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# GEORGIAN TRIANGLE LIFELONG LEARNING INSTITUTE

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## 2023-2024 Lectures



GTLTI is a non-profit organization,  
founded in 1995.

We offer university-level lectures given by experts from various  
fields.

GTLTI is maintained by volunteers and funded by registration fees.

**For more information:**  
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Collingwood, ON L9Y 3Z4

*for people who love to learn*

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# GTLTI COURSE REGISTRATION 2023- 2024

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## TICKETS

(Includes video)

<b>Perspectives</b> (4 independent lectures)	\$40
<b>Fall Series</b> (6 lectures)	\$60
<b>Winter Series</b> (6 lectures)	\$60
<b>Spring Series</b> (6 lectures)	\$60

**Plus HST  
NON-REFUNDABLE**

*Please check the website regularly for updates about  
when tickets will be available for purchase.*

**To receive GTLTI member communications,**  
Please go to [www.gtlti.ca](http://www.gtlti.ca) to create an account and  
you will receive email updates.

Feel free to share this brochure with your family and  
friends.

*We look forward to another engaging line up  
for the 2023-24 season!*

## PERSPECTIVES, 2023

Sep 8, 15, 22, 29

### Sep 8: DOES JOURNALISM HAVE A FUTURE?

The crisis of journalism that began around 2000 is continuing and becoming more acute. Does journalism have a future, and what does it look like? This lecture will explore the latest European and North American research on the state of journalism and identify some hopeful (and some not-so-hopeful) signs. In this context, members of the audience will be invited to consider how their own news consumption practices and preferences are changing.

**Dr. Gene Allen** is a Professor Emeritus in the School of Journalism at the Toronto Metropolitan University. He is a specialist in the history of journalism and communication and is actively involved in the rapidly growing field of Journalism Studies. His latest book, *Mr. Associated Press: Kent Cooper and the Twentieth-Century World of News*, was published in the spring of 2023.

### Sep 15: BLOCKCHAIN AND CRYPTOCURRENCIES IN 2023

This lecture will explain the meaning and interrelationship of blockchain, cryptocurrencies and Web3 (a new umbrella term that encompasses cryptocurrencies, non-fungible tokens (NFTs), etc. that use blockchain technology). Dr. Kim will further explain how a) cryptocurrencies and Web3 are really a new way of providing software services and yet (b) they have fostered unregulated speculation by a world awe-struck by the “shiny penny” of technology that seeks extra-large investment returns.

**Dr. Henry Kim** is an Associate Professor at the Schulich School of Business and a founding Director of York University’s Blockchain Lab. He is one of the most prominent blockchain academics in Canada and currently co-leads a research project on “Digital Currencies”, engaging academia, the Bank of Canada, financial institutions and start-ups to investigate blockchain, cryptocurrencies and Web3, digital payments and central bank digital currency (CBDC).

### Sep 22: ARE WE THERE YET? SUPPORTING MENTAL HEALTH IN TEENS AND FAMILIES IN A RAPIDLY CHANGING WORLD

Social disruptions related to the Covid 19 pandemic were challenging for the mental health of teens and families. Changes appear to be lingering. What do we do now? Dr. Browne addresses this question while presenting research findings on family mental health and coping. Additionally, he will present anecdotes, evidence and recommendations from the world of family therapy, showcasing interventions designed to support those struggling with mental health problems.

**Dr. Dillon Browne** (Ph.D. University of Toronto) is a Tier 2 Canada Research Chair in Child and Family Clinical Psychology and an Assistant Professor in the Department of Psychology at the University of Waterloo. He is also a registered clinical psychologist in Ontario, where he works regularly doing therapy with children, adolescents, and families.

### Sep 29: LEARNING TO FALL IN LOVE WITH THE LAND

A growing mental health crisis, ecosystem destruction, and erosion of Indigenous lifeways- these can all be traced in some way to a loss of connection with nature. In this talk, Dr. Scott will explore some lifeways and practices for repairing this loss and discuss their implications for possible reconciliation and decolonization, for being in the “right relation” with the land.

**Dr. Stephanie Scott** (Ph.D. University of British Columbia) cultivates a sense of belonging to the land through gardening, foraging food and medicines, and wildlife tracking. She is a Professor in the Department of Geography & Environmental Management at the University of Waterloo and a board member of the Food System Roundtable of Waterloo Region. She is a leading international scholar on food security and food system change topics.

## **FALL SERIES, 2023**

**Oct 13, 20, 27, Nov 3, 10, 17**

### **THE FUTURE OF LEARNING AND EDUCATION IN A CHANGING WORLD**

As members of GTLLI, a learning organization, we recognize that engagement in learning is important at any stage of life. This series will address how learning and education are being reshaped to keep up to date with the changes, challenges, and growing demands in our world.

