

## HUMANITIES 101 WINTER 2015 COURSE: *The History of Today*

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This semester, the Humanities 101 class is investigating *The History of Today*. Humanities 101 is a 14-week, university-level, non-credit course in the Humanities and Social Sciences for people who have a passion for learning but who have encountered barriers to education.

**Course Description** – The curious thing about the ‘news’ is that it doesn’t keep its namesake very well or very long. Today’s news will be tomorrow’s history and, likewise, history was once the news of the day. Yet all too often we can get wrapped up in the here and now and forget how the past colours our understandings of the present. This semester, we will be looking at a number of current events both locally and globally. However, we want to do more than just look at what is happening in today’s world. Collectively, society can get too caught up in the immediate ‘facts’ of a news story without giving proper attention to how an event built to the point of becoming newsworthy. In this class, we want to look at how we arrived at the point where current events happen. In other words, we’ll be unpacking what it means to think about the complicated ideas that make up the ‘history of today.’

History is about how things change. It looks at peoples over times past and present in different societies, noticing and explaining their attitudes, beliefs and behaviors, and interpreting their reactions to the various pressures, conditions and events that induce change. History remembers the past, explains the present, and gives hopes and predictions for our future. Broadly, our learning goals for this semester are as follows:

- To appreciate that history is an interpretative, explanatory process;
- To better understand the forces and influences that have shaped the modern world;
- To critically evaluate heritages and traditions;
- To investigate the role of values and beliefs in history; and,
- To develop the knowledge, abilities and aspiration to participate as active citizens in the shaping of the future through better understanding how we arrived at our current situations.

For our project this semester, we will be creating timelines about a topic we feel passionate about. In the early stages of the course, we will collectively brainstorm potential topics as well as how we each want to create the timelines. Ideally each timeline will have an aspect of the past, present, and a view of the future. Timelines can take many forms and will have plenty of space for all types of expression—there is no ‘one’ way to make a timeline! They might include photographs, poems, short stories, three-panel comics, interactive maps, and so on. At the conclusion of the course, we will be compiling the timelines into a larger class display.

Since we only have 14 classes to complete our timelines, each class we will spend time working on our individual and group contributions. Learners will also be expected to share these contributions and course reflections either with the class or the class

facilitator. There will be time each class to work on the individual final projects and working on contributions outside of class time is encouraged - but not expected.

**Course Objectives** – The objectives of the course are to:

- Learn different ideas about how individuals are affected by the topics covered in class;
- Create, collaborate, and document our learning experience;
- Participate in discussions and activities with classmates and instructors;
- Experience a university-level classroom setting; and,
- Explore your passion for learning.

**Course Format and Activities** – Students can expect presentations, class discussions, small group work, and one-on-one assistance. We will discuss ideas about experiencing news and headlines, talk about course readings, and explore different ways to present our ideas. Students are expected to participate in the following activities:

- Discuss ideas and participate in activities with classmates and instructors;
- Respond to readings shared out loud in class;
- Participate in guided assignments;
- Take photos and complete assignments that include photography or similar projects; and,
- Share reflections on their work.

Each class will include time to work on course assignments.

**Materials** – Students will be provided with all required materials, including pens/pencils, paper, folders, film cameras (including film processing), etc.

**Class Location, Time and Schedule** – Classes will be held at **The St. John's Institute**, 11024-82 Ave on Tuesdays from 6:30 – 8:30 pm. There is parking in the Safeway parking lot at the end of the block but you WILL need to get a parking pass from Jay.

