

**KAREN FOLEY:** Good afternoon, and welcome to the Student Hub Live faculty of Arts and Social Sciences showcase. My name's Karen Foley, and I'm a lecturer and an associate lecturer here at the Open University. And I'll be your host for the afternoon where we have nine new modules from the faculty of Arts and Social Sciences to tell you all about. Now, for those of you who are watching and engaging, which I hope you are, you'll see a chat screen, you'll see some widgets, some interactive tools. And We'd like to know where you are, how you're feeling, which level you're studying, which sort of subject area you're studying.

So if you can fill those in for us, that will be much appreciated. And it's good fun. To select the widget that you'd like to fill in, just click on it. It will open. Select the option that applies to you, and then you close to submit the answers. Sometimes you'll see one that's got three options. That's a word cloud. And they're really pretty when they come through, but we need three things in them. So if you can only think of one or two things, just put a full stop or little cross for the other one, and then you can submit your answers right there.

Now, this is a live and interactive show, and you can chat, ask us questions, talk about what you've had for lunch, talk about how anxious you might be about your EMA, or how excited you might be about your exams coming up. You can talk about anything. And those things will be fed through into this discussion by Sophie and HJ who are on our hot desk. Now, if you're on the live stream only link, that's just the watch only link, there's also a chat function there. So do ask us any questions.

And if we haven't answered them, or don't get around to including them in the conversation and there's something you'd still like to know, email us-- [studenthub@open.ac.uk](mailto:studenthub@open.ac.uk), and we will get back to you. Sophie and HJ, tell us how it all works.

**HJ:** Well, we're just here to chat. That's basically it. If you got any thoughts, comments, and questions, we're here to put them to the fantastic guests that we're getting throughout the day. But if you just want to chat about pretty much anything, then you know, we're happy to do it. Lunch is something that always comes up. But if you're just popping in and out, or if you're new, just say hi. We'd love to hear from you, love to know what you're studying. But yeah, pretty much anything goes in the chat. It's a--

**SOPHIE:** If there's anything else that we miss, do drop us a email. It's [studenthub@open.ac.uk](mailto:studenthub@open.ac.uk), and you

can follow us on Twitter as well-- @StudentHubLive. Also, just to mention the little pin button in the top right hand corner of the chat. So if it is moving a bit quickly and you can't keep up, if you click on that, it will pin. You can then navigate your way through the chat as you wish. So fingers crossed, we'll be able to catch up with you all again today.

**HJ:** And we've got lots of great resources. So we'll be posting the links to those. So if you want to find anything out for you, we can post those. And also head over to the resources section on the website where there's a lot more there as well.

**KAREN FOLEY:** Lovely. You can also change the layout of the screen on the bottom right hand corner to make the chat or the video larger or smaller. Let me tell you what we've got in store for you today. First, I'm going to interview the executive dean Ian Fribbance. And then we're going to look at DD801, principles of social and psychological inquiry, exploring religion, counselling and forensic psychology, the making of Welsh history, the masters in creative writing part two, advancing social psychology, art and its global histories, the British Isles and modern world 1789 to 1914, and the MA in philosophy part one.

Whew, that's a lot to get through to. So dip in and out as you want to. And if you can't make all of these sessions, or you'd like to catch up, then there will be that service available shortly afterwards. Enough of that. Let's get on to the real meat of it all. So Ian, welcome to the Student Hub Live. Now, this is very, very exciting for us. It's the first time we've had a fass showcase. And there's so much innovative and exciting new curriculum. Tell us, what some of the highlights are for you.

**IAN FRIBBANCE:** Well, obviously fass is involved in updating and refreshing its curriculum all the time. So it's great to see so many new modules coming through. I think particularly this year, there's a focus on new postgraduate offerings. So we're in a position where we're looking carefully at the postgraduate, and improving what we're doing in that space.

**KAREN FOLEY:** Now, some of the modules are using new things. So we've spoken a little bit this morning in our career session about some of the innovative things that we're doing. And I know some of these are using things like OpenStudio to allow students to collaborate on certain things, and different interactive experiences. So as well as the subject matter being very innovative, there's also an innovative way of teaching it.

