



Humanities and Public Life Conference 2022:

Crisis, Conflict, and Resolution

**Monday,
September 19**

8:30-10, Room: 5B.16

Speaker: Donal Gill

Title: The Xenophobic Wave: Exploring White Supremacy Terrorism

Abstract: Recent scholarship has outlined the case for rejecting the lone wolf thesis of white supremacist motivated terrorism. This paper develops this analysis further, using a social movement theory perspective to conceptually situate these recent acts of terrorism and political violence. Through a close reading of the manifestos of perpetrators of white supremacist violence, we join recent scholarship attempting to understand this phenomenon, asking the following questions: How should the links between white supremacist terror attacks across the world be understood? What are the core ideological links and commonalities between white supremacist attackers, and where do they differ?

Addressing this, we argue that these actors should be understood as operating within a loosely affiliated transnational movement. Possibly constituting a fifth wave of xenophobic terrorism, perpetrators within this movement share a core set of characteristics and beliefs, alongside more individualized unique traits that influence their respective attacks. This refutes the lone wolf thesis and builds towards an integrated theory of white supremacy extremism that emphasizes the network effects and shared ideology that have propelled an ongoing wave of political violence. Initial results, demonstrating the analysis and comparison of rhetoric, attack pattern, targets, and messaging used by perpetrators, are presented in this paper.

10-11:30, Room: 5B.16

Speaker: John Hunting

Title: Photographic Images of Atrocity and the Ethics of Media Witnessing

Abstract: Witnesses are understood to represent events to others who were absent from that event. Media witnessing involves a similar process, albeit in, by and through media. Photographic images of atrocity are instances of media witnessing that typically intend to attest to the suffering of others by way of their photographic representation. What are some of the presumptions, promises and risks of this process regarded from an ethical point of view? For if images of atrocity are frequently intended to disclose terrible injustice, which might be otherwise missed, ignored or forgotten, it is also true that images of atrocity are frequently regarded as mere tokens of concern or morbid spectacle, if not avoided or disregarded because part of an overwhelming glut of “news worthy” violence and wrongdoing. That said an ethics of responsibility might still be shown to reside at the heart of the photographic, media witnessing and images of atrocity.

Bio: John Hunting is a Humanities teacher at Dawson College. His research interests include the philosophy of Immanuel Levinas, media aesthetics and media witnessing.

12-2, Room: 5B.16

Speaker: Gray Miles

Title: Moon in a Dewdrop: Making Sense of Crisis through the Lens of the Self

Abstract: I am gripped by anxiety about the climate crisis. Images of self-harm bring me waves of grief. I feel helpless in the face of compounding disasters. Is it best to turn away from a world in pain to cultivate my own garden of happiness or be overwhelmed by the dark truths? What does Humanities have to say on this ancient and modern question?

Bio: Gray Swift Miles is a former foreign correspondent, television journalist, and documentary filmmaker whose subjects have included the 9/11 attacks, Hurricane Katrina, conflict, drug-trafficking, and cycles of violence. Gray graduated with a PhD in Anthropology/Sociology from Tulane University in New Orleans in 2014, and studied Cognitive Neuroscience as a Visiting Fellow at Harvard University. Gray has lived in Mexico, Colombia, and Brazil where he worked as a journalist and filmmaker, and later, in Bogotá and Rio de Janeiro, where he lived and conducted research on drug-trafficking gangs, youth peace movements, and forms of popular resistance funded by the Guggenheim Dissertation Fellowship in Violence Studies.

2:30-4, Room: 5B.16

Speaker: Oran Magal

Title: The Relevance of Knowledge, World Views, and Ethics to Contemporary Conflicts

Abstract: Modern wars and political conflicts are fought not only in the battlefield, but also in the arena of public opinion, with all sides working to convince us to support them. This is where the skills and knowledge we gain in Humanities courses can help: in this lecture we will discuss a few prominent examples, showing how each of the three Humanities courses contributes to a deeper, more careful, and ultimately better understanding of conflicts, both internationally and in our own country.

Bio: Dr. Oran Magal teaches Philosophy and Humanities at Dawson College and McGill University.

