



FEDERATION FOR THE
**HUMANITIES AND
SOCIAL SCIENCES**

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Think forward: Our future, shaped by the humanities and social sciences

How the HSS are shaping the future of democracy

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Three ways the humanities and social sciences strengthen democratic dialogue

How do we foster informed, engaged citizenship on today's most pressing issues?

The humanities and social sciences (HSS) provide essential tools for developing informed perspectives on major challenges facing Canadian democracy. From students enrolled in HSS courses to researchers at post-secondary institutions, the HSS equip people to critically analyze political, social, and economic issues, which in turn supports the informed participation of all in democratic life.

Here are three ways the HSS support democracy in action:

Strengthen media literacy and counter disinformation

Media literacy is a key defense against disinformation. Disinformation is pervasive and is perhaps the largest threat to democratic dialogue, public trust, and civic engagement.

As AI technologies become entrenched in classrooms, workplaces, and corporations, it is critical that we learn to assess what is presented as the truth and to make determinations about what the truth is.

HSS disciplines provide people with the research skills to assess information, recognize bias, and make informed decisions. An informed and critical citizenship is essential for the proper functioning of democracy.

Example: The [Canadian Digital Media Research Network](#) monitors and debunks foreign disinformation using interdisciplinary expertise in political science, communications, and linguistics.

Inform evidence-based solutions to social challenges

Addressing pressing problems such as economic development, housing insecurity, gender-based violence, and global warming require evidence-based public policy.

HSS disciplines offer theoretical as well as both qualitative and quantitative methodological expertise to address such problems and to develop appropriate policy responses. In collaboration with STEM fields such as environmental science, health research, and engineering, the HSS provide context, ethical frameworks, and social analysis to ensure solutions are both technically sound and socially responsive.

Example: The [Respect for All Relations](#) project, housed at the University of British Columbia, explores legal and policy approaches to promote sustainable and respectful relationships between people, animals, and ecosystems.



Equip citizens for informed and thoughtful public participation

A deep understanding of our histories, values, and systems helps individuals engage meaningfully in democratic life in communities across the country.

Insights within and across fields such as history, Indigenous studies, philosophy, and religious studies provide context for today's debates and encourage ethical reflection. Together, they strengthen inclusive, informed public dialogue and decision-making.

Example: Example: The [*Centre for the Study of Democratic Citizenship*](#) investigates how citizens participate in civic life and how institutions can better represent and respond to the public.

The humanities and social sciences are essential to a thriving democracy!