James Magnus-Johnston

PhD, MPhil (Cantab), Double BA (Hons)

Curriculum Vitae
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Education & Accreditation

PhD, Economics (in the "Sustainable Futures" Program, Natural Resource Sciences) | McGill University, Canada | 2020–26

Thesis: "Mapping Debt's Biophysical Signature: Material Flows and Political Sentiment in Canada and Argentina" | *Supervisor*: Dr. Gordon Hickey | Thesis passed by all examiners; oral defence pending

MPhil, Economics (Land Economy) | University of Cambridge, UK | 2009–11

Thesis: "Interrogating Debt as a Driver of Growth: Links between Financial and Ecological Debt in Rich-World Economies" | *Supervisor*: Dr. Ian Hodge

BA (Hons), Political Studies and Rhetoric & Communications | University of Winnipeg | 2005–07

Thesis: "The Global Politics of Transboundary Enforcement: How Global Finance Undermines International Law and Local Governance"

BA (Hons), Theatre & Drama – Performance | University of Winnipeg, Canada | 2001–05

Distinctions: Gold Medal for highest achievement (2005).

Additional: Two years of coursework toward a Bachelor of Music (Voice), University of Manitoba.

Accredited Credit Union Director (ACCUD) | Dalhousie University | 2018

Certified Financial Counsellor | Canadian Insolvency and Restructuring Professionals (CIRP) | 2011

Publications

Book Chapters

Magnus-Johnston, J. (2025). God and the Machine: Learning in the Metamodern Revolution. In P. G. Doerksen (Ed.), *A time of reckoning: Telling the Canadian Mennonite University story.* CMU Press.

Magnus-Johnston, J. (2016). What is the steady state economy? In H. Washington & P. Twomey (Eds.), *A future beyond growth: Towards a steady state economy*. Routledge.

Peer-Reviewed Papers

Magnus-Johnston, J. (under review). Debt's compounding biophysical claim: Toward a theory of dysregulated economic metabolism. *Energy Research & Social Science*.

Magnus-Johnston, J. (under review). The other decoupling: Debt claims and physical throughput in advanced economies, 1971–2020. *Structural Change and Economic Dynamics*.

Magnus-Johnston, J. (in preparation). Debt–extraction coupling in Canada: Private credit and fossil fuel throughput, 1980–2019. *Studies in Political Economy*.

Magnus-Johnston, J. (in preparation). Debt–extraction coupling in Argentina: Sovereign debt and biomass throughput, 1980–2019. *World Development*.

Magnus-Johnston, J (under review). Mapping debt's biophysical signature: Material throughput and institutional divergence in Canada and Argentina. *Cambridge Journal of Economics*.

Magnus-Johnston, J (under review). The political grievance of debt stress: Debt, extraction, and political sentiment in Canada and Argentina. *New Political Economy*.

Policy Reports & Working Papers

Magnus-Johnston, J. (2017). *Carbon pricing and competitiveness: Policy options for Manitoba businesses.* Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce.

Fernández, L. (Ed.), Magnus-Johnston, J., & Hudson, M. (2016). *An economic analysis of the Energy East pipeline in Manitoba*. Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives.

Magnus-Johnston, J. (Ed.), & Transition Winnipeg Initiating Committee. (2014). *Transition Winnipeg Energy Descent Action Plan: Ideas and actions for a low-carbon, climate-resilient city*. Transition Winnipeg.

Magnus-Johnston, J. (Ed.), Stevens, H., & Green Economy Working Group. (2012). *Response to the Government of Manitoba's green plan*. Manitoba Eco-Network.

Conference Participation (selected)

Invited Judge. Saint Mary's University, Sobey School of Business. The Arena. March 5, 2025.

Invited Presenter. "Human Books" Talk for the Canadian Association for Studies in Co-operation. Congress 2022. May 14, 2022.

Invited Keynote Address. "Conceptualizing Social-Ecological Resilience." Government of Canada: Prairies Regional Adaptation Collaborative (now ClimateWest) online conference. January 2021.