4-5:30, Room: 5B.16

Speaker: Pat Romano

Title: A Real Alternative? Reflecting on Nonviolence as War Rages On

Abstract: As Russian troops invaded their country, some Ukrainians turned to nonviolent action. Their resistance was supported by similar actions in Russia and other countries in the region and beyond. These acts of resistance though were overshadowed by violent ones and the increasing calls from much of the western world for a more militarized response to Russian aggression. Their existence though raises a question - a bold one: can nonviolence actually be effective in a struggle against a brutal opponent? Using the background of the War in Ukraine, this presentation explores this question, while intersecting with the themes of Humanities, revealing how our lack of knowledge about the theory and practice of nonviolence shapes the acceptance of violence in our ethics and worldviews.

Bio: Pat Romano teaches in the Humanities Department at Dawson College. Her academic background is in political science, and she is currently teaching courses that explore the potential of nonviolent resistance and the ethical questions raised by our responses to historical wrongs. She is the co-founder, along with Kim Simard from Cinema-Communications, of the *Creative Collective for Change*, a new Dawson para-academic project that seeks to create inclusive and creative spaces for conversation and action on polarizing social issues.



Humanities and Public Life Conference 2022:

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Tuesday, September 20

8:30-10, Room 4C.1

Speaker: Michael Restagno

Title: Destituent power and un-governability in biopolitical regimes: What our experience of the pandemic can tell us about the negative potentiality of becoming un-governable.

Abstract: Our collective experience of the current pandemic has shown that the crisis of the demos is a crisis of ungovernability. While this current form of un-governability is often presented by the media as a refusal to follow sanitation guidelines on the principle of an individual's freedom from coercion, our aim is to provide a brief genealogy of un-governability in order to demonstrate its relation to a wider, collective form of destituent power that operates within the interstices of biopolitical regimes.

Instead of presenting the possibilities latent within more imaginative forms of social organization, the individual manifestations of un-governability found in anti-sanitary protests simply reinforce and naturalize the artificial necessities on which our current economic system is structured upon; sanitation guidelines are flaunted because of the necessity of working, which is then elevated to the status of fundamental principle over mere contingency. The aim of a genealogy of un-governability is to show that the latter only becomes destituent power when it sources itself through the construction of possibility instead of the reinforcement of necessity: it is for this reason that the action such as the George Floyd protests consist of a form of destituent power while the latter example does not.

Bio: Michael Restagno holds a bachelors degree in Political Science and Philosophy, a Masters degree in Philosophy and a certificate in Cegep education from Université de Montréal. His areas of competence are political theory and intellectual history, where he specializes in German and French philosophical currents from the 19th and 20th centuries, more specifically critical theory, phenomenology and French post-structuralism.

10-11:30, Room 4C.1

Speaker: Carina Raisman

Title: Yoga, Critical Thinking & Creating the Life you want to Live

Abstract: With yoga, we *practice* on the mat what we *apply* when we're not on the mat. Yoga, like life, requires us to respond to challenges from many positions, perspectives, and postures. Join us for this interactive talk to learn practical tools, tricks, and tips {in order} to cultivate a flexible mind (not just flexible muscles!!) and open to the infinite possibilities that life can be, of what *your* life can be, and how to create the life you want to live.

Bio: Carina Raisman has been practicing Yoga for over thirty years and teaching for twenty. She is certified by Yoga Alliance as well the Quebec Association of Naturopath. She complements her practice and teaching through various forms, with her main sources of inspiration being Satyananda, Anusara, and Mindfulness Meditation.

Carina's academic history shows clearly her interest in Health Sciences. Graduating with honors from McGill University, obtaining a BSc in Microbiology and Immunology, she enriches her education with a year abroad at the Faculté de Pharmacie in Montpellier, France, providing added knowledge in many fields, namely pharmacology, homeopathy, and plant-therapy.

Her yoga classes emphasize alignment, posture, stress management, and awareness of breath. Private classes are available for those who wish to progress in their practice, as well as address needs such as depression, insomnia, anxiety, and other imbalances, by guiding and teaching the student the tools to cultivate and experience Health as a Whole.

