

KAREN FOLEY: Good morning and welcome to Student Hub Live. This is an introduction to the faculty of arts and social sciences. So a very warm welcome to you out there. My name is Karen Foley. I'm going to be presenting today's show, and I've got some wonderful guests lined up for you here today.

Now I know that many of you have already been chatting to each other. And this is a live interactive show. Some of you may have been to some of our events beforehand, but for others who are brand new let me just briefly explain how it all works.

So I've got some guests, we're going to have some discussions, and broadly speaking we're going to touch on some of the key level one modules in the school. Firstly of arts and humanities, but we've got lots lined up for you. So do stay tuned, but you might like to log in to a particular session. And you'll see all of that on our programme on the website.

So we'll be starting and stopping as we go through. But for many students, it's wonderful to meet other colleagues from the university and take this opportunity to chat to each other in the chat. Now there's lots of you in here today, so the chat can move quite quickly. Make sure that you engage with that as you want to. You can turn it off if you don't want to by just shifting the interface so that it's larger or smaller or just watching the video stream if you prefer.

And if you do see something that catches your interest, we encourage everyone to share links. Not names and addresses and details like that, but there are some things that students like to share that can be really useful. So if you see something and you'd like to scroll back to it, there's a little pin button on the top right hand of the chat.

The other ways that you can engage are by using some of our interactive multi-choice questions, and word clouds, and tools. And these widgets are shown on your screen. You can all fill them in. And at the moment we've got a map on the go. Some of you haven't filled that in. So do click on the map, put where you think you are in the country right now. I always find that a bit of a challenge. But anyway, roundabout the place will do. And then you can close that one down, and then you can also see where everyone else is.

Some of them are multi-choice questions. So you just put the box that applies to you there. So we'd like to if you're new to the OU and what level you're studying. So you can just do those. And sometimes, a bit later on, we have word clouds, and they ask for three things. So for example, in our first session, we're going to say, why do people tell stories? And we'd like you to think about that.

I mean, storytelling is something that we either do perhaps if they're something not true or sometimes they're narrative. Sometimes they're things we tell our children about. So we'd like to know why we tell stories. We've also got other things there that will show up very soon, like objects that you use to describe yourself. So if you could describe yourself in three objects, what might that be? And what might they be for other students?

Now sometimes we like threes, our computer likes threes, but we can't always think of threes. If you can't think of three things, just put one or two in, and put a full stop in the box, so that your results will still contribute to our discussion. And that's absolutely fine as well.

Now, we've got Damon and Tracey on our chat from the faculty, so make sure you ask them questions that you'd like to know the answers to. But on our hot desk, and interacting with us, and asking questions to our guests we have the lovely HJ. How are you?

HJ: I'm doing really well this morning. And it's great to see everyone joining us in the chat today. We've got lots of new people, and lots of people who've joined us before as well. So I'm really pleased to see that. And as you said, it's a great space just to chat to each other; ask our fantastic guests your thoughts; comments on questions, which they absolutely love. And just let us know generally how you're doing.

I know John was ready early this morning with coffee and chocolate biscuits. Rita's doing well with green tea, and Tracy's already had two cups of tea. She must have been up early, and she's on to hot chocolate for something a bit different. And I know we're all looking forward to the session.

So Kim from North Wales is very much looking forward to this, and Zoe's doing superb this morning. And I like that Zoe seems to be very organised today. She's started writing out her own glossary for psychology, which sounds like a great idea to get started. And Christine's especially looking forward to the study intensity section to work out whether she would like to do full- or part-time later on down the line in her study journey. But it's nice to see the map being filled in as well.

I know there's people hailing from everywhere. We've got Onati hailing from Zambia today, Alice from West London, Norris from sunny Bedfordshire, which makes a difference from wet Wales where I am. Jessica's from Thailand, and Rominy's from the Netherlands. So do keep letting us know how you're doing, what you're studying, introduce yourself, and get involved in the chat or just sit back and enjoy today's session.

