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Gale Presents: Udemy

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fiction, and short fiction—provide a historical overview of major contributors, and the genre form in the context of the African American experience. Summaries are signed and written by a mix of academics and independent scholars. **VERDICT** Comprehensive and useful for a variety of audiences.—**Robert Mixner, Bartholomew Cty. P.L., Columbus, IN**

POLITICAL SCIENCE

Conflict in the Modern Middle East: An Encyclopedia of Civil War, Revolutions, and Regime Change. ABC-CLIO. Mar. 2020. 409p. ed. by Jonathan K. Zartman. ISBN 9781440865022. $97. REF

Zartman (Dept. of Research, Air Command and Staff Coll.) offers general readers a laudable look at the 2011 Arab Spring protests and their resulting consequences, which swept all 22 states in the Middle East as well as bordering North African areas. Also addressed are the 2005 Cedar Revolution in Lebanon and Iran's 2009 Green Revolution. Featuring approximately 250 short entries from 73 prominent scholars in 17 countries, the work provides cogent explanations about

ereviews

Gale Presents: Udemy

Gale; gale.com/elearning/udemy
Free trial available

■ *By Rob Tench*

CONTENT First developed in 2010, Udemy is a large online learning platform offering courses in a variety of subjects for students seeking to sharpen their personal and professional skills. Currently, 57,000 instructors teach 150,000 courses in 65 languages to more than 50 million students.

The company recently partnered with Gale to offer 4,000 virtual classes to public library users. Courses are arranged in 13 major categories: cloud computing, data science, design, development, finance and accounting, IT operations, leadership management, marketing, office productivity, personal development, project management and operations, sales, and workplace and human development. Within these categories are 75-plus subareas. More offerings in the disciplines of computing, business, and personal development make this database similar to LinkedIn Learning, another popular online website with a substantial catalog of instruction in business, creativity, and technology.

Approximately 85 percent of the collection has been updated in the past two years. Courses are added and replaced monthly with new material on emerging and high-demand topics. All classes are accessible via IOS and Android apps, podcasts, Chromecast, and Apple TV.

USABILITY The layout on the landing page is clean; clicking the prominent "categories" tab at the top displays the 13 major areas of coverage. Below this top level, eight of the 13 general categories are listed horizontally across the screen. A large basic search box also appears at the top of the screen; advanced search options or a general list of all courses with links on the homepage would have made finding a class simpler and more intuitive. At the bottom of the page, users will find links to the app (available through Google Play and the Apple App Store), as well as a Sitemap option providing links to local homepages, popular topics, popular tutorials, and free resources.

Other features on the homepage include courses on related topics, courses that people are viewing, newest courses on the platform, and top courses in the general categories in which users have enrolled.

After enrolling, users can find their classes by clicking on the "my courses" tag, which lists both current and archived classes. Whenever returning users log in, they are greeted with a "welcome back" message with large icons of their enrolled classes.

On the main page of each class, users will find a course description and outline, requirements and prerequisites, ratings and reviews by former students, and a biography of the instructor. Learning outcomes, instructor expectations, and course content are clearly delineated.

For instance, selecting the "development" category from the landing page, then "game design" yields a page with "courses to get me started," "most popular courses," "trending courses," and "popular topics." Users can filter classes by "topics," "level," "features," "ratings," "video duration," and "closed captioned." Under "all game development courses," users will find several selections, including the course "Unity Game Development: Make Professional 3D Games." The "enroll now" button offers a video introduction to the course. Users can then continue the class in lesson-plan order or jump to another section.

Doing a search for "virtual meetings" yields more than 700 course options, including "How To Manage & Influence Your Virtual Team," which is targeted to all levels and three hours long, with 38 lectures and an overall rating of 4.4 [out of five?] by more than 4,000 people; 15,000-plus students had been enrolled as of May 2020.

Under "personal development" and "health & fitness," users will find "Yoga Flexibility Challenge: 15 Minutes X 15 Days," with a 4.7 rating and more than 2,600 students (as of May 2020).

Similar LinkedIn Learning classes on game design, virtual meetings, and yoga are higher quality in terms of instructional delivery and course content, though Gale Presents: Udemy instructors are also engaging; the video and audio quality are first-rate, and the courses are highly praised. On both platforms, transcripts, closed captioning, and multiple viewing options are the norm, with students having the option to complete sections and entire courses at their pace.

Gale Presents: Udemy's navigation is one of its best features. Users can seamlessly toggle between classes or jump from one class to another. The resource also identifies similar classes that may be of interest. Ease of enrollment, in-depth details about courses, and the lack of time constraints for completing courses are also strengths.

However, discoverability of classes from the homepage could be more seamless. An advanced search feature with Boolean capabilities located by the basic search box and a detailed course listing with links would be helpful enhancements.

PRICING Costs start at $2,500 and are based on population served. A free trial for the product can be requested at gale.com/elearning/udemy.

VERDICT Gale Presents: Udemy's course content and selection make it a viable instructional option for patrons looking to improve their computer skills and business acumen. Libraries considering this product should also explore other learning platforms such as LinkedIn Learning, Universal Class, and Skillshare, particularly LinkedIn Learning, which is similiar to Gale Presents: Udemy in scope, presentation, and features.

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