

## Carleton University Lifelong Learning Program

### **Standing on the Shoulders of Giants: A Sampling of the Humanities**

#### **Lecture Series Description**

As humans, we generate new ideas while standing on the shoulders of ancestral giants. Join us for a lively sampling of the humanities: the study of human intellectual thought. This lecture series will discuss texts from key periods of human intellectual thought and explore how they build on and engage with the works that precede them. Our study will range from ancient Sumer to 19<sup>th</sup> century Europe, surveying a variety of texts that offer insight into what it has meant to be human throughout history. No previous experience with these texts or traditions is required.

#### **Lecture Schedule**

- **Week #1 – Orality and the First Human Texts**  
We look at some of the earliest human writing in *The Epic of Gilgamesh* and the Hebrew Bible to examine how ancient people understood themselves in relation to animals, the earth, and the gods.
- **Week #2 – Charting the Stars: New Cosmogonies**  
Ancient Assyrian astrology paved the way for a mechanistic view of the universe that characterized early human scientific pursuits and influenced the Greek pre-Socratic philosophers.
- **Week #3 – Apocalypticism and Empire**  
As we rush towards the 1<sup>st</sup> century BCE, texts from the Hebrew Bible and Greek philosophical ideas conspire to result in the New Testament and other early Christian writings.
- **Week #4 – Reason and Revelation**  
Christianity develops into a flourishing institution and articulates itself anew against the backdrop of ancient Greek philosophy in the works of Bonaventure and Thomas Aquinas.
- **Week #5 – Disrupting the System**  
The Catholic church grew to become a full-fledged institution – with some problematic practices and doctrines. Dante’s *Divine Comedy* showcases the issues and Martin Luther’s *95 Theses* offer the rebuttal.
- **Week #6 – Modernity and Monsters**  
Fueled by Enlightenment rationality, humans turn to the creation of monsters in Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein*.