



Welcome to the Fall Edition of Ecampus Faculty News

Feel free to contact [Ecampus Staff](#) if you have questions about any of our services.

Ecampus Faculty Focus: in their own words... Jonathan Katz

Jonathan Katz is a Professor of History. His Ecampus course, HST 390, is entitled *Middle Eastern Women: In Their Own Words*. Students read a variety of women's memoirs and view a selection of films in a survey of contemporary Middle Eastern history.

My Ecampus Debut

With just one Ecampus course under my belt (and a brief 4-week summer session course at that), I'm far from being an ordained member of the distance learning clergy. But I will go on record to testify after my first experience: (a) "I was pleasantly surprised," (b) "It was much better than I expected," and (c) "Sure, I'd try it again, why not?"

My initial skepticism was prompted by my earlier experience teaching the old IDL (Individual Distance Learning) courses. This was in the pre-millennium nineties before the advent of Blackboard and the wonderfully helpful Ecampus support staff. IDL instruction back then was "one on one."

Theoretically this sounded ideal – just me with my Ph.D. and some hapless soul in Prineville thirsting for college credits. In reality it was impossible. IDL courses then were really old-fashioned correspondence courses. I never got to "know" my students, our e-mail exchanges were perfunctory and often stilted, and my extensive comments on papers and essays were received with silence. To be honest, I felt used.

What's different now?

First, there's the technology. Blackboard is sometimes difficult to use. (It doesn't follow the intuitive logic for which history professors and other practitioners of the liberal arts are so well known.) But as a teaching platform it does have amazing capabilities. I quickly learned not to expect Blackboard to replicate a bricks-and-

mortar classroom. Instead, I've tried to exploit it for its own merits, especially the potential for speedy interactions and the ability to add and disseminate new materials efficiently.

The second major difference is the students themselves. Sure, there must be some students who expect an online class to be “easier” or less “intimidating” than a face-to-face class on campus. But what I discovered was that many of my summer course students were genuinely motivated. They took my comments on their papers into consideration, and their writing showed improvement with each successive effort. Most participated eagerly in the Discussion Board sessions. Best of all, they interacted with one another rather than just with me.

My online “classroom” also displayed far more diversity than my normal OSU classes. Maybe it was a statistical fluke, but fully half of my class had Hispanic surnames, and I appreciated how some of these students brought their personal perspectives of belonging to a minority or being from an immigrant family into our discussions of ethnicity and identity.

Other students were older than average and thus could relate to the historical events under discussion. One student was from the Middle East. Another had served in the military in the region. A few lived in Europe. Each provided a critical point of view, and by the end of four weeks I really had a sense of each individual’s personality and an appreciation for his or her approach.

Back when I was in college, the ideal classroom setting (at least for me) was a small class that focused on deconstructing documents and texts. In my years of teaching at OSU, I’ve often tried to replicate that experience, encouraging students to formulate their own interpretations and voice them with confidence. I confess, the results have often been mixed as it seems no amount of effort on my part can break down an apprehensive or ill-prepared student’s wall of passivity.

Ironically, my Ecampus distance course comes closer to that Platonic ideal of classroom intimacy than many of my campus offerings. Perhaps it’s the distance and nature of the virtual setting. Or maybe the process of writing somehow encourages a more frank and deeper exchange than ordinary verbal communication. Whatever the reason, my first foray into distance learning was a success. As I approach my second Ecampus course, I do so with high hopes.

Ecampus Faculty Interviews

The Ecampus website now has a new webpage featuring [short interviews](#) with some of our faculty. Their stories give a brief insight into their experiences in teaching online courses.

Online Instruction: Tips and Tricks Victor Yee, Multimedia Developer

How to open an MS-Office 2007 document if you don't have Office 2007

Scenario: your student just submitted an assignment as a MS-Word 2007 document (identified by a “.docx: extension) and you can't open the file.

Here's how you can open it in your version of MS-Office.

On a PC computer you just need to download the Office [compatibility pack](#).
On a Mac you need the Office Open XML File [Format Converter](#).
If you are using OpenOffice or StarOffice you need the Open XML [Translator](#).
There is also an online resource, which doesn't require you to have Office, that you can use at <http://www.zamzar.com>.

