

070-1984
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July 20, 1984

Teleconferencing joins

telecollege at Laurier

While Wilfrid Laurier University is well and favorably known for its credit courses taught on television through Telecollege, there will be something new this fall: teleconferencing.

Teleconferencing brings students together in several centres at the same time, and involves simple equipment--a telephone, a loudspeaker and microphone. The lecturer speaks at one centre and is heard in all the others.

Interaction between students and professor is easy. Anyone wishing to participate in discussion depresses a bar on a desk microphone and speaks. While some feel a little awkward at first, almost everyone soon finds the interchange pleasant and enjoyable.

In addition to two courses to be taught this fall and winter totally by teleconferencing, all new WLU Telecollege courses will have new enrichment--a teleconferencing component.

The first two teleconferenced courses are Introduction to Sociological Theory, and Introduction to Data Collection Methods in sociology.

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Classes will gather in Waterloo, Barrie, Brampton, Collingwood, and Midland with the first course to be taught Thursdays in September. The second course will be offered, beginning Jan. 3, in the same centres.

"It is important to remember that distance education courses--whether by teleconference or through Laurier's well-established Telecollege--are always integrated packages," said Sharon Varley, co-ordinator in the university's continuing education office.

The package includes text books, resource binders, study guides and, in some cases, audio cassettes and record albums.

Telecollege students consult with their instructors via toll-free telephone during specified hours. Instructors also hold review sessions in various communities and on campus.

People signing up for credit courses via Telecollege will note that the television segment of the package is more professional every year. The programs have come a long way from the "talking heads" of early days.

New offerings this year include cultural anthropology, introduction to sociology, and criminology. The video segment for the first course is the television series, the Faces of Culture. The video part of the last is the series, In the Name of Justice.

"Watching television often is simply time-wasting," Varley said. "If coupled with a WLU Telecollege course it can lead, instead, to personal fulfilment and a pleasant sense of achievement."