

# Spring Session 2026 In-Person

## ELLA NOON HOUR PROGRAM SPRING SESSION 2025

**Please Note: The Noon Hour Speaker program will be in-person only in Room ED-N2-115, 11:50 a.m. to 12:50 p.m. in the Education Centre located on the University Campus. The Noon-Hour program is restricted to members.**

**Tuesday, April 28: You are what you eat: How diet influences the gut microbiome and human health**

The trillions of bacteria and other microbes that live in the gastrointestinal tract are collectively referred to as the gut microbiome. The foods we eat shape our gut microbiome, which in turn can impact our health, both positively and negatively.

In this talk, we will start off by defining what the gut microbiome is and its essential functions for human health. We will then focus on how various aspects of diet influence the microbiome and conclude with a discussion of dietary recommendations that best support the gut microbiome and overall well-being.



### **Speaker: Anissa Arnet**

Dr. Anissa Armet, PhD, RD is a registered dietitian and postdoctoral fellow in the Department of Pediatrics at the University of Alberta. Anissa completed her Bachelor of Science in Nutrition and Food Sciences with distinction in 2018, and her PhD in Nutrition and Metabolism in 2024. Her research focuses on understanding the effects of targeted nutritional strategies on the gut microbiome and human health, specifically in inflammatory bowel diseases (IBD), and whether the microbiome can be used to predict responses to dietary interventions and optimize health.

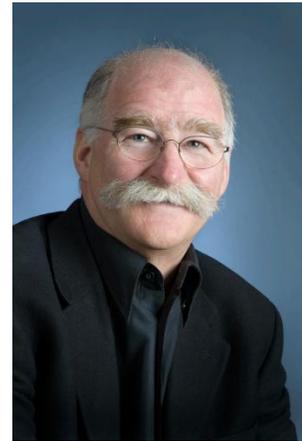
**Wednesday, April 29 25th Anniversary Kick-off – Details to be announced.**

## **Thursday, April 30: BAAKFIL\_ Respectful and Affordable Densification**

This lecture explores the principles behind BAAKFIL, a new business model and design approach to infill housing that respects the character of mature neighbourhoods by preserving existing housing while adding gentle density to a site. This is in marked contrast to current zoning strategies that start with demolition and end with expensive overbuilding that is rapidly atomizing our mature neighbourhoods. BAAKFIL explores ideas (using 2 demonstration projects) about making cities, respectful densification, preserving communities and addressing the housing crisis at the same time.

### **Speaker: Barry Johns**

Dr. Barry Johns is an award winning and widely published architect in Edmonton, Alberta. He is a former Chancellor of the College of Fellows, Royal Architectural Institute of Canada and Director of Practice for the Alberta Association of Architects. His career includes an extensive tenure with Arthur Erickson in Vancouver and spans private practice, teaching and public service. He received the Doctor of Design (DDES) from the University of Calgary in 2023 for his pioneering work in developing BAAKFIL, a new approach to addressing the housing crisis in Canada. His website is [www.bjalstudio.ca](http://www.bjalstudio.ca)



## **Friday, May 1: Saving the Former Royal Alberta Museum: the Next Chapter!**

We will talk about the former Royal Alberta Museum from the time of its design and opening in 1967, through the decades of its life as our Provincial Museum, to its closing in 2015-2018. Once closed the vacant museum became the subject of much debate and advocacy, resulting in a decision to demolish it in 2024, and a subsequent rethinking in the summer of 2025. Hear from a member of a team working on their proposal to adapt the building into a community hub that Edmonton can be proud of.



**Speaker: Vedran Skopac**

Vedran is a Principal at Reimagine Architects and Adjunct Professor at the School of Architecture, Planning and Landscape (SAPL) at the University of Calgary. With more than 30 years of experience across Canada, Europe, and China, Vedran’s work focuses on questioning assumptions and developing design solutions that respond to the social, cultural, and historical fabric of each place. He sees architecture as a catalyst for human connection. In addition to reimagining the future of the former provincial museum, Vedran is also currently participating as a co-researcher with the U of A Faculty of Nursing on the impact of the built environment on mental health in the aging population.

**Monday, May 4: Elections and Electoral Systems**

This session will explore voting systems, looking at options such as our current first-past-the-post approach, proportional representation, and blended models such as Germany’s.

**Speaker: Dr. Feo Snagovsky**

Dr. Feo Snagovsky is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Political Science at the University of Alberta. His research focuses on the comparative analysis of elections and political behaviour – particularly in the role that political elites play in shaping identity and public opinion. His work has been published in *Party Politics*, *Parliamentary Affairs*, *Government and Opposition*, *Electoral Studies*, the *Canadian Journal of Political Science* and the *Australian Journal of Political Science*.



## **Tuesday, May 5: Lyme, CanLyme and Entomologists in Action**

Lyme disease is a complex and contentious zoonotic disease. Entomologists are integral to the process of improved public dialogue, driven by the need to translate science into action to better the lives of Canadians.



### **Speaker: Dr. Janet Sperling**

Janet Sperling is an entomologist intrigued by insects and fascinated by the bacterial communities they carry. She received her BSc (Horticulture) in 1983, MSc (Entomology) in 1988 and PhD (Systematics and Evolution) in 2021 from the University of Alberta.

## **Wednesday, May 6: A Twisted History of the Edmonton Fringe**

Gerald Osborn has been producing Fringe shows since 1986 and working at the Fringe Theatre Admin Desk since 1989. As the newly-minted Official Fringe Historian, he has lived through most of the history and is chronicling the good, the bad and the ugly (well, perhaps not ugly, just a little unsightly). His plan is to explain the Edmonton Fringe's origins, how it works and how its presence benefits our community, tossing in as many Fringe anecdotes as we have time for.

### **Speaker: Gerald Osborn**

Grizzled old theatre veteran Gerald Osborn has been creating theatre since 1986. His work has been performed in such exotic locales as Vancouver, Calgary, Medicine Hat, Grande Prairie, High River, Camrose, Leduc and Edson. He began working at Fringe Theatre in 1989 and, over the decades, has been witness to all sorts of dramatic twists and turns in the theatrical community. This made him the perfect candidate to become Official Fringe Historian. Now he spends his days trawling through old Fringe programmes and yellowing newspaper articles looking for anecdotes and historical gems to be used in the creation of a massive Fringe Timeline. After all, the 50th Fringe is only six Fringes away!



## **Thursday, May 7: Creak, Crackle, Pop: Understanding Osteoarthritis**

A review of typical symptoms and signs of osteoarthritis as well as management options. May include brief information about rheumatoid arthritis if time permits.

### **Speaker: Dr. Whitney Hung**



Dr. Hung is a Rheumatologist at the Kaye Edmonton Clinic. Her specialty focuses on autoimmune conditions that often affect the joints, though they can affect other organs as well (for example, rheumatoid arthritis, lupus, myositis, etc.). She completed her medical training and residency at the University of Alberta, and much of her research interests revolve around access to and quality of care.