



Nov 08, 2016 15:08 GMT

Election Day is the perfect time to learn more about America

While the world holds its breath ahead of the dramatic result of the US election, thousands of online students are learning more about America thanks to Northumbria University's first ever MOOC (Massive Online Open Course).

'The American South' launched on 31 October in partnership with Future Learn and is giving students from the around the world the chance to learn from Northumbria's experts at the University's Institute of the Humanities. Almost 6,000 students are currently signed up to the course, which has

received 3,000 comments by way of feedback, with many expressing an interest in coming to study a full degree at Northumbria.

This exciting news comes during a hugely important 48 hours in both US and global affairs as America decides who its next President will be. Dr Michael Cullinane, who was born in the US and lectures on Northumbria's American Studies course, says there's never been a better time to learn more about this fascinating country at Northumbria University. He said: "The American South, Northumbria University's first Massive Open Online Course now has nearly 6,000 learners, and with Election Day this week, there have been thousands of comments on the Trump-Clinton showdown. What role does the American South play in elections? How will President Clinton or President Trump impact the region?"

"In addition to these questions, learners on the MOOC have recognized Northumbria's strength in American Studies and History. One A-Level student decided to book into an Open Day as a result of taking the course, and many others have made comments on the exciting research taking place in the Institute of the Humanities."

Northumbria has a large cohort of American Studies scholars, with a number of experts on the American South, specialising in topics from politics and popular culture to civil rights and southern writing, and from religion to rock and roll. Earlier this year, Dr Cullinane was involved in organising a two-day Presidential History Network symposium at Northumbria's City Campus to analyse the phenomenon of 'presidential legacy'. Alongside Northumbria experts, keynote speakers included bestselling author and two-time Pulitzer Prize finalist H. W. Brands and the Director of the JFK Presidential Library and Museum Tom Putnam.

Dr Cullinane added: "Presidential legacy is everywhere. Walk through Newcastle's Civil Centre and you will pass by a monument to Jimmy Carter's visit. Turn on BBC and you can watch *Inside Obama's White House*. And if this is not pervasive enough, you need only tune into the wall-to-wall coverage of the 2016 presidential election to hear today's presidential hopefuls co-opt former occupants of the White House."

Watch the film below to find out more.

[View embedded content here](#)

Northumbria's free five-week MOOC, which launched last month, focuses on the many paradoxes of the American South and helps students get to grips with its fascinating history and culture. The course examines the history of slavery, the Confederacy, and the South's defeat in the Civil War, to racial segregation, and the Civil Rights movement, before moving onto the present day. But it also explores how film, television, music and literature, not mention religion, cooking, climate, guns and sport, have shaped the southern experience. By the end of the course, students will have gained an understanding of the global significance of the South and come to some conclusions about the nature and extent of southern distinctiveness.

Speaking prior to the launch of the new MOOC, Brian Ward, Professor in American Studies and a leading expert on US and southern history, said: "The great thing about a MOOC is its reach and flexibility. It is also a great way to showcase the extraordinary research strengths and teaching talent we have in American Studies at Northumbria to a genuinely global audience of learners who want to be informed and entertained."

Professor Ward is currently in Florida writing about the US election. Read his report, direct from Florida, on the state's 'voter fatigue' by clicking [here](#).

The American South MOOC, in partnership with Future Learn, is being delivered by experts from Northumbria's Institute of the Humanities. This cross-disciplinary centre is dedicated to exploring the many facets of what it is to be human and what drives us in terms of culture and creativity.

Northumbria is recognised for world-leading research in several Humanities' disciplines. Results from the 2014 Research Excellence Framework showed that, for both English and History, Northumbria University is ranked in the top quartile of UK universities. Our researchers have attracted major funding from Research Councils UK as well as the British Academy, Leverhulme Trust and Nuffield Foundation.

Research at the University's Institute of the Humanities brings together the disciplines of Art History, American Studies, Creative Writing, English Language and Linguistics, English Literature, History, and Media Studies. For more information about the Institute go click [here](#).

Meanwhile, if you want to learn more about the history, literature, politics, film, art and popular culture of the United States, then American Studies at Northumbria is the ideal choice. Whether your interests lie in the Civil War or the War on Terror, Walt Whitman or Walt Disney, this course will help you to develop your critical and imaginative skills in the context of the American experience and its global significances.

Northumbria offers a range of courses in the Humanities, including American Studies. To find out more sign up for one of our next Open Days on 26 November by clicking [here](#).

To find out more about 'The American South' MOOC, delivered by Northumbria's Institute of the Humanities and FutureLearn, go to:
<https://www.futurelearn.com/courses/american-south>

Northumbria is a research-rich, business-focused, professional university with a global reputation for academic excellence. To find out more about our courses go to www.northumbria.ac.uk

If you have a media enquiry please contact our Media and Communications team at media.communications@northumbria.ac.uk or call [0191 227 4571](tel:01912274571).

Contacts



Rik Kendall

Press Contact

PR and Media Manager

Business and Law / Arts, Design & Social Sciences

rik.kendall@northumbria.ac.uk

07923 382339



Andrea Slowey

Press Contact

PR and Media Manager

Engineering and Environment / Health and Life Sciences

andrea.slowey@northumbria.ac.uk

07708 509436



Rachael Barwick

Press Contact

PR and Media Manager

rachael.barwick@northumbria.ac.uk

07377422415



James Fox

Press Contact

Student Communications Manager

james2.fox@northumbria.ac.uk



Kelly Elliott

Press Contact

PR and Media Officer

kelly2.elliott@northumbria.ac.uk



Gemma Brown

Press Contact

PR and Media Officer

gemma6.brown@northumbria.ac.uk