

Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences: Teaching, Research, and Creative Themes

The Faculty will be best served by maintaining a commitment to both department-specific and Faculty-wide strengths and contributions. Identifying a clear sense of the intellectual and curricular areas that distinguish the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences will ideally strengthen the Faculty's capacity for communicating the value of our work. Two central objectives of efforts facilitated by the Dean's Office to articulate themes and strengths include: a) making HSS more visible and intelligible both within and outside of the university, and b) supporting possibilities for research and teaching work across departments.

These themes emerged out of a survey that heads completed in early fall 2019. They are meant to serve as broad descriptors that begin to articulate the concrete contributions faculty members in HSS are making through teaching and research. It is inevitable that there will be a degree of overlap in these themes. Further, while they cannot be exhaustive, the aim is that they capture the substance and breadth of work in HSS. This document has been revised per input from the Heads, who were asked by the Dean's Office to consult with faculty members in their departments and pass on feedback from ASMs at Heads' Meetings.

Ideally, this document will be brought to Faculty Council for endorsement at a meeting in February 2021. If and when these themes are endorsed, it is likely that one or both Faculty Council committees will engage in conversation about possible next steps and use of these themes.

- 1. Languages, Media, and the Arts:** This theme focuses on modalities of human expression and communication, in linguistic, artistic, digital, and other media. Specifically, attention to the study of ancient and modern languages; the structure, development, and psychology of languages; storytelling forms and practices in film, literature, theatre, and popular culture; and systems and technologies of interpersonal and global communication characterize work in this theme. Possible subareas: texts, meanings, and contexts; creativity and imagination in theory and practice; and interplay of media and political, social, and cultural life.
- 2. Social, economic, and political ethics, relationships, and structures:** This theme focuses on understanding relationships between and among groups of people: what those relationships create, sustain, challenge, and resist. This includes examining, at a minimum, institutions, organizations, social networks, cultures and social structures, often with particular attention paid to the ethics and relationships of power, resource distribution, reproduction and change. Possible subareas: theories and practices of organizational and/or institutional change; meaning-making practices, values, and ethics; and structures of power, privilege and oppression (e.g. racism, colonialism, sexism, homophobia, ableism, classism).
- 3. Space and place:** This theme focuses on the relationship of humans and our environment. Work in this theme considers the role of human agency and of power in the context of varied and intersecting physical and social contexts. Specifically, attention to resources, development, sustainability, and land and water, and to concepts including the anthropocene, imaginary environments, and representations of space and place characterize work in this theme. Possible subareas: distribution of income, environment and sustainability; and intersections of science, ethics, technology.
- 4. Time, tradition, and change:** This theme focuses on the chronological dimension of human experience and the continuities and discontinuities in social formations, ideas, artistic practices, religious rites, and political institutions over time. Specifically, attention to issues of preservation and transformation, memory and forgetting, and the histories of places, communities, and linguistic practices characterize work in this theme. Possible subareas: social memory and identities, development, economic resources in local and global settings, the history of political institutions, and the history of ideas.

Please forward questions to Charlene Burke (charlenes@mun.ca) in the Dean's Office.
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