MSc in Experimental Therapeutics

There has been significant interest in this exciting new MSc course, run jointly with the Department of Clinical Pharmacology. The first module ‘Structure of Clinical Trials and Experimental Therapeutics’ started on 8th October 2007. The modules can be taken as standalone courses or used to build up to the full MSc qualification.

New Online Plagiarism Course

The Department’s Technology-Assisted Lifelong Learning unit recently developed the online course ‘Good Practice in Citation and the Avoidance of Plagiarism’ for the University of Oxford’s Graduate Skills Advisory Group. The course, which won an award in last year’s OxTALENT competition, provides an introduction to the issues surrounding plagiarism and equips graduate students with some of the skills and judgement they need to apply to their academic work and publications. This is the first in a planned series of online courses delivering basic academic skills training to graduate students. The course is freely available to all staff and full-time students at the University from: http://www.tall.ox.ac.uk/plagiarism. Students studying CPD courses with an online component will also be able to access the course from within their course materials.

New Postgraduate Diploma in Paediatric Infectious Diseases

In association with the University’s Department of Paediatrics and the European Society for Paediatric Infectious Diseases (ESPID), the Continuing Professional Development Centre is delighted to offer this part-time, blended learning (online and face-to-face elements) programme, which is due to launch in 2008/9.

The Postgraduate Diploma places the practice of paediatric infectious diseases in the broader context of applied sciences, such as pathogenesis, population biology and epidemiology. The Programme focuses on clinical (applied) aspects, underpinned by basic science to provide both breadth and depth.

The Programme has been designed so that students can complete an Oxford University Postgraduate Diploma or they can undertake components of the programme on a standalone basis.

For further information please visit our website:
http://cpd.conted.ox.ac.uk/pid/
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Email: pid@conted.ox.ac.uk
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The Forgotten Prime Minister

Dr Angus Hawkins, Director of International Programmes, received rave reviews for his recently published book, The Forgotten Prime Minister: The 14th Earl of Derby Volume 1 Ascent 1799-1851.

Lord Derby was the first British statesman to become prime minister three times and remains the longest serving party leader in modern British politics. Yet, no full-length biography of Derby has ever been published. Largely airbrushed out of Victorian politics, he has become the forgotten prime minister.

“The most significant book on Victorian politics in half a century.”
Professor John Charmley, University of East Anglia

“….this is real history. Unlike so many political biographers, Hawkins has really mastered the archives. There is much in this book that is new, much that will permanently change interpretations of the period. It is about real politicians, not caricatures or faceless abstractions.”
Leslie Mitchell, The Literary Review

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Digging the Romans

The seventh season of excavation at an important Iron Age and Roman site at Marcham/Frilford in west Oxfordshire took place in July. Students and staff concentrated on the Roman temple precinct and amphitheatre-type building. The University has been excavating at this site since the late 18th century with the discovery of a cemetery and then the major uncovering of the Roman temple in the 1930s. Despite the awful summer weather resulting in some flooded trenches and very wet diggers, we continued this tradition of uncovering important evidence of Oxfordshire’s remote past.

The temple forms the central focus of a complex of buildings dating from the 1st to 4th centuries AD, with perhaps the most interesting of these being a massive stone-built arena close to the temple which is a cross between an amphitheatre and a theatre. This was probably the site of religious plays and ceremonies associated with worshipping in the temple and around its banks we have found many shrines with objects and animals buried as offerings to the deities.

Beneath all of this Roman evidence there is an Iron Age settlement dating back to at least 700 BC. In the summer we will be exploring this more fully. You can read more at the project website (http://www.arch.ox.ac.uk/research/research_projects/marcham) and you can learn more about archaeology and excavation by signing up for the Level 1 Certificate in Archaeology (http://www.conted.ox.ac.uk/cert).}

Agile Methods in Software Engineering

This new addition to the Software Engineering Programme is a five-day course examining how ‘agile methods’ are challenging conventional wisdom regarding systems development processes and practices. The course provides today’s software development professional with all the tools needed to use agile methods in practice.