#### **Oct 13: ISSUES CHALLENGING LEARNING AND EDUCATION TODAY**

This lecture offers a broad overview of the many issues confronting teaching and learning today. Drawing on his extensive experience as a senior executive leader in the education system, Mr. Rodrigues will discuss current and pending challenges facing both teachers and learners, addressing such topics as global competencies, equity, diversity and inclusion and digital learning.

**Bruce Rodrigues** is currently the Chancellor of the University of St. Jerome's, federated with the University of Waterloo. He is the former Deputy Minister of Education and the government-appointed Supervisor for the Peel District School Board. He was also the CEO of Ontario's Education Quality and Accountability Office as well as the Director of Education for the Toronto Catholic District School Board.

#### **Oct 20: FOSTERING INTERNATIONAL-MINDEDNESS AND GLOBAL COMPETENCIES IN EDUCATION**

Our world seems to have become increasingly more connected while people become increasingly lonely and isolated. Within this tension, international-mindedness and global competencies can help students address some of the world's, and our communities', most pressing problems. Schools can activate what it means to be a citizen of the world by nurturing a re-orientation of who we are in relationships with others and the environment.

**Dr. Steve Snider** is Associate Dean and Professor in the Faculty of Education at Wilfrid Laurier University in Waterloo where he teaches courses in international education, school leadership, and special education.

#### **Oct 27: DIVERSITY EQUITY AND INCLUSION**

Education (specifically that offered through public schools) is a crucial but flawed mechanism for the promotion of a more inclusive and less unequal future. There is important system-level work to be done to improve opportunities and outcomes for different marginalized groups. This lecture will highlight recent Ontario research on equity issues facing Indigenous students, students with disabilities and students from certain racial groups.

**Dr. Kelly Gallagher-Mackay** is an Associate Professor in the Law and Society Program at Wilfrid Laurier University. The main focus of her research is educational inequality. Since 2020, her major focus has been on the impact of COVID-19 on schooling, in addition to a continuing focus on systemic discrimination. Previous roles include Director of Research and Evaluation for the Future Skills Centre and Director of Research for People for Education.

#### **Nov 3: PROVIDING EDUCATION IN CONFLICT AREAS**

School is often thought of as a safe physical place for children. Yet in the shadow of war, the school can also be a place of violence, especially in contexts where educational facilities are specifically targeted. This lecture will provide an overview of school as a site of both risk and hope, suggesting ways that education can ultimately serve as a site of resistance in extreme adversity.

**Dr. Bree Akesson** is the Tier 2 Canada Research Chair in Global Adversity and Wellbeing, and Associate Professor of Social Work at Wilfrid Laurier University. She has worked and conducted research for over two decades with children and families impacted by war and displacement in settings such as Chechnya, Uganda, Palestine, Lebanon, and Afghanistan.

**FALL SERIES, 2023, continued**

**Oct 13, 20, 27, Nov 3, 10, 17**

**THE FUTURE OF LEARNING AND EDUCATION IN A CHANGING WORLD**

**Nov 10: LEARNING IN A DIGITAL WORLD**

Digital technologies have become pervasive in all aspects of our lives from industry to entertainment to education. Understanding the impact and influence of emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence, “big data” and social media, is imperative to participate as a digital citizen. Moral and cognitive questions of our digital era will be raised, discussed, and perhaps answered!

**Dr. Julie Mueller** is a former elementary teacher, a Full Professor in the Faculty of Education at Wilfrid Laurier University, and an Executive Member of the Centre for Leading Research in Education. D. Mueller’s research addresses the integration of digital technologies and the impact of active learning in face-to-face, online and hybrid contexts.

**Nov 17: RECREATIONAL ALCOHOL AND DRUG USE: IMPACT ON ACADEMIC OUTCOMES**

This lecture will overview trends in alcohol and other drug use by young adults and the impact those drugs have on academic outcomes, from short-term effects on assessments to longer-term outcomes with health, legal and career implications. The lecture will additionally explore the effects that select drugs have on the brain that underpins changes in academic achievement.

**Dr. Bruce McKay** is the Dean of the Faculty of Human and Social Sciences and the Dean of the Wilfrid Laurier International College at Wilfrid Laurier University. His research focuses on recreational alcohol and drug use in university students and the mechanisms by which psychoactive drugs affect brain functions.

