

Innovative learning week in Geography: Honours years

Innovative Learning Week (ILW) is a new programme being run in the University for academic year 2011/12 from February 20th to 24th.

The Institute of Geography has planned an exciting and vibrant week full of new learning opportunities. In order to take part in ILW we need you to sign up for sessions by Friday December 9th. I will then be in touch to confirm your place on the relevant workshops.

The week will begin on Monday morning with brief research presentations from staff, a chance for you to see what we do when we are not teaching! Following this there will be a careers event. On Tuesday we will run various trans-skills workshops which are detailed below. It is these workshops which **you need to sign up for** as each has a cap of approximately 20 students. On Wednesday we are offering either a volunteering opportunity or a photography workshop (details on both below). Again these activities are capped and we need you to sign up for them.

We will provide lunch in the building on Monday and Tuesday and we are hoping that Geog-Soc will be involved in a social activity during the week.

Innovative Learning Week: Meet the staff

Title: What do we do when we are not teaching?

Staff: All geography staff

Max number of students: No Maximum number

Timetable: Monday 20th 10.00 – 13.00

Come along and let us introduce you to our research as each member of staff gives you a 5 minute presentation on their work. You will see just how varied and vibrant the research is within the Institute of Geography.

Innovative Learning Week: Careers Session

Title: Life after a Geography degree...

Staff: Bruce Gittings and Susan Bird with geography graduates

Max number of students: No Maximum number

Timetable: Monday 20th 2pm – 4pm

This session will bring together a group of mid-career geographers who work in a range of roles in the public, private and third sectors. They will tell you about their career paths and the decisions they did (or didn't make) to get to where they are today. You will be surprised to find out where geography can take you, and inspired to explore a breadth of career opportunities. From its position at the interface between the natural and social sciences, Geography not only gives a unique perspective on the world but finds favour with employers, providing strong numeracy skills with the ability to write. There will be the opportunity for informal discussion after the presentations. Come armed with questions which will help you make your career choices.

Innovative Learning Week: Trans-Skills Sessions

Title: The 1 Minute Film Project

Staff: Eric Laurier, Betsy Olson, Eduardo Serafin, Dave Murray-Rust

Max number of students: 40

Requirements: Reasonable quality of headphones. Preference will be given to students with even minimal experience in editing video or audio.

Timetable: Tuesday 21st and Wednesday 22nd. Please note that this runs over 2 days.

Students will be offered the chance to make a 1 minute film in a 48 hour film-making course. A basic introduction to film, camerawork, audio-recording and editing will be given. The emphasis will be hands-on in planning, recording, editing and creative direction. Students will be organised into groups of five and allocated to one of the staff members. The school has a limited number of high quality cameras and audio recorders and a larger amount of consumer Flip-style cameras. Students can bring their own recording equipment, and laptops to work on if they have editing software that they are familiar with. The final films (8 x 1 minute) will be shown as part of the ILW events and afterward uploaded onto a dedicated School web-page. There will be a prize for the best short film.

Title: Communication of science to the public

Staff: Patrick Meir and Anthony Newton

Maximum number of students: 20 maximum

Date: Tuesday 21st February 2011

Start Time: 10.30

Our ability as a society to address many of the challenges facing the world today and our ability to make use of new opportunities, may often be enhanced by improved public understanding of scientific and cultural issues. Museums plays an important part in providing the public with this knowledge and the National Museum of Scotland (NMS) is continually looking find ways to improve how it communicates information to the public.

This student assignment provides an opportunity to spending time thinking about and understanding how science is communicated to the wider public, and then to suggest how it might be improved.

This work for this project will last all day. We will meet at 10.30 on Tuesday 21st February, where we will provide brief details of what we would like you to do. Students will form groups of four or five and in the first instance go to the NMS to investigate a specific exhibit. We recommend that the groups visit exhibits within a specific gallery in the museum (e.g. the Restless Earth, Adventure Planet, Beginnings and Early People) and note how information is presented to the public. This might include the methods used, the types of media, how much detail, the use or absence of jargon, whether any simplification ("dumbing down") is taking place and how well this is done *etc.* You should examine your exhibit critically but also with a positive attitude; there are likely to be strong and weak elements.

You will then be expected to prepare a short group-based presentation on your findings. We will reconvene at 15.00 to hear your presentation on how a particular science story is communicated in the NMS, and how this might be improved. We have contacted NMS staff and they hope to be present at the presentations, so you may have a direct impact on the future delivery of exhibits in the museum! Hopefully this will also inspire a discussion on the representation of science, and the contribution of museums to this process.

Title: You-Bloggin-Twitt-Face – Harness the power of social media.

Staff: Brian Barrett

Max number of students: 20

Timetable: Tuesday 21st 10am – 1pm

The area of social media has become hugely popular over the past number of years and is considered by many as a vital part of life. In the first part of this interactive workshop, we will consider the impact that social media has had on the lives of students and also see how it is transforming the way that we as a society do business. In part two, a hands-on introduction to wikis will be provided and we will look at how they can be used for collaborative work within the University and as an opportunity to use your creativity as a communicator.

Target Audience:

This session will be open to 3rd and 4th year undergraduates but places are limited

Title: Writing Skills

Staff: Franklin Ginn

Max number of students: 20

Timetable: Tuesday 21st 11.00 – 16.00

This session will give students the opportunity to improve their writing skills. The idea of the session is to focus on some core aspects of writing that can be applied to not just academic essays, but also to job applications, online content, posters, professional reports and so on. The morning session (11:00-13:00) will involve peer review exercises designed to identify the strengths and weaknesses in your own writing. We will then look at some tricks to help how you write as coherently as possible and ensure you communicate your ideas effectively. The afternoon session (14:00-16:00) will build on the morning session and involve the whole group in a collaborative writing exercise.

Title: The art of good photography

Staff: STILLLS studio

Max number of students: 22

Requirements: A camera

Timetable: Wednesday 22nd

This one day workshop will be held at the STILLLS gallery and will introduce students to some basic theory, camera functions and provide you with a brief to go out taking photographs. When you have captured your photography you will come back to the studio to discuss and critique. The aim is to teach you the 'art' of taking a good photograph

Innovative Learning Week: Volunteering

Title: Volunteering at the Royal Edinburgh Hospital's Community Gardens

Staff: Niamh Shortt

Max number of students: 25

Timetable: Wednesday 22nd

The Royal Edinburgh Community Gardens is an NHS Lothian initiative with a mission to make opportunities for good food and healthy lifestyles available to the local communities in which NHS Lothian hospitals are based. The gardens have a particular focus on welcoming people who are experiencing mental or physical health problems, disadvantage, isolation or poverty.

We are looking for students to volunteer just one day to help out in the gardens.

Innovative Learning Week: Poster Conference

Title: Dissertation poster conference

Staff: William Mackaness and all staff

Max number of students: All

Timetable: Thursday 23rd

The poster conference is a celebration of student dissertation project work undertaken during the previous year. Every senior honours year student will present the essence of their project work and key findings in the form of an A1 poster. The conference illustrates the enormous variety of projects undertaken by Geography students. It is a wonderful opportunity to share ideas - both among staff, and among students themselves.