Lorne Dawson – Professor, Sociology and Legal Studies

**Featured in the video series; attending Congress**

**Field of research:** radicalization of religious groups and ‘homegrown’ terrorism

**Research statement:**
My work on violence and religion lead me to the analysis of terrorist radicalization - in particular so-called “homegrown terrorism.” Post 9/11 we live in a world in which unprecedented resources are dedicated to ensuring our security, and a big part of that process is figuring out how and why certain young people in our own societies – mainly men and Muslims right now – have become terrorists intent on wreaking havoc on their fellow citizens. Terrorism and security are big uncertainties in this day, and the reality of young Canadians plotting to kill other Canadians is even more perplexing and challenging.

My attempts to synthesize the findings of the vast yet rather unsystematic research into terrorist radicalization from around the world, to analyse the strengths and weaknesses of this knowledge base, and delineate a more refined and appropriate approach to the study of homegrown radicalization has caught the attention of security agencies here in Canada and elsewhere – leading to numerous presentations, public and confidential. These consultations have helped to change and improve the reasoning and strategies of the agents tasked with protecting us, and they have started to influence both the language and research strategies of the Canadian government. These efforts are also helping to foster a new community of researchers and initiatives on this pressing issue in Canada, in unprecedented ways.

Jennifer Simpson – Associate Professor in Speech Communication

**Featured in video series; attending Congress**

**Research fields:** Higher education and social justice (among others)

**Research statement:**
My research is focused on how higher education responds to social challenges and contributes to justice. In particular, I am interested in what students learn while in university. As students earn their degree, what will ensure that they are concerned about social issues, and can think carefully about addressing those issues? I see uncertainties in the rising gaps between rich and poor, the increasing privatization of public goods, the government’s continued exploitation of Indigenous communities and resources, and the ongoing racism directed at communities of colour in Canada. In my mind, these uncertainties contribute to a weakened democracy. As public serving institutions, universities have an obligation to consider such uncertainties. Scholars working in the humanities and social sciences have a great deal to contribute to considering the purposes of university education in relation to how we live together.

François Paré – Professor, French Studies (Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada)
**Field of research:** Globalization and monocultural threats to diasporic languages and cultures

**Research statement:**
My research proposes a worldwide ecology of cultures and languages, many of which are facing great uncertainties and, in some cases, extinction. So it is about strategies to maintain the diversity of languages and cultures and to develop strategies of resistance to the larger uniformity or monoculture implied by economic globalization. More specifically, I work on cultural and linguistic identity in minority or marginalized communities not only here in Canada (Francophone, Indigenous cultures) but in other areas of the world (Europe’s minorities, Mayan communities in Mexico, Caribbean island cultures).

What is inspiring is the knowledge that my research is located at a transnational level. It is gratifying to be able to give recognition to the invisible outskirts of our human cultures and geopolitical world, to continue to fight the forces of colonialism and oppression. For me, literature is an important part of the symbolic workings of our societies. Although a construct of the human mind, literature deals with the real life of people around us. It provides open explanations and a narrative for our aspirations and our worries.

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**Neil Randall – Associate Professor, English Language and Literature & Director of the Games Institute**

Not in video series, but attending Congress

**Field of research:** Rhetoric and semiotics of human-computer interaction

**Research statement:**
Rhetorical and semiotic analysis of user interfaces, in technologies ranging from computer operating systems through cellular phones and videogames. Second is metaphor theory – particularly cognitive/conceptual metaphor – which relates in part to interface analysis but which also informs a more general interest in cognitive rhetoric. I have become increasingly engaged in studying games that attempt to simulate history and/or politics, using semiotic and social semiotic theory to determine the simulative structures of these games.

Director of the Games Institute: The mission of the Games Institute is to advance games research – and ultimately game design – through rigorous analysis of games-driven content, interactions, interfaces, and technologies both current and future.

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**Aimée Morrison – Associate Professor, English Language and Literature**

Not in video series; attending Congress

**Field of Research:** Deciphering Digital Life Writing; digital humanities
**Research statement:**
My work focuses on popular reception and remediation of computer technologies, as well as on design for digital media. Now I teach literature, digital humanities, history and theory of media, and multimedia practice. Increasingly, my research engages with emergent forms of social media as a set of complex and consequential rhetorical, literary, and social practices undertaken by ordinary people across the full spectrum of daily life. My current project, a book-length study called “Deciphering Digital Life Writing,” aims to produce a mode of criticism suitable to extant and future online communication tools, attuned to notions of personal identity, and to the constructive role of technology in mediating these online. Basically, I’m trying to figure out how people decide what to say about themselves online, and what motivates these decision.

More researchers in humanities and social sciences based in the Faculty of Arts, University of Waterloo

(Note: professors below are not featured in the research video series, but are attending Congress.)

**Jay Dolmage – English**
I research the rhetorical history of disability as well as the development of bodily rhetorics: how have our notions of ability/disability evolved and changed—or not —over the years?

**Colin Ellard – Psychology**
I am interested in how the organization and appearance of natural and built spaces affects movement, wayfinding, emotion and physiology. My approach to these questions is strongly multidisciplinary and is informed by collaborations with architects, artists, planners, and health professionals.

**John Turri – Philosophy**
I study cognition and communication. I’m specifically interested in how social factors affect our interpretation of verbal behavior, and the fundamental role that knowledge plays in governing speech.

**Lynne Taylor – History**
I study the impact of war on state-society relations, currently in the context of the displaced persons crisis in post-WWII Germany, and the postwar international response to this refugee crisis.

**Doris Jakobsh – Religious Studies**
I recently edited the two-volume *World Religions: Canadian Perspectives* (2012); the books offer a distinctly Canadian approach to the study of world religions.

**Martin Cooke – Sociology**
I’m jointly appointed in Sociology and the School of Public Health and Health Systems (UW Faculty of Applied Health Science). My research teaching interests are in the social demography and health of Aboriginal peoples; social inequality, the welfare state, and the life course; population ageing and retirement.

**Barbara Schmenk – German**
My research seeks to ask and sometimes answer questions about learning and teaching language/culture. What educational agendas do we follow, why, and to what (and whose) ends?