11:30-1, Room 4C.1

Speaker: Andreea Bargoveanu

Title: The Cultural Sector: Between Crisis and Transformation

Abstract: Through the eyes of an arts administrator, this presentation will look at the ways in which the COVID-19 pandemic has transformed the arts sector in Canada, with a focus on the Quebec sector since 2021. Some of the most important impacts of this crisis on cultural organizations and on the reality of today's artistic profession will be cited. But this crisis will also be considered as a fascinating accelerator of long term changes that triggered the creation of new structures within the public and artistic

organizations that are able to support and keep promoting the work of artists for the benefits of all society. This reflection will also consider some of the challenges related to the sustainability of the arts sector and some of the responses that have been formulated by government agencies to continue to support the arts ecosystem.

Bio: Andreea Bargoveanu is a graduate from McGill University and the University of Montreal where she completed a Master's degree in Art History. She then completed a DESS in Management of cultural organizations at HEC Montreal and began a new graduate degree at the *École nationale d'administration publique* in management - private and public sectors. She has been working for over 10 years in the Montreal arts sector, first in the visual arts, then in the field of theatre training and today in symphonic music at the *Orchestre Métropolitain*. Convinced that art can radically transform our vision of the world, she has also sat on several boards of directors of cultural organizations.

1-2:30, Room: 5B.16

Title: Provincial Election Debate

The Dawson Student Union, along with the Law, Society, and Justice profile, is sponsoring a debate featuring the candidates from the Ville-Marie riding. Candidates will specifically focus on the future of young allophone and anglophone Quebecers.

2:30-4, Room: 5B.16

Speakers: Pat Loisel and Dave Lines

Title: Pandemic Blues: Reflections on the Pandemic from a Musician's Perspective.

Abstract: The global pandemic is unprecedented in its effect worldwide on essentially everything, from supply chain issues to human behaviour. Somewhere in between all this lies the milieu of the artist; how does one maintain the ability to call themselves an artist if there is no one to appreciate (and financially support) their art? Technology is only part of the answer, and as a self-employed musician there seems to be more challenges than solutions for me. Or do I just need to be more creative than ever to continue?

Dave Lines and Pat Loisel will describe and analyze their experiences during the pandemic and then perform songs for us, giving us a taste of the live music talent that exists in Montreal.

Bios: **David Lines** is a self-taught multi-instrumentalist who has been involved in the Montreal music community for over 30 years, from his first "professional" (and underage) show at Fofounes Électrique in 1986 to his most recent performances as a hired gun at The House of Jazz and Upstairs.

During this time, he has performed with his own projects, playing rock, funk, blues and Rock'n'Roll, and even electronic dance music, and amassed a reputation as a very competent and reliable musician-for-hire, for a wide range of styles from blues to reggae.

He has performed at The Montreal Jazz festival, and other festivals around the province, toured the UK with his rock band A Devil's Din, opened for such bands as Cat Empire, Pride Tiger and Big Country and is currently obsessing with the New Orleans boogie-woogie and blues piano style, in the vein of Dr. John and Professor Longhair. His more frequent projects he leads are The Swingin' 88s and the Rocket 88s.

Born in Montréal, Multi-instrumentalist **Pat Loiselle** has been part of the blues and 'roots' music scene for more than 25 years. Starting out on guitar and harmonica, he was influenced by the blues greats: B.B. King, Muddy Waters, Little Walter, Sonny Boy Williamson, John Hammond Jr. to name a few. Pat has performed with and recorded with numerous artists such as Kenny 'Blues Boss' Wayne, Janice Harrington, Stephen Barry, Michael Jerome Browne, J-D Slim and has opened for many blues legends over the years: Robert Jr. Lockwood, Magic Slim, Little Charlie and The Nightcats, Junior Watson, Canada's own Dutch Mason and Jack de Keyzer

4-5:30, Room: 5B.16

Speaker: Anna Sheftel

Title: What can we learn about conflict by listening to the people who have experienced it? Survivors, storytelling, and the ethics of listening.

