

IN THE LOOP

NOTES FROM THE DEAN'S OFFICE

Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences



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DEAN'S NOTES

Jennifer S. Simpson, Dean of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences

As we all continue to grapple with the challenges that a pandemic poses to living together well, I was struck recently by an [Op-Ed article](#) in the New York Times that noted the significance of the question: "Are you ok?" In this op-ed piece, the author, Meghan, the Duchess of Sussex, addresses her miscarriage. Since reading that op-ed, I think often of the pause that asking "Are you ok?" can invite, whether we ask this of ourselves or others. A pause, and then perhaps some space for reflection and kindness.



We are now heading into winter break and the end of the year. Thank you to all of you for everything that you have done over the past several months to adapt to remote teaching and work. I want to acknowledge the significance of your contributions to ensuring support for the work of teaching, research, and creative work in HSS. Teaching remotely has called for new kinds of attention to pedagogy and course planning. Instructors must grapple with how to engage students in a virtual environment. Even when all goes well, these demands can be exhausting.

In response to the challenges posed by the pandemic, all of us have had to change how we fulfill our professional responsibilities, and how we approach our personal lives. I hope that you have also found ways to change your expectations for what is possible. Even as faculty, administrative staff, and students are finding ways to “get the work done,” it is simultaneously crucial to be flexible and generous, with ourselves and others.

Many of you may have seen the call for [expressions of interest](#) in the HSS Anti-Racism committee. Also, following the Special Meeting of Faculty Council on December 7 addressing the Master of Philosophy in the Humanities Program in HSS, there will be a proposal for discussion at the January Faculty Council meeting.

I hope that over especially the next couple of weeks, you have the opportunity to ask and respond to the question “Are you ok?” Care for ourselves and those in our lives is all the more important as we move into winter, our first while living in the context of a pandemic. There is hopeful progress on vaccines. The situation we are in now will change. All the best over the last few weeks of 2020. I hope everyone finds ample time for rest and relaxation, and has a good start to the New Year.

COAST LINES

Author Michael Crummey speaks with Angela Antle of CBC's Atlantic Voice and William Ping for Memorial University book club

December 15, 2020 7:30 p.m.

Online via Facebook Live and YouTube

[DETAILS](#)



DATES OF NOTE

- Dec. 12: [#comMUNityofGiving donation drive](#)
- Dec. 15: [Women's Forum with Pres. Timmons](#)
- Dec. 18: Fall semester exams end
- Dec. 25: Holiday break begins
- Jan. 5: Return from holiday break
- Jan. 11: Winter semester lectures begin



AILS A CRAIG

Associate Dean (Curriculum and Programs)

It seems only days ago that we were writing the first newsletter, and somehow, at least 7 years since last February... A heartfelt thanks to all of you for the work you have put into supporting our students in a remote teaching and learning environment this term, and for the work you are doing to prepare your courses for January.

I've been very pleased to have co-facilitated two collaborative remote-teaching support discussion sessions with Allyson MacNeill from CITL in the past 6 weeks. At these sessions, we met with HSS instructors to discuss shared challenges of remote teaching, and to share strategies and ideas to meet those challenges. Thank you to those who have participated in the sessions. That collegial discussion and sharing of experience goes a long way in building and sustaining our teaching and learning community within the faculty, and to supporting the success for our programs, our students, and each other. If you are interested in additional sessions, please do reach out and let me know what topics could be most helpful.

While I miss the happenstance of running into people on campus, I have appreciated seeing people in virtual meetings, and am encouraged by how well we continue to work collaboratively, even when physically separated. I hope the break is filled with all you are hoping for, whatever that might be: reading a novel, catching up on things that have been put aside, knitting and Netflix, hiking, cooking, sleeping, jigsaw puzzles—whatever feeds you well and helps you recharge for the winter term.

It is hard to believe that the term is coming to a close and that we continue to interact in a mostly virtual way. Yet even in the face of current challenges, members of HSS have continued to be busy with research in innovative and meaningful ways. I'm pleased to be able to give an update on some of our activities.

First up, the annual HSS celebration, A Fine Crowd, took place in an entirely new format way back in September. Congrats once again to award winners and grant recipients! September also saw the beginning of an intense grant season during which many hours by computer light were spent in review and approval mode. Thanks to researchers for preparing their files and to the GFOs, Matt and Heather, for their ongoing energy on working on applications.

It is so exciting to see the ways that members of HSS are having conversations with communities and sharing their knowledge. I have been to many talks, presentations, workshops – we are really doing amazing things in our faculty.

The newly launched [HSS Research Showcase](#) is a place where our work is shared and explored; it provides a wonderful opportunity to highlight the interconnectedness of who we are and what we do. Feel free to keep adding your projects on the site.

For both new and experienced researchers, as we all know, it has been an unusual and difficult time, but for now, I feel like I am getting to you know you quite well and I look forward to being able to actually meet with each of you in person. Please feel free to get in touch with me if that would be helpful. Enjoy the upcoming weeks and see you in January.



**FACULTY OF HUMANITIES
AND SOCIAL SCIENCES**

KEN HOPKINS

HSS Senior Administrative Officer

2020 has been a year filled with challenges, changes and uncertainty for all of us here at Memorial. In March, we experienced a sudden shift from our normal working routines and environments. With this shift came the challenges of working from home and adapting to an unfamiliar virtual environment. This shift also brought with it the unknowns surrounding COVID 19 and the uncertainty surrounding a possible return to campus.

In spite of these challenges and uncertainties, I witnessed a university community who banded together to forge ahead. It hasn't been easy, but your dedication and professionalism has greatly contributed to a successful year at Memorial.

It has been a pleasure working with you all throughout this year. As 2020 draws to a close, I wanted to wish everyone a very happy holiday season.