyn Brooks travelled the currents of African American History. Born in 1917 in Topeka, Kansas, Brooks' family followed The Great Migration to Chicago, during which hundreds of thousands of Black people from the South moved to the North in search of greater opportunities. Having published her first poem at age thirteen, Brooks' work shifted over the course of the 1960s from a personal, private preoccupation with local community life to public, political questions of Black politics and identity. In this course, participants will discover Brooks' expansive body of work, situating it within its historical context and the influences that shaped her aesthetic choices.

Core questions guiding our discussion will include: In what ways are language and identity connected, and what role do these connections play in the development of the poetic voice? How are these connections reflected or disrupted in Brooks' poetic works? Should poets feel obliged to take up socio-political causes? If so, who gets to decide what constitutes a legitimate political cause and the nature of the poets' obligation? Finally, how does Brooks' body of work reflect her changing responses to these questions? Alongside Brooks, works by Langston Hughes, James Weldon Johnson, Gwendolyn B. Bennett, Emily Dickinson, Robert Frost, and more will be considered.





Beyond the Mother Tongue: Literature in an Adopted Language

What compels an author to write in a language other than the one they were born into? And what happens when they do?

The practice of writing in a language other than one's mother tongue—also known as exophonic writing—is not new. Writers have chosen to write in a second language for many reasons, from creative fulfillment to political resistance. Yet as communities around the world become increasingly multilingual, more and more examples emerge. In this discussion-based literature course, we will explore the concept of linguistic identity as it relates to creative writers. We will ask ourselves: What does it mean to have a mother tongue, and how do exophonic practices complicate one's relationship to it? How can finding a literary voice in another language affect one's sense of cultural and national identity, both for authors and their audiences? How does exophonic writing straddle the boundary between the personal and the political? We will read and discuss both fiction and non-fiction books by authors who choose to write in another tongue, including Yoko Tawada, Jhumpa Lahiri, and Aleksandra Lun.

LITERATURE

3405 Atwater

Tuesdays

6:15 - 8:15 p.m.

6 weeks

1.5 credits

First Session

January 12, 2027

Discussion Team

Valerie Amyot
Paul Lafontaine
Matthew Rettino

Standard Tuition

160\$

**New Participant
Tuition**

115\$

HISTORY LITERATURE

3405 Atwater

Wednesdays

6:15 - 8:15 p.m.

12 weeks

3 credits

First Session

January 13, 2027

Discussion Team

Charlotte DeNeeve

Mariana Navarro-Grau

Greg Peace

Standard Tuition

210\$

**New Participant
Tuition**

150\$

Canterbury Tales: The Wives and Nuns of Chaucer's England

What can literature tell us about life in 14th-century England? In this discussion-based history and literature course, we will read *The Canterbury Tales* by Chaucer in tandem with selected writings from Julian of Norwich and Margery Kempe, and examine how these early speakers and writers of English understood themselves and the social, political, and religious dimensions of their late medieval world.

Geoffrey Chaucer (c. 1343–1400), a courtier, diplomat, and keen observer of his world, presents a complex and varied work of social commentary in *The Canterbury Tales*. What can we understand today about life in Chaucer's time given that situations like plague, social unrest, economic inequity, and ongoing wars in Europe are not unlike the issues of our own time? And what can we learn about medieval attitudes towards women from Chaucer's tales of love and marriage?

Julian of Norwich (c. 1343–1416), an educated religious recluse and contemporary of Chaucer, provides insight into the 14th century as an age of mysticism and intense religious belief. What does her religious imagery tell us about how women viewed themselves in her time? Do we recognize her religious fervour and faith in any of Chaucer's characters?

Despite political and personal dangers, the late medieval period was a time of travel, trade, and pilgrimage in Europe, all of which is richly described by Margery of Kempe (1373–1440) in her autobiography and travelogue. How do her descriptions of marriage and faith compare to Chaucer's and Julian's? How does her understanding of Christ reflect ideals of behaviour, honour, and chivalry also portrayed in Chaucer? What do her interactions with members of the clergy reveal about the clerical politics and popular religion of her day?





WRITING

3405 Atwater

Mondays

6:15 - 8:15 p.m.

12 weeks

3 credits

First Session

January 11, 2027

Instructor

Zsolt Alapi

Standard Tuition

235\$

**New Participant
Tuition**

235\$

Creative Writing: The Art of the Short Story

Are you looking for your unique “voice” as a writer? Do you want to learn how to use dynamic and effective language to write impactful short stories?

This writing course will focus on understanding the structure of the short story and what makes it unique as a genre. We will pay particular attention to elements like voice, persona, characterization, point of view, description, dialogue, and writing effective beginnings and conclusions. We will also explore several classic short stories, as well as more recent ones to help participants understand techniques and devices successful authors have used.

Weekly assignments will be shared, discussed, and critiqued by members of the group and will receive regular feedback from the instructor. Beginning with a step-by-step approach through short writing assignments, participants will work toward creating a completed and revised short story by the end of the course. The final class will conclude with a discussion of further resources for writers as well as strategies for showcasing your work.

