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The University of Tokyo

The University of Tokyo to offer an online course through edX in cooperation with Harvard University and MIT

The University of Tokyo (UTokyo) has signed an agreement with edX to deliver Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs).

A MOOC is a free online course open to everyone. With this service, persons who successfully complete the course are awarded certificates of completion. World first-class universities, including Harvard, Stanford, and Princeton, are already participating in this rapidly diffusing course style.

UTokyo was the first in Japan to try this course style. From September 2013, through the platform of Coursera, UTokyo delivered MOOCs in English as a trial. There are two courses: "From the Big Bang to Dark Energy," taught by Professor Hitoshi Murayama (Director of the Kavli Institute for the Physics and Mathematics of the Universe), and "Conditions of War and Peace," taught by Professor Kiichi Fujiwara (Graduate Schools of Law and Politics). Over 80,000 persons from more than 150 countries worldwide have registered for these courses, and approximately 5,400 persons have completed the courses. During the fiscal year 2014, two new courses are scheduled with Coursera in addition to the above two courses, namely, a course in the field of economics, and a course in the field of information science.

To further develop its engagements with MOOC presentations, UTokyo has signed an agreement for course offering with edX, a MOOC platform established through the joint funding of Harvard University and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). With the cooperation of Harvard and MIT, UTokyo is currently developing a joint course series on early modern and contemporary Japan, entitled "Visualizing Japan," which is scheduled for sequential presentation from Autumn 2014.

For this series on early modern and contemporary Japan under joint development by UTokyo, Harvard, and MIT, Professor Andrew Gordon of Harvard and Professor John W. Dower of MIT will take charge of the courses. From UTokyo, Shunya Yoshimi, Vice-President and Professor of Interfaculty Initiative in Information Studies, plans to deliver two courses, "Visualizing Postwar Tokyo, Part 1 and 2."

The implementation of edX online courses has brought praise for related efforts, including research on the learning status of registered and completed students, and on the statistical distribution of course grades, etc., as well as the trial implementation of "flipped classroom," which combine online courses and physical classroom activities.

In tandem with the joint agreement, UTokyo welcomes Professor Shigeru Miyagawa of MIT to serve as Director of its online education at the Center for Research and Development of Higher Education (Professor Miyagawa will also retain his posts and duties at MIT). MIT initiated the world's first open courseware in 2003, and Professor Miyagawa has served a leadership role therein, such that now he is a leading expert on open education.

In regards to this collaboration, Masako Egawa, Executive Vice President, said: "By this agreement with edX, we are delighted to be able to share the accumulated knowledge of UTokyo with many people around the world. Also, via the development of attractive educational programs with Harvard and MIT, we are sure to move forward with the internationalization of UTokyo." Shunya Yoshimi (University Vice-President and Director of the Office of Educational Planning and Research), who is in charge of courses, stated: "As a Professor of UTokyo, I am extremely pleased to be able to present the courses to the people around the world that will deepen their understanding of Japan. With the implementation of flipped classroom that actively uses these courses, I believe that we will contribute to the bolstering of education at UTokyo that will foster global-minded human resources." Professor Shigeru Miyagawa of MIT declared: "'Visualizing Japan,' to be presented jointly by UTokyo, Harvard, and MIT, is the first MOOC by three major universities together, and will be watched closely as a new model of global collaboration."

EdX is a non-profit organization (NPO) established in May 2012 with financing from Harvard University and MIT. EdX is extending its efforts for providing opportunities for learners worldwide to study in free online courses of first-tier universities. Since the launch of its services in May 2012, edX has reached over 140 courses of 31 universities, nearly two million registered learners. Anant Agarwal, President of edX, stated: "We are pleased to have The University of Tokyo, the first national university in Japan, join the xConsortium," said Anant Agarwal, president of edX. "We are committed to offering courses from institutions as diverse as the nearly two million students on our platform. As one of the leading research universities in the world, The University of

Tokyo will help us achieve that goal."

edX UTokyo website:

https://www.edx.org/school/utokyox

edX "Visualizing Postwar Tokyo Part 1, 2" website:

https://www.edx.org/course/utokyox/utokyox-utokyo001x-visualizing-postwar-1545

https://www.edx.org/course/utokyox/utokyox-utokyo002x-visualizing-postwar-1546

For your reference:

For announcements from edX regarding this matter, please see:

https://www.edx.org/edx-blog