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More News

October 2026 Edition



RECENT EVENTS

WELCOME TO THE THOMAS MORE INSTITUTE'S 26-27 ACADEMIC YEAR!

The Institute welcomed a full house on September 1, 2026, as both community members and newcomers gathered to usher in the new academic year. On one of the last warm days of summer, visitors were invited to enjoy cakes and tea, and to discover the academic programming for the year by meeting leaders and instructors of upcoming courses through a “courses launch”. The launch gave people the opportunity to inquire about courses and experience the vibrancy of our community. The evening then continued with a special guest reading by Montreal author Sarah Gilbert, who read an excerpt from her collection of stories, *Our Lady of Mile End*. Gilbert’s energy and sense of humour charmed a full classroom of guests that evening, and her writing offered much food for thought on topics such as gentrification, displacement, social transformation, and inter-generational neighbourhood life.

We were delighted to have so many people join us at this event. Keep an eye out for future academic and community events to come at the Institute!



NEW COURSE ANNOUNCEMENT

AN EPIC FOR THE AGES: THE ODYSSEY FROM HOMER TO NOLAN.

Christopher Nolan has made waves in recent months with his film adaptation of the *Odyssey*. Since Classics are a staple course subject at the Institute, and several of our recent courses have had films as the topic of discussion, we are introducing a special addition to the curriculum for this Fall: [*An Epic for the Ages: The Odyssey from Homer to Nolan.*](#)



This discussion-based film and classics course will use a close reading of the *Odyssey* to examine what has made this literary work so enduring and meaningful. We will focus on what it can tell us about the time and society in which it was composed and first read, with particular attention near the end of the course on what re-interpretations of the story can tell us about our own time and society.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES



There are new volunteer opportunities this year at Thomas More! The Institute is developing a program for volunteers who will be involved in hospitality and administrative activities. Find more details at thomasmore.qc.ca, or on the brochures at the front desk.

Thomas More seeks to create a place where people can be part of a vibrant community of learners. Your contribution as a volunteer--large or small--will make a difference.

INTERVIEW WITH A COURSE LEADER

Q&A WITH RONIKA KHANNA, CO-LEADER OF THE FALL 2026 COURSE *MILTON'S PARADISES: LIBERTY, EXPRESSION AND BEING HUMAN.*

This transcript has been edited for length and clarity.

What made you want to lead this course?

I love taking courses at Thomas More. And the thing that distinguishes leading from simply taking a course is—because you're responsible for motivating the class discussion—that you have to read everything more carefully and think about it so you can come up with good questions, right? So for me that's really a way to motivate myself to read everything much more closely, and I love that.



And these are works that I always wanted to read [...] but that I just wouldn't read on my own. I think a few people mentioned this: it's something that you want to be in a discussion group with other people about, because a lot of [these works] are harder than the average novel.

As leaders, we come up with some discussion questions, and we make sure we know the text really well. But then, [...] everybody is kind of feeding off of each other. So it's very cool to see some of the discussions, some of the points that come up... things that you would never have thought of. And everybody sort of encourages everybody else to speak. People debate, but in a gentle way.

If you were to describe the energy in a class to someone who's never been to one, how would you describe it?

My first course at Thomas More, I had no idea it was going to be a discussion course. I just thought it was a seminar. It was *Love in the Italian Renaissance*, and I thought someone would be teaching the course and we would ask questions. So I was surprised when we all sit around a table, and the discussion sort of asked some provocative questions, and then everybody contributes their ideas and opinions.
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INTERVIEW WITH A COURSE LEADER (CONT.)

And so the energy in the room is amazing. Within the first two or three classes everyone gets to know each other and people tend to interact with each other's questions, with the leaders' questions... so I think it's a great energy.

What was your first impression of Milton in particular as an author? Has that impression changed?

That's a great question. I knew a little bit about Milton because I know of his background in the 17th century. Everybody knows Milton, including myself, for having written *Paradise Lost*, his most famous work. But I hadn't realized how politically active he was in the government in the civil war that happened in England in the 17th century. So when Charles I was beheaded, [Milton] is an instrumental figure [who] works for the new Cromwell government, and is writing pamphlets that are in favour of regicide, in favour of divorce. So he spends a lot of his time, or most of his time during this period, just writing political tracks to help the new government. And then, of course [...] Cromwell dies, and then Charles II is restored, and then Milton decides to go back to poetry. So that was really interesting. This political side of him was really interesting.

And the other part that was really interesting was how much I enjoyed his poetry. You don't necessarily think of Milton—at least I didn't—as being a great poet, but when Joseph put the course together he included a number of [Milton's] poems, and they were incredibly beautiful. So I was really happy to have been exposed to that and to have read them closely. Milton was very steeped in the classics, so there's all kinds of allusions. It was very cool.

You are co-leading another course in the Winter, called *Reading Virgil: Tensions in Roman Identity*. Could you tell us a bit about it?

We're going to be doing the *Aeneid*, which is [Virgil's] most famous work of epic poetry. But in addition to that, we are going to be doing some of his other works. He wrote a bunch of pastoral poetry: the *Eclogues*, some beautiful stuff, and I think we'll delve a little bit into the history. So I'm very excited to be leading that. And I think it's going to be a great course.

IN MEMORIAM

Gert Morgenstern
July 11, 1933 – July 9, 2026



The Thomas More Institute is saddened by the news of the passing of Gert Morgenstern, who was a superb course designer and discussion leader at the Thomas More Institute, a former member of the Board of Directors, and former president of the Thomas More Research Institute. Gert's annual course, Psychiatry for the Layman, was a perennial favourite at Thomas More.

In his career, Gert was a child psychiatrist who trained with Jean Piaget in Switzerland and John Bowlby in London. He left a legacy in his practice at the Montreal Children's and the Douglas Hospitals, and in his scholarship in child psychiatry. [His obituary can be found here.](#)

