

What can MOOCs do for us in HE?

Some experiences from the School of Law

Professor Christian Tams

Dr. Suzy Houston



Key questions

- are MOOCs a suitable way of widening participation in University teaching?;
- how can they be developed and delivered sustainably?;
- how can they be linked with traditional forms of classroom teaching in forms of 'blended learning' so as to enhance student experience?;
- can they contribute to the University's aim of fostering 'excellence in teaching' as defined in the L&T Strategy?

Background

- Our 2 MOOCs: 'Right v Might' and 'Paris 1919'
- Reasons for getting involved
- Who was involved? MOOCs as team efforts
- UoG's approach to MOOCs
- Specific features of these two MOOCs
- Overall assessment and key lessons

Course statistics

Right vs Might in International Relations

Overview

Totals

Weekly

Filter stats up to a date:

12 Apr 2015

5 Apr 2015

29 Mar 2015

22 Mar 2015

15 Mar 2015

8 Mar 2015

Course Run Measures

Joiners	5,855	
Leavers	878	15.0%
Learners	3,188	54.4%
Active Learners	2,664	83.6%
Returning Learners	1,332	41.8%
Social Learners	1,486	46.6%
Fully Participating Learners	739	23.2%
Statements Sold	103	

Course statistics continued

World War 1: Paris 1919 - A New World Order?

Overview

Totals

Weekly

Filter stats up to a date:

12 Apr 2015

5 Apr 2015

29 Mar 2015

22 Mar 2015

15 Mar 2015

8 Mar 2015

Course Run Measures

Joiners	9,367	
Leavers	975	10.4%
Learners	5,457	58.3%
Active Learners	4,532	83.0%
Returning Learners	2,739	50.2%
Social Learners	2,372	43.5%
Fully Participating Learners	2,332	42.7%
Statements Sold	123	

Key considerations and challenges

- Focus: identifying topic and audience
- Interaction: how much mentoring?
- Linkage: how close to existing classroom courses?
- Marketing: how to reach the target audience?
- Resources: time, money and expertise

Pedagogy

- “Post-MOOC”? SPOCs?
- Massiveness
- Openness

Massiveness

- Course content designed for ‘individual’ learner (xMOOC)
- Massiveness related to discussions
- Peer-review
- Use of GTAs

Week No 1	Morning slot (until 14.00)	Afternoon Slot (14.00-19.00)	Evening slot (19.00 onwards)
Monday 23/06	GTA 1	GTA 2	GTA 3
Tuesday 24/06	GTA 1	GTA 2	GTA 3
Wednesday 25/06	GTA 1	GTA 2	GTA 3
Thursday 26/06	GTA 1	GTA 2	GTA 3
Friday 27/06	GTA 1	GTA 2	GTA 3



WEEK 1	WEEK 2	WEEK 3	WEEK 4	WEEK 5	WEEK 6
23 Jun	30 Jun	7 Jul	14 Jul	21 Jul	28 Jul

WEEK 1: LETHAL DRONE STRIKES

42 weeks ago



Introduction to Lethal Drone Strikes

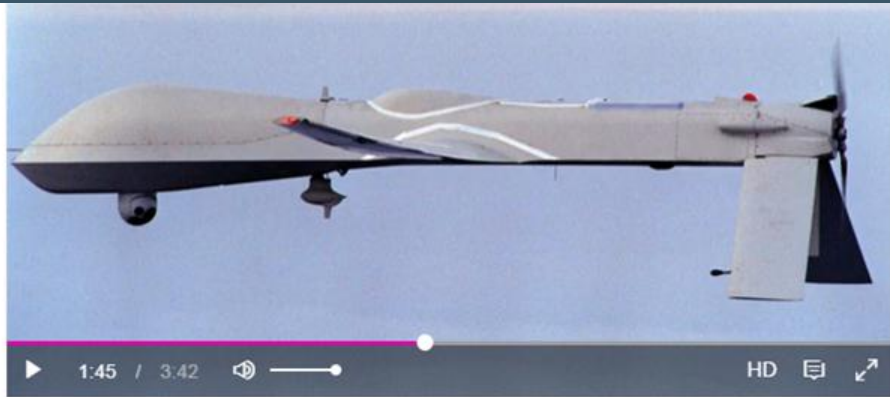
This section will introduce you to the controversial debate surrounding lethal drone strikes. Image: Cpl Mark Webster/MOD

- 1.1 MEET THE TEAM ARTICLE
- 1.2 HOW TO USE FUTURELEARN VIDEO
- 1.3 WHAT BRINGS YOU HERE? DISCUSSION
- 1.4 INTRODUCTION TO LETHAL DRONE STRIKES (3:42) VIDEO
- 1.5 GOOGLE HANGOUT SESSION ARTICLE



Factual Background

This section will look at some general facts about drones and the US drone program. Due to the secrecy surrounding drone strikes a lot of facts remain unknown or controversial. Therefore, we will not consider specific incidents.