Abstract: When we learn about conflict and violence, we tend to learn from the perspective of people in power; governments, organizations, leaders, etc. However, there is a lot to learn from listening to the people who experience conflict, to understand how the decisions that people in power make play out on the ground, to make sense of what it means to live through atrocity, and to understand the multifaceted impact that these experiences can have on people, families, and communities. In this presentation, we will discuss what it means to listen to stories of survivors of violence, drawing on the speaker's work in Bosnia-Herzegovina and with Holocaust survivors, and what the ethics are of recording these stories and representing them to the world.

Bio: Dr. Anna Sheftel is Principal and Associate Professor at the School of Community and Public Affairs at Concordia University. She has a DPhil in Modern History from the University of Oxford. Her work focuses on memory of atrocity, particularly the Holocaust and Bosnia-Herzegovina, and she has also published extensively on the ethics and practice of oral history. Her most well known works is *Oral History Off the Record: Toward an Ethnography of Practice*, co-edited with Stacey Zembrzycki, which won the Oral History Association's 2014 Book Award. She also recently co-developed a collaborative audio tour about Holocaust survivors' immigration to Montreal, entitled, *Refugee Boulevard: Making Montreal Home After the Holocaust* (www.refugeeboulevard.ca), which won both the 2020 Oral History Association (OHA) and Canadian Historical Association (CHA) Digital and Public History prizes.



Humanities and Public Life Conference 2022:

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**Wednesday,
September 21**

8:30-10, Room: 5B.16

Speaker: Arina Pavlova

Title: Why Should Ukraine Keep its Sovereignty?

Abstract: The “Special Military Operation” launched by Russia in Ukraine on the 24th of February 2022 has brought destruction, deaths, violence, and other atrocities of an armed conflict. The clashing ideologies and worldviews of the western liberal society and the Russian authoritarian system are causing tangible consequences affecting millions of people in Ukraine and worldwide. In order to understand the roots of a conflict on a large scale, we need to understand the history that has shaped the political maturity of the citizens as well as the National Identity of a country. Ukraine's past is a unique collection of events and revolutions: from claims to self-rulership to war for the ideals of a liberal society, that doesn't resonate with Russia's rationale and its imperial ambitions. However, the struggle to preserve liberal democracy when situated next to an autocratic state is what makes the Ukrainian-Russian conflict so interesting from the point of view of political science. We will look into the notion of Ukrainian democracy and Russian autocracy; why people chose to submit to the authority of a state or to rebel against it in terms of Humanities. We will also consider the civic nationalism, and values system of Ukraine in terms of Worldviews. And finally, why it is so crucial for International Politics, that Ukraine remains a sovereign democratic country?

Bio: Arina Pavlova is a student at Dawson College in the Psychology program. She was born and grew up in Kiev, Ukraine, where she studied The History of Ukraine and World History. She left the country in 2018, to pursue academic studies in the field of Social Science in Canada. Her main topics of interest represent politics, history, philosophy, and psychology.

10-11:30, Room: 5B.16

Speaker: Sean Elliott

Title: The End of History and the Clash of Civilizations: The Use and Abuse of Theories and Metanarratives

Abstract: People like stories. And, stories reach into the domain of politics. What will the future hold and how will we get there? If politics is the process of negotiating our collective spaces and how we live together, it seems as if we need to agree on how our collective human story will and should we evolve on a global basis. After the collapse of the communist bloc in 1989, and the subsequent collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, some people claimed that we had reached the End of History, the culmination of the human drama that would result in the spread of liberal democracy around the world. Human history had shown, according to them, that human beings aspire to live in free and democratic societies. However, throughout the 1990s we saw enough carnage and ethnic rivalry to significantly discredit the End of History thesis. A competing theory emerged called the Clash of Civilizations, which claimed that Western institutions did not have universal appeal and that the world was destined witness conflicts between major civilizations, and that geo-politics would take on a multi-polar character. We will discuss these 2 theories with respect to the conflict in Ukraine and offer an alternative view which may serve to understand some aspects of conflict. We will examine the theories from the perspective of the 3 humanities categories. In terms of Knowledge, how do people reason about their sense of rights and how do they configure their individual interests and identity in relation to the collective interests and identity around them? In terms of World Views, we will look at liberalism, which is the ideology that undergirds the End of History thesis. In terms of Ethics, Do we have any moral obligations to protect individual rights around the world? Should we help Ukraine in its fight against Russia?