LITERATURE**3405 Atwater****Wednesdays**

6:15 - 8:15 p.m.

6 weeks

1.5 credits

First Session

January 13, 2027

Discussion Team

Charlotte
Boatner-Doane
Shernaz Choksi
Louise Jarrett

Standard Tuition

160\$

New Participant Tuition

115\$



George Eliot's *Middlemarch*: An Experiment in Life

My writing is simply a set of experiments in life.

—George Eliot

This discussion-based literature course will focus on George Eliot's masterpiece, *Middlemarch*, famously described by Virginia Woolf as "one of the few English novels for grown-up people." Published in installments between 1871 and 1872, Eliot's intricately plotted novel follows the interconnected lives of several families and their friends and neighbours in a bustling provincial town in the early 1830s.

In addition to its compelling characters, moving plots, and a memorably wise and witty narrator, *Middlemarch* comments on some of the most pressing social and political issues of the Victorian era, including electoral reform, medical advancements, railway expansion, and "the woman question." It is also one of the great examples of 19th-century realism, the literary mode that Eliot felt was best suited to portraying the lives of everyday people and evoking sympathy with their struggles.

By reading *Middlemarch* alongside selected texts on Eliot's life and the historical and literary context, we will explore questions raised by this novel that remain relevant to contemporary life. What place is there for idealism amid the realities of modern life? Why do people marry, and what dooms marriages to fail? What does it mean to have a vocation? Is it possible to find equal happiness in love and work? What impact does money have on relationships? Why does ambition affect individuals differently? How can we feel sympathy for those who are different from us—and what role does reading play in fostering our compassion and open-heartedness?

Learning to See: A Photography Circle

This monthly art appreciation course will give visual artists who use photography in one way or another an opportunity to present their work to an interested and informed audience. Participants may choose either to bring physical photographs or digital files to be projected in the classroom. They will be encouraged to share ahead of time a short written piece that sets out their purpose or describes what inspired the particular body of work that they wish to show.

The workshop is intended to promote respectful dialogue about photographic seeing and to deepen our understanding of photography's language. How does the world appear through a lens? Except in the domains of medicine and science, what does a photographic image say that we don't already know? Why bother to create works of photography when so many images are already accessible, especially with the advent of generative AI? What's happening "inside us," when we're actually taking a photograph or looking at it at a later date? How does memory contribute to the present experience, or distort it? How has the medium transformed the artist who uses photography?

ART ART HISTORY

3405 Atwater

**The third Saturday
of every month**

1:30 - 3:30 pm

5 sessions

0 credits

First Session

January 16, 2027

Discussion Leader

Brian McDonough

Standard Tuition

145\$

**New Participant
Tuition**

145\$



LITERATURE

3405 Atwater**Thursdays**

1:30 - 3:30 p.m.

12 weeks

3 credits

First Session

January 14, 2026

Discussion TeamImogen Brian
Irene Menear
and another**Standard Tuition**

210\$

**New Participant
Tuition**

150\$

Letters to Ghosts: Kafka Revisited

Writing letters is actually an intercourse with ghosts, and by no means just the ghost of the addressee but also with one's own ghost, which secretly evolves inside the letter one is writing.

—Franz Kafka, *Letters to Milena*

Among Franz Kafka's literary works are *Letters to Felice*, *Letter to his Father*, and *Letters to Milena*. In this discussion-based literature course, we will attempt to explore the origin of Kafka's fiction by reading his letters. How do these give us additional insights into Kafka as a writer?

A recent historical novel, *Letters to Kafka* by Christine Estima, imagines what Milena Jesenska's lost letters to Kafka might have said in response to his *Letters to Milena*, which are considered his most profound, expressing his deepest struggles. How does Kafka's quote "writing letters is actually an intercourse with ghosts" help us understand the self-portrait that these letters express? Can films of Kafka's works, as well as the new biopic film *Franz K* by Agnieszka Holland, further help us delve into his life and develop a better understanding of his writings?



Reading Virgil: Tensions in Roman Identity

This discussion-based classics and literature course offers an in-depth study of the major works of Virgil—*Eclogues*, *Georgics*, and *Aeneid*—situating them within the literary, political, and cultural transformations of the late Roman Republic and the early Empire. Participants will explore how Virgil shapes Roman identity through myth, history, and poetic innovation. Central questions we will explore include: What is the tension between personal desire and duty to the state? How is identity formed—through ancestry, land, labour, or collective destiny? By closely analyzing Virgil's language and imagery, we will consider how poetry constructs ideals of order, tradition, and authority while simultaneously exposing their fragility.

Participants will also examine Rome's claim to greatness and the moral costs that accompany imperial ambition. What is the greatness of Rome, and what is the cost of war required to achieve it? How does Virgil represent suffering, loss, and sacrifice beneath the idea of a glorious empire? Participants will examine the role of morality in Virgil's vision of history: Is virtue compatible with conquest? What does it mean to be a good citizen in a world shaped by violence? Attention will be given to Virgil's contrasting worlds: rural life and city life, poetry and labour, peace and conflict. How can we reconcile the competing values these experiences represent?