[View transcript \(PDF\)](#)

Introduction to Lethal Drone Strikes (3:42)

Our first encounter with the world of lethal drone strikes.

© University of Glasgow

486 comments

[Undo](#)

◀ PREVIOUS

NEXT ▶



Suzy Houston (Host)

Leave a comment... (plain text only, links will be auto-linked)

Post

0/1200



Jonathan HUDSON

[Follow](#) 17 OCT

Regarding Critics, as they put forward: Drones kill innocent victims and they terrify Foreign Publics, but even if the drones are precise tools to destroy enemy targets of course there can be collateral damages inflicted to innocent civilians, but this is also the case in course of conventional airstrikes. What also needs to be put forward is the technological evolution that permits to reduce the impact of these collateral damages this does not mean that there will be no more victims at all but the trend is to reach a zero target of victims. The evolution since WWII since mass bombing and the more accurate precision that is possible thanks to the embarked electronics being on conventional war planes or drones tends to diminish drastically the collateral damages inflicted on civilians.

[Like](#) • [Reply](#)



Mohamed Jama Farah

[Follow](#) 02 AUG

I think this new methods created the difference between human rights laws and political international ideological and how to apply the interesting supported supper powers country.

[Like](#) • [Reply](#)



lili eylon

[Follow](#) 30 JUL

All violence, war is reprehensible. New methods are always developed. The difference here is that human llives on one side are being spared.

[Like 1](#) • [Reply](#)



Josendrick Bravo

[Follow](#) 26 JUL

It is a very controversial topic, but merely driven by major powers. These potentials argue about





[View transcript \(PDF\)](#)

Introduction to Lethal Drone Strikes (3:42)

Our first encounter with the world of lethal drone strikes.

© University of Glasgow

486 comments

Undo

[NEXT](#)

employed both in surveillance and attacks.

* The user is uninjured, there are no body bags bringing home dead soldiers shown on the 6 o'clock news. I'm old enough to remember the impact of those body bags from Vietnam.

* Identified targets are frequently demolished and terrorists killed.

* 82 countries have them so the USA no longer has a monopoly.

But:

* Who decides what is a potential terrorist threat to any country?

* Using drones on a country can be called an act of undeclared warfare.

* Who assesses the risk to innocent people? So many have been killed. Paying compensation later is hardly going to bring back the dead.

* Most important of all have drone strikes reduced the number of terrorists? Or have they just moved elsewhere changed their name and spread their message.

Like 27



Lena Jöst

Unfollow 23 JUN

Excellent summary! If I may add one "but": Who supervises the drone strikes and ascertains the legality and effectiveness of each drone strike? I'm not quite sure how other countries do it, but in the US it's mostly intelligence operations by the CIA, which are naturally kept secret and out of the public eye. So who watches the watchers?

Like 11



Peter Beske

Follow 24 JUN

As Joyce noted, US attacks (via both drones and troops) in Afghanistan and elsewhere have merely resulted in targeted groups spreading out and moving to other areas. Also, from a strategic standpoint, 'blowback' is a real danger in using drone strikes, i.e. causing more anti-US sentiment among the local population.

Like 2



Alice Braile

Follow 24 JUN

As Lena said, excellent summary. I believe that the main point is defining who and what is a terrorist, because the image of one can be extremely different if you're a occidental or oriental person.

Like 2



Alice Mill

Follow 27 JUN

The presence of drones in a territory breeds resentment, hatred and possible terrorism in





The only way these drone strikes differ from air force strikes from 30,000 feet is that the pilot is even more remote, and not in any physical danger. The 'accuracy' of either method determines whether or not innocent civilians will suffer. So, I am confused as to what the difference is. If the attacking power would not be able to justify sending planes over the target areas, it cannot justify the use of drones. If it could justify sending in the planes, then I don't see the major difference.

Like 9



James Devaney (Mentor)

Unfollow 23 JUN

Ian I think the new/interesting questions that have been raised by drones will become more apparent as we move through the tasks and consider the issues of ius ad bellum and international humanitarian law that they raise. Then again, maybe after all your mind will not have been changed, and I think that's fair enough - but I think we can have a very interesting discussion about your argument this week, and I look forward to hear what everybody else thinks too.

