



THE UNIVERSITY *of* EDINBURGH

News Release

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Free online course to track twists and turns of General Election

Britain's most exciting and unpredictable General Election in decades is the focus of a new free online course from the University of Edinburgh.

The three-week course will follow the election and its build up in real time, responding to events on the campaign trail. The University's political experts will unpack the issues that will determine who forms the next government in Westminster.

Understanding the UK's 2015 General Election launches on 27 April, 10 days before the vote. It will cover the count live on 7 May and then continue for 10 days to discuss the implications of the result.

It is the latest in a series of Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) offered by the University in conjunction with Coursera, the online platform providing universal access to the world's best education.

There have been more than 1.3 million sign-ups for Edinburgh MOOCs, with more than a million unique learners, since they were launched in July 2012.

The course, which will take no more than three hours a week to complete, will provide a general introduction to UK politics for an international audience. It will also aim to help British voters make an informed choice at the ballot box.

With the polls suggesting that Britain's established two-party system is under strain and a coalition government likely, University experts will examine how Scottish and Welsh nationalists could have an unprecedented impact on who becomes Prime Minister.

Uniquely for a politics course, this MOOC happens in real time, changing in response to events in the election and feedback from participants. The course will consist of a mixture of videos, articles and quizzes as well as a weekly live-streamed interactive seminar.

Students who successfully complete the class will receive a Statement of Accomplishment signed by the instructors.

Course instructor Dr Alan Convery from the University's School of Social and Political Science said: "The 2015 election could be a highly significant moment in British politics. The decline of the Liberal Democrats alongside the rise of UKIP and the SNP has the potential to

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create constitutional as well as electoral tensions. This course will be an exciting way to keep abreast of all the inevitable twists and turns.”

The University currently offers 22 MOOCs. Topics covered in these popular higher education standard courses, include *The Discovery of the Higgs boson*, an introduction to particle physics based on the work of Edinburgh scientist and Nobel Prize winner, Professor Peter Higgs.

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