**IAN FRIBBANCE:** Yeah, that's right. So obviously the university and the faculty is in the process of becoming more digital by design. So there's a lot more kind of digital innovation going on in the modules.

So the postgraduate ones generally will be all online. And as you say, there are some particular features there, like OpenStudio which allow students to collaborate with each other. Again, that's a trend that's happening across higher education, in particular relevant to OU students who, historically, would work very individually, and sometimes in a kind of lonely way on their own.

So collaboration is important. We've also got the online rooms coming in, which is the new tutorial channel for OU students, which will allow, again, a greater interactivity in live online tutorials. That's a significant thing for all students, actually, to look forward to in '17 J.

**KAREN FOLEY:** You mentioned collaboration very briefly, there. But some of these modules will have great opportunities. And as we're more digital by design-- and you can access these online rooms, there's a greater ability for students to be able to connect with each other and learn things together. But a lot of the time, these are more than just an exercise. Students really benefit from learning together, don't they?

**IAN FRIBBANCE:** That's right. And it's always been a challenge for Open University students about how exactly you bring them together. So there's lots of work around. And indeed, this event is part of that sense of creating sense of academic community around subjects, qualifications, and modules. And increasingly, that's being built into module design itself as well.

**KAREN FOLEY:** Now, you mentioned that-- obviously there's a lot of undergraduate, but you did highlight the postgraduate offering as well, which is very exciting. And I know even a lot of students who are at an undergraduate level like to know what there is in store for them, and to have those options then. So can you tell us a little bit about how those are going to benefit our students? And again, what you think is really good about what we're doing.

**IAN FRIBBANCE:** Well the first background, of course, is that postgraduate loans have become available. And so we're expecting to see an expansion in the postgraduate market. It's also about how students might want to take their journey forward beyond their undergraduate degree, making the most of the expertise of the academic staff, and offering students a greater range of options. So we know, for example, that we got a lot of psychology students, and a lot of students interested in criminology.

So absolutely, we're looking to put on new qualifications that students can take forward as part of their journey, and that you've got other modules, too. I think today, philosophy, and--

**KAREN FOLEY:** Creative writing.

**IAN FRIBBANCE:** --creative writing, which has, again, been hugely successful. And we're looking to build on that as the years go forward.

**KAREN FOLEY:** Excellent. We've got some links as well for the funding options. So those are in the chat, and they're in on the website as well. So if you'd like to take a look. They are different for different nations, so I see what applies to you. And there's some tips there about how you could take that forward. So Ian, you mentioned, then, that this sort of way of showcasing things is a good idea for students, partly to connect, but also partly to show what we're doing.

So we're hoping within this showcase to sort of give students a sneak preview. But 20 minutes is quite a short session. So it's not going to be exhaustive. And students can also find out about these new modules in a variety of ways. They can look at the details online. What makes this sort of event different for students?

**IAN FRIBBANCE:** Well, I think what's interesting about these emerging live events is the very fact that they're live. So they can ask questions, chat, send in comments as you already outlined. They can interact directly with faculty academics. There's much more of a two way thing than perhaps Open University students are used to, more kind of passive recipients of material. This is kind of about enlivening, engaging, being able to make things happen on the day. So that's all good. And it's helping to build that sense of community that I was talking about earlier.

**KAREN FOLEY:** Absolutely. And of course, students often ask questions, don't they? And often, those questions are things other people have been asking. So it's really nice to be able to hear people saying that.

**IAN FRIBBANCE:** That's right. And there's no such thing as a stupid question. So whatever people want to ask, fire in. It's probably something that other people have thought of, too. So get sending in the questions, would be my advice.

**KAREN FOLEY:** Absolutely. So any questions you've got that you want us to answer, we will do our utmost. And if not, we will get back to you to find out the answers to those questions. Now, Ian, there are a range of modules, here. Some students have quite a lot of choice about what they can choose next. Other students don't. What advice would you give to students who may be making a choice between a couple of modules?