CLASSICS LITERATURE

**3405 Atwater
and Zoom**

Thursdays

6:00 - 8:00 p.m.

12 weeks

3 credits

First Session

January 14, 2027

Discussion Team

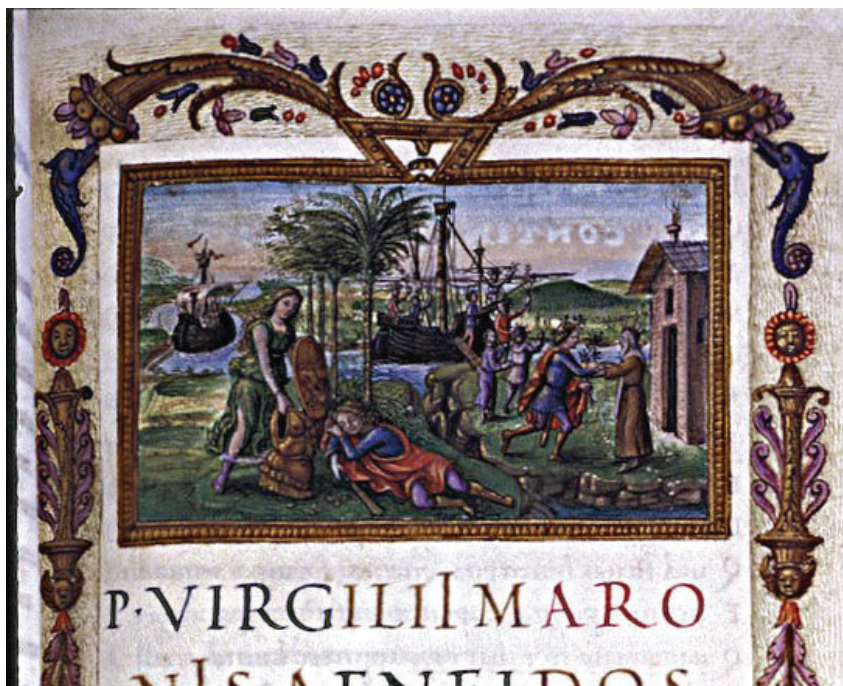
Ronika Khanna
Joseph Vietri

Standard Tuition

210\$

**New Participant
Tuition**

150\$



ART HISTORY

Zoom

Tuesdays

6:15 - 8:15 p.m.

12 weeks

3 credits

First Session

January 12, 2027

Instructor

Marie Beaulieu

Standard Tuition

235\$

New Participant Tuition

235\$

Renaissance Art in Europe: The 15th & 16th Centuries

Highlighting the cultural context and the foundations of developments in painting, sculpture, architecture, and engraving, this lecture-based art history course addresses themes such as the 15th-century revival in Flanders; the dissemination of Italian innovations in European courts and northern urban centres the German, Flemish, and Dutch High Renaissance; and the reciprocity of innovations from the North into the Italian artistic centres. After an introduction to the arts of the Italian Renaissance, we will turn to the major artistic developments and their interactions in Europe between 1400 and 1600.



PHILOSOPHY

Zoom

Every second Friday

1:30 - 3:30 p.m.

6 weeks

0 credits

First Session

January 15, 2027

Discussion Team

Pierrot Lambert
Heather Stephens

Standard Tuition

160\$

New Participant Tuition

115\$

The Question as Commitment

Where do questions emerge from? We all have moments when we are puzzled by what we see around us, or feel unsure about something. How do we form everyday questions in our minds, and how does this shape the way we learn?

What is a fruitful question? How do one's questions shape one's personal horizon? This discussion-based philosophy course, offered in celebration of a symposium by the same name held 50 years ago at the Thomas More Institute, will explore the practice of questioning in our lives. The work of Bernard Lonergan will guide our discussions. This course will be bilingual—participants may express themselves in English or in French.



Ancient Egypt: From 3000 B.C. to Cleopatra's Time

This discussion-based history course on Ancient Egypt offers an overview of millennia of civilization. Despite having been a flourishing civilization for over a millennium, most historians consider the unification of Upper and Lower Egypt by Menes around 3000 B.C. to mark the beginning of Egyptian history. This long history ended with Cleopatra's reign, in 30 B.C., when Egypt became a Roman province. Despite invasions by the Hyksos, Assyrians, Persians, and Alexander the Great, it consistently assimilated its invaders. What factors might explain Egypt's remarkable continuity and ability to absorb outside influences over such a long period?

The course will address the power of Egypt's unique topography and geography in shaping its history and culture. How did the Nile River and surrounding environment influence political organization, economic life, and religious beliefs?

We will also examine the reign of several pharaohs, including the unifier Menes, the pyramid builder Khufu, the empire creator Thutmose III, the powerful Ramesses II, and the monotheist Akhenaten, as well as influential queens such as Hatshepsut, Nefertiti, and Cleopatra. How did different rulers shape Egypt's political power, cultural achievements, and religious transformations? What distinguishes the leadership styles and legacies of these figures?