Like



Rosemary Morrison

Follow 23 JUN

Isn't there a concept of "just war"? And if so, to lose as few of your own men as possible if the cause is right? And doesn't technology drive history? Change law? should law control the strong /protect the weak? a few first random reactions - and a reason for taking the course -

Like 7



James Devaney (Mentor)

Unfollow 23 JUN

Rosemary I think you hit upon a few of the really crucial questions that this week's topic raises. As for the 'just war' question - this is one that we'll address in greater detail in the next steps when we start to look more closely at the law.

Like



Kevin Isted

Follow 23 JUN

I'm with Ian on this one. And I don't really understand implication of the just war issue raised regarding the use of drones compared with anything else. If the right to go to war hasn't been established then no form of warfare is justified. And if it has been established, I see little difference in using drones to firing off cruise missiles from hundreds of miles away at pre programmed targets; or a manned aeroplane firing off a missile from over the horizon or





Senior Airman Gale Passe, prepare to load a AGM-114 Hellfire II air-to-ground missile onto the MQ-9 during weapons load training at Creech Air Force Base

Are drones an effective tool to end global terrorism?

Based on what you have encountered so far, are drones an effective tool to end global terrorism? Or do they help breed terrorism?

Please post up your views on this fiery point and add in any useful links that you wish to share with others. Try to respond to other comments. Remember to be respectful of other people's views when discussing this point.

© University of Glasgow

[+ \(842\) Join the discussion](#)

Undo





Post

0/1200



Carl Brooks

[Follow](#) 23 JUN

The question is ridiculous, of course they are not...quite the opposite in fact. Terrorism is driven by oppression, whether actual or perceived. Every drone strike adds to the feeling of oppression and therefore raises the risk of increased terrorist activity. We, the west, do not own the moral high ground and wars are never black and white, good and evil despite the political narrative of governments.

[Like](#) 30



Peter Fluck

[Follow](#) 23 JUN

I disagree Carl. Two brothers from Cardiff have gone to join the ISIS gang of murderers. The elder had four offers from British universities to study medicine. Can you honestly pretend that he was driven by 'oppression'? Whether, as you put it, 'actual or perceived'?

And do you know what? I think that we in the West, with our tolerance and freedom DO own the moral high ground over religious fanatics intent on oppressing women and killing gays. Not to mention putting to death anyone who wishes to leave their religion.

Some wars are 'black and white'. For example the war to destroy Naziism.

[Like](#) 11



Lena Jöst

[Unfollow](#) 23 JUN

... was no war to destroy Naziism. There were fascist factions in almost every European country at that time. The war was one of self-preservation, and then fairly thorough destruction of the enemy. In hindsight, I doubt anyone can not be glad the allied forces won, but it wasn't a war for high moral ideals. And the bombings of German cities certainly serve to add some shades of grey or splotches of colour to your black and white.

[Like](#) 11



Peter Fluck

[Follow](#) 23 JUN

For quite a long spell the only country in Europe actually fighting Naziism was Britain. The fascist faction there - the British Union of Fascists, led by Oswald Mosely, a Minister in a Labour government right up to the time he founded the BUF - was insignificant in numbers and effect. Strangely enough there were moral ideals around. The overwhelming





numbers and effect. Strangely enough there were moral ideals around. The overwhelming majority of British people saw Naziism for the evil that it was. I know I did.

"I doubt anyone can not be glad the allied forces won" you say. Does this mean that, however grudgingly, you are pleased that the Nazis lost?

Where are you from Lena?

Like 3



peter johnson

Follow 23 JUN

Peter- I'm replying to your response to Carl. I don't live in the UK now and haven't read the details of the case of the brothers joining ISIS, although I'm aware of it. I had no idea that one had offers to study medicine, which I imagine you cite as evidence that he is a rational, intelligent young man, as indeed he must be. I also do not know what his reasons for joining ISIS were, or whether he has given any. But it would not surprise me if they included solidarity with people he sees as oppressed brothers and willingness to die alongside them. So he may not have been, or felt, personally oppressed, but he is moved to act on behalf of others. None of this is specifically, or primarily, about drones, but in Iraq (I know you know this) we're seeing a Sunni-Shia war in which of course each side has its State and non-State backers and the Iraqi government, against whom ISIS are fighting, has US support. If you were able to ask the rational intelligent young man you cite about his view on lethal drone strikes I think he'd say it was pretty relevant to him. And as he's rational and intelligent, we need to come to terms with that.

Like 5



Peter Fluck

Follow 23 JUN

Thank you for your thoughtful reply Peter. The young man with four - FOUR! - offers must indeed be very intelligent. He has given his reasons for joining ISIS in a piece of social media - YouTube? - which was the first his poor father new about it. I have not watched it but I think it was indeed reported that he was motivated by the 'plight' of Sunnis in Shia ruled Iraq. I'm sure you are right - he would not like drones. But I do not expect they played any part in his decision to go to Syria.