Bio: Sean Elliott has been teaching at Dawson since 2002. He was born in Montreal and grew up in Kingston, Ontario. He studied at Queen's University and Carleton University where his main interests were and remain political theory. At Dawson College, he teaches courses about ideologies, globalization and 17th century political theory. He has published & presented on the subject of right wing populism. His hobbies include fly-fishing and playing with his band in local venues. Sean Elliott loves teaching and looks forward to many more years at Dawson.

11:30-1, Room: 5B.16

Speaker: Bonney Elliott

Title: Can we live happily on an ailing planet? The impact of climate change on

mental health.

Abstract: Witnessing and worrying about devastation on a planetary level impacts mental health on a personal level. This interactive workshop will explore a shift in worldview from climate change as happening "out there" to a series of catastrophic events that are eroding happiness and wellbeing. Participants will come away with deeper insight into how global climate crises can affect mental health. We will define and discuss concepts of eco-anxiety and eco-despair. We will explore what it means to you personally to live in right relationship with an ailing planet, and to foster a deeper connection with nature in order to cope, find hope, build resilience and come up with creative solutions. Lastly, we will explore simple ideas for building communities of support and action around climate change.

1-2:30, Room: 5B.16

Speaker: Carmen Cristea

Title: Corps dépossédés, corps augmentés, corps morcelés: Quand les récits dystopiques tirent la sonnette d'alarme sur les dérives qui guettent notre société

Abstract: Le corps a toujours été un champ de bataille important pour les régimes autoritaires qui ont fait de la maîtrise des corps un enjeu majeur dans l'exercice de leur pouvoir, que cela soit par le contrôle de la natalité (comme ce fut le cas de certains régimes communistes), par la persécution de certains groupes d'individus à cause de leur race ou par l'extermination des populations entières selon des critères raciaux ou eugénistes (le régime nazi). Le degré élevé d'emprise sur les corps coïncide généralement avec les manifestations les plus abominables du totalitarisme. À la lumière de la réflexion menée par des penseurs contemporains (Merleau-Ponty) au sujet du corps vu comme un *a priori* ontologique et par des chercheurs qui s'intéressent à l'impact des progrès scientifiques et technologiques sur le corps (Céline Lafontaine, Nicolas Le Devedec), nous nous proposons de réfléchir, à partir de deux récits dystopiques à la place du corps dans un monde en crise, un monde qui « part en morceaux ». Le corps serait-il le dernier rempart de notre humanité menacée ? Sa réhabilitation voire sa re-sacralisation serait-elle notre dernier espoir pour affronter la débâcle du monde ?

Bio: Enseignante de français au Collège Dawson depuis 2009. Docteur en littératures de langue française de l'Université de Montréal. Mes intérêts de recherche portent sur la littérature francophone, l'analyse de discours, l'écriture des femmes, l'écriture de l'Histoire et l'enseignement de la littérature

2:30-4, Room: 5B.16

Speaker: Daniel Goldsmith

Title: The Impact of AI on Spiritual Worldviews

Abstract: In this presentation, I will explore the impact that artificial intelligence could have on spiritual practice and worldviews, which I studied during my time as a Dawson AI fellow in Fall 2021. Could we use AI to improve spiritual qualities like compassion? Or to get enlightened? Or could AI development end up reinforcing a reductionist, materialist view of humanity?

Bio: Daniel Goldsmith has taught in the humanities department at Dawson college since 2009. His courses focus on identity, enlightenment, and food ethics. An avid traveler, Daniel spent over 2 years in Asia, where he studied yoga and meditation.



Humanities and Public Life Conference 2022:

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**Thursday,
September 22**

8:30-10, Dawson Theatre

Speaker: Daniel Goodfellow

Title: Ethics at the foundation of Real Estate Development

Abstract: In this presentation, I will describe the important role that ethics has played in guiding my decisions as I have built my real estate development company, Werkliv. With \$200 million in current developments, Werkliv develops affordable and beautiful student housing. My experience shows that a strong ethical compass is not an obstacle to profit, but is actually an integral component to success in a global sense.