We will also explore elements of Egyptian mythology and consider theories about Akhenaten's influence on later monotheistic religions. To what extent can Ancient Egyptian religion be seen as a precursor to later monotheistic traditions? In addition, we will examine the ideas of Théophile Obenga regarding Egypt's African origins. How do debates about Egypt's cultural and geographic identity shape our understanding of its place in world history?

Lastly, we will look at novels set in Ancient Egypt, as well as excerpts from opera and film. How do modern literary and artistic interpretations shape our perception of Ancient Egypt? In what ways might fiction complement or challenge historical understanding?

HISTORY

3405 Atwater and Zoom (Alternating)

Mondays

1:30 - 3:30 p.m.

12 weeks

3 credits

First Session

March 8, 2027

Discussion Team

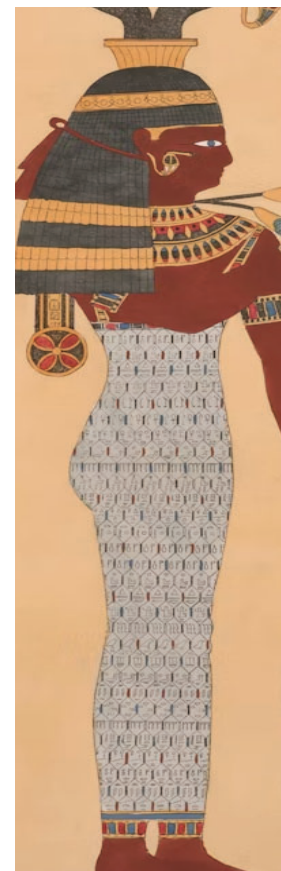
Ossama El Nagggar and another

Standard Tuition

210\$

New Participant Tuition

150\$



ART HISTORY**3405 Atwater****Wednesdays**

10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

4 weeks

0 credits

First Session

March 10, 2027

Instructor

Anita Grants

Standard Tuition

133\$

New Participant Tuition

133\$



Discovering Art: The Visual Stories We Tell

Have you ever wanted to know more about the wide-ranging permanent collections of the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts (MMFA)? How can we begin to make sense of the various styles, techniques, and subjects presented? The Discovering Art series at the Thomas More Institute offers guidance on appreciating the works on display through lectures and museum visits, with this course focusing on narrative in art.

There are endless possibilities to the stories that can be told through art—they can be biblical or mythological, depict a domestic scene or an historical event, have a moral to impart, or reflect a contemporaneous social or political situation. A good narrative work will raise questions not only about the scene depicted but also about what came before and what is to come. In this lecture-based art history course, we will consider the nature of the narrative form in visual art, and look at examples of how a message is conveyed to its target audience. We will examine works from a range of eras, from the 20th century to as far back as the medieval period.

The week following each lecture, we will meet at the MMFA to engage directly with the art discussed.



The Evolution of Post-Bop Jazz

Dive into the rich world of jazz and its subgenres in this music history lecture course, which will trace the development of “post-bop” jazz from the early 1960s to the present day. Building on the foundations of bebop and hard bop, post-bop emerged as a more experimental and harmonically advanced form of jazz, shaped by artists like Miles Davis, Herbie Hancock, Wayne Shorter, and John Coltrane.

Participants will explore key albums, stylistic innovations, and the broader social and cultural movements that influenced the music during this transformative period. The course will also examine how post-bop has continued to evolve through fusion, avant-garde, and modern jazz movements, influencing generations of musicians. Through guided listening, analysis, and discussion, participants will gain insight into the creativity, complexity, and lasting significance of this fascinating musical genre.

MUSIC

3405 Atwater

Thursdays

1:30 - 3:30 p.m.

6 weeks

0 credits

First Session

April 8, 2027

Instructor

Mike Bruzzese

Standard Tuition

170\$

New Participant Tuition

170\$

Exploring Canada Through the Arts

What can we learn about Canada by engaging with the arts? In this discussion-based art history course, we will visit our country from coast to coast to coast by exploring its fine arts, performing arts, and literature. We will endeavour to learn more about Canada’s people and the places we share, and will ask questions such as the following: What kinds of narratives contribute to our understanding of Canada? What do art and literature show us about the early relationship between Europeans and First Nations? How have newcomers shaped the Canadian art world over the years? How does music help to tell Canada’s story? What does our art tell us about ourselves and our past as a society?



ART HISTORY

3405 Atwater

Mondays

1:30 - 3:30 p.m.

6 weeks

1.5 credits

First Session

April 5, 2027

Discussion Team

Kathe Lieber
Joan Machnik

Standard Tuition

160\$

New Participant Tuition

115\$

THEOLOGY LITERATURE

3405 Atwater

Thursdays

1:30 - 3:30 p.m.

