



THE UNIVERSITY *of* EDINBURGH



## *News Release*

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### **World Cup and Scots' Yes-No vote are focus of new online courses**

Two of 2014's key events – the FIFA World Cup and Scotland's independence referendum – will form the basis of free courses from the University of Edinburgh.

The six-week, online courses involve a mix of teaching styles, including video presentations, online debates and role-play exercises.

They are the latest in a series of Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) being offered by the University, in conjunction with FutureLearn, the social learning platform. More than 800,000 people have signed up for Edinburgh MOOCs since they were launched in July 2012.

The Referendum course will be led by two of Scotland's foremost political academics – Professor Charlie Jeffery and Dr Nicola McEwen.

*Towards Scottish Independence? Understanding the Referendum* will begin on 25 August and coincide with the vote on 18 September, allowing analysis of the result and discussion of its implications.

Professor Charlie Jeffery, of the University's School of Social and Political Science, said: "We will place learners at the heart of the Referendum question by examining arguments for and against independence, with lively debate guided by University academics.

"We will also ensure a distinct international dimension, by examining implications for other regions whose populations have expressed desire for greater autonomy, including Catalonia, Flanders and Quebec."

The Football MOOC will explore the world of football and its role in the world today.

*Football - More Than a Game* will begin on 20 October and coincides with the Homeless World Cup, which will take place in Chile from 18 October.

The course will be led by Professor Grant Jarvie, one of Scotland's leading commentators on sport. Professor Jarvie said: "From Mandela to Messi, the Women's World Cup to the Homeless World Cup, the people's game to global spectacle, the big five football leagues to

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football projects that have helped communities in the most challenging of circumstances, we will place learners at the heart of this football journey.”

“The University of Edinburgh’s influence upon the origins of football in Scotland has, for some time, been acknowledged. In launching *Football: More than a Game*, the University recognises not only that football is an international language but that it can help to widen access to education.”

*Football: More than a Game* will be hosted by the Institute for Sport, Physical Education and Health Sciences which sits within the University’s School of Education.

The most recent University Guardian League tables for 2015 placed Edinburgh top in Scotland and ahead of Loughborough and Birmingham for the study of sport.

Working with partners such as the Homeless World Cup will help to provide access on a wide scale including a truly global audience.

The University currently offers 16 MOOCs. Topics covered in these popular higher education standard courses, include *The Discovery of the Higgs boson*, an introduction to particle physics based on the work of Edinburgh scientist and Nobel Prize winner, Professor Peter Higgs.

FutureLearn is a social learning platform that provides free, online courses from world-class universities. Its 38 British and international university partners work with three British cultural organisations – the British Library, British Council and the British Museum – and the National Film and Television School to offer quality, higher education courses to anyone with an internet connection anywhere in the world.

Learners can sign up for the new courses at [www.futurelearn.com](http://www.futurelearn.com)

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