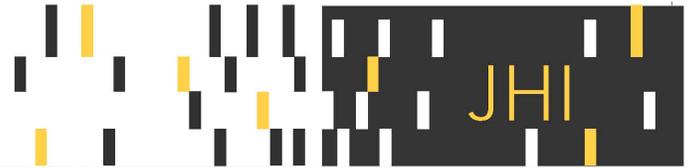


# HUMANITIES AT LARGE

Jackman Humanities Institute Newsletter  
Volume I: Issue 2 (October 2017)



## Health Humanities: The U of T expert behind the multidisciplinary program

*Andrea Charise: "What attracts me to health humanities is how it asks researchers and educators to think about the relationship between the creative imagination of health and illness" (photo by Jennifer Rowsom, UofT News September 18, 2017) Story by Wajiha Rasul, Department of English.*

Andrea Charise has been awarded the first University of Toronto Scarborough/Jackman Humanities Institute Digital Humanities Fellowship, 2017-2018, for her project, *The Resemblance Project: Remixing Scarborough's Stories of Aging*.

University of Toronto's Andrea Charise is the lead developer of Canada's first undergraduate program in health humanities, which looks at the impact of the humanities and critical social sciences on health.

Charise, assistant professor, English and Interdisciplinary Centre for Health & Society at University of Toronto Scarborough, is also the founding director of SCOPE: The Health Humanities Learning Lab, an arts- and humanities-based research and education initiative.

"Health humanities or medical humanities, as it's also sometimes called, can take a few different forms," Charise says. "One approach involves more theoretical considerations of health, illness, disability and embodiment, as well as the aesthetics of representing illnesses like AIDS, cancer, dementia or depression in various creative media. But the field also encompasses more applied, hands-on practices: the use of arts-based health interventions such as art therapy, 'narrative medicine,' universal design, and health-care architecture, to name just a few."

Health humanities has a broader and, arguably, more inclusive purview – than medical humanities, she says. "Because my own research involves investigating matters of health and illness as they exist outside of exclusively medical spaces – for example, in my work with allied health professionals (like nurses) or non-health-professional 'laypeople' – I prefer to use the language of

health humanities," she says. "But the politics of naming this field is an important issue that anyone interested in this field should be familiar with."

WHAT SHAPED YOUR INTEREST IN THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE HUMANITIES, HEALTH AND MEDICINE?

What attracts me to health humanities is how it asks researchers and educators to think about the relationship between the creative imagination of health and illness, and how those ideas get put to work in the real world.

It's common to hear criticisms of the arts and humanities as somehow disengaged from the urgency of contemporary life; and of course it's essential to protect the creative arts from reductive assessments of their "use." That said, health humanities offers us a powerful, concrete opportunity to argue for the value of the arts and humanities in the 21st century – especially for people, disciplines or communities that aren't used to thinking about the arts as something other than a nice hobby.

My own interest in the relationship between the humanities, health and medicine began when I was in grade school. My two favourite subjects were English and biology, but for much of my undergraduate and graduate career, my interest in the connection between arts and health felt a bit inchoate – a sense that was often reflected back at me by family members, teachers, advisers or other well-meaning people who would say things like, "well, you're either a science or an arts person," or "that's nice, but you're going to have to choose one someday!" Even while I was doing my master's degree, I got strong messages that my interests in arts and health were eccentric and that I'd have to come around if I wanted to be employable.

A turning point came – intellectually and professionally – when I was hired as a research associate in geriatric medicine at Parkwood Hospital in London, Ont. Much of the research I did at Parkwood focused on how to improve elder care curriculum in undergraduate medical education. One intervention involved an intergenerational dance initiative, which we discovered had the effect of improving medical students' attitudes toward working with older people. For me, this project highlighted the potential for community-based arts interventions to improve health outcomes, medical education, and health delivery more generally, especially concerning older people.

HOW DOES LITERATURE FACILITATE WHAT YOU WANT TO UNDERSTAND ABOUT HEALTH?

Paying attention to the texture of creative representations of health and illness help us understand how thoroughly steeped in metaphor, symbol and narrative our accounts of the body are –

and have been for a very long time. For example, in the book that I'm completing now, entitled *Aging, Population, and the Nineteenth-Century Literary Imagination*, I examine how literary portraits of aging were entangled with increasingly medicalized ideas about what it meant to grow old

Nineteenth-century Britain and Europe became increasingly attracted toward aging as a medical issue, but even as methods of understanding the body became more recognizably empirical, they still relied on deeply imaginative, even speculative, ideas of why bodies grew old. For example, immortality science was so closely connected with the political radicalism of the French Revolution, that a range of physicians, philosophers, and literary writers (like William Godwin, father of *Frankenstein* author Mary Shelley) believed that by manipulating thought and language we might avoid growing old entirely.

