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MIT PUBLISHES 500TH COURSE ON OPENCOURSEWARE

Offering course materials from all of MIT's academic disciplines, OpenCourseWare delivers on the promise of open-knowledge sharing

CAMBRIDGE, MASS. (September 30, 2003) — MIT announced today that the OpenCourseWare initiative has published its 500th course and now offers free and open access to the educational materials from all 33 of MIT's academic disciplines and all five of its schools. This milestone represents a significant technical and organizational achievement, the first on the way to publishing virtually all of MIT's courses online.

"MIT is delivering on the promise that it made when OpenCourseWare was announced in 2001, and we are pleased that educators and learners from all parts of the globe tell us that OCW is already having an impact on education and learning," said MIT President Charles M. Vest. "We see OCW as opening a new door to the democratizing and transforming power of education. We hope the idea of openly sharing course materials will propagate throughout many institutions and create a global web of knowledge that will enhance the quality of learning and, therefore, the quality of life worldwide."

MIT OpenCourseWare (MIT OCW), a large-scale, Web-based publication of MIT faculty's course materials, enables the open sharing of the faculty's materials and pedagogy with educators and learners around the world in a way that befits MIT's reputation as a leading institute of world-class teaching and research. Available at <http://ocw.mit.edu/>, this initiative connects visitors with the syllabi, lecture notes, and calendars of 500 courses. In addition, most course sites include a subset of other materials such as multimedia simulations, problem sets and solutions, past exams, reading lists, sample MIT student projects, and a selection of video lectures.

Educators are encouraged to utilize the materials for curriculum development, and self-learners and students may draw upon the materials for self-study or supplementary use. Course materials contained on the MIT OCW Web site may be used, copied, distributed, translated, and modified by anyone, anywhere in the world. All that is required of adopters of the materials is that the use be non-commercial, that the original MIT faculty authors receive attribution if the materials are republished or reposted online, and that adapters openly share the materials in the same manner as MIT OCW.

First announced in April 2001, the MIT OCW proof-of-concept pilot site opened to the public in September 2002, offering 32 courses. Truly a global initiative, the site has received almost 120 million hits from visitors in more than 210 countries, territories, and city-states around the globe



over the course of the last year. Materials have already been translated into at least 10 different languages.

“Your free-of-charge OCW is something brilliant, and unfortunately very rare, in this commerce and money driven world of ours,” said Pekka Tolonen, a site visitor from Spain. “Even if the academic world has been more and more inclined toward the laws of business and money, you are showing an applaudable example of returning to the very fundamental academic values — information open and available for all!”

The initiative, which has received generous support from the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation and the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, has a dual mission: to provide free, searchable access to virtually all MIT course materials for educators, students, and individual learners around the world; and to create an efficient, standards-based model that other universities may emulate to publish their own educational materials.

MIT Provost Robert A. Brown said, “OpenCourseWare is a project that grew organically from the MIT faculty, and this publication of 500 courses would not have happened without the faculty’s remarkable dedication to education and MIT’s mission. Leadership means taking chances and setting an example, and with OCW, we are starting to realize the potential of this exciting initiative.”

More than 300 of the MIT Faculty’s 950 members contributed course materials to the 500 courses published on MIT OCW’s site in September. On MIT’s campus, faculty have become more aware of what their colleagues teach, while students have welcomed the syllabi and lecture notes available on MIT OCW. Several participating MIT faculty have been recognized by peers at other universities for their MIT OCW course sites, and in some cases this has led to new teaching and research collaborations.

“I saw MIT OCW as an opportunity to organize the class notes of my subject [Course 13.022: Surface Waves and Their Interaction with Floating Bodies], and publish them freely on the Web,” said Paul Sclavounos, MIT Professor of Ocean Engineering. “The feedback I have received from colleagues at MIT and around the world, as well as current and former students, has been overwhelmingly positive. They have found the contents of the 13.022 pages very educational, and my site is frequently visited by colleagues in academia and industry.”

In order to increase international access to the faculty’s educational materials, MIT OCW has entered into a formal agreement with Universia.net to translate 25 MIT courses into Spanish and Portuguese. Active in 10 countries (Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Chile, Spain, Mexico, Peru, Portugal, Puerto Rico, and Venezuela), Universia counts more than 700 universities among its members. The 24 translated MIT OCW courses are hosted on the Universia Web portal at <http://www.universia.net>, and Universia is committed to expanding its translated MIT OCW course offerings over time. This relationship has the potential to extend MIT OCW’s reach to a new non-English-speaking audience, and both organizations will work to evaluate the impact of these translated sites in Latin America.

About OpenCourseWare

MIT OCW makes the educational materials that are used in the teaching of almost all MIT undergraduate and graduate courses taught in the Institute's five schools — the Schools of Architecture and Planning; Engineering; Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences; Science; and the Sloan School of Management — available on the Web, free of charge, to any user anywhere in the world. This venture continues the tradition at MIT, and in American higher education, of open dissemination of educational materials, philosophy, and modes of thought. See MIT OCW on the Web at <http://ocw.mit.edu/>.

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