**WINTER SERIES CONTINUED BELOW**

## WINTER SERIES, 2024

Jan 12, 19, 26, Feb 2, 9, 16

### SPIRITUALITY: LIGHT, DARK AND FUNNY

While spirituality may inspire love and altruism, it sometimes promotes violence, exploitation, and hatred. Using case studies to show how people engage with spirituality today, our speakers will address both its light and dark sides. In the final lecture, we will also discuss the spiritual side of comedy—or perhaps the comical side of spirituality—whichever is funnier.

#### January 12: CAN SPIRITUALITY SAVE THE WORLD?

Some leaders of movements dedicated to peace, justice and ecological sustainability argue that saving the world is ultimately a spiritual pursuit. The work of Vandana Shiva, an activist for farmers and Indigenous peoples in India, Thich Nhat Hanh, a Buddhist monk and peace activist, and Pope Francis, shows how these thinkers use spirituality to address evil in the modern world.

**Dr. David Seljak** (Ph.D. McGill University) is a Professor of Religious Studies at St. Jerome's University and former Chair of the Department of Religious Studies at the University of Waterloo. With Paul Bramadat, he co-edited *Religion and Ethnicity in Canada* and *Christianity and Ethnicity in Canada*. He is part of the editorial team working on *Indigenous Spiritualities in Canada*, the third volume of that series.

#### Jan 19: INDIGENOUS SPIRITUALITY AND HEALTHCARE IN CANADA

The crisis in health outcomes for Indigenous people has inspired an amazing variety of innovations in Canada's healthcare sector, including a newfound respect for Indigenous spirituality. These innovations challenge the boundaries established by Canadian secularism and push the Canadian state and society to rethink the exclusion of religion and spirituality from public life. Are we moving towards a post-secular future?

**Dr. David Seljak** returns for this lecture.

#### Jan 26: THE DARK SIDE OF SPIRITUALITY 1: CONSPIRACY THEORIES AND RELIGION

The impact of conspiracy theories and religion can be witnessed in the prevalence of QAnon, the Freedom Convoy and the events of January 6th in Washington D.C. Social movements inspired by fear and faith can have a long-lasting political impact, including the global rise of populism. In this lecture, Dr. Celestini will argue that conspiracists are a spiritual group society can no longer ignore.

**Dr. Carmen Celestini** (Ph.D. University of Waterloo) is a Post-Doctoral Fellow with the School of Religion at Queen's University, and a Lecturer at the University of Waterloo in the Religious Studies Department. Previously a Fellow with the Disinformation Project at Simon Fraser University, and the Centre on Hate, Bias and Extremism, her research focuses on the intersections of religion, conspiracy theories, extremism and politics.

#### Feb 2: THE DARK SIDE OF SPIRITUALITY 2: RELIGION AND NATIONALISM IN A TIME OF WAR

Putin's war in Ukraine is guided by an ethno-religious ideology, "Russkiy mir", a vision of an Eastern Orthodox Russian civilization (Russia, Belarus and Ukraine). Around the world we have seen a resurgence of religious nationalism in Asia, Europe and the United States. Dr. Seljak will examine this resurgence as both a product of and a response to globalization.

**Dr. David Seljak** returns for this lecture.

**WINTER SERIES, 2023, continued**

**Jan 12, 19, 26, Feb 2, 9, 16**

**SPIRITUALITY: LIGHT, DARK, AND FUNNY**

**Feb 9: SPIRITUALITY: FROM STAR TREK TO SOUTH PARK**

A considerable portion of what we think we know about religion comes not from our churches, temples, mosques or other places of worship, but from somewhere else entirely: popular culture. Through such genres as science fiction, horror, situation comedy and even police procedural, Dr. Cowan explores how we often encounter the religious imagination at work in real time.

**Dr. Douglas E. Cowan** (Ph.D. University of Calgary) is a Professor of Religious Studies at Renison University College, affiliated with the University of Waterloo. He is the author of numerous books including *Sacred Space: The Quest for Transcendence in Science Fiction Film and Television*, *America's Dark Theologian: The Religious Imagination of Stephen King* and most recently, *The Forbidden Body: Sex, Horror and the Religious Imagination*

**Feb 16: SPIRITUALITY AND HUMOUR: TRANSCENDENCE THROUGH LAUGHTER**

In *Redeeming Laughter*, Peter Berger, one of America's most important sociologists, connected his study of sociology and theology to his spiritual quest for transcendence. He argued that humour heals wounds, lessens suffering and "signals" transcendence. In this lecture, Dr. Seljak will mostly tell jokes but will also discuss the serious and spiritual side of comedy.

**Dr. David Seljak** returns for the final lecture.

**SPRING SERIES CONTINUED BELOW**

## SPRING SERIES, 2024

Mar 22, Apr 5, 12, 19, 26 May 3

### PRESERVING DEMOCRACY: A DELICATE DANCE

This Series will begin with a lecture on the origin /idea of democracy. Subsequent talks will lead us through some of the challenges facing modern-day democracy and the final lecture will emphasize the importance of civic engagement.