KAREN FOLEY: Brilliant. Thank you, HJ. That's absolutely wonderful. And wonderful to have such an international audience here today. That is genuinely excellent, and one of the benefits of studying with the OU is we meet the coolest people in the most far flung places. Well, let's, without further ado, start with our first discussion, which is about an introduction to arts and humanities.

And we're all focusing on some of these level one modules, 4 I have some great guests here. I'm going to ask them to introduce themselves, and say something about why they think level one is particularly cool from their different perspective. So Richard, can I ask you to say something first?

RICHARD JONES: Hello. yes, well, I'm Richard Jones. I'm a senior lecturer in literature, excuse me. And I'm the chair of A111, discovering the arts and humanities. So what I like about the arts and humanities at level one is the opportunity it offers us to ask those big questions, what I call big questions.

So what are the arts and humanities anyway? What sort of knowledge do they give us about the world? So I've spent quite a lot of time talking recently to my dog about this. I like to do that. But it's always good to talk to other people about it too.

KAREN FOLEY: Excellent. I'm sure people at home have lots of interesting ideas. Emma-Jayne, can you tell us something about yourself and why level one is exciting for you?

EMMA-JAYNE GRAHAM: Hi, yes, I can. Hi, I'm EJ for short, and I am senior lecturer in classical studies, and I am also a module teacher for A112 cultures. And I think, for me, one of the most exciting things about level one study is the chance it gives you to basically hang out with a whole pile of experts who just want to enthuse with you about their subject areas, and who even sometimes take you on virtual field trips.

So for me, the most exciting thing was when I got to go to Delphi in Greece and take people on a tour, basically a filmed tour around the Sanctuary of Apollo. It was a huge thrill for me. And my colleagues will tell you I haven't stopped talking about it since. So yeah, yay for virtual field trips at level one.

KAREN FOLEY: Excellent. I bet everyone's really keen on coming along that virtual field trip with you, EJ. That's super. Excellent. Neil, tell us a bit about yourself and why level one's exciting for you.

NEIL YOUNGER: Hi, yeah. I'm Neil Younger. I'm a senior lecturer in early modern history, and I'm the chair of A113 revolutions. And I guess what I really like about level one is just helping to guide students through the sort of thicket of different disciplines which they encounter at this first level.

So many different things they could pursue, but we try to help students sort of find their way through it, develop their skills, and think about what they want to take on into level two and beyond. And it's also really fun, of course, for me to learn about these different disciplines, and find out all sort of different things that are going on in our faculty.

KAREN FOLEY: Brilliant, thank you. And last, but by no means least, Clare.

CLARE SPENCER: Hi, everyone. I'm Clare Spencer. I'm deputy director of teaching for arts and humanities. What's exciting for me, I think, about our level one modules is that we've recently introduced creative writing as a subject, and that's a subject that really gets you thinking about the words you use, and how you put them together, and how stories are told. And I really hope people are going to enjoy it.

KAREN FOLEY: Brilliant. Thank you very much. So this is our panel, and we're going to be talking about some of the key level one modules. We're going to start Richard with an introduction to level one broadly in terms of what's that experience like for students at level one in arts and humanities?

RICHARD JONES: Well, level one in arts and humanities provides a really rich introduction to study, and I think, as Neil was saying, one of its unique qualities is how you can get perspectives on different subject areas. It deliberately brings different subject areas together. So you can set off-- it's designed so that you can set off studying a specific qualification. You might be registered on one of those already or it gives you the opportunity to explore and discover new areas, and approaches, and think how they might fit together.

So one important aspect of that level one is that it's aimed at students new to university studies. You're guided slowly at developing the skills that you need as you go along, both through the materials and by working with your tutor. There are three modules at level one. So there's A111, discovering the arts and humanities, and that's a compulsory module. So everybody starts there. Then you might move on to either A112 cultures, or A113 revolutions.

