PREDICTING A CHANGING WORLD

Until recently, regional climate prediction knowledge has been accessible only to a handful of scientists.

Now, a new online resource – climateeducation.net – offers two online short courses (one of which is free) and supports an online community of knowledge.

‘In order to plan for the effects of future changes in climate we need to know the changes most likely to occur on a regional scale,’ says Met Office project leader Dr Richard Jones. ‘For example, a water engineer in Kenya might be most interested in the predictions about drought in Kenya’s Turkana district, whilst a city planner in London will more likely need to know the expected change in the occurrence of storm surges in order to begin planning flood defences now.’

Climateeducation.net is a combined effort: Oxford University academics in Atmospheric, Oceanic & Planetary Physics join specialists at the Met Office’s Hadley Centre in providing the climate prediction expertise, with the Department’s Technology-Assisted Lifelong Learning (TALL) team and Continuing Professional Development Centre supporting the delivery of the online courses and educational components. Climateeducation.net is part of the NERC-funded RECIPROcate project: ‘Regional Climate International: Providing Online Climatological Applied Training and Education’.

Course one introduces the concepts of regional climate prediction and the use of regional climate change data. It’s a stand-alone, un-tutored course that can be taken at the convenience of the user. It’s freely available online or on CD-ROM. The second course is a more in-depth look at regional climate modeling. It’s intended for those with a scientific background, and can be taken either as a standalone learning experience or as a prerequisite for attendance on the UK Met Office’s PRECIS (‘Providing REgional Climates for Impacts Studies’) face-to-face workshop. For more information, please see: http://climateeducation.net/.

AFRICAN COMMONWEALTH INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS LAW SCHOLARSHIPS

Five new scholarships per year will enable scholars from African Commonwealth countries to join the Department’s Master’s programme in International Human Rights Law.

The scholarships will cover all University tuition fees, living costs and daily travel – a value of about £23,000 per year – and will be available from October 2012. The Commonwealth Scholarship Commission and the Foreign Office’s Chevening Scholarship Fund will jointly pay for the scholarships.

Dr Andrew Shacknove, Director of the International Human Rights Law programme, said: ‘The part-time format of the degree programme means that human rights advocates who work or have a family can also further their studies. We are looking for people with an excellent academic record, who have work experience and will take a leading role in furthering human rights projects in the coming years.’

The two-year part-time Master of Studies degree in International Human Rights Law has 30 places available each year. Study options on the residential courses in Oxford include: human rights law concerning vulnerable populations such as women, children, minorities and indigenous peoples; economic, social and cultural rights; and the law of armed conflict. For more information please see: http://www.conted.ox.ac.uk/humanrightslaw.

LAST REMAINING SEATS FOR SUMMER SCHOOL

A week-long exploration of a favourite subject can still be yours this summer: the Oxford University Summer School for Adults (OUSSA) is open for enrolments until 1 June 2011. There are history, literature, art, philosophy, science and music courses on offer. Join like-minded fellow-learners on this engaging summer programme.

Learn more about OUSSA’s range of accredited, one-week courses at: http://www.conted.ox.ac.uk/courses/summerschools/oussa/.

NEW VACCINOLOGY BURSARIES

Oxford University joins Crucell N.V., the global biopharmaceutical company, to offer funded places on the vaccinology short courses offered by the Department.

Building vaccine capacity and knowledge in developing countries is crucial in meeting the global demand for vaccines. The bursaries cover all University tuition fees, living costs and accommodation during the course. For more information on the vaccinology programme, please see: http://www.conted.ox.ac.uk/vaccinology.
CONTINUING EDUCATION FOR NEW CONSTRUCTION ENGINEERING CENTRE

The newly announced Laing O’Rourke Centre for Construction Engineering at Oxford University will examine global trends influencing the built environment of future generations. The Department for Continuing Education is pleased to join this effort as providers of continuing education in support of the new centre. Read more at: http://www.ox.ac.uk/media/news_stories/2011/110125.html.

POLITICAL ECONOMY OF THE ENVIRONMENT

Two leading Oxford University economists warn the government of the urgent need to tackle climate change.

Professor Jonathan Michie, Director of the Department, was joined by Professor Sir David Hendry, Professor of Economics and Director of the Institute for Economic Modelling at the Oxford Martin School, at a conference held on 4 May at Rewley House.

Professor Michie has drawn up a top ten list of policy proposals, as advocated in his new book The Political Economy of the Environment, which was launched at the conference. He stressed that there can be no ‘pick and mix’ option but ‘a whole range of policy measures needs to be pursued as a coherent package’.

‘The credit crunch in 2008 showed that economic policy was inadequate. ‘Light touch’ regulation turned out to be ‘soft touch’ regulation’, he said. ‘The Chairman of the US Federal Reserve blamed this on a ‘flaw’ within mainstream economic thinking. In truth there were many flaws and these are leading to equally inadequate policies on the environment.’ Read Professor Michie’s top ten policy proposals on our website at: http://www.conted.ox.ac.uk/top-ten/.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION COMES OF AGE

Our part-time Diploma in Environmental Conservation is celebrating its 21st birthday this year and our Advanced Diploma course is entering its 10th year.

