

## Birmingham teams up with BBC to offer unique online WW1 course

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The University of Birmingham has teamed up with the BBC to offer a unique online distance learning course marking the centenary of the First World War.

Registration is now open for World War One: Aviation Comes of Age, which will allow users to explore the aerial aspect of the conflict through a series of academic resources and multimedia content.

The massive open online course (MOOC) will be available through the FutureLearn platform and is part of a pilot project involving the BBC and four UK universities. Birmingham's three-week course will begin on 20 October.

Dr Peter Gray, Director of the Centre for War Studies at the University of Birmingham, said: 'The World War One: Aviation Comes of Age MOOC will be an exciting opportunity to explore the ways in which the First World War gave huge impetus to the development of air power in many countries. Throughout the period that we will be examining, it is amazing how the magic of flight, and its grim military potential, really gripped the imaginations of the public, politicians and, of course, the military.'

The course will look at how technological innovations turned the aeroplane into a machine of war and how British factories developed to supply the pilots of the Western Front with aircraft and ammunition. It will also examine how the aeroplane became a commercially viable tool for the first time, with passenger and mail routes starting to appear, and how the government tried – and failed – to regulate the aviation industry. Learners will explore how all the key moments in the air in the Second World War followed from lessons learned during WW1.

The BBC is providing multimedia content for the course, including a specially shot video filmed at the RAF Museum in Hendon, alongside a BBC iWonder guide titled How did World War One's battle in the skies change warfare?

Sinéad Rocks, Acting Controller of BBC Learning, said: 'The BBC is committed to education and looking at how we can exploit technology to best serve audiences. This is a great opportunity to explore how we can do that as part of our WW1 season, and working as a content partner with these four universities to help deliver online courses will help us establish how we can contribute to the UK remaining a world leader in online learning. MOOCs are an interesting and exciting area, and I'm looking forward to exploring what role we might play.'

Ends

### Notes to editors

- **Register for the course (<https://www.futurelearn.com/courses/ww1-aviation>)**
- For more information, **contact Stuart Gillespie (<mailto:s.gillespie@bham.ac.uk>)** in the University of Birmingham press office on +44 (0)121 414 9041. Out of hours, please call +44 (0)7789 921165 or **email the press office (<mailto:pressoffice@contacts.bham.ac.uk>)**.

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