



▶ **Did You Know?**
DID YOU KNOW? THE CUOL STUDENT CENTRE HOURS ARE EXTENDED DURING EXAMS. FROM APRIL 7TH TO 21ST IT IS OPEN MONDAY TO FRIDAY: 8:30 AM TO 9:00 PM, AND SATURDAY: 10:00 AM TO 6:00 PM.



▶ **CONGRATULATIONS TO CUOL STUDENTS JESSICA SMITH AND JORDAN WELK.** THEY WON A PAIR OF TICKETS TO SEE THE **SENATORS** PLAY, COURTESY OF THE **OTTAWA SENATORS.**

Online focus

With the winter semester almost over, it can be difficult to stay focused on schoolwork. But buckle down comrades! Summer's just around the corner.

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If you asked him, Professor Peter Thompson couldn't explain all the technology supporting his new Canadian studies course. But he knows he likes it. The course, which just finished its pilot semester and is due to run again this summer, is a Carleton trailblazer - it was one of the university's first courses to be offered exclusively online. No in-class section.

"It's a targeted approach to support [distance students] in their native environment, as opposed to trying to hit two birds with one stone," Ryan Kuhne, an educational technology consultant at Carleton said, referring to observatory role that CUOL students often adopt (though more and more professors are making an effort to connect with their hundreds of absent online students).

This course - called Introduction to the study of Canadian culture - features introductory videos for each class, with the main material delivered in a series of slides with Thompson's recorded lecture over-top. Then there are the active discussion boards and skyped office hours.

"I think it's really slick and intuitive... and really accessible to distance students," Thompson said. Since all the lessons are designed and produced before the course even begins, the

Dedicated to Distance

Universities are pushing to offer more online courses, and Carleton is no different. Here's the latest shift online.

instructor's time is freed up to hold longer office hours and mark coursework.

Naturally, there were a few glitches the first time around but Thompson said Kuhne and the rest of the tech team working on the project were incredible and indispensable. He recalls sending Kuhne an email at 9pm on a Sunday night, regarding some difficulties students were having accessing the video, and within an hour Kuhne had emailed back, saying he'd packaged and uploaded the material in another format - the problem was fixed.

But for the most part everything went smoothly, Thompson said. Especially the open-source online conferencing tool they used in the first class - BigBlueButton. The system, built specifically to improve distance education, was developed in the *Technology Innovation Management (TIM)* program at Carleton, and one of the developers Fred Dixon sat in on the first session for support.

It's really a Carleton success story, Kuhne said of BigBlueButton, which lets users scribble on virtual whiteboards, type questions everyone in the conversation can see, and listen live to the professor answering questions. Thompson says he enjoyed learning to use the new tools, and that the web-focused nature of the class has impacted his "entire approach to teaching."

Canadian Studies involves a lot of issues regarding remote regions of Canada, so it's great that this

kind of course can get students from those actual regions involved, Thompson said. Not to mention the fact that Canadian studies is a popular course around the world, perhaps even more so than within our own country.

Last semester they limited enrollment to 60 people, then raised it 69, and Thompson said they still had about double that many people asking to get in. Summer registration opens May 1 and 2.

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Photo courtesy of Sabrina Doyle



Peter Thompson

Stories from the field: CUOL at the ground level

In Ottawa and around the world, CUOL is becoming a part of students' lives. Do you have a story to share? It could be funny, inspirational, or just kinda neat - so long as CUOL was somehow involved.

I moved to Ottawa a few years ago to come to school at Carleton. Unfortunately due to family circumstances I could no longer afford to take full time studies and support myself. I also was not qualified for enough OSAP to cover my expenses. I was extremely upset because I really wanted to continue school but needed to be working up to 70 hours a week. CUOL allowed me to not only work but stay in school and do well. I never missed a single lecture (which I don't think I can say happened when I was in classes at the school) and I received some of my highest marks. It was perfect because I was able to watch lectures whenever I had a spare moment (breaks, before bed, time off etc.) and I could go back if I needed to. It was also helpful during exam period because when I was studying and got confused I could go rewatch the lecture that I was unsure on. I will continue to take CUOL classes as often as I can, as they are a huge asset to my Carleton degree!