Invited Presenter. "CMU's Centre for Resilience" Impact Hub Global Meetup. Montréal, July 2018.

Invited Judge. "North Forge Open Innovation Challenge." North Forge Literacy Innovation Challenge. Winnipeg, May 2018.

Invited Judge. "Red River College Dragonfly Den." Red River College Social Innovation Department. Winnipeg, March 2018.

Invited Delegate. "Citizen Dialogues on Canada's Energy Future." Simon Fraser University Centre for Dialogue. Winnipeg, October 2017.

Presenter. "Mainstreaming Ecological Economics Discourse in Universities." Canadian and United States Societies for Ecological Economics Joint Conference. University of British Columbia, November 2015.

Invited Keynote Address. "Social Responsibility for Every Business." Manitoba Environmental Industries Association. Winnipeg, June 10, 2015.

Invited Keynote Address. "Transitioning to a Steady State Economy." Respecting the Land: Transitioning to a New Economy. University of Alberta (Augustana), November 7–8, 2014.

Presenter. "Sustainability through Song: Flow-seeking Behaviour, Procedural Utility, and the Subordination of Consumer Impulses." Canadian Resource and Environmental Economics Study Group. Co-presenter with Matthew Knight. University of Saskatchewan, October 2014.

Invited Keynote Address. “Designing a Post-Growth Economy.” Faculty of Architecture Lecture Series, University of Manitoba, March 7, 2014.

Invited Facilitator. Sustaining the Commons: Ideas and Actions for a Green Economy, Canadian Society for Ecological Economics, York University, November 1–2, 2013.

Presenter. “Deep Debt and the Prospect of Conscious Capitalism.” International Conference on Degrowth in the Americas, Université de Montréal, May 13–19, 2012.

Invited Speaker. “Waste-to-Energy Potential with Plasma Technologies.” Opal Clean Technology Investment Forum, San Francisco, USA, June 15–20, 2011.

Participant. Second International Conference on Economic Degrowth for Ecological Sustainability and Social Equity, Universidad de Barcelona, Barcelona, Spain, March 26–29, 2010.

Courses Taught

59 course sections across 19 distinct courses, plus 4 supervised independent studies, fall 2013 to fall 2026, in Business, Political Studies, Communications, Psychology and Sociology, at Canadian Mennonite University and The King’s University | *Terms: F = fall, W = winter, Sp = spring, Su = summer.*

Business and Organizational Administration (10 courses, 23 sections)

Social Entrepreneurship (2nd year; Business · Political Studies). 5 sections: F15, W17, W19, F22, F24.

Innovation Lab (4th year; Business). 4 sections: F18, Sp20, W23, W26.

Organizational Behaviour (2nd year; Business · Psychology). 3 sections: F21, F22, F24.

Business and Organizational Communications (2nd year; Business · Communications). 3 sections: W21, W22, W23.

Business Ethics (2nd year; Business). 2 sections: F25, F26.

Organizational Leadership (3rd year; Business at CMU · Psychology at The King’s University). 2 sections: W22, W25.

Entrepreneurship and Small Business Management (2nd year; Business). 1 section: W25.

Introduction to Business & Organizational Administration (1st year; Business). 1 section: F23.

Not-for-Profit Management (3rd year; Business). 1 section: W22.

Behavioural Economics (2nd year; Business). 1 section: Sp26.

Political Studies (7 courses, 28 sections)

Democracy & Dissent: An Introduction to Politics (1st year; Political Studies). 7 sections: F13, F15, W17, W20, F21, F23, F25.

Politics, Society, and the Mass Media (2nd/3rd year; Political Studies · Communications). 6 sections: W15, F17, F19, W22, W24, W26.

Citizenship, Land, Economy [alternatively titled “Degrowth & Political Ecology”] (2nd/3rd year; Political Studies). 4 sections: W17, W19, W23, W25.

Social Welfare (2nd year; Political Studies · Sociology). 4 sections: F14, F16, W19, F21.

Global Politics: An Introduction (1st year; Political Studies). 3 sections: W14, W16, W21.