This sounds pretty far out, until you see how researchers in our own time have made similar claims about the life-shortening effects of ageist language, policies and beliefs. What literature helps me realize is how thoroughly our understanding of the body – even in the ostensibly neutral or objective realm of medicine and research – depends upon deeply symbolic patterns and aesthetic concerns.

WHAT POTENTIAL CAREERS CAN HEALTH HUMANITIES OFFER TO ITS GRADUATES?

Bioethics, health law, health communication, disability studies, medical illustration, art-based therapy, and health design are just a few potential career pathways; Health humanities is also part of the curriculum of a growing number of health professions including medicine, nursing, and rehabilitation sciences.

Working with my graduate and undergraduate researchers (Katherine Shwetz, Mehdi Hassan, and Mariam Rashid), we've compiled a [Health Humanities Postgraduate Education and Career Pathways](#) resource that outlines a wide range of potential careers – with a focus on Canadian opportunities.

The good news is that health and allied health professions are increasingly open to collaborating with folks who have the special skills traditionally emphasized by humanities disciplines – including critical reading and thinking, close reading, oral and written communication, visual literacy, and narrative analysis.

If you're an undergraduate or graduate student interested in pursuing this interdisciplinary field as a career, check out resources like [SCOPE: The Health Humanities Learning Lab](#) for more information on how to get involved.

TELL US ABOUT YOUR OWN RESEARCH IN HEALTH HUMANITIES?

As a literary scholar with more than 15 years' experience as a medical researcher (primarily in geriatrics), it's clear to me that growing old is far more than just a physiological or biological phenomenon. What my interdisciplinary research aims to do is highlight the fascinating texture of aging, which is far more complex than the usual platitudes regarding decline or so-called "successful" aging.

My research and teaching are committed to demonstrating how the arts and humanities are especially valuable materials for exploring the many different meanings and expressions of aging – so I'm especially glad to have been chosen as the first recipient of the Digital Scholars Fellowship, co-sponsored by the Jackman Humanities Institute and University of Toronto Scarborough, to explore the special affordances of a digital approach to age studies and health humanities more generally.

WHAT IS THE FUTURE OF HEALTH HUMANITIES?

An interdisciplinary field like health humanities has many possible futures, but one important thread to follow will be how the relationship between arts, humanities, and health – how this intersection is taught, researched, and funded – plays out in different national contexts. The fact that North America, for example, is home to multiple public and private health-care systems means that our understanding of how the arts can – or should – be brought to bear on matters of health and illness is dependent upon these contexts.

The amplification of voices, experiences, and communities that have been historically marginalized or exploited in the name of health care, research, and policy is another necessary future for this field. If you're interested, I've just recently written about these issues in an article for the [Journal of Medical Humanities](#) [paywall].

### UC PRIESTLEY LECTURES 2017

JOHN BORROWS, CRC IN INDIGENOUS LAW, U VICTORIA

*The Seven Grandmothers: Indigenous Law, Ethics, and Canada's Constitution*

16 October "Indigenous Law: Treaties, Love and Truth"

17 October "Ethics: Aboriginal Rights, Bravery, and Humility"

18 October "Canada's Constitution: Wisdom, Honesty, and Respect"



John Borrows has long been at the forefront of Indigenous legal education initiatives in Canada, having developed programs of research and teaching at the University of Toronto, Osgoode Hall Law School at York University, the University of British Columbia, and the University of Victoria. He has also furthered his work in the field as a Visiting Professor at the University of New South Wales in

Australia, Waikato University in New Zealand, Arizona State University in the United States, the Native Law Centre at the University of Saskatchewan and Akitsiraq Law School of the University of Victoria in Nunavut. Most recently, he served as the Visiting Scholar in Residence with the Law Commission of Canada, writing a book about Indigenous Legal Traditions in Canada.

He teaches in the areas of Constitutional Law, Indigenous Law, and Environmental Law. His publications include, *Recovering Canada; The Resurgence of Indigenous Law* (Donald Smiley Award for the best book in Canadian Political Science, 2002). *Canada's Indigenous Constitution* (Canadian Law and Society Best Book Award 2011), *Drawing Out Law: A Spirit's Guide*, all from the University of Toronto Press. Professor Borrows is the recipient of an Aboriginal Achievement Award in Law and Justice; a Fellow of the Trudeau Foundation; a Fellow of the Academy of Arts, Humanities and Sciences of Canada (RSC), Canada's highest academic honor; and a 2012 recipient of the Indigenous Peoples Counsel (I.P.C.) from the Indigenous Bar Association, for honour and integrity in service to Indigenous communities. John is Anishinabe/Ojibway and a member of the Chippewa of the Nawash First Nation in Ontario, Canada.