KAREN FOLEY: Brilliant.

RICHARD We're going to-- yeah, yeah, sorry.

JONES:

KAREN FOLEY: Yeah. No, no, that's perfect. And we're going to be taking each of those key modules and having a little look in detail. But first, let's find out about A111 by watching this short, but packed little video.

[VIDEO PLAYBACK]

[MUSIC PLAYING]

- This idea of stillness in the midst of a turbulent and fluctuating world, I just thought it was a sort of miracle.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

- We're in the heart of a very bustling city. There are a lot of temptations I suppose, so because of that challenge, actually I learned a lot about myself.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

- I'm an artist who using very old idea, old images. Look at as new art.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

- I'm performing possibly the most famous story ever written.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

[NON-ENGLISH SPEECH]

- There's a wonderful metaphor for humanity that we're all cast in the same mould, but we're all very different.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

[END PLAYBACK]

KAREN FOLEY: Oh, some big questions there, Richard. And we've got a big question for you guys to fill-in at home in our word cloud, just as something to sort of spark your interest. We'd like you to fill-in why do people tell stories? And you might want to talk about that in the chat also. But Richard, tell us a little bit about this video, and why you've chosen to show it, and how it sparks up some of those big questions.

RICHARD
JONES: Yeah, well, I really like this video just for those reasons really because it does sort of hint at all those big questions that I mentioned before. But it also gives us a glimpse of all the different subject areas that you encounter on A111. So you're seeing a little clip from the discipline of art history, there's classical studies, creative writing, and English literature, and history, 4 and music, philosophy, and religious studies.

And they're are all the areas that you can explore through the module. And we look at how the approaches in these areas might differ from each other so you begin to understand what's involved in studying one area compared to another. But also what they have in common, how we can explore things through them.

So and the other thing that the video hints at is the three themes of A111. so the first is reputations. And that allows us to ask a question, like why are some people remembered today, or why are they forgotten? We look at the next theme is traditions, and there we're asking what is a tradition? Or that question about what is passed down to us, and how do those traditions influence us? We might be born into them, and how does that alter our lives?

And then we have a third theme which we've called crossing boundaries. And really that's about how different cultures might represent each other or how they might influence and change each other. So how they bring people together or perhaps keep people apart. So we get to explore that too. So we can see, on the module, we address these big, overarching questions and themes whilst also allowing us to explore different subject pathways through all that amazingly rich content, which you've got a glimpse of in the promo.

KAREN FOLEY: Absolutely. And it was really nice to see some modern contemporary artists included in that also. Richard, we've asked people to fill in the question about why people tell stories, and there have been some awesome responses. Let's take a look and see what you said at home. It's things like passing on history, not to be forgotten, sharing, remembering, entertaining, making a point, expressing oneself, inspiring, sharing views, inform, explain, create an image, share memories of empathy, reassure, teach, form friendships, social engagement, fill in the silences.

And we could see here, which I think is one of the beautiful things about OU students, is that from our own perspectives we can all immediately start to unpick some of these big questions from our different perspectives. So thank you, everyone, for filling that in.

RICHARD JONES: That's an amazing word cloud to see, isn't it? I can just pick out some of the words from that again.

KAREN FOLEY: Absolutely, absolutely. Some brilliant, brilliant thoughts. So well done everyone at home for contributing to that. Thank you very much. Well, let's take a look then at after A111. So this is going to be A112 that we're going to take a look at. And EJ, I wonder if you can sort of fill us in a little bit on that module after A111.

EMMA-JAYNE GRAHAM: Well, after A111, or for some students perhaps alongside A111 you have a choice. You can either choose the A1121 cultures or A113 revolutions. And as the module team chair of A112, I'm better placed to talk about that. So maybe the best thing to do would be following Richard's lead to watch a short video that shows you a sort of glimpse of what might happen within A112.

KAREN FOLEY: Perfect. Let's take a look.

