

Public understanding of science. Distinguished Lectures at the Catalan Academy (2006–2008)

Every academic year, the Institute for Catalan Studies (IEC) organizes a series of lectures on the different branches of science, with the goal of communicating scientific knowledge to society. For science communication to serve its purpose, the use of a clear style of language as well as terms and expressions that can be readily understood by a non-specialized audience are essential. The assumption that it is difficult to communicate science to non-scientists is rebutted by the fact that many prestigious scientists have gained further recognition as popularizers of science, reaching millions of people through best-selling books, newspaper and magazine articles, radio and television programs, and, most recently, podcasts. In this context, it is the privilege and responsibility of the IEC, as the Academy of the territories of Catalan language and culture, to educate and inform its citizens about recent advances in the many fields of science.

The IEC's outreach activities are aimed not only at academics and university students, but also at high school students and teachers as well as the general public. The IEC is committed to becoming an integral part of the intellectual life of the Catalan territories. To this end, it hosts many Distinguished Lectures, which are held in Barcelona, at the IEC's home, and in Valencia, at the Octubre Center of Contemporary Culture.

The **Octubre Center of Contemporary Culture (OCCC)** is situated in a landmark building that previously served as a department store known as *El Siglo*. Set in the very heart of the city of Valencia, the OCCC offers a wide range of cultural activities throughout the year, such as exhibitions, conferences, and lectures; jazz, folk, pop, and electronic music live concerts; performances; cinema; and language courses. It is the most important center working for the promotion of Catalan culture in Valencia. The OCCC opened to the public in the fall of 2006. With a total area of 3,500 m², it is entirely devoted to sponsoring and promoting local as well as international culture. The center has quickly become a modern, independent focus of cultural and civic events, able to respond to the social demands and enormous challenges of the 21st century.