Like 3



Lena Jöst

Unfollow 23 JUN

Peter - this may not be the place for a historical discussion, but Britain fought Germany in WWII because it had to, not because anyone wanted it; otherwise the appeasement





before the war began (although, admittedly, there are charges he very purposefully kept his eyes shut).

Anyway, no war is black and white. Individuals may fight it with certain principles in mind, sure, but WWII in particular stands out for war crimes committed by all sides. Nazi Germany had the lion's share, but considering the amount of civilian dead in Hiroshima and Nagasaki, or in German cities, I can't see that war as black and white.

As to my personal opinion, perhaps I phrased that sentence there badly. I am unreservedly glad Nazi Germany and its allies were defeated.

Like 8



Jeff Green

Follow 24 JUN

Going a bit further back in history, there was a civil war in Spain that had large numbers of foreign nationals volunteering in to join.

Like 6



Peter Fluck

Follow 24 JUN

We disagree Lena. Britain was not threatened by Nazi Germany. Hitler had long made it clear through diplomatic channels that he saw Germany ruling Europe while the British Empire remained a dominant force in the rest of the world. 'Self preservation' did not come into it. Britain could easily have ignored its treaty obligations to Poland, just as it could have ignored those to Belgium in 1914.

While we are lingering in these historical by-ways I think a case can be made that everything would have worked out better all round if Britain had abandoned France to its fate in 1914.

OK so WWII can be seen in shades of grey. Very, very dark grey, almost indistinguishable from black, on the German side. And the palest grey, which to some eyes might look a bit like white, on the Allied side. See how far I'm prepared to go in a search for compromise?

Like 3



Lena Jöst

Unfollow 24 JUN

Very well, let's compromise then. I just wanted to point out that the fact that the better side won doesn't mean the Allied side is a side of saints to be glorified and revered, to stand above all criticism.

As to the civil war in Spain, sadly enough the Soviet Union was the only country to send





And I think many would agree that in the particular respect reform is required.

[Reply](#)



Athene Richford (Mentor) replied to Frankie Chen
WORLD GOVERNANCE – THEN AND NOW VIDEO

[Unfollow](#) 30 OCT

An excellent question Frankie. What do others think?

[Reply](#)



Athene Richford (Mentor) replied to frank wyse
WORLD GOVERNANCE – THEN AND NOW VIDEO

[Unfollow](#) 30 OCT

Here is his university page with a list of his publications.

<http://www.gla.ac.uk/schools/humanities/staff/peterjackson/>

[Reply](#)



Athene Richford (Mentor) replied to Martin Richardson
SNAPSHOT 1 - 21ST CENTURY GLOBAL SECURITY ARTICLE

[Unfollow](#) 30 OCT

A very interesting contribution thank you Martin. It is interesting to note how quickly things can change. I am reminded of the editorial by Putin in the New York Times regarding Syria (when many international lawyers found they had a rather odd new champion) and then we think about Ukraine....

[Reply](#)



Athene Richford (Mentor) replied to Keith Felstead
ONLINE TUTORIAL: PROSPECTS FOR WORLD GOVERNMENT ARTICLE

[Unfollow](#) 30 OCT

Hi Keith, a good view point I think. States make pragmatic decisions about areas of power to give up in order to benefit (trade is the obvious example). You raise an important point also about the role of domestic political agendas (ideologies, even) in the success or failure of international organizations. The immigration issue in the UK is a prime example as...

[Reply](#)



Openness

- A question for the institution (and you!) – how open should we be?

“Many thanks for a wonderful course. I have only just completed it but have thoroughly enjoyed it. I have learnt an enormous amount and will be on the lookout for the next course from University of Glasgow and in particular by you Christian”

“Thank you very much to Professor Tams, the mentors and moderators for this wonderful experience. I can't wait for my next MOOC and I hope to see Professor Tams in a future FutureLearn course!”

“I'm already looking forward to another course from Glasgow.”

- The problem with copyright....

‘Supra-pedagogy’: peripheral issues

- Complex, collaborative content....
- Rigorous, project-management approach to designing and delivering courses
- Cross-disciplinary and cross-service approaches
- L&T support staff
- Working with third parties (e.g. FL and BBC)



COMPLEX, COLLABORATIVE CONTENT

EDUCATORS

E-SUPPORT

MENTORS



MENTORS

LEARNERS

MENTORS

LEARNERS



Key questions revisited

- are MOOCs a suitable way of widening participation in University teaching?;
- how can they be developed and delivered sustainably?;
- how can they be linked with traditional forms of classroom teaching in forms of 'blended learning' so as to enhance student experience?;
- can they contribute to the University's aim of fostering 'excellence in teaching' as defined in the L&T Strategy?

Building and Executing MOOCs