-Jessica Smith

CUOL is a great way to slack off and cram in all your lectures before your exams. Ok, maybe that is exaggerating a little. CUOL allows for a more effective learning environment in the comfort of your own home, your favourite coffee shop, or wherever you may be. My roommate is currently registered in two CUOL classes and man it is very hard getting up in the morning to go to class seeing his door shut and knowing he's still fast asleep. These classes are a very inexpensive luxury that definitely enhance your attention span and lead to a better mark. And lets face it, everyone loves the fact they can watch their classes whenever they want to study in a way that best suits their learning cycle. I love being able to have six classes and still manage everything due to my one CUOL class that makes my schedule and learning experience that much easier. CUOL is a beneficial option for a better education.

-Jordan Welk

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Behind the Scenes

There's a lot of organizational work that goes into making CUOL work for the thousands of students that benefit from it. But most of it happens behind the curtains, hidden from view - until now.

When Renea Free sits down at her desk in the morning, there are many unread emails waiting for her, having arrived in her inbox since she left the office the previous afternoon.

While some are the run-of-mill office memos, most include some variation of exam organization, planning technicality, or a student in a pickle. As a CUOL Exam coordinator, it is Free's job to deal with each of these. For the majority of each day, she is responding to emails or on the phone.

"I think people would be surprised to know how much detail goes into every part of this job," Free says. If one thing goes wrong, it can lead to a domino effect and muck up everyone's schedule. More courses lead to more conflicts, and with the decree coming from above that Carleton is to expand its online offerings, things aren't about to simplify.

She has two computer screens, one an iMac, to accommodate the gigantic spreadsheets that she manages. There are at least seven small happy-bunny posters tacked to her walls, as well as another at her doorway that cheekily announces, "Skool makes you sooper smartt."

Around ten years ago the Carleton geography graduate moved back to Ottawa with her husband, and was happily working for a cartography company making 3D maps. But mapping work is largely contract based; companies can disappear quickly and with two young sons to think of, she decided to accept full-time, stable work with the school she loved.

While she misses mapping, she says she loves the people she works with. But the best part of her job, she says, is interacting with the students - most of whom are thankful for all the hidden organizational work she does and not afraid to say it.

Rightly so. There are around 6000 CUOL registrations per term and almost 250 of those are distance students, signing on from Spain to Pakistan to Australia.

Photo courtesy of Nestor Querido



Renea Free

That means making sure there are enough seats and enough exams sheets, reminding safety personnel to unlock the doors, dealing with conflicts, etc. And when the earthquake hit Japan on the day of one student's distance exam and he and his proctor couldn't reach each other, it was Free who hustled to communicate between the two and told them to relax, because yes of course he could do his exam another day.

Of course not everyone is a ball of sunshine - when an issue does pop up, like schedule conflicts or missing exam deadlines, this is where Free comes in and calms everyone down, and gets the job done.

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This month's feature:
Google Calendar

*Well 'aint that helpful!
Ways Google Calendar can help
organize your life that you maybe
didn't know about*

Exam month. The ultimate schedule scrambler. Routines get shattered, and organization (not to mention sleep) suffers. *Google Calendar* can help you bring order to the disorder. And there's a lot of features that many people still aren't aware of, even though they've been around for awhile. Sure, you can stick with a good ol' desktop agenda, or perhaps you prefer your desktop calendar, but *Google* has packaged a tidy, seamless, nicely customizable calendar that has something for everyone and can't be accidentally lost somewhere. If you've never jumped on the digital calendar bandwagon, it's worth taking the time to really get to know the interface. In the meantime, here's some cool things that you can do with it:

-If you've got a smartphone, it can link automatically to the calendar on your device. It can even sync with Apple's *iCal* (and *Microsoft Outlook* and *Mozilla Sunbird*).

-if you don't have a smartphone, you can still be mobile by texting events straight to your google calendar using their quick-add syntax, such as 'study biology with Laura, 10am- 1pm April 15. *Gcal* would automatically create an event at the appropriate time/day. Similarly, you can also have text notifications of impending deadlines or commitments sent to your phone.

