

# Ways of Knowing (INTD 1000)

## Garbage: what counts as waste?

### Canadian Mennonite University

#### Course Syllabus 2026-27

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**Office:** D290 (second floor, DeFehr Hall)  
**Lecture times:** Wednesday/Friday 10:00-11:15 AM  
**Office hours:** MW 2:30–4:30 PM; TTh 4:00–6:00 PM in D290  
**Symposium date (“exam”):** December 17

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## Course Description

This course introduces students to the university by getting them involved in asking a big question alongside other students and professors from many subject areas. It includes seminars, round table discussions, a few big lectures, and fieldtrips, all in order to do the things the university does best: taking the time to think about real problems, from multiple expert viewpoints (or ways of knowing), and to develop their own ideas. Prerequisite(s): Curiosity. This year's theme is "Garbage: what counts as waste?"

## Objectives

At its heart, the university sets aside space and time for some core activities: reading (both individually and together, from original sources), listening (both to professors and each other), dialogue, and developing one's sense of voice (in speech, writing, and other media). This course cultivates an environment intended to foster these activities and its objective is that every student grow their own capacities in these activities.

## Required Textbook

*Garbage: What Counts as Waste?* Eds. Dyck, et. al. Canadian Mennonite University 2026.

(This book is available only at CommonWord Bookstore. Note that we will be reading almost all of it and you will need to bring it to every class.)

## Course Requirements and Due Dates

### Assignment Summary

| Assignment           | Value | Due Date              |
|----------------------|-------|-----------------------|
| Discussion questions | 10%   | Due with each reading |
| Essay free drafting  | 10%   | Oct 30                |
| Essay, final version | 25%   | Nov 18                |
| Symposium proposal   | 10%   | Nov 4                 |
| Symposium workshop   | 10%   | Dec 4                 |
| Symposium final      | 25%   | Dec 17                |
| Participation        | 10%   |                       |

### Assignment Descriptions

#### Discussion questions

**Value: 10%**

**Due:** At 9:00 AM on the day of classes with readings, via Populi

To help facilitate meaningful class discussions, students will submit a discussion question based on daily readings (max 2 per day). These will become the basis for our seminar discussions. Because these will be used daily for discussion it is not possible to submit them late. Discussion questions should include one sentence that quotes the reading, and one sentence that asks a related question. Effective questions for class discussion follow the below guidelines:

- Engage directly with the reading, including specific quotes, page numbers, or key terms;
- Encourage connections between the reading and real-life scenarios;
- Can be reasonably answered based on the information available (i.e. doesn't require additional research from respondents);
- Are open ended, promoting new areas for dialogue.

## **Essay**

**Value: 25%**

**Due: November 18**

**Description:** Write an essay of 1000 words developing your thinking about the course topic, drawing upon at least one of the course pack readings plus one reading of your own finding. Submit via Populi.

## **Free-drafting**

**Value: 10%**

**Due: October 30**

**Description:** This assignment gives you a class period to write a short version of your essay, from scratch. You do not need to work out all the details. Rather, aim at writing freely and letting your thinking develop as a whole. Come to class with a thesis statement (your overall point) in mind, as well as some sub-points, and see what happens.

Desired outcomes include both the discovery of your argument and the discovery of your voice. How do *you* think about our theme?

This exercise does not replace your normal drafting process but instead gives you some time and space to try out the best version of your essay that you can come up with. The stakes are low — just coming and writing this will get you at least a B-range grade.

Test booklets will be supplied. Your professor will write comments on your draft and return it to you so that you can take those comments into consideration as you prepare the final version of your essay.

**Symposium:** the symposium is a large-scale event occupying the whole of Marpeck Commons for a whole morning during December reading days (after classes end and before exams start). You will be in one of three shifts, and each student will have a section of table space on which to set up a poster presentation. Your presentation may include other elements as well as a poster. Use your imagination! You should also be prepared to give a three-minute talk about the idea, for anyone who stops by.