12 weeks

3 credits

First Session

March 11, 2027

Discussion Team

Jim Cullen

Brian McDonough

Standard Tuition

210\$

**New Participant
Tuition**

150\$

The Gospels as Literature

The gospels of Mark, Matthew, Luke, and John are key narratives of the Christian Bible which have had an enormous impact on literature, music, and the visual arts, not only in Europe and the Americas, but also in Africa and Asia. One cannot enter into a major museum without coming across works of art that refer to episodes from the gospels. How can one appreciate the genius of famous artists throughout history—for example, a composer like Bach—without having some idea of the stories that shaped their art? Yet, as public education in religious traditions has declined, generations of students are getting increasingly less exposure to this literature that has shaped the Western mind and imagination. Does this decrease in knowledge affect the way younger generations understand art? This twelve-week discussion-based literature and theology course will introduce participants to this unique body of literature. We will focus primarily on the four “canonical” gospels (Mark, Matthew, Luke, and John) and one other—the Gospel of Mary—written later than these and considered apocryphal.

Some of the questions we will explore include the following: How did these texts come to be created? To whom were they addressed? How does each gospel portray Jesus and understand his message? To what extent are the gospels reliable accounts of historical events and figures? Is such a consideration even relevant? Why has this literature had such an impact on the hearts and minds of so many over the centuries, in many cases transcending different cultural and ideological barriers?



Les mystères révélés de notre cerveau

Vous êtes curieux d'en savoir plus sur le cerveau humain, mais vous n'avez pas de formation en neuroscience? Dans ce cours de vulgarisation scientifique, les participant.e.s utiliseront des recherches récentes effectuées en neuropsychologie pour aborder, dans une perspective scientifique, des questions universelles telles que: Qu'est-ce que la pensée et la conscience? Pourquoi les humains agissent-ils parfois de manière prosociale (p. ex. amour, empathie, générosité) et d'autres fois, de manière antisociale (p. ex. agressivité, corruption)? Nos réflexions porteront aussi sur des préoccupations telles que: Quels aspects de notre comportement sont en quelque sorte « prédéterminés » par nos gènes, et quel est le rôle de la culture et de l'éducation formelle sur le développement du cerveau (« nature vs nurture »)? Comment le cerveau influence-t-il le raisonnement, l'émotion, l'imagination, la mémoire, l'intelligence, la personnalité? Que se passe-t-il dans le cerveau lors d'un état altéré de conscience (ex : rêve, consommation de substances) ou d'un dérèglement?

Le livre de Sandra Aamodt et Sam Wang, « Welcome to your brain: Why You Lose Your Car Keys but Never Forget How to Drive and Other Puzzles of Everyday Life », servira de guide principal. Il sera complété par d'autres ouvrages de vulgarisation scientifique parus au cours du 21^e siècle. Bref, nous explorerons comment l'étude du fonctionnement du cerveau peut nous aider à mieux comprendre le comportement humain.

Shakespeare in the Spring

This six-session discussion-based literature course will explore two Shakespeare plays, at least one of which will be performed at the 2027 Stratford Festival. A complete course description will be available on the Thomas More Institute website once Stratford announces its theatre offerings for 2027.



SCIENCES SOCIALES

3405 Atwater

Les mardis

De 13h30 à 15h30

6 semaines

1.5 crédits

Première session

April 6, 2027

Animatrices

Marie-Claire
Laurendeau
Jane Thomson

Standard Tuition

160\$

**New Participant
Tuition**

115\$

LITERATURE

**3405 Atwater
and Zoom**

Tuesdays

1:30 - 3:30 p.m.

6 weeks

1.5 credits

First Session

April 6, 2027

Discussion Team

Carol Fiedler
Rina Kampeas

Standard Tuition

160\$

**New Participant
Tuition**

110\$

LITERATURE**Zoom****Thursdays**

1:30 - 3:30 p.m.

6 weeks

1.5 credits

First Session

April 8, 2027

Discussion TeamZsolt Alapi
Murray Shugar**Standard Tuition**

160\$

New Participant Tuition

115\$

Shame, Identity & the Mundane: Into the World of Karl Ove Knausgaard

In this discussion-based literature course, we will discuss Karl Ove Knausgaard's epic *My Struggle*, which explores themes of identity, shame, and gender norms—particularly social expectations faced by men—in the form of a relentlessly penetrating study of the author's relationships as he attempts to come to terms with them. Knausgaard's exploration of the most mundane aspects of his life urge the reader to ponder the weightiest aspects of human nature, and his brutal self-analysis spares no one, not even himself as the narrator. Not unlike the novels of Proust and Joyce, Knausgaard's *My Struggle* steers the reader so completely into the psyche of the narrator that the reader is almost overwhelmed by the intensity and brutal honesty of his narrative. Controversy has arisen regarding Knausgaard's work. First, his use of real characters, whom he unapologetically dissects for the purpose of his story, led his own family to sue him and his publisher to suppress certain painful elements of their lives. Second, the reference to Hitler's *Mein Kampf*, upon which the title and premise is somewhat based, must be considered. Why has he chosen this connection despite an obvious distaste for everything Hitler and fascism represented?

Why have readers become so fascinated with the most intimate thoughts and details of Knausgaard's life? Is *My Struggle* an honest exploration of the human psyche, a journey that is ultimately our own, or is it self-indulgently confessional and virtually inaccessible due to its highly personal nature? Join us as we explore these questions together.