**Course Schedule:**

<b>Day and Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>
Tuesday, January 20 <b>*Jay</b>	<b>Introduction and Course Overview</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Introduction to course goals and structure.</li> <li>- Develop class guidelines.</li> <li>- Go over major themes we will tackle over the next semester and the timeline project.</li> </ul>
Tuesday, January 27 <b>*Stephen</b>	<b>Introduction Continued, &amp; “The History of the News and Journalism”</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- What are the historical roots of the news? Where did it begin? How did it look? Who was it for?</li> <li>- What have been the most historically significant moments in how news was disseminated? What predictions about what form future news stories will take based on trends we have seen in the past?</li> <li>- How does the medium news is presented effect the messages audiences received?</li> </ul>
Tuesday, February 3 <b>*Guest Speaker Margriet Haagsma</b>	<b>Women and Democracy: The He for She Initiative</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- How did the news and democracy function in ancient Greece, particularly with respect to women?</li> <li>- What traces of the past can we see in contemporary politics?</li> <li>- How would the UN’s He for She Initiative be understood by the ancient Greeks and what does it tell us about modern times?</li> </ul>
Tuesday, February 10 <b>*Kelsi</b>	<b>Reign of Terror – How the news portrayed terrorism in 2014</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- From “home-grown terrorists” to the fight against terror across seas, we are continually confronted with ideas of terrorism.</li> <li>- What is terrorism?</li> <li>- Who are the terrorists?</li> <li>- When did it all start?</li> </ul>
Tuesday, February 17 <b>*Joe</b>	<b>We Don’t Need No Education</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- What is school?</li> <li>- Who is responsible for education? The government, municipal, provincial, or federal? The citizenry?</li> <li>- How are we affected by the education system as adults?</li> </ul>

<p>Tuesday, February 24 *Emily</p>	<p><b>Everybody Is Talking About How No One Is Talking About It</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- One of Canada's top news stories of 2014 was about how no one is talking about the missing and murdered Aboriginal woman. What is that story actually about?</li> <li>- Is PM Harper right that it is not a sociological issue, what does that mean?</li> </ul>
<p>Tuesday, March 3 *Guest Speaker Olga Ivanova</p>	<p><b>What gets lost in the Atlantic? – Translating the News</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Who is translating the news?</li> <li>- How much of the 'truth' gets lost when the news travels across the ocean?</li> <li>- How does the representation of news from across the ocean affect our perceptions and how we engage with our local communities?</li> </ul>
<p>Tuesday, March 10 *Jay</p>	<p><b>The Not So Popular "Popular" Culture?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Is Popular Culture "true" news?</li> <li>- How accountable are celebrities and how did they become 'historical' figures?</li> <li>- Why have celebrities who have a long history and reputation for abuse, like Bill Cosby and Jian Ghomeshi, only have their cases come to light today? How has the culture changed to allow this?</li> <li>- Should we care about what Rob Ford does on the weekend, does it affect his ability to do his job?</li> </ul>
<p>Tuesday, March 17</p>	<p><b>Work Day</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Check in with where we are at as a class and as individuals.</li> <li>- What still needs to be done?</li> <li>- Questions/concerns</li> </ul>
<p>Tuesday, March 24 *Jennifer</p>	<p><b>The (Evolving) Sound of Music: Have New Ways of Listening Changed How Music is Experienced?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Historically, how has music been experienced differently throughout different places and eras?</li> <li>- How has music distribution changed from ways in the past, especially with the emergence of services like Spotify and Pandora?</li> <li>- Do artists think about their work differently when distribution models change? What about audiences and consumers?</li> </ul>

Tuesday, March 31 <b>*Brittany</b>	<b>'Compassionate' News?: How the News Has Covered Mental Wellness</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- In what ways has news media covered mental wellness in the past?</li> <li>- Does how it is covered now suggest historical changes in broader public opinion?</li> </ul>
Tuesday, April 7	<b>Work Day</b>
Tuesday, April 14	Open house and graduation! Bring friends and family.
Tuesday, April 21	Graduation party for graduates

**Course Feedback** – No grades are assigned in the course. If you would like additional feedback on your course work you can choose to hand in your assignments at the end of each class.

### **Certificate Requirements**

In order to receive the certificate indicating successful completion of Humanities 101, students must meet the following criteria:

- Complete all in-class assignments;
- Attend at least 9 out of 13 classes;
- If you are having difficulty meeting these requirements, please speak with Jay as soon as possible.

**Course Contacts** – Jay Friesen, Humanities 101 Coordinator, University of Alberta; hum101@ualberta.ca or 587-709-5472.

In addition to the above scheduled classes we have several other optional scheduled events to compliment classroom learning. Rylan, a recreational coordinator that works at Bissell and Boyle Street, is also planning several activities around the city that we will make sure to let you know about.

So far in this semester, we have planned trips to the Edmonton Journal, the Art Gallery of Alberta, and a downtown historical walking tour, with more in the works!