In both his extensive research and activism on behalf of First Nations peoples, Professor Borrows illustrates that parallel systems of law and justice will forever exist in this land. Canadians can now celebrate this legal diversity because Professor Borrows knows that strong links of understanding and mutual respect can bridge the two streams. "I'm convinced that Canada can be enriched by indigenous peoples' legal traditions. I would love to see Salish, Cree, Blackfoot, Inuit and Mi'kmaq legal perspectives and traditions form a part of our standards for judgment, not just within indigenous communities but for Canada as a whole."

The Priestley Lectures will take place in University College Room 140 starting at 4:30 p.m. each day. Seating is available on a first-come, first-served basis.

FIRST ANNUAL UTM/JHI SEMINAR  
DIGITAL MEDIA AND MIXED REALITY PERFORMANCE

We are delighted to announce the fall schedule for the first JHI/UTM Annual Seminar, generously funded by the Office of the Vice President, Research, at UTM and the Jackman Humanities Institute. This year's topic, digital and mixed reality performance, will engage students and faculty at UTM through a program of visiting speakers, workshops, field visits to design laboratories, and moderated discussions, and will celebrate UTM's position at the forefront of research and training in the performing arts and the digital humanities.

1.) **Meet and Greet, October 18th from 4:30-6pm**  
(MiST Theatre at UTM)

At this catered welcome/kickoff reception, we'll discuss our plans for the coming year and screen examples of digital and mixed reality performance (including algorithmically-scripted drama, holographic etudes, operas without singers but with real-world settings, and live durational performances that are inflected through social media, among other instances).

2.) **Workshop on Transmedia Performance Creation with The Mission Business**, Oct. 27 10am-2:30pm (MiST Theatre at UTM)

Interested in exploring digital performance as both a concept and a creative process? Learn about this popular (and often misunderstood genre) and discover how to use pre-existing technology to create sites of play. Participants will create small-scale digital performances using mobile technology, transmedia story webbing, in-narrative character creation, participant/ player on-boarding and interactive vs. choice-based creative decision-making.

Brought to you by The Mission Business, creators of ZED.TO <<http://zed.to/>> & Visitations, this workshop will expand your toolbox for creations at the intersection of live and digital theatre.

Participation in this workshop is open to undergraduates, graduate students, and faculty. Workshop space is limited. If you'd like to take part, please contact Merrylee Greenan at [edassist.utm@utoronto.ca](mailto:edassist.utm@utoronto.ca).

3.) **Jennifer Buckley, "Long 'Live' Theatre: Feeling Time and Togetherness in Forced Entertainment's Livestreamed Durationals and Complicite's Auditory Hallucinations,"** Nov. 9th in Deerfield Hall at UTM (location TBD)

Dr. Jennifer Buckley (University of Iowa) will deliver a talk and moderate a discussion on the phenomenon of livestreamed performances of both lengthy "durational" performances and performances that are already heavily mediated (as in Complicite's recent audio spectacle *The Encounter*).



Buckley challenges the habitual assumption that audiences' and spectators' bodily co-presence is the essential ingredient in making a performance feel as if it is taking place right in front of the spectators' eyes.

The UTM/JHI Annual seminar in 2017-18 is organized by English and Drama faculty members Jacob Gallagher-Ross, Alexandra Gillespie, and Lawrence Switzky. In addition to enriching an already thriving community of researchers working at the intersection of art and digital technology, the Seminar is intended as groundwork for a long-term Centre for the Study of Mixed Reality that will sponsor sustained outreach projects as well as residencies, fellowships, and other intellectual opportunities for undergraduates, graduate students, and professors at UTM.

## NEWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

### UPCOMING EVENTS (A SELECTION)

PLEASE SEE THE JHI WEBSITE FOR LOCATION, TIME, AND REGISTRATION INFORMATION.

