

NEWS RELEASE



For Immediate Release
May 18, 2011 | 086-11

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Laurier professor discusses the importance of ‘uselessness’ at Toronto event

TORONTO – Laurier professor Tamas Dobozy will examine the pursuit of knowledge for its own sake in his presentation, “The Importance of Uselessness,” May 19 at noon as part of a speaker series at the Laurier Toronto office, 130 King St. W.

Dobozy’s presentation explores the value of non-instrumental approaches to learning, scholarship and creative work in academia. By “non-instrumental,” Dobozy refers to ideas, materials and findings that are not necessarily “useful” or “purposeful” in a directly applied way.

“I will encourage participants to consider, from a theoretical and historical angle, what might be lost and what risks we run if intellectual activity is entirely given over to satisfying immediate and topical policies,” said Dobozy, associate professor in Laurier’s Department of English and Film Studies, and the associate dean of the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies. “Also, what might we gain if we permit some space for advancing knowledge for its own sake, rather than some pre-determined end?”

Dobozy uses bacteriologist Alexander Fleming as an example. Fleming wrote a paper in 1929 about a mould he discovered growing in his Petri dish that he determined to be Penicillium. No one paid attention to his findings until 1940, when two scientists used his information to develop the antibiotic penicillin that went on to save millions of lives.

Dobozy has presented at numerous international conferences. He has published articles on Philip Roth, John Coltrane, Toni Morrison, Mavis Gallant, Richard Ford, Raymond Carver and Stuart Dybek, to name a few. He also published two critically acclaimed books of short stories: “When X Equals Marylou” and “Last Notes and Other Stories” – the latter was awarded the 2007 Governor General’s Award for English to French translation. His short stories have appeared all over North America, most recently in “The Best American Non-Required Reading 2010” and the “PEN/O Henry Prize Stories 2011.”

The presentation is open to the public. To register, please call 416-306-0866, or email Meagan Suckling at infotoronto@wlu.ca.

About Laurier Toronto

Laurier’s Toronto office is located on the main floor of the Exchange Tower building at 130 King St. W. The university’s Toronto office supports Laurier’s weekend-format MBA program, co-op work terms and employer partnerships, student recruitment, alumni relations, university development activities and government relations.