-No internet connection? No problem. You can still view your schedule with their view offline option.

-share a calendar (or certain parts of the calendar, if you don't want to share all) between people to schedule study events, or even study breaks. You can also invite other people to events on your calendar.

-export *Facebook* events to the calendar (as well as friends' birthdays)

-have your agenda for the day sent to you each morning, if desired

-create different calendars for different aspects of your life - so could have one for studying, another for exercise, bills, goal milestones, birthdays, etc.

Just be careful to use it as a way to make your life more efficient, as opposed to an online procrastination tool to play with and tweak endlessly!

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Staying Healthy during Exams

It's 6:25 p.m. and her hands have become clammy and turned a suspicious purple colour, as if covered in bruises. She presses her elbows snug against her ribcage because who knows how disastrous the pit stains are at this point. Barely slept last night, so overcompensated with caffeine today (here come the shakes) and unless you count *Redbull* as food, has barely eaten since breakfast. 6:45 p.m. and the doors open. She walks across the threshold into a room filled with desks and papers and pens and proctors. She is in no state to be doing an exam.

This situation, which I experienced in my second undergrad year, could have been avoided. Students are constantly reminded to take care of themselves during exam period but many warnings go unheeded, despite best intentions. In fact, exam month war stories can later get romanticized, like comparing battle scars at a bar; glory is given to (s)he who suffered the worst and lived to brag about it. But the fact that you did your exam as a sickly, human-shaped blob of caffeine and stress isn't something to be proud of or propagate.

So here are some tips to help ease those April jitters and keep you healthy and ready for exams this spring.

-to help you sleep during exam season and sidestep cabin fever symptoms, set aside some time each day for some sort of exercise, but don't do it right before bed.

- to make your time awake as productive as possible, I recommend waking up early. However sleep routines can be something of a personal thing and if you're more of a night owl then play into that - just make sure to get enough zzz's!

- organize your time, slotting in segments for sleeping, eating, and exercising as well as study periods. Go to this month's *TechCorner* to learn some ways *Google* calendars can help.

- lots of people don't want to spend lots of time preparing food, so at the beginning of each week, cook a lot of big-ticket items that will last you for a good few meals. Casseroles are perfect, since they're freezable, healthy, and you can basically throw in whatever's in the fridge.

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Here is a super easy recipe to make during exam season, or whenever time/money is an issue. Or just whenever, because it's delicious.

Basic tuna casserole

prep time: 15 minutes

cook time: 30 minutes

Yields 6 - 8 servings, so double the recipe according to how long you want it to last you (depending on the room in your freezer, you can always cut it up into sections and freeze individually)

Ingredients:

3 cups cooked macaroni (can use other pasta, if that's what happens to be in your cupboard)

1 can (6 ounce) tuna drained

1 can (10.75 ounce) condensed cream of mushroom soup

1 cup shredded cheddar cheese enough cracker crumbs to make light covering of the dish

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees Fahrenheit.

2. Combine macaroni, tuna and soup in large greased baking dish. Mix well. Top with cheese and cracker crumbs.

3. Bake for about a half an hour, or until bubbly.

If you've got the time and/or the money, this is great with chopped onions, celery, peas, and basically whatever other vegetable you want to throw in. If seafood's not your thing, substitute chicken or turkey! That's the beauty of the almighty student casserole.

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CUOL Newsletter

Reporter/Writer:

Sabrina Doyle

Contributors:

Maria Brocklehurst | Patrick Lyons | Nestor Querido

CUOL Final Exam Schedules (April 2012)