The Diploma course, which began in 1990, focuses on UK wildlife conservation while the Advanced Diploma embraces global environmental issues. Inevitably, both courses look at climate change and how this is affecting wildlife, ecosystems and global resources such as water and food production.

Students come from many backgrounds: some already work in the environment sector, but an equal number are highly qualified in a different field and are seeking career change. UK students are joined by those from many countries overseas, including Brazil, Nigeria, Hong Kong, South Africa, Germany, Hungary and South Korea. All share a passion for making a difference to the environment. For further details about both courses: tel: +44 (0)1865 286953, email: envcon@conted.ox.ac.uk or visit our website at: http://www.conted.ox.ac.uk/env.

VIRTUAL OPEN EVENTS

Over 30 prospective students from seven countries attended two recent virtual open events, one each for the MSt in Literature and Arts and the MSt in the History of Design. The sixty minute online events benefited those who could not conveniently travel to Oxford. Attendees met course directors, partook in real-time question and answer sessions, and had a narrated photo tour of the Department and Oxford. Both events have received several hundred visits since being posted to our website. The Department plans to make virtual open events a regular part of our offerings.

The MSc in the History of Design is still accepting applications – see the virtual event here: http://www.conted.ox.ac.uk/mhodopenday.

SPEAKING OUT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

Dr Nazila Ghanea, our University Lecturer in International Human Rights Law, was part of a panel discussion on BBC’s Woman’s Hour in March. The show explored the case of Sakineh Mohammadi Ashtiani, an Iranian woman who gained the attention of human rights groups globally for a conviction of adultery and accompanying sentence of death by stoning. Listen to the show here: http://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episode/b00zslfb/Womans_hour_31_03_2011/. The segment starts at 50 seconds on the BBC iPlayer timer, and ends at approximately 10 minutes.

Dr Ghanea also presented at a UN workshop on the prohibition of incitement to hatred in February. Read more at: http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/workshopprohibitionincitementhatred.aspx.

COURSE HIGHLIGHT

TEXTS IN TRANSIT: THE CULTURAL AFTERLIFE OF THE KING JAMES BIBLE
25 June 2011

Marking the 400th anniversary of the King James Bible, this day school will explore the use of the King James Bible in art, music, literature and theology, examining the degree to which the biblical text has transformed culture.

http://www.conted.ox.ac.uk/textsintransit
STUDENT SPOTLIGHT: CAROLINE WITHELL

Caroline Withall stepped away from a career in law to pursue an old passion for things historical on our part-time MSc in English Local History.

‘I studied history at undergraduate level, but went on to do a law conversion course. I trained at a city law firm and spent nearly seven years in the law as a litigator, my last post being Director of Legal for a regulatory body.’

‘Although enjoying a successful career, I did not really enjoy law as an occupation and was interested in changing to an academic career.’

‘When I embarked upon the MSc in English Local History I was not sure where it would take me, but it reignited my interest in studying, leading me to conclude a career change to academia was both possible and desirable. I decided to pursue a DPhil – extending the research I had already done for my MSc dissertation – and was lucky enough to receive full ESRC funding.’

‘For my DPhil I am researching child labour in the industrial revolution. This may seem a well-worn path; everybody knows about children toiling in mines and mills. However, much less is known about children who worked in port towns, and I am researching the Atlantic towns of Liverpool, Bristol & Southampton. I came to this subject area through the Advanced paper I took in my first year of the MSc. I enjoyed the course so much I wanted to investigate matters for myself further. The support and encouragement of the tutor allowed me to do so.’

‘To anyone considering studying local history with the Department I’d say ‘take the plunge’. Although hard work it is an extremely rewarding course, with supportive tutors who will encourage you to explore your own personal interests further.’

Read Caroline’s complete story at: http://www.conted.ox.ac.uk/students/alumni/spotlights/localhistory.php and learn more about our local history programme: http://www.conted.ox.ac.uk/localhistorycourses.

DIGITAL VISITORS, DIGITAL RESIDENTS?

Understanding students’ expectations and motivations in using online technologies can help universities to develop and deliver the right digital learning resources.

The Department’s Technology-Assisted Lifelong Learning (TALL) team and OCLC Research (an international library service and research organisation) are collaborating on a JISC-funded study to explore the notion that learners can be classified either as ‘digital visitors’ or ‘digital residents’.

Digital residents tend to use the Web in many aspects of their lives. They develop an identity, participate in online culture, and view the web as a venue for conducting their social life. In contrast, digital visitors use the Web as a tool for achieving specific goals as needs arise. They do not develop an online identity nor participate in online culture in the same way, or to the same extent, that digital residents do.