What would you say the key things are for them to bear in mind, in your experience? And

partly because you're still tutor, as well. So you've got a lot of access to--

**IAN FRIBBANCE:** I do, yes.

**KAREN FOLEY:** --students. What's your advice for them?

**IAN FRIBBANCE:** Well obviously, the first thing is to think about the qualification that they want to achieve, and to make sure that the modules that they choose fit within the qualification or pathway that they're seeking to succeed in. So there is the basic regulatory requirement to make sure that they're doing the right thing. But where students have a choice within that, my own personal view has always been to try and choose things that you think you're going to enjoy the most.

Because if you enjoy studying something, it tends to make studying something a lot more easier because you enjoy doing it. So I always say that's the first thing-- choose something you'll enjoy. And then perhaps also, the other things to think about are the kind of skills that you'll develop, what's going to be on your CV. If you're particularly interested in employment opportunities, what are you going to be able to get out of the module that you could show an employer, or take on to further study would be some of the other criteria I'd think about, too.

**KAREN FOLEY:** Yeah. And skills and employability are being embedded so much more now than they have been in the past in curriculum design.

**IAN FRIBBANCE:** That's right.

**KAREN FOLEY:** Partly because they're so important, anyway. But one of the things that we've been spending time talking about this morning with our careers advisors was how important it is for students to recognise some of those attributes, and things that they're building up. How would you say they can spot them, and use them as they're going? Because of course, starting a degree is building a lot of things. You don't just have to end a degree to get all of these skills.

We've been talking a bit about time management, and balancing all of these tasks, and things that you do right from year one of your studies at the Open University, to what students will be moving onto now, level two-- critical thinking, and all of those things. Have you got any advice about how students might reflect on some of those things in the thick of it, add those to their CVs, and use them to their advantage?

**IAN FRIBBANCE:** Well, I think the simple thing is to always stop and really think about the kind of feedback and feed-forward process that all students get through their ALs. So don't just look at the mark,

really think about what's been learned in an assignment, what skills have you taken from it. Which might be as simple as note-taking, reading comprehension, how to construct an essay, or how to write in an academic style. Simple building blocks along the journey, but I always think that's such a key opportunity that shouldn't be missed.

Just to give at least a few minutes, just to look beyond the grade, really absorb what the AL has said. Maybe get back to the AL and engage, and think about that. And maybe make a few notes of reflection, or self-diagnosis of what they need to do next time.

**KAREN FOLEY:** Absolutely. So you've mentioned the collaboration. Just to end this, you're talking really about using your tutor more effectively. And often now, students will have access to more than one tutor who may have a range of skills and things. What matters now in the current market with students really trying to seek out, often, those routes, and having greater access to a number of tutors as part of group tuition and things-- that students can really benefit from different voices.

What would you say to students in terms of reaching out for their next module if they're to do things differently and really learn from the experience that they've got around them? What sort of things could they do?

**IAN FRIBBANCE:** In terms of gaining-- well, part of the journey and experience of higher education is precisely what you're talking about, which is being exposed to different voices, different ways of thinking about things, building from one module to the next. But also comparing modules. So if you're an economic student and you do a politics module, what are kind of the different voices or different approaches you might think about? That applies across a kind of range of discipline areas.

So it's just really just taking the time. It's having almost a kind of portfolio approach to your qualifications. Just making sure you build in time for a bit of self-reflection, self-diagnosis. Think of the journey you've made so far, and of course think about how to take it forward, and develop your employment opportunities further.

**KAREN FOLEY:** Excellent. Thank you, Ian. Of course, the summer after people have done their EMAs is the perfect time to do that when they're making a decision about course choice.

**IAN FRIBBANCE:** Sit and reflect, absolutely, yes.

**KAREN FOLEY:** In the sunshine. Or not.

[LAUGHTER]

Ian, thank you so much for coming along today. That's been fantastic.

**IAN FRIBBANCE:** Thanks very much for having me. And best of luck to all the students in making their choices.

**KAREN FOLEY:** Aw, thank-- well, they've got a hard choice to make, Ian. [LAUGHS]

**IAN FRIBBANCE:** Thank you.

**KAREN FOLEY:** Thank you. Right, well, we're going to take a short break, and play you a video, which is the social sciences show reel. And then in our next session, I will be joined by Kesi Mahendran to talk about principles of social and psychological inquiry. All of those of you who are interested in postgraduate study this is the one to watch in a few minutes see you then.