



For immediate release — December 21, 2015

## **U of L adds two new PhD programs**

The University of Lethbridge is pleased to announce two new doctoral degree programs slated to begin in September 2016, the first of their kind in the school's history. The PhD in Population Studies in Health and the master's and PhD in Cultural, Social and Political Thought represent a significant achievement for the University.

"We've offered graduate studies here at the U of L for more than 30 years and now, for the first time, we have doctoral programs in the social sciences, the health sciences and the humanities," says Dr. Robert Wood, dean of the School of Graduate Studies.

The PhD in Population Studies in Health is being offered through the Faculty of Health Sciences and the Faculty of Arts & Science. Students will receive an integrated academic experience with seven concentrations to choose from, including life course, aging, and health; policies and policy analysis; sustainability and population health; and global health.

"For the Faculty of Health Sciences, this is an incredibly important step in our evolution," says Dr. Chris Hosgood, dean of the Faculty of Health Sciences. "The idea was to take advantage of the great variety of strengths we have, not only in the Faculty of Health Sciences but within the Faculty of Arts & Science and its affiliation with the Prentice Institute."

The Cultural, Social and Political Thought program brings a multifaceted approach to studying some of the most complex social problems. Political thought, in this degree, refers to generalized questions of justice and power. This differs from political science, which deals with the systematic study of government, politics, political behaviour, and political theory, and is offered through a separate MA major.

"In the social sciences and humanities, some feel that relying on the perspective of a single academic discipline can place constraints on understanding the social world and answering social problems," says Wood. "But if elements of history, anthropology, sociology, women and gender studies and other disciplines are brought in, then numerous transdisciplinary tools, concepts and frameworks are available to help critically assess and understand various kinds of social problems."

“Combining the expertise available through Arts & Science scholars associated with the Prentice Institute with that in the Faculty of Health Sciences creates a diverse doctoral program that will give students the background and skills to pursue high-level positions in the workforce,” says Dr. Muriel Mellow, associate dean in the Faculty of Arts & Science. “The graduate degrees in Cultural, Social and Political Thought will also position students to bring a multidisciplinary approach to some of the most complicated problems facing the world today. These students can also benefit from the scholarly exchange in the Centre for Oral History (COHT) and the Institute for Child and Youth Studies (I-CYS).”

The Campus Alberta Quality Council has rigorously reviewed the programs and their approval signifies the programs are of the highest standard. Both PhD programs are full-time and the application deadline is Feb. 1.

## **Backgrounder**

With the addition of these two new PhDs, the U of L will have added five new graduate programs since 2012, marking a significant step in the University’s development as a comprehensive research institution.

## **The Population Studies in Health PhD**

This full-time program will allow students from a variety of disciplines to pursue doctoral studies. Students will have a broad base of options to consider, including life course, aging, and health; intervention efficacy; diversity, disparities, inequalities and social determinants of health; policies and policy analysis; populations and demographic change; sustainability and population health; and global health.

Students’ academic work will reflect the option they have chosen and their thesis research, comprehensive examination, and course work will also be organized around their area of concentration and research problem. Many research questions emerge from the intersection of health and population, whether the researcher looks at local or global populations.

“It provides opportunities for doctoral supervision for our colleagues in the Faculty of Health Sciences, as well as many in the social science disciplines. It also draws heavily on the transdisciplinary strengths we have in the Prentice Institute for Population and Global Economy,” says Wood. “We’re not trying to replicate a professional public health program that you might see at other Alberta universities. This is very much an academic, research intensive kind of program.”

More information is available on the [School of Graduate Studies website](#).

## **The Cultural, Social and Political Thought graduate degrees**

The Cultural, Social and Political Thought (CTSC) graduate degrees prepare students to use the tools, methods and paradigms from many different disciplines to address complex social issues. The program builds on existing strengths in the Faculty of Arts & Science in sociology, anthropology, history, women and gender studies, and kinesiology.

The CTSC PhD is interdisciplinary and based on a cohort learning model which fosters an environment of cross-disciplinary engagement and exchange, research, peer mentoring, collaboration and team-based learning.

Students graduating from the CTSC major will have the practical tools necessary to work successfully with community partners and agencies to facilitate social changes. Graduates will demonstrate the professional skills and research competencies to undertake research that will contribute to the interdisciplinary body of knowledge. They'll have the ability to undertake positions of high responsibility in government, education, academia and social welfare organizations.

More information is available on the [School of Graduate Studies website](#).

-- 30 --

**Contact:**

Caroline Zentner, public affairs advisor  
403-394-3975 or 403-795-5403 (cell)  
caroline.zentner@uleth.ca