It looks at the different agile methods available and guides participants on practical issues such as determining the suitability of agile methods for a particular project, and evaluating how well a project is following agile principles. More information can be found at:

http://www.softeng.ox.ac.uk/subjects/AGM.html

This course has proved very popular and information on future runs can be requested by emailing info@softeng.ox.ac.uk or calling +44 (0)1865 283525.

CPD in Cognitive Therapy

The CPD Centre is pleased to announce that it will shortly be launching a new part-time Master’s programme in Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy (MSt in MBCT) in association with Professor Mark Williams, Dr Melanie Fennell and other colleagues from the Department of Psychiatry. The MSt in MBCT, starting in September 2008 with a deadline for applications in March 2008, is designed for qualified and experienced healthcare professionals.

MBCT derives from a model of cognitive vulnerability to depressive relapse that assumes that people who have previously experienced episodes of major depression differ from those who have not in the patterns of negative thinking that become activated in mildly depressed moods. MBCT is now recommended in the guidelines of the National Institute of Clinical Excellence (NICE) as a treatment of choice for recurrent depression.

Oxford has a worldwide reputation as a centre of excellence in cognitive therapy practice, training and supervision. This reputation rests in large part on the existing highly successful Oxford Postgraduate Diploma in Cognitive Therapy, and the new Postgraduate Diploma/MSc in Advanced Cognitive Therapy Studies.

Contact for further information on MBCT: wendy.swift@psych.ox.ac.uk; for the Oxford Postgraduate Diploma in Cognitive Therapy and the Postgraduate Diploma/MSc in Advanced Cognitive Therapy Studies: kim.morris-smith@obmh-nhs.uk.

Summer Programmes held at Exeter College

For six weeks last summer, historic Exeter College was home to students enrolled on summer programmes in English literature, history, politics and creative writing. Students attended lecture series given by leading Oxford scholars and distinguished visiting speakers, and participated in seminars and workshops taught by specialist tutors. They also took part in reading groups and debates, and enjoyed a varied programme of social events including receptions and formal dinners, talks, tours and excursions. The long-established literature and history courses continued to recruit well; the creative writing programme, in only its second year, expanded to meet growing demand. The diversity of the students’ nationalities and backgrounds, combined with a shared enthusiasm for their subjects, fostered a lively and happy learning environment.

http://international.conted.ox.ac.uk/oxfordexperience.php
20th Oxford/University of Virginia Programme

Last year we celebrated the 20th programme in a collaboration with the University of Virginia (UVa) going back to 1993. That initial programme was attended by Dr John Casteen, President of UVa, who sent a personal representative last year to demonstrate his continuing commitment to the collaboration between our respective institutions. Also attending were two participants from that very first programme. The central theme of the initial and of the latest programmes was national leadership, in the persons of Thomas Jefferson and Winston Churchill. The photograph shows the participants and International Programmes staff gathered on the hall steps at Merton College, where the programme is now held.

A First First for the Department

Peter Dunn talks about his experience of the Foundation Certificate in Modern History leading to a First Class degree at Oxford University:

“My early education was slanted towards business and getting a corporate job, although I did get a GCSE in History. In 2002, after completing a professional qualification in Marketing, I was keen to broaden my academic interests and started reading more history. I found that I had a real appetite for this subject so began thinking about studying for a history-related qualification. I came across the Continuing Education site and discovered that a Foundation Certificate in Modern History is offered to mature students. It seemed ideal given that it is at undergraduate level, but targeting students who had not necessarily studied history for a while, or ever. I was definitely attracted by the possibility of progressing to full-time study at Oxford University. Living in London I knew this would be a big commitment, because of the need to travel to classes, but I was actually rather excited about the idea of leaving the big city once a week and travelling over to Oxford!

