Teaching Tip: E-Learning Crossing Borders: "Policing (all around) the World"

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This project, developed by Ruhr-University Bochum and the University of Cape Town, provides a series of interdisciplinary, transnational presentations in English, given by national and international experts on policing and police science from across the world. The series of presentations may be used in classroom settings at universities and colleges or for distance learning. The presentations are videotaped and converted together with a Powerpoint-Presentation into an Adobe Presenter file. This file is stored at a server in Germany (Bochum University), and is available without any further software by anybody worldwide who has internet access. Some open-to-public examples of such presentations on policing may be found at the Second Annual Conference-website of the Scottish Institute or Policing Research (SIPR) at http://www.sipr.ac.uk/events/Outputs_Conference2008.php. [See e.g. "Peacekeeping and police reform in the new Europe: Lessons from Kosovo," Thomas Feltes.]

The project has **three learning objectives**:

1: Students will learn about a variety ways in which societies are policed, how state and private police forces operate as well as how they are structured and trained. They will be able to compare different legal systems and different policing philosophies.

2: Students will realize that there are different meanings and understandings of "police science". They will appreciate how these different understandings of police and policing have emerged and are developing. They will be able to analyze theoretical, empirical and practical developments in this field.

3: Students will appreciate different teaching and learning cultures and be able exchange their views with other students from different countries and working within different fields (law, social sciences, philosophy, etc.).

Scope

As of March 2009, the project consist of two teaching modules, each ready to be included in classrooms teaching (with internet access) or for distance learning.

Module A includes presentations on over 12 countries, from Australia to Switzerland. Together with readings and self-study time this adds up to 125 working hours (or 5 Credit Points in terms of the European Credit Transfer System – ECTS).

Module B includes presentations on special topics such as Policing Mass Events, Police Use of Force, Police and Diversity, Peacekeeping and Police, Police in Transition, Police Accountability, Police Democratization, Private and Plural Policing and Inter-Continental Policing. Here again, the workload (video plus reading) for the students is 125 hours.

Format

Presentations are made available through Adobe Presenter. Ruhr-University in Bochum hosts the server where the Presenter-Files are stored. It is <u>not</u> possible to download the lectures, but the lectures are available online 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. No special software on user´s side is necessary to view the presentations. But access to the presentations requires an account and a password (provided by Bochum University). The presentations consist of: a) powerpoint-slides, b) a presenter (commenting on the slides) and c) a presentation outline, which enables the viewer to stop the lecture, move forwards and backwards, and re-start. Besides the video-lectures, mp3-audio-files of the lectures are available for those who want to print out the slides and listen to the lecture as a podcast-audio whilst travelling.
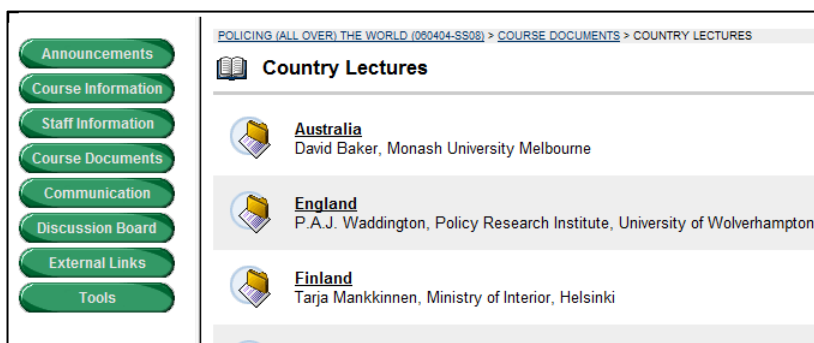

Blackboard and teaching material: Articles for personal study and discussion

Each presentation consist of a Presenter-file and between three and five articles (in pdf-format) as "Course Documents", accessible via the e-learning software "Blackboard" at Bochum University. This software allows for a discussion forum, announcements, chats, and other options. (see screenshot). The "Blackboard" seminar is monitored and moderated by a teaching assistant in Bochum, but local or regional assistants may be included.

Interaction and Communication

Besides the discussion forum, it is possible to establish national working groups in Blackboard, which enables students from different countries to discuss questions and exchange documents in their own language. It is also possible to have an exchange and discussion with the author of the lecture on pre-arranged days and times.

Copyright: The authors retain the copyright for their lectures. There are no costs for those who take part (neither students, nor lecturers).

Join the Group: Anybody who wants to be included is encouraged to contact the organizers and propose a presentation on either policing in a given country or a special topic in the field of policing and police research. Those who want to join the group may do so by contacting the organizers at contact@policescience.info.