MIT OPEN COURSEWARE
MASSACHUSETTS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

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Erik, We are deeply grateful to the 1,074 people who participated in the OCW Gift Challenge.

Because of their donation, OCW will receive a total matching gift of $30,000 that will go a long way towards helping us make our content richer and more accessible to every learner in the world.

We know there are thousands of OCW visitors who do not have the means to donate, and our core mission is to provide access to exactly these audiences—educators in developing countries, workers displaced by financial crisis, homeschooling parents, independent learners unable to continue formal study.

But we are so very thankful to the OCW supporters who could afford to donate because they demonstrate that our program can be sustainable and is a worthwhile investment.

With appreciation,

Cecilia d'Oliveira
Executive Director
MIT OpenCourseWare

Finding Ties That Bind

Photo of Toni Morrison, one of thirteen women who have won a Nobel Prize in Literature. (Courtesy of the American Library Association on Flickr. Creative Commons license BY-NC-SA.)

"I selected these particular readings because I wanted to provide students with a list that didn't have a logical narrative," Instructor Wyn Kelley says of her course *21L.315 Prizewinners: Nobelistas* in one of the Instructor Insights on the course's This Course at MIT page. "The coherence came from finding connections between the authors and their works."

21L.315 is the fifteenth course Kelley has published on OCW. Here is a sampler of her other courses:

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In the Nobelistas class, Kelley chose to have students read novels and stories by five women who won the Nobel Prize: Toni Morrison, Nadine Gordimer, Doris Lessing, Herta Müller, and Alice Munro.

The connections between these very different writers emerged from class discussions generated by the students themselves. Kelley has used this technique in other classes and found it a sure way to boost student engagement:

"For students who don't necessarily feel comfortable with each other, beginning with student-led reports . . . can be a good way to cultivate discussion. In these reports, students provide an introduction to the author, a passage to discuss, and a few discussion questions. Students are required to speak for only about 10 minutes, but they set the terms for the discussion. In this way, students' perspectives and their responses to the reading shape the discussions, rather than the instructor's pre-existing structure and narrative."

Another technique that Kelley has used with great success is the 10-minute quiz at the start of the class. These are less to test how much the students have learned than to get their gears turning:

"Lately, I've been devising quizzes that I think will focus them before class and give them a chance to remind themselves of what was in the text. I start the discussion based on the quiz."

Kelley sees her evolving approach to teaching in part as a response to MIT's requirement that student take Communications Intensive courses:

"I now focus more on skills than on topics, and on close reading rather than themes. So often, looking more closely at a passage opens it up and gives you a very different understanding. If you're open to it, something wonderful happens. So rather than students showing me mastery of an entire text, they work with a small piece of the text that is connected to larger issues."

What's new for Kelley is often new for her students as well:

"Frequently, students have been trained to read for content and to get to the point quickly. That's how they've passed all those tests! And I'm slowing them

down and holding them back by design.”

This experience can be painful for some students, but Kelley has developed ways to assuage their discomfort:

“To scaffold students’ close reading, I provide guidelines for how to approach the essay I assign in the course. I give them a sense of the different steps they might go through and the different things they might avoid. I want as much as possible to make what we’re doing transparent. I feel that if they understand the process, they’ll produce something really interesting.”

>Learn more about OCW Educator

New Courses

21F.820 Portuguese Advanced Conversation and Composition

21H.S01 Food in American History

- 15.S50 Poker Theory and Analytics
- 21A.506 The Business of Politics: A View of Latin America
- 21F.341 Contemporary French Film and Social Issues

Updated Courses

21A.442J Violence, Human Rights, and Justice
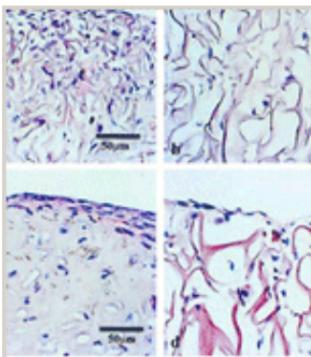
2.785J Cell-Matrix Mechanics

- 18.783 Elliptic Curves
- 21H.319 Race, Crime, and Citizenship in American Law
- 21L.451 Introduction to Literary Theory

> Find courses that interest you

Gambling That Pays Off – In More Ways Than One

Image of a poker hand. Photo Credit: Peter Hopper on Flickr, License CC BY-NC

What kind of career requires:

- high-pressure decision making with incomplete information
- the ability to accurately read the actions of others
- a capacity for honest self-assessment

Political leader? Police detective? Labor negotiator?

Perhaps all of these. But the career that most fully meets these criteria? Poker player!

