What is wrong with slavery?  
Wednesday 16 Oct 2013  
Professor David Owens  
Department of Philosophy  
Most human societies have allowed one adult human being to own another but we now think slavery morally abhorrent. What is wrong with it? Is it that slavery causes misery? Is it that slavery is based on racism? Is it that the owning of another person involves denying the dignity of that person? This lecture will explore the moral and philosophical questions of slavery. 
Part of Reading Black History month  

Milk: friend or foe? Are dairy products really good for you?  
Wednesday 13 Nov 2013  
Professor Ian Givens  
School of Agriculture, Policy and Development  
Milk and dairy products have had a mixed press in recent times, from being blamed for cancer, diabetes, allergies and even acne, to being praised for their benefits as ‘superfoods’. Dairy products are an important source of essential dietary nutrients such as calcium, and studies have shown that increasing the amount of milk consumed may help prevent heart disease and other illnesses. This lecture will explore the benefits of milk and dairy, with some reflection on health issues that affect children and the elderly.  

Health and Safety regulation: ‘Red tape’ or ‘thin blue line’?  
Wednesday 4 Dec 2013  
Professor Paul Almond  
School of Law  
Health and safety regulation has never had a higher or more unfavourable public profile than it does now, with newspapers printing stories of ‘health and safety gone mad’, and politicians arguing for ‘red tape’ to be cut. But at the same time we, the public, have never been more concerned about policing risks to our health and wellbeing, and ensuring accountability when things go wrong. So why do these two very different views of ‘health and safety’ exist side by side? And which version should we believe in?  

The shadow of Mussolini. Italy today and its fascist past  
Wednesday 29 Jan 2014  
Professor Christopher Duggan  
Director of the Centre for Modern Italian History  
The early years of Mussolini's fascist government were marked by a widespread enthusiasm for the leader, Benito Mussolini. Similar comments about Hitler and a leading politician would be unthinkable in Germany. This lecture will explore how Italians have viewed Mussolini and his fascist regime. It will examine the often passionate and intense relationship that millions of ordinary Italians had with the fascist leader during the interwar years, and it will consider how positive images of fascism have been allowed to persist into contemporary Italy.  

Tackling teenage depression  
Wednesday 26 Feb 2014  
Professor Shirley Reynolds  
Director of the Charlie Waller Institute  
Depression is not just an illness that affects adults; children and teenagers can be affected too. Teenage depression is common and difficult to treat successfully. Depressed teenagers often develop problems in later life with mental health, drugs and alcohol, suicide, unemployment, underachievement at school, anxiety problems, personality disorders and relationship breakdown. This lecture will look at how young people’s brains and minds work differently when they are depressed and how we can develop new ways to treat young people with depression.  

Muscle medicine  
Wednesday 19 Mar 2014  
Dr Keith Foster  
School of Biological Sciences  
Your muscles are amazing. Whether you’re a body builder or a baby, there is more muscle tissue in your body than anything else. However, disease and old age can damage our muscles, leaving us not only slowing down and more susceptible to falls, but also at risk of developing other illnesses such as diabetes. But can we do anything to prevent this? In this lecture, Dr Keith Foster will look at the current development of gene medicines that aim to keep our muscles bigger and stronger for better health, longer life and increased resistance to disease.