

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **Margaret Atwood and other luminaries join Big Thinking keynote line up for Congress 2012 in Kitchener-Waterloo**

Kitchener, Ontario, November 10, 2011—The Canadian Federation for the Humanities and Social Sciences (CFHSS), Wilfrid Laurier University and the University of Waterloo are pleased to announce seven Canadian and American luminaries who will join the 2012 Congress of the Humanities and Social Sciences *Big Thinking* lecture series. Margaret Atwood, Thomas Homer-Dixon, Janine Brodie, Chris Hedges, Mary Eberts, Sidonie Smith and Jane Urquhart will come to Waterloo in May, 2012 to speak to Congress attendees and interested members of the public on pressing social issues.

Congress 2012 will be hosted by Wilfrid Laurier University and the University of Waterloo from May 26 to June 2, 2012.

“The *Big Thinking* lecture series will open one of Canada’s largest multi-disciplinary conferences to the host community of Waterloo, giving attendees and organizers a forum to connect with community members,” said CFHSS president Graham Carr. “The stellar line-up of thinkers and their varied perspectives and disciplines are emblematic of the 2012 conference theme of ‘Crossroads: Scholarship for an Uncertain World’.”

The speakers being announced today are:

**Margaret Atwood** is the author of more than fifty volumes of poetry, children’s literature, fiction, and non-fiction. She has been recognized and awarded internationally for her work through awards and honorary degrees.

**Thomas Homer-Dixon** holds the Centre for International Governance Innovation Chair of Global Systems at the Balsillie School of International Affairs and is Director of the Waterloo Institute for Complexity and Innovation at the University of Waterloo. His research focuses on threats to global security in the 21st century and on how societies adapt to complex economic, ecological, and technological change.

**Janine Brodie** holds a Canada Research Chair in Political Economy and Social Governance at the University of Alberta. Her research engages with many of the core challenges in Canadian politics and public policy: citizenship, gender equality, globalization and contemporary transformations in governance. The Trudeau Foundation is co-sponsoring her lecture.

**Chris Hedges** is a Pulitzer Prize-winning American journalist, author, and former war correspondent, specializing in American and Middle Eastern politics and societies. He is currently a senior fellow at The Nation Institute in New York City.



**Jane Urquhart** is the author of seven internationally acclaimed novels. She has received nine honorary doctorates from Canadian universities and has been writer-in-residence at the University of Ottawa and at Memorial University of Newfoundland, the University of Toronto, and the University of Guelph.

**Mary Eberts** is a co-founder of the Women's Legal Education and Action Fund (LEAF) and has been litigation counsel to the Native Women's Association of Canada since 1991. She holds the Ariel F. Sallows Chair in Human Rights at the College of Law, University of Saskatchewan.

**Sidonie Smith** is a professor of English and Women's Studies at the University of Michigan. Her fields of interest include human rights and personal narratives, notably women's autobiographies.

"Through this series of public lectures and through Congress itself, researchers in the social sciences and humanities can take stock of the significant changes affecting Canada and the world, from new technologies and environmental and political changes to economic upheavals," said Max Blouw, Wilfrid Laurier University president and vice-chancellor. "Congress 2012's theme of 'Crossroads' and exceptional roster of Big Thinkers will facilitate discussion and collaboration on these complex global issues across disciplines."

*Big Thinking* lectures are open to both Congress delegates and community members. They are the cornerstone of Congress, highlighting the importance of humanities and social sciences scholarship on issues that affect all Canadians and giving community members a chance to experience Congress.

"Waterloo region is a hub of technological innovation with a deep and rich history," said Douglas Peers, University of Waterloo Congress co-chair and Dean of the Faculty of Arts. "This blend of old and new is an ideal backdrop for the reflection and forward-thinking discussion that takes place at Congress," he added.

### **About the Congress of the Humanities and Social Sciences**

Organized by the Canadian Federation for the Humanities and Social Sciences, the Congress of the Humanities and Social Sciences is the largest interdisciplinary conference in Canada. It brings together more than 70 scholarly associations in the humanities and social sciences. The University of Waterloo and Wilfrid Laurier University are co-hosting the 81<sup>st</sup> Congress from May 26 to June 2, 2012.

[www.congress2012.ca](http://www.congress2012.ca)

Congress brings together top experts in a variety of research areas. They are an excellent source for innovative story leads and information on cutting-edge research. Journalists interested in being accredited should email [media@fedcan.ca](mailto:media@fedcan.ca) to be added to the Congress 2012 media list.

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### **FOR MORE INFORMATION**

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