Social & Political Philosophy (1st year; Political Studies). 3 sections: W14, F16, W18.

Canadian Political Issues: The Culture Wars (3rd year; Political Studies). 1 section: W23.

Interdisciplinary (2 courses, 8 sections)

Ecological Economics (2nd year; Political Studies · Business). 7 sections: F14, W16, F17, F19, F22, F24, F26.

Ways of Knowing I (1st year; Curricular Commons). 1 section: F26.

Supervised independent studies (4)

Behavioural Economics (4th year). Fall 2018.

Political Theory (4th year). Summer 2019.

Symbols of Canadian Identity (4th year). Summer 2022.

Political Psychology and Social Cohesion (4th year; Political Studies). 2024–25.

Guest Lectures, Talks, and Panels

The Jubilee and the Coevolution of Money and Morality. Fort Garry Mennonite Fellowship. January, 2025.

Sermon. Prairie Mennonite Fellowship, Crystal City, Manitoba. April 7, 2024.

Measuring Economic Resilience. Government of Manitoba Social Innovation Office. November 5, 2022.

ReStart Business Mentor. Government of Manitoba Social Innovation Office. September 29, 2022.

City of Winnipeg Advisory Group. University of Winnipeg, November 10, 2017.

Economic Precarity for Millennials. Xplore Education Series. Canadian Mennonite University, October 11, 2017.

Social Innovation at Manitoba's Institutions of Higher Learning. Organized by the Canadian Community Economic Development Network, CMU Centre for Resilience, April 2017.

Options for Manitoba's Proposed Carbon Tax. HTFC Planning and Design Landscape Architects, January 2017.

Is a Steady State Economy Possible or Desirable? St. Andrew's United Church, September 2016.

Sacred Economics. Fort Garry Mennonite Brethren Church, September 2016.

A Short Introduction to Ecological Economics. 10×20×20. Organized by the Manitoba Association of Architects, Winnipeg Art Gallery, January 2016.

When Oil Dependency is Not Black and White. Face2Face Discussion Series. Canadian Mennonite University, November 9, 2015.

Public Forum on the Proposed Energy East Pipeline. University of Winnipeg, February 23, 2015.

A Short Introduction to Ecological Economics. Pecha Kucha Winnipeg. Park Theatre, October 2014.

Post-Growth Agendas and Natural Resource Management. MA course in Environmental and Natural Resource Economics. Denis DePape, University of Manitoba, April 3, 2013.

Steady-State Economics. Introduction to Peace and Conflict: Global Contexts. Dr. Jarem Sawatsky, Canadian Mennonite University, March 5, 2013.

Where's the Future? Co-presenter with Dr. Paul Kershaw (University of British Columbia). Public lecture at Finn's Pub, Winnipeg, December 11, 2012.

What is Ecological Economics? Public lecture organized by the South Eastman Transition Initiative, Steinbach MB, October 27, 2011.

Sustainable Development in Practice. MA course in Sustainable Development. Michael Reid, University of Winnipeg, September 15, 2011.

Grants, Scholarships, and Prizes

Principal Investigator (Canada), with Dr. Chiara Valentini (University of Jyväskylä): SSHRC Knowledge Synthesis Grant, "Changing Nature of Security and Conflict," Nordic–Canadian stream. In preparation; submission December 2026.

Graduate Excellence Award: McGill University. September 2026 ($5,000).

Graduate Excellence Award: McGill University. December 2022 ($13,000).

Graduate Excellence Award: McGill University. September 2022 ($5,000).

Research Subsidy: Government of Canada (via Magnet), for doctoral research on the HomeCo land-trust housing prototype. September 2022 ($10,000).

Herman Daly Research Fellow: McGill University / Centre for the Advancement of the Steady State Economy. January 2020 ($12,000).

Most Innovative Business Model: Winnipeg Downtown Business Improvement Zone, for designing the Fools & Horses business model, June 2016.

Finalist: One of Manitoba's "Future 40 under 40," Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, March 2015.