Tom, Christine and the other tutors had clearly worked hard on the format of the classes. The material was challenging but I really felt that we were being consistently taught well. The tutorials provided a valuable additional layer of support and Rewley House itself was an ideal environment for learning. One of the great benefits of this course is having access to the University and faculty libraries. I think that this proximity to a centre of such academic excellence played a major part in maintaining my enthusiasm. And for those who decided to continue on beyond the Foundation Certificate, both Tom and Christine provided excellent support and guidance.

At the end of the course I was successful in applying for a full-time place at New College to study for a history degree. The tutorial system is simply the best method for learning that I have ever come across - but it can be stressful! Fortunately, the Foundation Certificate prepared me well for this system so I never felt overwhelmed.

I was delighted to achieve a First Class degree and in October I began an MSt in Historical Research at Wolfson College, under the supervision of Professor Roy Foster.”

Recognising and Rewarding Excellence in Teaching Award

The Mathematical Finance Programme teaching team is delighted to have been awarded £4000 in recognition of the positive effect of restructuring the course and revising the course material of the MSc in Mathematical Finance. The award was presented by the Vice-Chancellor on 13th November in the Milner Hall at Rhodes House. http://cpd.conted.ox.ac.uk/mathsfinance/
The present Summer School has its roots in ‘The Oxford Summer Meeting’ which took place in 1888 as part of the University Extension movement. In 1947 the Summer Meeting was transformed into a Summer School for Graduates from Overseas, the forerunner of OUDCE’s International Programmes. In 1910 the first WEA Oxford Summer School was held at Balliol College. The accent on the WEA Summer School was on scholarship and serious academic work and in 1975 this Summer School settled in Rewley House and is now Oxford University Summer School for Adults. Alison Parry, one of the students attending last year, first attended OUSSA in 1936 or 1937. She was certainly present in 1938 when this group photograph was taken (the very young lady with dark hair in the middle at the back) and has only missed a few years of OUSSA for wartime, arrival of babies etc since. She is now in her nineties.

Oxford University Summer School for Adults

Technology-Assisted Lifelong Learning

Technology-Assisted Lifelong Learning (TALL) is the Department’s e-learning development and research unit.

TALL has been busy completing the development of seven new online courses, launched in 2007. Further details of the new art history, English literature and philosophy courses are available from: http://onlinecourses.conted.ox.ac.uk/

TALL won two awards in last year’s OxTALENT Awards competition. The improved departmental website (http://www.conted.ox.ac.uk/) was runner-up in the ‘Administration, Support Services and Research’ category and the ‘Good Practice in Citation and the Avoidance of Plagiarism’ online course was runner-up in the ‘Teaching and Learning Project created with Professional Assistance’ category.

Work on the Isthmus and Phoebe research projects has continued. The project team demonstrated an improved version of the Phoebe Pedagogic Planner tool at the Association of Learning Technology conference (ALT-C) held in Nottingham on 4th September. TALL has also continued researching the use of Massively Multiplayer Online (MMO) environments to support e-learning and, in July 2007, TALL’s David White presented a paper at the Games, Learning and Society conference in Madison, Wisconsin, on behalf of the JISC Emerge project. In August, David and Lawrie Phipps from JISC gave a podcast on the impact Web 2.0 technologies are having on education and research. To download the podcast and to find out the latest news, visit the TALL blog at: http://tallblog.conted.ox.ac.uk/

In 2007, over 350 students applied for more than 40 OUSSA courses in a variety of subjects such as archaeology, local history, philosophy, science, theology, music and literature. The majority of OUSSA students come from the UK but we also host students from Australia and New Zealand, the USA and Canada, and several from Western Europe. All make their way to Rewley House to enjoy a week or more of seminars and coursework but also good food, great conversation, social events and time to explore the culture (and shopping!) opportunities that Oxford has to offer. Each week ends with a special farewell dinner, rousing applause for the tutors and the traditional entertainment by staff and students including instrumental music, singing, poetry and prose. With an average 60% return rate amongst OUSSA students, many cannot wait to sign up for 2008!

Contact us

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Director, International Programmes: Dr Angus Hawkins

Director, Public Programmes: Philip Healy

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