Blackboard Training Tips Dianna Fisher, Director, Ecampus Project Development and Training

You may have noticed a new checkbox when composing announcements to students within Blackboard. Section 4 allows you to check a box that sends your new announcement to your students via their ONID email accounts. One caution: If you have set dates into the future for the announcement to appear, don't use this feature. Checking this box will send the announcement immediately, regardless of the dates you have set.

Biennial Conference on University Education in Natural Resources

Oregon State University will host the 7th **Biennial Conference on University Education in Natural Resources** on March 13-15, 2008.
Please consider **submitting a paper** and attending. Discounted registration and housing rates are being offered to students, and travel stipends are possible.
More complete information can be found at <http://uenr.forestry.oregonstate.edu/>

Faculty Senate Distance Ed. Committee Endorses New Ecampus Syllabus Template

“The Faculty Senate Distance Education Committee endorses the ‘Syllabus Guidelines’ developed by Extended Campus (June 2007). The Sample Course Syllabus is an effective tool to help instructors provide information essential for students. The guidelines also include the elements required of every OSU syllabus, as set by the Curricular Procedures and Policies within the Academic Programs Web site. The [Detailed Course Syllabus Template](#) is a useful collection of syllabus elements tailored for distance education courses.”

OSU Libraries unveils The Oregon Explorer

The new [Oregon Explorer](#) website provides information to help local citizens and policymakers make better decisions about Oregon's natural resources. The new website is a free, natural resource digital library integrating data from state and federal agencies, local governments, university scientists and citizens. Check it out!

Online Literature Review Workshop for Extended Campus Grad Students

A free online thesis/dissertation literature review workshop is now available for graduate students currently enrolled in Ecampus! The workshop will be made available online through Blackboard beginning Monday, October 22 and run through Friday, November 2. Participants may listen to the workshop presentation and participate at any point during that two-week window. You might consider recommending this to your students if they are:

- Unclear about how to start on a thesis/dissertation literature review
- Unsure of how to keep track of sources, searches, and all the new research in their field
- Wondering how to keep up once they have done their initial work
- Wishing they could use those valuable library resources more effectively and efficiently

How to register:

http://osulibrary.oregonstate.edu/instruction/ecampus_registration.html

For questions contact Hannah Rempel at hannah.rempel@oregonstate.edu.

COURSE PACKETS GO GREEN!

If you are currently using course packets – would you like to save time each term, and save trees and students' money, all at the same time? By converting your course packets for delivery through Blackboard:

- You won't have to remember each term to contact Printing and Mailing to order them. They will automatically roll over with the course.
- Students will have the option of viewing them online through Blackboard, or printing out only what they want, saving paper, ink, toxins, excess garbage in the landfills, etc.

To see if your current course packet material can be put into Blackboard, please send your citations to [Mandy Misner](#), who will facilitate your request.

Take Center for Teaching & Learning Fall Workshops

For information about workshops listed below, consultations, learning resources via the web, Best Teaching Practices video library, teaching and learning grants, plus more go to <http://oregonstate.edu/ctl>, or send an e-mail to CTL@oregonstate.edu, or call 737-2809.

Registration is required for all workshops.

Emerging Technologies

Tuesday, October 30, 1:30-3:00pm, Milam 215

Visual Teaching in an Auditory World

Friday, November 2, 8:30am-12:30pm, Milam 215

Learning Styles and Learning Perspectives

Wed., November 7, 10 am-12 pm, Milam 215

Fall Career Development Conference for students

Fall Career Fairs: Tuesday & Wednesday, October 23rd & 24th, 11 a.m. - 4 p.m., CH2M Hill Alumni Center

The University Wide (October 23rd) and Engineering Career Fair (October 24th) are great opportunities to connect with employers. OSU has the largest career fairs for students in the state, and this Fall's fairs are bigger than ever, with more employers from a wider variety of fields attending than ever before (almost 300 in all!). The fairs are a great way to look for internship and full-time job opportunities, as well as network with employers and just learn what's out there. **For information and a full listing of who's attending these fairs, visit:** <http://oregonstate.edu/career/fair/>

Ecampus Graduates Make Trek to Graduation Ceremony

This past June, a number of Extended Campus distant students came to OSU to participate, in person, in the 2007 graduation ceremonies. Go to our website to read some of their inspiring stories. **Add link**

Parting Notes

Thank you for taking a few moments to read the Ecampus fall 2007 edition of eFaculty News.

Please let us know if you have a topic you would like addressed in a future edition, would like to submit an article, or have any comments or suggestions. We appreciate any feedback that is given!

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