‘This is timely research which will move forward our understanding of how learners engage with the web,’ said David White, Co-Manager of TALL. ‘It is especially exciting to be part of a trans-Atlantic partnership which allows us to compare students’ digital learning strategies in different cultural contexts.’ Read more about the study at: http://www.tall.ox.ac.uk/research/current/visitorsresidents.php.

PHILOSOPHY & DEMENTIA

Marianne Talbot, the Department’s Director of Studies in Philosophy and author of Keeping Mum: Caring for Someone with Dementia will be interviewed about the philosophy of dementia and caring by Paul Heiney, well-known writer and broadcaster, and currently presenter of ITV1’s Countrywise. This event, which is part of Oxfringe 2011, is free and takes place on 25 June, 2011, from 7-8.30pm, in the Geoffrey Thomas Lecture Theatre, Rewley House, 1 Wellington Square, Oxford OX1 2JA. All are welcome.

TALKING TO CAMERA

Learning to face a camera with confidence.

The ability to speak fluently and convincingly into the lens of a camera is no longer a skill needed only by professional broadcasters. With sites such as YouTube becoming increasingly influential, and with the growth of video phones, Skype, and video content within websites, the ability to talk to camera is becoming as important a communication skill as writing a letter once was. The course ‘Talking to Camera’ is taught by Paul Heiney, well-known writer and broadcaster, and presenter on ITV’s Countrywise. For more information, see: http://www.conted.ox.ac.uk/courses/details.php?id=W213-1.
CREATIVE WRITING NEWS

Dr Jake Simons, MSt in Creative Writing tutor, published his second novel The English German Girl with Polygon Books in April 2011. Set in the Second World War, the novel revolves around the story of the Kindertransport. For further information please see: http://www.theenglishgermangirl.com.

Dr Clare Morgan, Director of the MSt in Creative Writing, presented her new novel A Book For All and None at the Sunday Times Oxford Literary Festival. The novel will be published by Weidenfeld in June.

Jane Draycott, senior course tutor for the MSt in creative Writing, publishes her new translation of the medieval dream-poem Pearl with Carcanet this April. One of the great treasures of the British Library, Pearl is an account of loss and consolation that retains its force across six centuries.

MSt in Creative Writing student Fortuna Burke has recently founded the Oxford Screenwriting Society. The Society invites students who are working on scripts for screen, radio, television or stage to attend their weekly Saturday workshops, in which works are read by actors, followed by discussion and critique. The society currently has a TV scriptwriting contest afoot; information about this may be found on their Facebook page: http://www.facebook.com/#!/home.php?sk=group_111948692214419. More information about the society can be found at: http://www.ouss.co.uk or by emailing: fortunaburke@hotmail.com.

FSP EUROPEAN STUDY TOUR

Members of the Oxford University Foreign Service Programme (FSP) undertook their annual European tour in March.

The tour, an integral part of the Foreign Service Programme, took in Brussels, Strasbourg, Geneva and Paris. Participants visited a range of international, European and other institutions, including the EU, NATO, the European Court of Human Rights, various UN and other bodies in Geneva such as the International Committee of the Red Cross, and the Quai d’Orsay (Foreign Ministry) in Paris, and also met with local members of UK diplomatic missions.

Foreign Service Programme members are mainly serving diplomats from a range of countries spending an intensive academic year in Oxford. The programme has been in operation for over 40 years, and offers a Certificate and Postgraduate Diploma in Diplomatic Studies, leading to a Master of Studies in Diplomatic Studies. For more information about the Foreign Service Programme, please see: http://www.conted.ox.ac.uk/fsp.

ONLINE USER ACCOUNTS & SHOPPING BASKETS

The Department’s website will soon offer students the ability to create an account and make use of an online shopping basket for enrolling on courses. Account holders will be able to manage personal details, sort and save courses to their shopping basket, and enrol on one or more courses simultaneously. The new system is expected to go online over the summer, in time for Autumn enrolments.

Phase two developments will include the ability to enrol multiple people onto courses at the same time, and to gain online access to course-related information (such as joining instructions, excursion details, etc.) immediately upon enrolment.

Comments and suggestions on the improvement of our website and online systems are always welcome: webmaster@conted.ox.ac.uk.

Become a Friend

The Friends of Lifelong Learning play a key role in supporting the work of the Department, in particular through their support for facilities, library resources and student bursaries. Members enjoy many benefits, including the opportunity to meet new people, to participate in special events at the University, and to enjoy discounted fees on some of the Department’s course offerings. There are organisations for both UK and North American Friends. For more information about the Friends, please contact the Secretary, Ana Pastega.

Tel: +44 (0)1865 612015
Email: ana.pastega@kellogg.ox.ac.uk

NANOMEDICINE SUMMER SCHOOL
4 - 8 July 2011

Nanotechnology for medicine and healthcare. Info: Tel: +44 (0)1865 286953, email: nano@conted.ox.ac.uk. http://www.conted.ox.ac.uk/1990-22