10-11:30, Dawson Theatre

Speaker: Vanessa Sasson

Title: How Secular and Religious Worldviews shape debate in Contemporary Quebec: a dialogue

Abstract: In this dialogue with Daniel Goldsmith, I will explore questions like what exactly does it mean to live in a secular society and what is a secular worldview? in which ways is a supposedly secular society influenced by religious worldviews? How do these topics influence contemporary debates in Quebec, particularly around Law 21 and 96. Finally, we will speculate about what a humanities class for Francois Legault would look like!

Bio: Vanessa Sasson is a professor of Religious Studies at Marianopolis College where she has been teaching since 1999. She is also a Research Fellow at the University of the Free State in South Africa and a Research Member of CERIAS at UQAM.

Sasson is the author and editor of a number of academic books, most notably a collection entitled *Little Buddhas: Children and Childhood in Buddhist Texts and Traditions* (Oxford University Press, 2013). Her most recent academic book is an edited volume entitled *Jewels, Jewelry, and Other Shiny Things in the Buddhist Imaginary* (University of Hawaii Press).

A few years ago, Sasson tried something new and converted her research into a novel. The book, *Yasodhara*, was the outcome. She found creative writing to be both liberating and delightful (and agonizing). She is now writing the sequel to *Yasodhara*, which is focused on Gotami's request for ordination.

11:30-1, Dawson Theatre

Speaker: Nadia Khouri

Title: Who's Afraid of Academic Freedom?

Abstract: There are today virtue-signaling groups who are so afraid of academic freedom that they want to cancel it altogether, often through trolling on social media and campus mobbing. This means also cancelling free inquiry and free speech, re-engineering language through a system of euphemisms, cleansing books of words declared offensive, or listing them on an index of forbidden literature, and demanding the firing of those who do not comply with such an ideology of absolute purity. Are we witnessing the rise of a new religion of moral panic? The revival of the old despotism of inquisitors and more recently of dictators? This talk will analyze this phenomenon using the toolkit we inherited from the 3 categories of the Humanities: Knowledge and critical thinking, World Views, and Ethics.

Bio: After many years of teaching in the Humanities Department Nadia is now scholar in residence at Dawson and a regular contributor to the annual Humanities and Public Life Conference. She earned her B.A. from Alexandria University, and her M.A. and Ph.D. from McGill University. Her thesis on the impact of the Enlightenment and its transformation in America earned her the Dean's Honours award. Among her many interests is a love for opera which she considers to be a complete form of art and a testament to the aesthetic potentials of human beings. You can subscribe to her opera newsletter and browse her list of opera databases, societies and composers on her homepage. For the past 5 years Nadia has been working on a project entitled "The Philosophy of Happiness from Plato to the UN World

Happiness Report.”

1-2:30, Room: 5B.16

Speaker: Susan Palmer

Title: Uyghur Women Activists and Whistleblowers in the Diaspora: Personal Narratives of Transformation in Ethics, Femininity and Worldviews

Abstract: This study explores the changing role of women in the international Uyghur advocacy movement. Based on in-depth interviews with ten prominent female activists, all born and raised in East Turkestan/Xinjiang, this study explores the factors that prompted them to leave China and relocate to the West, where they currently engaged in advocating for the rights of Turkic Muslims in China and raising public awareness of the ongoing persecution against their people in Xinjiang, recognized by eight nations as a genocide. Drawing on conversion theory, this study analyzes the tensions and turning points in these women’s narratives – which range from experiences of ethnic discrimination in the job market/ workplace, to witnessing massacres and arbitrary mass arrests of protest demonstrators in Ghulja (1997) and Urumqi (2009) – as steps in the process of conversion to a new political perspective. These life stories demonstrate a series of dramatic role transitions; from Muslim daughters to CCP-sponsored scholarship students, to aspiring professionals in a “Han-only” job market, to Uyghur women political activists in the West. This study investigates how Uyghur women are redefining the traditional Uyghur ethic of *japakesh* [woman’s self sacrifice on behalf of family] as a license to exercise their political agency in the public sphere as “mothers of our nation” – and have thereby played a significant role in magnifying the voice of Uyghurs in the West.

