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UCT's new free online course expands access to higher education

University launches its 10th Massive Open Online Course

The University of Cape Town has launched its 10th Massive Open Online Course (MOOC), 'Writing Your World', which showcases the university's approach to teaching academic literacy.

The MOOC was designed by the Language Development Group, which is part of the Academic Development Programme (ADP), in collaboration with the Centre for Innovation in Learning and Teaching (CILT). Both are part of the Centre for Higher Education Development (CHED) at UCT. The MOOC aligns with CHED's mission of widening access to higher education.

This MOOC is aimed at anyone exploring their options to study at a university. It encourages students from around the world to enter this online space and to critically engage and write about the key themes of identity and mobility. These themes have international currency. Enrolment starts on 09 October 2017.

Dr Aditi Hunma, one of the course lecturers, says: "With this new MOOC, students can draw on their own life experiences as they learn to write alongside the international learning community."

This course features practical aspects of academic writing and offers a variety of interactive texts, lecture videos, and discussions. The MOOC runs over four weeks and allows students to give feedback to each other, thereby creating their first academic essay.

"By emphasizing that writing is a messy process we intend to take away the 'angst' of writing academic essays," Dr Hunma adds.

MOOCs provide an opportunity to share knowledge generated by leading academics and researchers and allow UCT to showcase its array of intellectual and teaching resources. While physical classrooms can reach only 250 or 300 students at a time, MOOCs are freely accessible anywhere at any time, with the potential to widen and democratise access to higher education.

Dr Gideon Nomdo, another course lecturer, mentioned that "by drawing on lessons learned from MOOC teaching, we can enrich our face-to-face offerings."

Since all MOOCs are freely available, online they are part of the answer to the call for open and relevant higher education. This was reiterated by the Vice-Chancellor, Dr Max Price, at the launch of this MOOC. Dr Price highlighted that MOOCs have the potential to break down barriers and make academic resources available to a much broader audience.

'Writing Your World' is part of a series of 12 MOOCs developed at UCT, and aims to give exposure to African scholarship. UCT MOOCs are supported by the Vice-Chancellor's Strategic Fund. Illustrating their success, three of the previously released UCT MOOCs are ranked among the Top 50 MOOCs of all time - according to [Class Central](#).

Notes for editors

What are MOOCs?

Massive Open Online Courses (MOOC) are online course aimed at unlimited participation and open access via the internet. Learners can drive their own education and study alongside diverse fellow students who may come from anywhere in the world. MOOCs provide interactive user forums, as well as access to video and audio lectures and course materials in online format to support community interactions among students and professors (or teaching assistants).

UCT MOOC: Writing Your World: Finding yourself in the academic space

This is a four-week online course, aimed at anyone exploring their options to study at university. Students in their final year of high school, those taking a gap year or professionals moving back into the academic space could use the course to familiarise themselves with university expectations, particularly with regard to academic writing in English. The course may also be of interest to anyone wishing to engage with debates around identity, culture and mobility in an ever-changing world.

Participants can access the course for free, provided that they have an internet connection, and have the option to buy a certificate. Financial Aid is available for learners who want to obtain a certificate, but cannot afford the certificate fee.

Please see the [website](#) for further details on this specific MOOC. To access any other of the UCT MOOCs visit the [website](#).

FREE ONLINE COURSE AND FINANCIAL AID AVAILABLE FOR CERTIFICATES

#UCTWritingMOOC

WEEK 3 Writing Paragraphs

WEEK 4 Starting to finish Looking Forward

Writing YOUR WORLD:

FINDING YOURSELF IN THE ACADEMIC SPACE

SIGN UP NOW!

This is a gateway course aimed at anyone exploring their options to study at university. Students in their final year of high school, those taking a gap year or professionals moving back into the academic space could use the course to familiarise themselves with university expectations, particularly with regard to academic writing in English.

In different parts of the world, the act of writing serves to express, record and even create meaningful moments. In academic spaces, writing becomes the bridge between ourselves and a dynamic world of ideas. In this course, we provide useful and practical insights into how to write an academic essay. We show you how to develop the academic skills needed to be a competent academic writer. You will have an opportunity to engage with texts written by academics, and to see how some of the ideas in these texts are used by students in constructing an academic essay. We address some of the challenges these students face with respect to academic writing and offer you the opportunity to practice and to develop your own writing style. For this course, we centre our lessons around a specific topic - the concept of identity, since it forms such an important feature of how we locate ourselves in an ever-changing global world. In other words, this course teaches academic writing skills through getting you to write and reflect on your understanding of identity. So if you are thinking about studying at a tertiary institution, or if you just want to brush up on your academic essay writing skills, this course is for you!

Course Instructors

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Sign up at: www.coursera.org/learn/writing-your-world

ENDS

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