Socrates and the Examined Life

In the *Apology*, Plato's account of Socrates' efforts to defend himself at his trial, Socrates refuses to even consider giving up his philosophic activity, claiming that an "unexamined life" is not worth living. Indeed, Socrates is often hailed as a martyr to the cause of philosophy. But just what did Socrates mean by an "examined life"? And who, today, would think of philosophy as "a cause"—let alone be willing to martyr themselves on its behalf?

In this discussion-based philosophy course, we will examine the historical figure of Socrates. We know Socrates primarily through the reports of his contemporaries: figures like Plato, Xenophon, Aristophanes, and others. Our goal is to get a more concrete sense of Socrates, the man, and what he meant by an "examined life." Why did he feel this belief was too important to abandon, even to save his own life? Moreover, why did many of his fellow Athenians consider his philosophic activities dangerous enough to want to get rid of him? What exactly did philosophy entail in that era? The term itself was coined by the Greeks, and it seems clear that, to them, it was not merely an intellectual discipline, but a way of living—one exemplified by Socrates and others like him. What type of life was it? Is it still possible today? Are there people in our era who strive to live an "examined life"?

PHILOSOPHY

3405 Atwater

Wednesdays

1:30 - 3:30 p.m.

12 weeks

3 credits

First Session

March 10, 2027

Discussion Team

Daniel Paul

Mary Pennefather

Jim Queen

Standard Tuition

210\$

**New Participant
Tuition**

150\$



MUSIC**3405 Atwater****Mondays**

6:15 - 8:15 p.m.

6 weeks

0 credits

First Session

April 5, 2027

Instructor

Rob Lutes

Standard Tuition

170\$

New Participant Tuition

170\$

The Soundtrack of Our Lives: An Introduction to Songwriting

Most of us listen to countless songs throughout our lives. They comfort us, energize us, and help us better understand ourselves. Though the average listener may not realize it, everyone who has listened to songs with lyrics possesses an expertise in songwriting that is just waiting to be explored.

This writing workshop is dedicated to the craft of songwriting. We will explore how songs are built, how ideas turn into lyrics and melodies, and how personal expression can take musical form. Whether you're a beginner or have some experience, the focus is on developing your voice as a songwriter through hands-on practice.

Over six sessions, songwriter and performer Rob Lutes will use historical references, gems from different musical traditions, and his own songs to guide a creative exploration of the songwriting process.

Working individually and in groups, participants will create songs or parts of songs by following a few different approaches, with an emphasis on writing, experimenting, and refining original material throughout the course.





Writing Form Poetry

Are you intrigued by poems that seem to follow a particular structure? Are you drawn to elements such as rhyme and repetition, and wonder how to use these to write your own verse? In this eight-session creative writing workshop, participants will learn about form poems—those that tell a story by employing specific patterns, syllable counts, and other elements. Reputed poets Mark Strand and Eavan Boland, authors of *The Making of a Poem: A Norton Anthology of Poetic Forms*, have said that form poems are “not locks, but keys.” Although they may seem limiting at first, we will find that forms can allow poets to plan their journey and arrive exactly where they intended. We will explore various types of poems including Villanelle, Ballad, Ode, Elegy, and Haiku, to name just a few; and will learn about their history, how they work, and how we can use them to let our individual expression shine through.

WRITING

3405 Atwater

Tuesdays

6:15 - 8:15 p.m.

8 weeks

2 credits

First Session

April 6, 2027

Instructor

Carolyn Van Der Meer

Standard Tuition

195\$

**New Participant
Tuition**

195\$

LITERATURE

Pointe-Claire

Mondays

1:30 - 3:30 p.m.

10 weeks

0 credits

First Session

September 14, 2026

Discussion Team

Mary Allen

Jennifer MacGregor

Jim Queen

Standard Tuition

194\$

New Participant Tuition

139\$



America Through the Looking Glass: Questioning the U.S. as Superpower in Fiction

The Americans have never even heard of history, they still believe that legend created about the Far West, and cowboys and Indians, and cops and robbers, and black and white, and good and evil... If the Europeans are afflicted by history, Americans are afflicted by innocence.

—James Baldwin, from his 1965 debate with William F. Buckley

What does “America” mean to the rest of the world? This discussion-based literature course will consider this question through a study of two novels: Graham Greene’s *The Quiet American* (1955) and Mohsin Hamid’s *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* (2007). Both of these novels offer an outsider’s perspective on the United States’ position as a superpower since 1945. Though published fifty years apart, these novels share remarkably similar themes and structures, and raise unsettling questions about the effects of U.S. imperialism. Set at the end of French colonial rule in Vietnam, *The Quiet American* questions the U.S.’s early involvement in the region. Set fifty years later in Lahore at the height of the War on Terror, *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* follows the Pakistani narrator as he tells the story of his life in the United States, from his embrace of American culture to his later rejection of and by that culture in the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks.

