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Margaret Koval *83: Hello, Princeton. Everywhere we are this semester, coronavirus is changing our lives. But during this extraordinary time, the University's mission and community are stronger than ever. We may be apart, but together, we roar.

The Princeton community is always growing, is always evolving.

I think students from all around campus are trying to come together in this moment of extraordinary highs and lows.

What matters is that we're all going to try our best to be healthy and safe.

This is a special community, and while these are really hard challenges, I know that we will succeed in facing them as a community.

Margaret Koval: This spring, we're reaching out to Princetonians everywhere, to hear how we're continuing our teaching, learning and research; how we're staying together while so far apart; and how so many of us are working together to serve the wider world. Today, a pioneer in remote education joins us from his home near the Princeton campus.

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Jeremy Adelman: My name is Jeremy Adelman. I'm the Henry Charles Lea Professor of History and the director of the Global History Lab.

Well, first of all, the pandemic has given us an opportunity to explore new ways of teaching and having conversations with each other across great distances. I think it's put enormous stress, though, on the faculty and on students to reproduce a sense of belonging, to feel a sense of connection, even as this COVID crisis has super-isolated us.

In the past, the students would come together for a three-hour seminar, and then off they would go to the library, to the residence halls, to the cafeterias, and so on, but when they are not present, when they are not here, the course and their professor is almost their only connective tissue.

I mean, they might be talking to their friends and classmates occasionally through social media, but even that, I sense, has been

untethered, to a very large extent. We take it for granted that, from Firestone to the residential colleges, eating clubs, and so on, it's all in the same shared space, but what happens when that's no longer there? How connected do you feel? [MUSIC] And it's up to the courses to provide much more of the answer to it than is traditionally the case.

This is probably about almost a decade ago, I was the director of something called the Council for International Teaching and Research and spending a lot of time thinking about Princeton's global stature and global commitments to make sure that Princeton was realizing its global aspirations.

At the same time, I was teaching, as I still am, and we were experiencing the impact of Wi-Fi on our ecosystems in the classroom, and it was very disruptive, as more and more students were taking their notes on their laptops. And because they're all networked at the same time, they're multi-tasking. And so, their attentional economies are being diluted, if not challenged. They're not focusing so much on the material in the classroom because they're being drawn away to other things because of what's happening on the screen.

So, while I was doing this global strategic planning, on the one hand, I kept wondering how I could become part of and invade the students' screens. [MUSIC] I kept thinking, well, we're designing all these macro systems of partnerships and networks. What about the micro systems, the unit that we all rely upon as teachers and professors for working with students, which is the unit of the course? And we've been experimenting with online education ever since.

One of the things I learned early on is that going online created opportunities for what we call flipping the classroom. That is, that if I could put my lectures, pre-record the lectures and put them online, that released time for me to have much more interactive dialogues and arguments with students about the content that really helped deepen what they were learning, about how to write a lecture for a screen is very different from writing a lecture that you're going to deliver from a podium.

For starters, on the screen, giving a lecture is a very slow, very tedious experience. One way to solve that is to break up the lecture. Don't give the traditional 50-minute long lecture. Break it into seven-minute segments. Break up the segments with active learning interludes, so pose a question, challenge them with something, even if it's just for 30 seconds, that allows the student to reset the passive learning structure that is what we rely on when the sage on the stage is giving the lecture into something where the students are forced to apply what they've just learned to become, in a sense, active learning by application.

[MUSIC] So, it requires some very, very basic shifts in how we do that everyday routine thing of the lecture, itself. I think COVID-19 is a very helpful reminder of, say, the integratedness of the planet and the complexity of what it means to be integrated. The fact that the virus began in a province in China and, within weeks, had spread around the planet, this has been going on for a very long time and, in fact, in the survey of world history, we go back to the Black Death and the ways in which the Black Death followed the very same Silk Road trading corridors from port to port and spread the plague.

This is a seminar course called Remaking the World from 1820 to 2020. I could not have imagined a course that would be more relevant to the current conjuncture because in some senses what's informing it is the idea that the world has been, and the people of the world have been at crossroads several times in the past where people have debated and discussed the components of global integration and disintegration. With the idea that there are many forces that make us interdependent, but we have complex responses to that interdependence.

We all jump into the seminar in Zoom and we've got a student in Denmark, a student in Germany, a student in California, some are still marooned here in Princeton, though not many of them, each one cooped up in their room and yet here we are learning together, using these new media to learn together and to learn collaboratively.

So, in a way, that's a parable for what's happened in the Earth. We are interdependent and yet fractured and fragmented. I mean, we are, in a sense, practicing in the classroom what people have seen unfolding previously in time. In earlier protest movements and social mobilization, whether it was Civil Rights, even the Occupy Movement in 2008, 2009, it was easier to blame public authorities for, let's say, trampling on, in the case of Civil Rights, our liberties. This one is much harder to get a fix on, politically. When there's no clear enemy, the enemy is, as we're reminded all the time, a virus. It's a war against a virus, so where do you direct your anger and your outrage? And I think that's going to create, and we can already see, it's been coming for a while, what is a sort of questioning around the legitimacy of globalization

And so, my fear, and this is one of the themes we explore in the course, that there's going to be a retreat from the idea that we have commitments and responsibilities across borders because the experience of globalization with this pandemic is going to be that globalization brings more threats than it does opportunities.

So, the Global History Lab has different dimensions to it. It started out really as a program to provide a collaborative learning and exchanges for graduate students. The biggest thing we do, though, is sustain online interactive and connected learning for undergraduate learners in various parts of the world, in Europe, the Middle East, Africa, and more

recently, in Asia. At the same time, we are now piloting a project that takes the students who graduated from these courses to themselves become chroniclers of the global crisis.

We have an initiative called History Dialogues which trains students who've done History 201 or the Global History Lab, in the methodologies of oral history and they are going to do projects from these various locations, from Rwanda to France to California to create and to document oral histories of the COVID crisis from different perspectives.

So, the crisis is itself a lab that we can create data, but because we're historians, the data take narrative form. What the stories and the experiences are, of a global pandemic from multiple, local perspectives. So, we're training the students to become, themselves, knowledge producers for the future. And our plan is, by next fall, to have a showcase of what the learners and the participants in the project have produced. Narratives of a global crisis that we're now experiencing, that we're struggling to make sense of it, that our commitment as historians and as young historians, my students, are to help us get a deeper understanding and in this respect, to globalize our understanding, because one of the tough aspects, we understand that this is a global crisis, but we're experiencing it in hyper-localized ways.

And the hope is that the lab will create a framework for people to globalize their understanding of what is a global crisis. My big fear is that it will provoke a retreat from our global commitments. And we can think of history in this sense, in the service of reviving and reminding us of our global commitments, that we're all in on this one together.

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