

McMaster University Discovery Program

Voicing Hamilton: History, Arts, Expression

A Humanities Inquiry Course

October 15- December 3, 2011

Professor Dr. Daniel Coleman

Saturdays 10 am - 2 pm including lunch

Phone 905-525-9140, ext. 23717

Boardroom (5th Floor)

www.danielcoleman.ca

Hamilton Public Library - downtown

Coordinator Jeanette Eby

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Phone 905-525-9140, ext. 27040

Course Description

This course is an introduction to general humanities studies. You will

- read and evaluate works of history and literature
- develop research and study skills
- develop skills in interpreting works of history, art, and culture about the city of Hamilton
- understand and assess artistic works of drawing, photography, poetry, and drama
- study how different kinds of creative expression are made and organized
- develop your own creative expressions in writing, art, or in media such as photography or video
- choose a form of creative expression (for example, writing, drawing, photography, blogging, etc.) and create a story about Hamilton

The course theme, “Voicing Hamilton” will focus our studies on the different stories people have told about the city we live in. We will look at histories of the city that provide background on

- why Hamilton was established here in the first place
- what some of its opportunities and challenges have been
- how the city continues to change

We will

- study the city's social and environmental history as we try to understand the relationship between people and the unique ecology of this region
- examine stories photographers, historians, illustrators, and poets have told about this city and reflect upon why they told them in the way they did
- read books, watch films, study photographs, read graphic novels, and listen to poets, historians, and artists talk about their efforts to give voice to the Hamilton they know

There is something to be learned from those who have lived in Hamilton all their lives and from those who are new to the city.

Along with studying a variety of ways in which people have told stories about the city of Hamilton, you will develop a project in class that gives voice to your experience of Hamilton.

You might write about the

- street on which you live
- kind of work that defines a neighbourhood
- architecture in a certain part of the city

You might create a

- story using photographs or video about people who exemplify something unique about Hamilton
- create a series of drawings, a map, or a graphic (cartoon-style) story about the history of a street or a neighbourhood

Purpose and Objectives of the Course

Overall, this course will foster your creativity as you find different ways to give voice to the Hamilton you know. By looking at what other people have done in history, the arts, and writing, you will study a variety of models from which you will develop your own ideas and methods for telling a story about Hamilton. Knowing the stories of a place and finding ways to weave a person's own stories into them is a powerful way to feel at home in that place. By creating a whole series of different stories about Hamilton, you will be contributing to making Hamilton home for more people.

Class Format

The class meets every Saturday for eight weeks (October 15 – December 3, 2011) from 10 am to 2 pm. We will meet in the Boardroom (5th floor) in the Hamilton Public Library, downtown, Central Branch. Lunch is provided by the McMaster Discovery Program.

10 am to 11:30	Lecture and discussions with the professor, Daniel Coleman.
11:30 to 12:30	Lunch
12:30 to 2 pm	Workshop led by the coordinator, Jeanette Eby and the student support team.

During the first half of each class (lecture and discussion), Daniel Coleman will provide information and lead discussions based on the sections of the course texts you are to read for each week. You are expected to come to class prepared to discuss the readings that have been assigned for each week. Occasionally, we will have special visitors come as guest speakers to the class.

During the second half of each class (workshop), you will develop your projects. These projects may be individual or group projects. During each workshop Jeanette Eby and the support team of McMaster students will be available to help you plan, organize, find materials for, and complete your projects. Occasionally, the class will make a short “field trip” during the workshops – for example, to the library archives or to an art museum, or special guests may attend the workshops from time to time.

Daniel is responsible for organizing the curriculum for the class and for structuring the readings and responding to the projects. Jeanette is responsible for helping you make the arrangements (home and caregiving arrangements, transportation, etc.) you need to make in order to attend the course every week. Daniel and Jeanette will work closely together to ensure good coordination between the two parts of the course as well as with your personal arrangements.

Important Notes

Attendance policy

The course will succeed only if you are committed to attending all classes. A good learning environment depends on students and teachers knowing each other and being able to depend on each other to be prepared for class and ready to contribute to discussion. If you miss a class, you will be expected to make up the work. If you miss more than 2 classes and haven't contacted the Coordinator to explain the reason you missed the class, you may be asked to stop attending the course.

Feedback on assignments

There will be no grades in this course, but Daniel Coleman will provide written comments on the final projects once they have been completed.

Working with and respecting one another

Students, professor, coordinator, and student support team will all treat one another with courtesy. Everyone's voice is important and is to be respected. Obtrusive behaviour that interrupts, impedes, or belittles others' work in the course will not be allowed.

We will support you

Jeanette Eby, the Coordinator, will work closely with Daniel Coleman and the student support team to ensure that you are supported, encouraged and on your way to success in the course. Jeanette will make sure that your caregiving and transportation needs are met, and will be present at each class and weekly workshop session. Jeanette is the person to speak with if you need to miss a class and want to make up the work. Jeanette will be available each week outside of class by phone and email, and for a drop-in time where you can visit and talk about the readings and assignments, your project, and to work through any questions or concerns you may have.

This class is a pilot project

You should know that this class is a pilot project of the McMaster Discovery Program. We will be evaluating how this course goes so that we can make plans for how to organize similar classes into the future.