Traditional Uyghur ethics require women to be “*japakesh*” – which means to endure suffering on behalf of their children, husbands, father and brothers; and to renounce selfish pleasure and material rewards for their family (Shamseden, 2019; Huang, 2009). This ideal permeates Uyghur culture, and since many of our informants self-identify as “Mothers of Our Nation” or as the “Voice” for all the Turkic women who were raped, tortured and sterilized in the “re-education” camps, this study will analyze these (Muslim) narratives within the framework of Rosemary Ruether’s (Christian) model of “reformist romantic feminism” (1983).

Bio: Susan J. Palmer is a sociologist in the field of new religious studies, whose research has been supported by six grants from Canada’s Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC). She has authored (or co-edited) many articles and twelve books, including *Moon Sisters, Krishna Mothers* (1994); *Millennium, Messiahs and Mayhem* (1998) ; *Children in New Religions* (1999); *Aliens Adored: Rael’s UFO Religion* (2004) ; *The New Heretics of France* (2011); *Storming Zion: Government Raids on Religious Communities* (2015) and *The Mystical Geography of Quebec* (2020). Many of her articles have been translated into Italian, French, Korean, German, and her book, *Qiannian wang guoyu baiyang shijie* [The Coming of the Millennium and the Turning of the Kalpa] co-authored with David Ownby and Qin Bao (Beijing: The People’s Press, 2000) is available in Chinese.

Palmer is an Affiliate Professor in the Religions and Cultures Department of Concordia University where she teaches courses in religion. She also teaches at McGill University, Montreal, Quebec, where she is

currently directing a four-year SSHRC-funded research project, Children in sectarian religions and state control

2:30-4, Room: 5B.16

New School Roundtable

Title: 'Me' vs. 'We' in the New School Classroom

Abstract : New School asks, In a time of growing anxiety and increasing polarizations, what kind of community is possible in the classroom? What are the conditions for a meaningful and accountable relationality through teaching and learning? How can teaching and learning hold space for and reimagine humanism/s? These questions are the heartbeat of critical humanistic education at New School's core. Join Rushdia Mehreen (Vanier faculty), Christopher McMullen, and David Fleming (Marianopolis faculty) in a roundtable conversation with Cory Legassic and Mari Heywood. We look forward to exploring individualism in the context of collective care. We are our relationships.

4-5:30, Room: 5B.16

Speaker: Silvia Ortan

Title: Law as a Profession, Humanities as a Helper

Abstract: This presentation will touch on various critical thinking perspectives which can aid and inform attorneys and other players of the modern legal system in meeting its challenges, from the perspective of a Quebec attorney. In particular, the presentation will detail how viewing such contemporary challenges through the lens of a humanities background and education can offer unique insights and solutions, notably in respect to access to justice, ethics within the justice system and the public's confidence in same.

Bio: Silvia Ortan is a 2011 Dawson graduate and alumni of the Social Science “Law, Society and Justice” program. After subsequently graduating from Université de Montréal, she has been practicing as a labour law and litigation attorney since 2015. As part of her practice, she assists a wide range of clients in the management of labour relations, and frequently pleads before the Court of Quebec, the Superior Court and the Administrative Labour Tribunal. She is a published author and frequent conference speaker, and has been involved in various *pro bono* initiatives aiming to improve access to justice for all.



Humanities and Public Life Conference 2022:

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**Friday,
September 23**

8:30-10, Room: 5B.16

Speaker: Brian Redekopp

Title: Filtered Worldviews: The Promise and Peril of Online News

Abstract: Journalists and media theorists have long identified facilitating dialogue as a crucial role of the news media in a democratic society. But in an age of “echo chambers” and “filter bubbles,” many worry that online news is more of a force for conflict and polarization than it is for constructive debate. In this interactive talk we’ll explore some of the economic and psychological forces that threaten to undermine the integrity of news online, as well as ways that internet technology can enhance our engagement with news and improve democratic culture.

