

Osnabrück University

#UOSagainstCorona

2<sup>nd</sup> Newsletter for Students issued by the President's Office of Osnabrück University

**April 9<sup>th</sup>, 2020**

**Dear Students,**

For our latest newsletter I am writing to you from my home office. And as you can see from the picture, working from home does have its advantages, for example the view into my own garden. Now, for the long Easter weekend, I hope that you have a similar place which you can withdraw to and relax. Relax from the excitement and also frequently disconcerting days and weeks that now lie behind us. Let me reassure you that we in the President's cabinet and the whole university staff have left no stone unturned to provide you with support in what is also a new situation for us. Still, should things get a bit "juddery" here and there, whether in our preparations for offering digital courses or respecting your own individual questions about your course of study which you need to have answered quickly – please bear with us if we sometimes ask you to be a little patient! I am convinced that everything will be that bit clearer after Easter and we will be able to tell you how we intend to proceed. But until then, please enjoy your time, even if you would prefer to be with your family and friends. You might even discover something positive in this time you have to yourself ;-)

Most importantly: Keep healthy and stay positive!

Yours,

*Susanne Menzel-Riedl*

### **No Face-to-Face Examinations before May 1st**

Parallel to the cancellation of face-to-face teaching, there will be no face-to-face examinations before May 1st. The previous date – April 19<sup>th</sup> – was set by the President's cabinet in mid-March in the hope that there would be greater clarity about safety measures and precautions being loosened before Easter. This is not the case. "We are now hoping for greater clarity after the Easter break. At that point, we will reassess the situation and inform you accordingly. We assume that face-to-face teaching and examining will recommence from May onwards at the earliest, but potentially *much* later and then only in very small groups and with the strictest hygienic and protective precautions," said University President Prof. Dr. Susanne Menzel-Riedl in a circular email to all students and staff at the university.

### **When will digital courses take place??**

*Students are asking whether digital courses will be linked to the standard course timetable which was in place for the face-to-face courses.*

Yes, as a rule, the digital courses will take place at the same time in Stud.IP as they would have done had they been face-to-face courses. However, in certain cases there might be changes to the scheduled times in Stud.IP. It is therefore important for you to look up your courses and make sure you are well informed about plans and schedules.

### **Call for money to be made available for the students of Lower Saxony**

In a letter to Minister of Science Björn Thümler, the Arbeitsgemeinschaft Niedersächsischer Studentenwerke (ARGE) [Consortium of Student Services of Lower Saxony] suggested setting up an emergency fund amounting to €19 million for students attending the universities of Lower Saxony who find themselves in financial difficulties as a result of the coronavirus crisis. There are around 212,000 students in Lower Saxony, with many of them getting into difficulties as a result of the coronavirus crisis through no fault of their own.

The social survey carried out by the German Student Services organization indicated that 49,000 students in Lower Saxony have to work to finance their studies, and that many of these jobs had

been lost due to the crisis. Even more students rely on their parents for support. Here too, the crisis has given rise to new uncertainties if parents themselves have lost their jobs or are in short-time work. This is why Lower Saxony's Student Services have suggested that Science Minister Björn Thümler set up an emergency fund. According to the consortium, the money should be disbursed by Student Services themselves since they work most closely with the students. Nevertheless, it remains to be seen whether a fund of this size is feasible.

### **Literature to be provided electronically**

As long as the university library remains closed, there is regrettably no way of accessing the printed volumes at the university library's various sites. If somebody urgently needs a book, then they can ask the university library to check whether it exists as an eBook which the library can then acquire and provide to members of the university. If you would like to use this service, please use the online form at [https://www.ub.uni-osnabrueck.de/service\\_nutzung/ebook\\_beschaffungswunsch.html](https://www.ub.uni-osnabrueck.de/service_nutzung/ebook_beschaffungswunsch.html) to identify a specific title. You will then receive a response from the library as soon as your selected title has been checked. If you are writing an examination thesis (Bachelor or Master), please draw attention to this fact in the appropriate box on the form. If it is not possible for the library to access your chosen title as an eBook, then the university library will try and find its print equivalent. It is always worth having a look at our list of e-media which have been additionally released by various publishing houses and platforms due to the coronavirus crisis: [blog.ub.uni-osnabrueck.de/blog/2020/03/30/zusaetzliche-freischaltung-von-e-medien](http://blog.ub.uni-osnabrueck.de/blog/2020/03/30/zusaetzliche-freischaltung-von-e-medien)

### **University Doctor apl. Prof. Dr. Henning Allmers on the question of how much distance we should keep to stop the virus spreading**

*There are many ways the virus can be spread. According to the Robert Koch Institute, the key mode of transmission appears to be by airborne droplet infection. This means that droplets of saliva or mucus carrying the virus are passed from person to person, for example when they cough or sneeze and when these droplets land on the mucus membranes of another person. The virus multiplies mainly in a person's throat. It is for this reason that people should remain two meters apart, so that when a person sneezes the virus cannot reach another person as a large or medium-sized aerosol. The distance of two meters was identified in tests conducted in the 1920s during research on tuberculosis. Virologist Prof. Dr. Christian Drosten from the Charité hospital in Berlin explains: "It's not that a virus hangs in the air like a cloud for hours and moves about between rooms".*

But it is also possible to get an *indirect infection via your hands*, a so-called smear infection. This can happen if a person puts their hand in their mouth or rubs their nose or eyes after touching a contaminated door handle, for example. It is also possible to become infected via the conjunctiva in your eyes.

It is important to know: The *virus also adheres to surfaces*. "Coronaviruses do not die after three hours, they can survive for several days in cold temperatures," stresses Dr. Susanne Huggett, Head of Hospital Hygiene and Infection Prevention at the Asklepios Clinics.

### **Dr. Jost Hindersmann, Head of Section for English Studies in the university library and a committed fan of crime thrillers**

*I am currently reading: Katrine Engberg – Glasflügel: ein Kopenhagen-Thriller, Diogenes, hardback. 432 pages €20,00 (in German)*

Engberg, the new star writer in the crime thriller scene has published the third volume – entitled *Glasflügel (Glass Wings)* – about Copenhagen investigators Jeppe Kørner and Anette Werner. Although the private lives of the investigators have considerable space devoted to them – standard practice in Scandinavian thrillers – and are carried on from one book to the next, it is easy to get to grips with this novel without any prior knowledge from the previous books. This story deals with a spectacular murder case. The body of a hospital worker is found in a fountain in the pedestrian precinct. The investigation takes the police officers into the world of the Danish health services and reveals the problems that existed even before the coronavirus

outbreak. It has an exciting plot, addresses a topical theme, has investigators you can identify with – and it's not so bloodthirsty as Jussi Adler-Olsen.

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