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Journalist Chris Hedges to speak at Laurier's Interdisciplinary Arts Conference

WATERLOO – Laurier's Interdisciplinary Arts Conference on March 27 will feature Chris Hedges, Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist, war correspondent and best-selling author. Through his keynote address, Hedges will take the audience from Jerry Springer and wrestling to corporate boardrooms and the White House. Student presentations will range from the Internet to the distribution of Bibles in Waterloo Region public schools.

The conference invites university students from across Canada to share their views through 20-minute presentations on the conference theme, "Hope: uncertainty, pluralism and innovation." Awards will be presented for the best undergraduate and graduate talks based on audience feedback.

Hedges' keynote address, *Empire of Illusion: The End of Literacy and the Triumph of Spectacle*, is based on his 2009 book by the same name. His lecture will explore how our culture and our lives are severed from the complexities of reality into the one-dimensional world of celebrities, infotainment, pornography, advertising and nationalism.

A foreign correspondent at the *New York Times* for 15 years, Hedges is now a senior fellow at The Nation Institute in New York City. A quote from his 2002 book, *War is a Force that Gives us Meaning*, was used in the opening of the Academy Award-winning film, *The Hurt Locker*.

"This conference is designed to recognize and celebrate the academic achievements of university students," said Andrew Moores, vice-president of Laurier's religion and culture society and conference organizer. "It's an opportunity for students to give voice to their academic insights outside the classroom and to encourage academic discourse."

The Interdisciplinary Arts Conference runs 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. in the Laurier science building. Hedges' keynote takes place from 1:30 p.m. to 2:30 p.m. followed by a book signing.

The conference is free and open to the media and public. For registration, further details and directions, click [here](#) or contact Melissa Ireland, 519-884-0710 ext. 3330 or mireland@wlu.ca.