Bio: Brian Redekopp was born and raised in rural Saskatchewan. From the prairies, he headed east, where he earned a B.A. at Carleton University’s College of the Humanities, an M.A. in Philosophy at the Memorial University of Newfoundland, and finally a Ph.D. in Philosophy at McGill. He has been teaching in Humanities and in Philosophy at Dawson since 2011. He organizes the Dawson Philosophy Club, a

philosophy discussion group for students and faculty, and is the facilitator of the new Society and Technology profile in the Social Science program, set to launch in Fall 2023.

10-11:30, Room: 5B.16

Speaker: Dafina Savic

Title: War, Ethics and Equity: A Closer Look at the Situation in Ukraine

Abstract: The ongoing war in Ukraine continues to impact people, policies and societies at large. One issue which has gained little attention over the past months, however, is equity in protection in times of war. This presentation will take a closer look at the historical persecution of Europe's largest minority and its impact on the current war of aggression in Ukraine. Some of the questions which will be explored are the following: What are some of the ethical issues involved in addressing human rights in a context where propaganda is used to fuel a conflict? How can different notions of humanities and writings of philosophers such as Thomas Hobbes and David Hume help us to understand current responses and challenges caused by the war in Ukraine? These questions will be looked at by drawing from the local stories, perspectives and realities of Roma seeking to flee Ukraine.

Bio: Dafina Savic has an academic background in political science with a focus on international relations and comparative politics from McGill University. She has more than 10 years of experience in international relations, human rights and public affairs. Her work draws on local and international knowledge in the areas of human rights, immigration, social impact and minority rights. She has initiated dozens of successful national and international mobilization campaigns on various issues, as well as developing programs, projects, and digital educational tools on human rights and genocide prevention for various public contexts across Canada.

In 2013, Dafina founded Romanipe, a Not-for-Profit organization based in Montreal, Canada, whose main mission is to defend the human rights and dignity of Romani populations in Canada and worldwide. The organization recently led the efforts which resulted in the recognition of the Romani Genocide by the Canadian Government in 2020 and contributed to the elimination of Bill C-31 in 2019. In her capacity as the organization's Executive Director and Founder, she has contributed and developed international initiatives seeking to secure rights for Roma refugees in Canada and advance the human rights situation of Roma globally. She is also an expert Delegate for the Canadian Delegation to the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) where she advises the government on human rights and Holocaust education.

In 2016, Dafina was the recipient of the Young Quebecers Leading the Way Award for her leadership and work on human rights issues. In 2018, she co-founded Uena Agency, the first social impact agency of its kind in Quebec, specialized in inclusive governance, public and community relations. The agency has worked with various institutions and industries to make them better citizens by formulating and improving strategies and approaches. Dafina also regularly contributes recommendations on human rights mechanisms to the United Nations.

2-4, Room 4C.1

Speaker: Michael Wood

Title: Critical Thinking about Archaeology: Petra, Angkor and Sipan, conflict among stakeholders over archaeological sites in Jordan, Cambodia and Peru

Abstract: Over the course of the last 150 years, archaeology has developed as a discipline dedicated to discovering and understanding humanity's past. Petra and Angkor have been excavated, conserved and restored and are now symbols of national pride. Artifacts recovered at Sipan have given insights into the lives of the ancient Moche people. Unfortunately, this research was carried out by scholars, who were often unconcerned with the negative effects of their work. This talk will look at how communities in Jordan, Cambodia and Peru were impacted by the presence of archaeologists, the tourist industry and the demands of the illegal antiquities trade.

Bio: Michael Wood is currently a faculty member of the Humanities Department of Dawson College and a graduate of McGill (Ph.D., 2004), where he specialized in the histories of early Islamic Jordan and modern Indonesia. Trained as an archaeologist at Wilfrid Laurier University, he was involved in the excavations of Tel Dor (Israel), Cahel Pech (Belize) and Tell Jawa (Jordan). His publications include *Official History in Modern Indonesia: New Order Perceptions and Counterviews* (Brill 2005) and "Continuity and Change in Early Islamic Jordan," in *Studies in Islamic Historiography: Essays in Honour of Professor Donald P. Little* (Brill 2020).

4-5:30

Reception in the Colab! Room 3F.43. Everyone is welcome!