



**New Annual Themes 2020-2023**

The Jackman Humanities Institute structures many of its programming decisions around an annual theme -- this is true for all residential fellowships, events funded by the Program for the Arts, and the exhibition of art that is on display each year at the Institute. The annual theme enables scholars from across the disciplines to find fruitful discussion together, and often, it can be a catalyst that sparks other kinds of research at the University of Toronto. Themes are chosen by the JHI Advisory Board every three years with the goal of bringing as many researchers as possible into the conversation. We are delighted to announce our directions for the years 2020 to 2023.

**2020-2021: *Collectives***

From political parties to literary coteries, from fan groups to sports teams, from terrorist organizations to on-line groups, our collectives, associations, and communities are multiform and complex. How do we band together and why? In teaming up, how does membership of a collective affects one’s own agency and standing – what do we lose, what do we gain? Can collectives truly be agents and how do group dynamics emerge? How do we balance the interests between collectives, of individuals and collectives, and of the individual within the collective?

**2021-2022: *Pleasure***

Whether understood as light amusement or passionate pursuit, as pure enjoyment, sensual gratification, bliss or hedonism, pleasure may be the most agreeable motivator. Yet pleasure has been described as “curious and appalling,” one of modern civilization’s most deadly poisons. Through its diverse manifestations — as intellectual satisfaction and the pleasures of knowledge, across studies of media audiences, addiction, virtual sex — when, and how, has pleasure become divorced from ideology, politics, and power? Uneasiness concerning pleasure resonates readily with humanists’ tendencies to formulate our subjects of study as constellations of problems, but is there space in our discourses for unironic joy?

**2022-2023: *Labour***

From the labour of childbirth to the travail of making a living, human beings are labouring animals who derive meaning and experience meaninglessness in work. Historically, human creativity has long flourished both through and against labour-saving technologies. In a globalizing and climate-changing world, rising nationalist movements call for the fortification of borders that would stop seasonal flows of labour, while women call for pay equity and harassment-free workplaces to allow for the freedom to work in peace. In a world of increasingly precarious labour, thanks in part to automation, what does the future of work portend for both people and the planet? What forms of resistance are possible when workers face both the irrelevance of their labour and its exploitation?

**Previous Themes at the JHI**

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| 2019-2020: <i>Strange Weather</i>  | 2014-2015: <i>Humour, Play, and Games</i>                       |
| 2018-2019: <i>Reading Faces--Reading Minds</i>                                       | 2013-2014: <i>Translation and the Multiplicity of Languages</i> |
| 2017-2018: <i>Indelible Violence: Shame, Reconciliation, and the Work of Apology</i> | 2012-2013: <i>Food</i>  |
| 2016-2017: <i>Time, Rhythm, and Pace</i>   | 2011-2012: <i>Location/Dislocation</i>                          |
| 2015-2016: <i>Things that Matter</i>   | 2010-2011: <i>Image and Spectacle</i>                           |
|  | 2009-2010: <i>Pressures on the Human</i>                        |
|  | 2008-2009: <i>Telling Stories</i>                               |