## **Symposium Proposal**

**Value: 10%**

**Due: November 4**

**Description:** Submit via Populi a two-page proposal for your symposium presentation, including a one-page mock-up of the design of your poster and any other elements and a one-page (300 word) account of your idea that will be the basis of your three-minute talk. We recommend you bring a draft proposal to the poster workshop earlier that day.

## **Symposium Workshop**

**Value: 10%**

**Date: December 4**

**Description:** In this session we will workshop our symposium presentations with each other in the class. Bring a finished or close-to-finished poster and be ready to try out your three-minute talk with your classmates.

## **Symposium Final**

**Value: 25%**

**Date: December 17**

**Description:** At the symposium you will make your final and public presentation of your project, which includes both a completed professional-quality poster and a succinct and engaging three-minute talk that you are prepared to give to those passing by.

## **Participation**

**Value: 10% (attendance and participation in each of the three “bigs” is worth 2%)**

**Description:** Please come to class with the assigned reading completed and be ready to join the class conversation. We will together bring these topics to life, and your participation grade will reflect your professor’s judgment of your contributions to this process. Regular attendance is expected.

A note on the three “bigs”: The big walk, the big gawk, and the big talk all happen outside of normal classtime, with the expectation that you will adjust your schedule to attend them.

The big walk is a field trip, and there will be several options, all happening around the end of September. Sign-up sheets will be posted across from Paul Dyck’s office (D178)

The big gawk is a film night, and there will be at least a few options—we require you to go to at least one. This will happen later in October. Details will be posted well before the event.

The big talk is a lecture attended by all WK1 students as well as any other CMU students who are interested. It is scheduled for November 5 at 11 A.M. and it will last one hour.

## **Submission Procedures**

Please submit your discussion questions, your symposium proposal, and your essay through Populi in Word (.doc or .docx) format. Please name your file in this way: your last name, assignment name (for example, Baggins Essay1.docx). Discussion questions are due by 9 A.M. and all other assignments are due by 11:59 P.M.

## **Late Submissions**

Late assignments will be subject to a one percent per day penalty for five days following the due date; submissions after that point are allowed only on a case-by-case basis, after a conversation with the professor. Please inform your professor if illness or other emergencies interfere with your work more than a few days.

**NOTE:** Grades are not final until vetted and approved by the Dean’s Office.

## Stylistic Requirements

Essays should be in 12 point Times New Roman and double spaced, with margins of 1". Please put the essay's title, your name, course number and name, the date submitted, and word count on the top left hand side of the first page; do not include a title page. Please include a "Works Cited" page at the end of your essay. This page and all in-text citations should be in MLA format.

CMU's standard guide for academic writing is Diana Hacker's *A Pocket Style Manual*. Ninth edition. Macmillan Learning, 2021.

## Continuity Plan

### Individual students: what to do if you can't come to class

If you miss class for any reason, please let me know as a courtesy, and catch up with notes from other students, and of course, keep up with your readings.

### What happens if the instructor can't come to class

If I cannot come to class, I will make an announcement in Populi.

## Academic Integrity

ALL sources in ALL student writing must be appropriately referenced. Plagiarism is a serious matter. Students should be aware of CMU Academic Policies, particularly those regarding academic misconduct (plagiarism and cheating), which apply to all University courses. These are detailed on [CMU's website](#) and in the [CMU Calendar](#).

For more information on CMU policies regarding grades, academic misconduct, appeals, and other matters, please see [CMU's Academic Calendar](#).

## Student Use of AI

**Use prohibited for composition.** Each student is expected to complete each assignment without substantive writing assistance from others, including AI. A central aim of this course is for you to develop your own thought and voice as an attentive reader, so use of generative AI to draft your work is counterproductive.

## Accessibility

CMU strives to provide a fair and supportive learning environment for academically qualified students with disabilities. If you are eligible for these services or have questions about becoming eligible, please contact Sandra Loeppky, Coordinator of Accessibility Programs at [sloeppky@cmu.ca](mailto:sloeppky@cmu.ca) or 204.487.3300 x.340.