Travel and Research Grant: Downing College, Cambridge, for the 2nd International Conference on Economic Degrowth for Ecological Sustainability and Social Equity, Universidad de Barcelona, March 2010 ($3,000).

Full Scholarship: Hautes Études Graduate Institute, Master of International Affairs, University of Geneva, Switzerland, May 2009 ($16,000; declined).

Best Submission: Canadian Foreign Policy Competition, presented to Canadian Department of Foreign Affairs senior management, April 2006.

Academic and Administrative Experience

Assistant Professor, Canadian Mennonite University (2018–present). Previously Instructor (2013–2018). Teaching and research in business, economics, and political studies.

Director, Redekop School of Business, Canadian Mennonite University (2026–present). Helped bring the business program to accreditation with CPHR (Chartered Professional in Human Resources); contributed to program reviews in both Business and Communications. Helping shape the new Peace and Global Studies program, including a major in Economics and Public Policy.

Chair, Political Studies, Canadian Mennonite University (2019–2026). Contributed to the redesign of the Political Studies major.

Founding Director, CMU Centre for Resilience (April 2017–April 2025). Led the vision and animation of a co-working lab and experiential learning hub at Canadian Mennonite University.

Professional Experience

Founder, Selfscape Inc. (2025–present). Built and launched a health pattern-recognition platform for practitioners and individuals to perform root cause diagnostics.

Board Director, Assiniboine Credit Union (April 2016–April 2023). Elected by the credit union member-owners to help establish policy and govern the credit union. One of the largest independent financial cooperatives in Canada.

Research Director, HomeCo (April–November 2022). Co-developed a land-trust housing prototype with Benjamin Gillies, including ground-lease models, a community focus group, and interviews with land trust practitioners; supervised a student research assistant. Doctoral-level project supported by the Government of Canada Student Work Placement Program (via Magnet).

President and Co-owner, Fools & Horses (May 2014–January 2020). President of a coffee shop startup with a "triple bottom line" mandate (social, ecological, and financial). Awarded "most innovative business model" by the Winnipeg Downtown Business Improvement Zone (2016).

Director of Advocacy, Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce (July 2016–April 2017). Directed policy research, development, and advocacy in consultation with community stakeholders.

Articling Trustee in Bankruptcy, LC Taylor (May 2009–2014). Administered court-directed erasure of debt. Certified Financial Counsellor (CAIRP); trustee license level two.

Communications and Policy Director for Dr. Jon Gerrard, Manitoba Political Leader (May 2008–May 2009). Coordinated policy, legislative, and communications initiatives.

Copy Editor for the Hachette Media Group (Asia Division), including Morning Calm, and Beyond magazines; guest editor for Chatelaine, Premiere, Elle magazines (Seoul, South Korea, June 2007–May 2008).

Communications Officer for a National Political Leadership Candidate (August–December 2006). Coordinated communications initiatives with high-level leadership team in Manitoba and at the national conference.

Service

Board Director, Light of the Prairies Retreat Centre (2024–present).

Board Director, Village Conservatory (2023–present).

Participant, Canadian Community Economic Development Network Post-Secondary Social Innovation Roundtable (2017–2021).

Participant, Red River College Social Enterprise Program Steering Committee (summer/fall 2017).

Advisory Board Member, Manoverboard Design Inc. (2016–2022).

Board Director, Fireweed Food Co-operative (2016–2020).

Board Director / Social Enterprise Liaison, Green Action Centre / Compost Winnipeg (2012–18).

Founding Board Director (2012–2013) and Co-chair (2013–2017), Transition Winnipeg.

Associations

Member, Canadian Society for Ecological Economics (2012–2020).

References

Dr. Jonathan Dueck
Former Vice-President Academic (2018–2025), Canadian Mennonite University
204.487.3300 x 615

Dr. Jerry Buckland
Present Vice-President Academic; Former Director, Redekop School of Business, Canadian Mennonite University
204.487.3300 x 642

Dr. Craig Martin
Former Director, Redekop School of Business, Canadian Mennonite University
204.487.3300 x 365