LOCAL EXAMS (Carleton Campus)	TORONTO (Seneca College) <i>For Distance students only!</i>		HAMILTON (Academy of Learning) <i>For Distance Students only!</i>	
MIDTERM EXAM DATES/LOCATIONS	COURSE	MIDTERM EXAM DATES/TIMES	COURSE	MIDTERM EXAM DATES/TIMES
Mon., April 16 9:00	BIOL 1902 V	Mon., April 16 18:00	BIOL 1902 V	Mon., April 16 11:00
Tues., April 24 9:00	BIOL 2903 V	Tues., April 24 17:00	BIOL 2903 V	Tues., April 24 11:00
Sat., April 14 9:00	BUSI 1003 V	Sat., April 14 9:00	BUSI 1003 V	Sat., April 14 10:00
Wed., April 18 9:00	BUS 1402 V	Wed., April 18 18:00	BUS 1402 V	Wed., April 18 9:00
Sat., April 14 14:00	CDNS 2210	Sat., April 14 9:00	CDNS 2210	Sat., April 14 10:00
Fri., April 13 14:00	CHEM 1002 V	Fri., April 13 18:00	CHEM 1002 V	Fri., April 13 9:00
Tues., April 3 18:00	CIVE 5609 R	Tues., April 3 17:00	CIVE 5609 R	Tues., April 3 11:00
Thurs., April 5 18:00	CIVE 5614 R	Thurs., April 5 17:00	CIVE 5614 R	Thurs., April 5 11:00
Thurs., April 5 18:00	CIVE 5706 R	Thurs., April 5 17:00	CIVE 5706 R	Thurs., April 5 11:00
Thurs., April 19 9:00	ECON 1000 V	Thurs., April 19 17:00	ECON 1000 V	Thurs., April 19 9:00
Thurs., April 19 9:00	ECON 1002 V	Thurs., April 19 17:00	ECON 1002 V	Thurs., April 19 9:00
Fri., April 20 9:00	ERTH 2415 V	Fri., April 20 18:00	ERTH 2415 V	Fri., April 20 11:00
Wed., April 18 19:00	FINS 3105 V	Wed., April 18 18:00	FINS 3105 V	Wed., April 18 11:00
Sat., April 21 9:00	HIST 3305 V/ LAWS 3305 V	Sat., April 21 9:00	HIST 3305 V/ LAWS 3305 V	Sat., April 21 10:00
Wed., April 11 14:00	LAWS 1000 V	Wed., April 11 18:00	LAWS 1000 V	Wed., April 11 11:00
Sat., April 14 9:00	LAWS 2302 V	Sat., April 14 9:00	LAWS 2302 V	Sat., April 14 10:00
Tues., April 17 19:00	LAWS 2502 V	Tues., April 17 17:00	LAWS 2502 V	Tues., April 17 11:00
Mon., April 23 19:00	LAWS 3306 V	Mon., April 23 18:00	LAWS 3306 V	Mon., April 23 9:00
Mon., April 23 9:00	NEUR 2002 V	Mon., April 23 18:00	NEUR 2002 V	Mon., April 23 11:00
Thurs., April 19 9:00	NEUR 2200 V	Thurs., April 19 17:00	NEUR 2200 V	Thurs., April 19 9:00
Thurs., April 12 14:00	NEUR 3204 V	Thurs., April 12 17:00	NEUR 3204 V	Thurs., April 12 11:00
Thurs., April 19 19:00	PHYS 1902 V	Thurs., April 19 17:00	PHYS 1902 V	Thurs., April 19 11:00
Tues., April 17 9:00	PYSC 1002 V	Tues., April 17 17:00	PYSC 1002 V	Tues., April 17 9:00
Mon., April 23 9:00	PSYC 2002 V	Mon., April 23 18:00	PSYC 2002 V	Mon., April 23 11:00
Wed., April 11 9:00	PSYC 2100 V	Wed., April 11 18:00	PSYC 2100 V	Wed., April 11 9:00
Thurs., April 19 9:00	PSYC 2200 V	Thurs., April 19 17:00	PSYC 2200 V	Thurs., April 19 9:00
Fri., April 13 14:00	RELI 2732 V	Fri., April 13 18:00	RELI 2732 V	Fri., April 13 11:00
Wed., April 18 14:00	SOWK 1000 V	Wed., April 18 18:00	SOWK 1000 V	Wed., April 18 11:00
Tues., April 24 14:00	TSES 3002 V	Tues., April 24 17:00	TSES 3002 V	Tues., April 24 11:00