In recognition of individuals with asthma, allergies and severe environmental/chemical sensitivities, CMU is striving to become a scent-free campus. Students, staff and guests are asked to refrain from wearing fragrances and scented personal care products at CMU. This includes perfumes, colognes, aftershave and scented hair products. Your cooperation is greatly appreciated by those affected.

## CMU Campus Counsellors/Support Services

University students face many challenges and at times may benefit from having a trained professional to talk to. There are qualified counsellors at CMU who volunteer their services free of charge to students on the CMU campus. Students wishing to book an appointment with a counsellor can email [counselling@cmu.ca](mailto:counselling@cmu.ca). Confidentiality is always maintained. More information about CMU Counselling Services and Mental Health Resources, can be found on the [Student Hub](#) or by contacting Danielle Morton ([dmorton@cmu.ca](mailto:dmorton@cmu.ca)), Director of Student Community Life.

Counselling office: C366 (north side)

Cost: Free for CMU students

## Grade Scale

| Letter | Percentage | Grade Points | Descriptor   |
|--------|------------|--------------|--------------|
| A+     | 90–100     | 4.5          | Exceptional  |
| A      | 85–89      | 4.25         | Excellent    |
| A-     | 80–84      | 4.0          | Great        |
| B+     | 77–79      | 3.5          | Very Good    |
| B      | 73–76      | 3.25         | Good         |
| B-     | 70–72      | 3.0          | Satisfactory |
| C+     | 67–69      | 2.5          | Competent    |
| C      | 63–66      | 2.25         | Acceptable   |
| C-     | 60–62      | 2.0          | Adequate     |
| D      | 50–59      | 1            | Marginal     |
| F      | 0–49       | 0            | Failure      |

## Schedule of Readings/Activities

| Date   | Reading                                                                                      |
|--------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Sept 9 | Introductions: what is WK1 and why garbage?                                                  |
| 11     | Readings: Cronon, "Only Connect," 3-11 & Midgely, "Philosophical Plumbing," 13-18, 25-27     |
| 16     | The Big Walk (no class — sign-up for a field-trip sometime in September)                     |
| 18     | Reading: "The Prodigal Son," 29-31                                                           |
| 23     | Library orientation and A.I. discussion: beginning to think about essay                      |
| 25     | Roundtable 1 (all roundtables in Chapel, South Hall)                                         |
| 30     | National Day TRC (no class)                                                                  |
| Oct 2  | Reading: Liboiron and Lepawsky, "Insides and Outsides: A Theory of Power," 35-57             |
| 7      | Reading: Laqueur, "The Work of the Dead," 59-95                                              |
| 9      | Reading: Deutscher, "The Entropy Crisis," 97-106, 122-130, 107-117                           |
| 14     | The Big Gawk (no class — go to one of the course film showings in October)                   |
| 16     | Roundtable 2 (Chapel, South Hall)                                                            |
| 21     | Reading: Daly "Economics in a Full World" 133-149                                            |
| 23     | Reading: McCabe, "Forgiveness" 151-154                                                       |
| 28     | Reading: Devine, "Decomposed: a political ecology of music" 155-181                          |
| 30     | Essay free drafting                                                                          |
| Nov 4  | Symposium Poster how-to workshop; (symposium proposal due by midnight)                       |
| 5 11am | The Big Talk: A conversation with Premier Wab Kinew, tbc                                     |
| 11-13  | Reading Week (no classes)                                                                    |
| 18     | Roundtable 3 (Guest: Angela Lavallee; Chapel, S. Hall); (essay due by midnight)              |
| 20     | Reading: Stewart, "Cleaning up," 197-201 & Skudlarska and Goldstein, "Lovely Tents," 203-220 |
| 25     | Reading: Rothfeld, "More is More," 223-234                                                   |
| 27     | Reading: "Poetry and Waste," 235-254                                                         |
| Dec 2  | Roundtable 4 (Chapel, South Hall)                                                            |
| 4      | Symposium workshop: trial run/mock up                                                        |
| 9      | Wrap-up                                                                                      |
| Dec 17 | Symposium                                                                                    |