Although these novels received critical acclaim and have been embraced as modern classics, they were met with charges of anti-Americanism upon publication. Through examining these works, we will explore questions such as: How do these novels critique certain narratives central to American identity, such as the American Dream and American exceptionalism? Why is innocence a concept that has so often been associated with the United States, and what makes innocence so dangerous in these novels? When, if ever, is violence morally justified, either as a form of state intervention or as an act of resistance? What is the difference between patriotism and extremism? And what insights do these novels have to offer about the United States’ role on the global stage in our current political moment? In addition to the two novels, this course will also consider the film adaptations of the works.

Gardens of Art and Literature

Often in the background of a painting, the garden has generally played the role of décor to the main scene taking place in the foreground. But these green microcosms have lives of their own, and are rich with meanings and symbolism reflecting the tastes and aesthetics of successive centuries. In this discussion-based literature and art history course, we will read about and discuss how gardens have evolved from Antiquity to the 19th century, both historically and as seen in paintings. This juxtaposition will allow us to ask how and why gardens have been so important to human experience. They've brought us grandeur, escape, and solace among many other sensations.

We will also consider how gardens are presented in literature, as gardens have also been fruitful settings for stories ever since Adam and Eve were ejected from Paradise. Why do they evoke such strong memories of place and time for so many authors? We will read a collection of wide-ranging stories featuring secret gardens, enchanted gardens, gardens public and private, grand and humble. Readings will include Virginia Woolf's "Kew Gardens," Katherine Mansfield's "The Garden Party," and Doris Lessing's "Flavours of Exile" among many entrancing others.

ART HISTORY

Pointe-Claire

Mondays

1:30 - 3:30 p.m.

12 weeks

0 credits

First Session

January 11, 2027

Discussion Team

TBA

Standard Tuition

210\$

New Participant Tuition

150\$



SCIENCES SOCIALES

Gatineau (Zoom)

Les mardis

19h00 - 21h00

8 semaines

Première séance

22 septembre 2026

Animateur

Pierrot Lambert

Frais de cours

65\$

Pourquoi les Croisades?

Ce cours d'histoire de huit semaines, axé sur la discussion, abordera les acteurs, les motifs et les événements des croisades, ces guerres qui ont marqué l'Europe et le Moyen-Orient au cours des 11^e-13^e siècles. Nous considérerons des questions telles que les suivantes: Quels éléments déclenchent au 11^e siècle une guerre de reconquête des Lieux Saints? Quels sont les objectifs du pape Urbain II et de l'empereur byzantin Alexis I^{er} Comnène? Au-delà des motivations religieuses, comment ces croisades ont-elles permis aux Européens de s'installer temporairement au Moyen-Orient? Quels sont les visages de ces huit expéditions? Nous discuterons aussi des arguments de l'auteur Amin Maalouf, dans son œuvre *Les Croisades vues par les Arabes*.



SCIENCES SOCIALES

Gatineau (Zoom)

Les mardis

19h00 - 21h00

8 semaines

Première séance

16 février 2027

Animateur

Pierrot Lambert

Frais de cours

65\$

Le territoire

Quel est le lien entre les victoires militaires, le démantèlement des empires, et l'invention des frontières? Pourquoi dit-on qu'un événement se déroule en territoire « non cédé » et quel en est l'effet?

La délimitation des territoires est-elle encore le fruit de la reconnaissance de l'État-nation? Que dit le droit international à ce sujet?

Les droits de la personne reconnus ne contiennent-ils pas une notion de territoire inviolable?



La ruée vers le Sud

Ce cours d'histoire de huit semaines, axé sur la discussion, abordera le phénomène de la migration de 2,7 millions de personnes du Canada vers les États-Unis sur une période de 90 ans, entre les années 1840-1930. Nous discuterons des conséquences démographiques des deux côtés de la frontière, et des facteurs qui ont déclenché la migration.

Quel rôle ont joué les troubles politiques, les problèmes des récoltes et le régime seigneurial? Comment s'est déployée la résistance à l'exode des francophones, de la part des autorités civiles et religieuses?

Quel a été l'accueil de la population américaine envers les migrants du Nord? Quelle a été l'ampleur de cette migration et du phénomène de la ré-émigration? Quels facteurs ont contribué à renforcer la frontière, puis à mettre fin à la ruée vers le Sud?



SCIENCES SOCIALES

Gatineau (Zoom)

Les mardis

19h00 - 21h00

8 semaines

Première séance

17 novembre 2026

Animateur

Pierrot Lambert

Frais de cours

65\$

SENIORS OUTREACH PROGRAM

Nobel Laureates: Peace, Prose and Poetry

Have you ever wondered what the criteria are for receiving a Nobel Prize? That is one of the questions we will explore as we discuss some of the winners of the Peace and Literature prizes throughout history. During this course, we will travel through the decades, from the inaugural prize presented in 1901 to the present day. On our journey, we will look at individual winners, their acceptance speeches, as well as other writings.

What was happening in the world which influenced the decision of the panel? What can we learn about the winners from their speeches? Why were some choices controversial? Why would someone turn down the prize?