[VIDEO PLAYBACK]

[MUSIC PLAYING]

- What does it mean to feel at home in a particular place? What does it mean to feel connected to a particular landscape?

[MUSIC PLAYING]

- You get that sense of wow when you look at some of these objects again.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

- In an era before Facebook and Twitter and 24-7 news, how did you communicate a message about something amazing that you'd done to the rest of the ancient Greek world? You did it through a place that you knew people would come to.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

- She knew that for her status as a countess she needed really good tall rooms, and she needed them at the top of her house.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

- The dialect defines the sense of place. It gives you Shetland when it's there on the written page.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

- He wanted to mine popular culture and make the workers comfortable with what they saw.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

- Write what you're fascinated by, what you want to discover.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

[END PLAYBACK]

KAREN FOLEY: So EJ, there's a lot going on in A112.

EMMA-JAYNE There is indeed a lot going on in A112. We even have a puffin, which I'm not sure all modules can say. But yes,
GRAHAM: there is quite a lot, but there's also a slightly less, in some ways, than A111 because what makes it different is that this module allows you to explore in a bit more depth just four of the subject areas of arts and humanities. So that's art history, classical studies, creative writing, and English literature.

And the way that the module works is that you get to spend a bit of time with each of those exploring it a bit more deeply, and then you get to choose one of them to specialise in for the last part of the module. So you follow your interests.

And along the way you'll hopefully find some answers to some of the questions that were raised in the video there about what cultures are, why they matter. But also how people use the things that they create, so objects, 1 and images, and texts to say something about their values, and about their identities. And how that is something that is kind of common to human's rights from the deep past.

So we have ancient Greeks and Romans all the way through to the contemporary world with modern and creative writers who are still responding to their cultural situations or trying to say something about their identities. And I think actually we've got a little thing to ask people to start thinking about. What objects might you use to say something about you, your identity, your culture, even your culture as an OU student?

Because we're all part of a culture. We all sort of share things, and there are certain ways in which we mark ourselves out as a particular group. And OU student community is one of those groups.

KAREN FOLEY: Absolutely. So again, we can sort of see that notion of objects being not just about the things that we do, but how we connect and create things as well. So there's a very dynamic notion here, I think, that's sort of coming through. Nicholas says, wow, that's a great video for A112. And Alice says this looks amazing.

So thank you, EJ, for filling us in on that. You mentioned the four disciplines, and I guess this brings to mind the other four. And Neil, I'm guessing that these are included in A113 as we're starting to get a little bit more in depth with some of the arts and humanities.

NEIL YOUNGER: Yeah, absolutely. Yeah, so A113 revolutions, which I chair, covers those other four disciplines. So those are history, music, philosophy, and religious studies. So we're just sort of through the process of level one study, you're sort of focusing in more and more as you sort of think towards moving on towards level two and single discipline study. So we too have a nice shiny swish video. So perhaps we can have a look at that now.

KAREN FOLEY: Yes, let's.

[VIDEO PLAYBACK]

[MUSIC PLAYING]

- This will let us produce endless numbers of individual pieces of type like this?

- Endless numbers of type.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

- It's clear that the war has created an opportunity for Republicans to strike a blow against Britain. England's difficulty is Ireland's opportunity.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

- [NON-ENGLISH SPEECH]

[MUSIC PLAYING]

- The religion you're born into, even if you never practise pretty much ends up determining where you live, where you go to school, and who you marry.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

- [NON-ENGLISH SPEECH]

[MUSIC PLAYING]

[END PLAYBACK]

KAREN FOLEY: Wow, awesome. I bet that's getting a lot of love in the chat also. So there are four key periods there, Neil.

NEIL YOUNGER: Yeah, that's right. We basically picked four sort of revolutionary periods from the past 500 years. We start with the Reformation and the print revolution around sort of 500 years ago. We move forward onto the period of the French Revolution, the period that coined the term "revolution" to mean this dramatic change. Then we move on to the 20th century with the period of the First World War, and the events that surrounded that. And then we come right up to well, closer to the present day by looking at the 1960s.

