

# Humanities for humanity: How can they help?

MIT ESP – HSSP

Spring 2022

Program Sector: MIT ESP - HSSP

Class Title: Humanities for humanity: How can they help?

## Instructor Information:

Name: Joshua Aldwinckle-Povey

Email: TBC

Date/Time Information: TBD

## Class Overview

The humanities can often be really fun to learn about, but sometimes can be tricky to define and tricky to apply to the world. In this course, we'll approach the humanities on a broad scale. We'll look at the humanities overall, and take a broad look at all the different fields within the humanities, as well as getting an introduction to them as much as possible.

Then, we'll take a look at real world issues and together we'll use the humanities to tackle them. We'll also learn some digital humanities skills that we can use to more effectively construct our attacks of these modern day problems. Together, we'll bring humanities out from just academia and into the real world and have fun doing it!

## Class Schedule

Class number and date	Theme
1	What are the humanities?
2	The <i>Other</i> Humanities (part 1)
3	The <i>Other</i> Humanities (part 2)
4	Tackling the world's problems with humanities
5	Debate!

This class schedule is subject to change based on where your interests take us!

## Why would I want to take this class?

For lots of reasons! The main point in this class is to get you interested in the humanities more generally. You might be interested in learning more about digital humanities and how those who study the humanities are starting to use digital and scientific tools to aid their work. Plus, you might be interested in developing your own research skills. We'll also be

discussing museums, and working together to work together in a debate discussing the humanities and the ways that the world can be helped by using the humanities!

Of course, this class is only for five weeks and there's only so much we can cover in that time period! So this course isn't designed to give you an in-depth dive into any one particular area, but I've designed it as best I can to support you in developing new interests!

I do make a promise to you, though: it's likely that you're going to learn things and do things in this class you haven't had a chance to do in school just yet, and it's likely you'll do some stuff that you already do and can do with your eyes closed. The point of this class is to introduce you to a great new topic while also giving you a chance to learn in a way that isn't like a normal high school setup. I'm not a teacher, I don't pretend to be, and while some parts of class may look like a lecture, this is a discussion-based class! Come with questions, and I'll do my best to answer!

## Assignments and Requirements

**All readings for this class will be optional, and they'll be available to you digitally.** I won't be asking you to pay for anything for this class yourself, and I'll make sure anything you do need specifically for this class is covered for you. *Since HSSP is being taught virtually this year, any supplies you require for the course will be either virtual, free to download to your devices or I will ask ESP to ship them to your home.* I do strongly recommend you bring a notebook and a pen for taking notes. I'm also happy for you to take notes on your own computer or iPad or something similar, if you work better that way.

**Recordings of this class, whether Zoom recordings or using any other means, are not allowed.** This is to protect my privacy, yours and that of your fellow students. I'll make any slides or resources we use in class available online for you to catch up if you miss a session, wherever I can. You don't have to worry about missing a class! It'll always be easy to jump right back in wherever you can.

**Part of this class will involve a final debate involving each of you in our last class session together.** We'll talk more about this in class, and the presentation itself should last no longer than 5 minutes. I plan to be able to give you time to work on your presentation in our class time. I'm always happy to work with you all to support any research you wish to do for your projects. If you have any concerns or questions about the presentation, always reach out to me, and we'll talk about it!

## Class Expectations

Just be respectful! I understand that you're taking this class in your own time and things happen, so every class is designed so that you'll be able to jump in again as if you never left if things happen one week, and you're unable to make it. Respect in this class, for me, looks like bringing your A-game and a willingness to learn every week. We'll be a small group and I want to hear your thoughts and opinions, your ideas and your knowledge.

I also want you to know that I always want to help with any questions you have about our class! No question is a stupid question, and every question is a good one. Whether it's about our content, the skills we'll be using to access that content or you need help with research or just want to check in, I'm always happy to help.

## How to contact me

**Please don't try to connect with me via social media.** I'm happy to answer questions via email using the specific email links that the wonderful folks at ESP are setting up for us to keep in touch.

## On Zoom

Virtual sucks. I know. I'm only just getting back to an almost normal semester at college after 1.5 years studying almost entirely on Zoom and spending a good chunk of that from a different time zone and different country. I've also picked up skills and learned new things that were way harder to try and understand over Zoom and from my laptop where some of this stuff needs high-power computers! Trust me when I tell you, I know how much Zoom sucks.

This class is small. There's no need to stay muted at all times, you're always welcome to ask questions and talk to me during class. There's group work so you'll get to work with your classmates. I've planned fun activities that we'll do together and will hopefully give you a chance to explore what we're talking about in a way that looks and feels meaningful.

COVID-19 is still a huge challenge for us all, and nobody likes Zoom. I've done my best to design a course that's fun and engaging despite that limit, and I welcome your feedback. I also understand that it's really important for you to know your limits. If you're feeling tired of looking at a screen or need a break, you're always welcome to take one.

Participating in HSSP is voluntary, and you're here because you chose to be here. That's a big deal, and I want to make sure that, even as we're in a totally different place to last fall with this pandemic, this is as great an experience as I can design for you. Keep in touch with the great folks at ESP too in case you ever need a break or extra support. We can always meet you where you're at. Thank you for choosing to take part in HSSP, even if you can't join me on MIT's campus.