10 October, 4:00 - 6:00 pm

*From the Courts of the Kings to the Court of the Prophets: A New Inquiry into Abravanel's Historicization of the Bible*

CRRS Workshop by Cédric Cohen Skalli

[https://www.humanities.utoronto.ca/event\\_details/id=3097](https://www.humanities.utoronto.ca/event_details/id=3097)

12 October, 4:00 – 5:00 pm

*Reviving Baroque Opera from Manuscript to Stage: Alessandro Stradella's La Doriclea*

Public Lecture by Guillaume Bernardi, York University

[https://www.humanities.utoronto.ca/event\\_details/id=3102](https://www.humanities.utoronto.ca/event_details/id=3102)

13 October, 3:00 – 5:00 pm

*Alexander and Averroes on the Uses of Dialectic*

CPAMP 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Lecture by Peter Adamson, LMU Munich

[https://www.humanities.utoronto.ca/event\\_details/id=3187](https://www.humanities.utoronto.ca/event_details/id=3187)

16, 17, 18 October, 4:30 – 6:00 pm each night

*The Seven Grandmothers-Indigenous Law: Treaties Love & Truth*

F.E.L. Priestley Lectures by John Borrows, University of Victoria

[https://www.humanities.utoronto.ca/event\\_details/id=3157](https://www.humanities.utoronto.ca/event_details/id=3157)

19 October, 4:00 - 6:00 pm

*Eugenics, Racial Science and Nazi Biopolitics*

Public Lecture by Richard Wetzell, Georgetown University

[https://www.humanities.utoronto.ca/event\\_details/id=3180](https://www.humanities.utoronto.ca/event_details/id=3180)

20-21 October, 9:00 am – 5:00 pm

*The Ethics of Apology*

Centre for Ethics Conference

[https://www.humanities.utoronto.ca/event\\_details/id=3112](https://www.humanities.utoronto.ca/event_details/id=3112)

26 October, 5:30 - 7:00 pm

*The Future of an Immigrant Past: Italians in Canada since Confederation*

Public Lecture by Gabriele Scardellato, York

[https://www.humanities.utoronto.ca/event\\_details/id=3160](https://www.humanities.utoronto.ca/event_details/id=3160)

27 October, 9:00 am - 5:00 pm

*Judgement, Relationality, Care: A Celebration of the Work of Jennifer Nedelsky*

Symposium

[https://www.humanities.utoronto.ca/event\\_details/id=3022](https://www.humanities.utoronto.ca/event_details/id=3022)

13 November, 4:00 – 6:00 pm

*Approaching the Virtues in the Islamic Tradition*

Public Lecture by Sophia Vasalou, University of Birmingham

[https://www.humanities.utoronto.ca/event\\_details/id=3023](https://www.humanities.utoronto.ca/event_details/id=3023)

16-18 November

*Literature Pedagogy and Decolonization*

JHI/University of the Western Cape Conference

Keynote address by David Palumbo-Liu, Stanford University

[https://www.humanities.utoronto.ca/event\\_details/id=3175](https://www.humanities.utoronto.ca/event_details/id=3175)

### JHI COMPETITION DEADLINES

For funding competitions that are currently accepting applications, please see:

<https://www.humanities.utoronto.ca/funding>

**Scholars-in-Residence Faculty Supervisors** (May 2018)

Deadline: 15 November 2017 (date TBC)

**Scholars-in-Residence student participants** (May 2018)

Deadline: 8 February 2018 (date TBC)

For faculty and student information about Scholars-in-Residence, see:

<https://www.humanities.utoronto.ca/SIR>

**JHI Graduate Fellowships, 2018-2019**

"Reading Faces, Reading Minds"

15 March 2018

For information about graduate fellowships, please see:

<https://www.humanities.utoronto.ca/Fellowships#graduate>

**JHI Program for the Arts** (events in 2018-2019)

"Reading Faces, Reading Minds"

Deadline: 20 March 2018

For this year's awards:

[https://www.humanities.utoronto.ca/announce\\_ProgArts\\_17-18](https://www.humanities.utoronto.ca/announce_ProgArts_17-18)

**JHI Undergraduate Fellowships, 2018-2019**

"Reading Faces, Reading Minds"

Deadline: 5 April 2018

For information about Undergraduate Fellowships:

<https://www.humanities.utoronto.ca/Fellowships#undergraduate>

**JHI Working Groups, 2018-2019**

Deadline: 15 May 2018

For program information and this year's groups, see:

<https://www.humanities.utoronto.ca/WorkingGroups>

**JHI Faculty Research Fellowships, 2019-2020**

"Strange Weather" (12-month only)

Deadline: 14 September 2018

For information about Faculty Research Fellowships, please see:

<https://www.humanities.utoronto.ca/fellowships>

Calls for applications for each of these competitions will be posted to the JHI website in the coming weeks. The normal application period is the 4-6 weeks before the deadline.

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