So some of its sort of political, and military, and sort of changes of government. Some of it's much more about social change, cultural change, ideological change, religion, knowledge, sexuality. So there's lots of different themes that we cover there.

And we're sort of asking these big questions that you saw in the video of why do revolutions start? What changes in a revolution? What stays the same? Who causes these things? Who are the people who-- what are the ideas? What are the consequences? How do they help to form the world that we live in now? So tonnes of big questions around sort of change in sort of human events.

KAREN FOLEY: Hmm, absolutely. So some really exciting content there. I mean, honestly, I think I wouldn't know which one to pick or which one I'd like to do more there. There's so much in there that I can really see students enjoying, so thank you, Neil.

Clare, I'd like to end by thinking about the future. But before we do that, people have been filling in some of the objects about themselves. And it's been quite interesting actually because when we think about stuff that we use to describe ourselves, people are saying things like, books, and a cuppa, bicycle, glasses, Buddhist beads, cats, chocolate, walking boots, hairbrush, clock, wheelchair, piano. So it's a very sort of specific items.

But when we think about being OU students, which is what we all have in common, there's some stuff like this in terms of content that people have loaded. So it's things like, books, and computer, stationery, being eager to learn, trepidation, engage a variety of stuff. OU hoodies are fantastic as well. Student Hub Live pens, stationery, garden, and excited.

So lots of wonderful things, and books and computers being some of the key items on people's agendas. But Clare, it's important that students bear in mind while they are looking at a specific module at a specific time, these are enclosed in a qualification. So tell us more.

CLARE
SPENCER: So yes, what's going to happen once you finish level one is you're going to continue on the route to your qualification. One of the reasons we make these big level one modules covering a lot of subjects is to keep things flexible for you. So it's quite likely you might have signed up now for, let's say, a degree in a single subject, like history, but you discover you enjoy something like classical studies so much when you're studying A111 that you can kind of change pathways.

And you're always free to do that by contacting your student support team, and asking them for advice on the route you're taking. The other thing about our qualifications is that we have big communities of students gathered around them. And the online home for our qualifications is the arts and humanities Study Home site, which you can get to by clicking the Study Tab on your student home page.

And there you'll find separate areas for each subject in our level one modules, like the art history page. And on those pages, you'll find forums where you can contact all the other students studying your subject. So you can, for example, ask you what it's going to be like studying in the level two modules, moving on with your qualifications.

So yeah, the big message with our qualifications is flexibility really, and you probably have a very clear idea at the moment what you think you're going to do for your qualification. But it might be that you change your mind about that or indeed change the qualification. You could get a certificate in higher education, you could get a diploma in HE as well as a full-scale degree. So yeah, lots of room for manoeuvre there, Karen.

KAREN FOLEY: Absolutely. And as you've sort of seen, we start broadly with level one and with that introductory module touching on all eight disciplines, starting to specialise a little bit more. But if you are interested in talking about your qualification either now or perhaps towards the end of the module, the student support team are the best people to talk to.

They'll be able to look at what's right for you, and tell you about the modules, and also pinpoint some areas of sources that you might like to look at to get a steer on what's in each specific qualification and indeed the modules. So that's been a packed session. Thank you so much Clare and Neil, EJ, and Richard. I think you've inspired everyone.

Peter says, yay, I am two days into this module, and also it's lovely just to see some friendly faces of our module chairs here today. So guys at home, you're in safe hands. And today is hopefully day two of something really, really exciting. And I hope you enjoy all of those big questions that our guests have put together for you to mull over.

So we are going to now take a little break, but I have something exciting for you because Ian Robbins, who is the Executive Dean, has made a little video to welcome you to the faculty. He's really lovely as well. So let's hear what he has to say, and then we'll be back for our next session soon.

[MUSIC PLAYING]