And now you can become one—or certainly a better one—thanks to *15.S50 Poker Theory and Analytics*, just published on OCW.

The course combines an overview of poker theory with lots of practice and analytics. Taught during January 2015's IAP period by Kevin Desmond, a graduate student at MIT's Sloan School of Management, the course has video lectures, lecture notes, assignments and solutions, and links to a variety of poker software programs.

Desmond spent several years playing poker professionally as an undergraduate, and the experience of taking calculated risks and making high-pressure decisions provided him with a strong background for a career in finance at Morgan Stanley. After coming to the Sloan School, Desmond decided to share what he knows about pot odds, fold equity, and semi-bluffing with others. He also got some of his most accomplished poker buddies to share what they know in guest lectures.

"The class serves as an opportunity for students interested in trading and other careers to enjoy some of the benefits of learning and mastering poker without the need to risk money," Desmond explains in one of his Instructor Insights from 15.S50's This Course at MIT Page.

Desmond faced the challenge of teaching 150 students at all levels of ability from raw beginner to advanced, but he structured the course to allow

everyone to succeed, including review sessions for the least experienced players and ensuring that students competed against others with a similar skill level.

Students were offered different modes of assessment: they could demonstrate their ability by winning play money, or they could play in 10 class tournaments, thereby gaining loads of practice. Even the best students played poker for 15 to 20 hours a week, with an average student playing 5,000 hands by class end.

All play was online. This enabled abundant practice and allowed that practice to be analyzed in depth using tracking software that gathered data from hand histories. Students could also visualize their past play using an animator. Maverick never had it so good!

So if you want to know more about big blinds, deep stacks, pre-flop decisions, flop play, when to fold 'em and when to hold 'em, check out this course!

Highlights for High School

Photo credit: Purple Sherbet Photography on flickr. License: CC BY

Did you know that OCW Highlights for High School offers a free guide for teachers?

It provides handy tips on the different ways educators can use the website to support their curriculum, flip their classroom, and assign STEM homework. There are also specific examples of how other teachers have used the resources to enhance the learning experience for their students.

Donald Cameron, a Mathematics Teacher from Massachusetts said, "It is nice to have a place to turn where students can genuinely do independent study, and where busy teachers can rely on OCW materials to be good."

>Find the guide on OCW Highlights for High School.

MITx News

What to Do on Your Summer Vacation

The school year has wound down, and summer promises to be a time for recharging batteries and reflecting on how things might go better, or even be different, next time around.

Many instructors, indeed entire school districts, see great potential to transform education by implementing new technology in the classroom.

But the landscape of videos, online assessments, tracking tools, and evaluation metrics remains an intimidating one. How can teachers hope to get up to speed in the vanishing weeks of summer?

Professor Eric Klopfer's edX course 11.133x Implementation and Evaluation of Educational Technology offers an easy way to get into the pool and make waves.

The course starts on July 15, giving teachers enough time to decompress from the school year before taking on a new assignment. The course should also be of interest to entrepreneurs, developers, practitioners, and leaders in educational technology. Running for seven weeks, 11.133x has a very manageable workload of only 4–5 hours per week.

Professor Klopfer is practiced hand at online teaching. He has developed and led three successful courses on edX already. 11.132x Design and Development of Educational Technology ran last fall. It is not a requirement for 11.133x, which is open to all comers. Two other edX courses offered in the past year tapped into a second area of Professor Klopfer's research—games in learning: 11.126x Introduction to Game Design and 11.127x Design and Development of Games For Learning.
Students interested in gaining some background might examine Professor's Klopfer's courses available now on OCW:

- *11.124 Introduction to Education: Looking Forward and Looking Back on Education*
- *11.125 Introduction to Education: Understanding and Evaluating Education*
- *11.127J Computer Games and Simulations for Investigation and Education*

As the course registration page says, 11.133x "provides a practical overview for selecting, integrating, implementing, and evaluating educational technology initiatives in formal educational settings, primarily in the US. It will include the perspectives of

stakeholders that make such initiatives possible, and consider how to evaluate for efficacy."

Like nearly all of Professor Klopfer's offerings, this one is project-based. Students will learn by doing. Lounging on a beach towel is not an option!

> Find more MITx courses.

Views From Our Supporters

"I love to learn and MIT OpenCourseWare gives me access to a wide verity of top notch courses.

Also, I mentor kids in robotics [FIRST Robotics] and a lot of them are disadvantaged.

The kids I work with can go to MIT OpenCourseWare and it gives them access to a learning opportunity their high schools can't give them, or won't."

- Joe, Educator, USA

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