Through explorations of writings, biographies and acceptance speeches, we will aim to learn more about the awarding of this prestigious prize and some of those who have received this honour.



Engage socially and intellectually with Montreal's seniors. TMI's Outreach Program sends volunteers from the Institute to lead discussion groups—identical in spirit to our discussion courses—at various seniors' residences and centres throughout Greater Montreal.

If you would like to volunteer, or for more information, contact Seniors Program Coordinator

Jennifer MacGregor at jmacgregor@thomasmore.qc.ca.

SENIORS OUTREACH PROGRAM

OUR LOCATIONS

CONTACTIVITY CENTRE

Westmount

DAWSON BOYS & GIRLS CLUB

Verdun

MAISON DESAULNIERS

Saint-Lambert

MANOIR WESTMOUNT

Westmount

ONLINE GROUP

SAINT-BRUNO

PLACE KENSINGTON

Westmount

SAINT PATRICK SQUARE

Côte Saint-Luc

STEPHEN F. SHAAR COMMUNITY CENTRE

Hudson

THE TEAPOT

Lachine

TRINITY COMMUNITY CENTRE

Gore

BEACONSFIELD UNITED CHURCH

Beaconsfield

VISTA

Montreal

WESTMOUNT ONE

Montreal

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REGISTRATION

Thomas More Institute courses are open to the public: no prerequisites or application process required, except in the case of studies for credit. We invite participants to register online at www.thomasmore.qc.ca. Alternatively, participants may register by telephone (514) 935-9585, or register in person at 3405 Atwater Ave.

COURSE FEES

New participants receive a one-time discounted tuition rate for discussion-based courses. Some exceptions apply; please see our website for all course fees.

STUDIES FOR CREDIT

All students wishing to take courses for credit—whether toward a Bachelor of Arts or a Comprehensive Certificate, or for professional development—must apply for admission.

Visit www.thomasmore.qc.ca/studies-for-credit to read more.

INSCRIPTIONS

Les cours de l'Institut Thomas More sont ouverts au grand public: aucune condition préalable ni demande d'admission n'est requise, sauf dans le cas des formations donnant droit à des crédits universitaires. Nous invitons les participants à s'inscrire en ligne sur www.thomasmore.qc.ca. Il est également possible de s'inscrire par téléphone au (514) 935-9585, ou en personne au 3405, avenue Atwater.

FRAIS DE COURS

Les nouveaux participants bénéficient d'un tarif réduit unique pour les cours à base de discussion. Certaines exceptions s'appliquent ; veuillez consulter notre site web pour connaître l'ensemble des frais d'inscription.

ÉTUDES DANS LE CADRE D'UN PARCOURS UNIVERSITAIRE

Tous les étudiants souhaitant suivre des cours donnant droit à des crédits—que ce soit dans le cadre d'un baccalauréat ès arts, d'un certificat compréhensif ou à des fins de développement professionnel—doivent déposer une demande d'admission. Rendez-vous sur www.thomasmore.qc.ca/studies-for-credit pour en savoir plus.

THANK YOU TO OUR 2026-27 COURSE DESIGNERS & LEADERS!

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Every donation is a concrete gesture of support for the enduring power of lifelong learning and the timeless value of the Humanities.

The following individuals, foundations, and local businesses have generously supported the Institute this year.



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TIME	MONDAY	TUESDAY
10:00 a.m. 12:00 p.m.		
1:30 p.m. 3:30 p.m.	 Rethinking Fast Fashion  Ancient Egypt  Exploring Canada Through the Arts Pointe-Claire  America Through the Looking Glass  Gardens of Art and Literature	 Across the Korean Peninsula  Tin Pan Alley  Les mystères révélés de notre cerveau  Shakespeare in the Spring
6:15 p.m. 8:15 p.m.	 Writing Life: The Craft of Memoir  Creative Writing: The Art of the Short Story  The Soundtrack of Our Lives	 Experience and the Limits of Explanation  Radical Universalism  Beyond the Mother Tongue  Renaissance Art in Europe  Writing Form Poetry

WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
 Discovering Art: Chronologies of Art in Quebec  Discovering Art: The Visual Stories We Tell	 Fiction, Film, and F. Scott Fitzgerald	 Montreal's Urban Nature
 Who Paid? Art Patronage in Renaissance Venice  Justice in Ancient Greek Tragedy  Socrates and the Examined Life	 Demistifying Joyce's <i>Ulysses</i>  Türkiye, an Empire Reborn?  Letters to Ghosts: Kafka Revisited  The Evolution of Post-Bop Jazz  The Gospels as Literature  Into The World of Karl Ove Knausgaard	 The Question as Commitment
		SATURDAY
		 Saturday Afternoons at the Opera  Learning to See
 Spellbound by Story  The Universal Experience of Loss  Canterbury Tales  George Eliot's <i>Middlemarch</i>  The Poetry of Gwendolyn Brooks	 Limitarianism  Milton's Paradises  Reading Virgil	

 = In person

 = Zoom

 = Hybrid



2026-2027 Course Catalogue Catalogue des cours



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