#### **Mar 22: THE ORIGINS OF DEMOCRACY: WHO ARE “THE PEOPLE”**

Democracy (rule by the *demos*, usually translated as “the people”) is unquestionably the most distinctive of ancient Greece’s contributions to political philosophy and practice. Today, we tend to associate the idea of “democracy” with a basket of other liberal concepts, such as human rights. An exploration of its origins, however, reveals the struggle for power and privilege is as inherent in democracy as in other political systems.

**Dr. Sheila Ager** (Ph.D. University of British Columbia) is a Full Professor in the Department of Classical Studies at the University of Waterloo and is currently the Dean of Waterloo’s Faculty of Arts. She is the author or editor of four books and numerous articles on Greek and Roman history, with a particular interest in ancient interstate relations, peaceful conflict resolution and female monarchy.

#### **Apr 5: DEMOCRACY IN A GLOBAL SYSTEM**

Over the past century, democracy has spread around the world in turbulent waves of change. This talk will examine how shocks to the international system have shaped the spread and retreat of democratic cascades and conclude by looking at how the future of the global order will impact the survival of democracy in the 21st century.

**Dr. Seva Gunitsky** (Ph.D. Columbia University) is an Associate Professor of Political Science at the University of Toronto. He is the author of *Aftershocks: Great Powers and Domestic Reforms in the Twentieth Century*, named by *Foreign Affairs* as one of the best books of 2017. Some of his work has appeared in *Foreign Affairs*, *Foreign Policy*, *The Washington Post* and *The New Republic*.

#### **Apr 12: GUIDES, GUARDRAILS, AND GOOD BEHAVIOUR: CANADA’S LIBERAL DEMOCRATIC SYSTEM**

Liberal democratic systems endure when there are clear rules of the game. The Canadian system of government is a relatively strong one, but the good (or honourable) behaviour required of those in power to adhere to the guides and guardrails of the system can ebb and flow, and this is where our democratic principles may be most vulnerable to erosion.

**Dr. Anna Lennox Esselment** (Ph.D. Western University) is an Associate Professor in the Department of Political Science at the University of Waterloo. Her broad areas of research include political parties, campaigns and elections, political marketing and Canadian institutions.

#### **Apr 19: CANADA’S NATIONAL SECURITY AND DEMOCRACY**

How should a democracy protect itself from threats to its national security? Could Canada have avoided the dangers of overreactions such as the use of the War Measures Act in October 1970 and some post-9/11 excesses? Could it have avoided the dangers of under reactions, such as the failure to prevent the 1985 Air India bombing, and the February 2022 occupations? This lecture seeks to find the answers to these questions.

**Kent Roach** (LL.M. Yale Law School) is a Professor of Law at the University of Toronto. He worked on the Arar Commission, the Air India Commission and the Public Order Emergencies Commission. His books include *September 11 Consequences for Canada* and *The 9/11 Effect*.

***SPRING SERIES, 2024, continued***  
***Mar 22, Apr 5, 12, 19, 26, May 3***  
**PRESERVING DEMOCRACY: A DELICATE DANCE**

***Apr 26: CAN DEMOCRACY SURVIVE SOCIAL MEDIA?***

Will social media connect us in a global community, or stoke divisions, circulate hate speech, and make us feel lonely and disconnected? Questions about the role of social media in fostering or harming democratic life abound, now that we live with conspiracy theories, heightened polarization, and access to misinformation. What can be done to revitalize democracy given the presence of new media in our lives?

**Dr. Robert Danisch** (Ph.D. University of Pittsburgh) is a Professor in the Department of Communication Arts at the University of Waterloo. He is the author of several books on the relationship between communication and democratic life and he teaches courses in Communication Ethics, Speech Writing, Persuasion, Small Group Communication and Public Communication. He also hosts a podcast called “Now We’re Talking” about effective communication.

***May 3: CIVIC ENGAGEMENT***

In this talk, Dr. Perrella will touch on how we participate (i.e. not just by voting) and some attitudes that we hold about democratic governance. Dr. Perrella will focus on whether people think the democratic system is responsive and whether citizens think they are adequately skilled to participate.

**Dr. Andrea Perrella** (Ph.D. Université de Montréal) is an Associate Dean and Professor of Political Science at Wilfred Laurier University and a Deputy Director of the Laurier Institute for the Study of Public Opinion and Policy. His main area of research focuses on voting, public opinion and the media. Some of his more recent research involves an examination of attitudes toward public health and local governance.