Nottingham Summer School: Creativity, Culture, History and Heritage

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About Nottingham Trent University and Nottingham

Nottingham Trent University is known worldwide for creativity, innovation and design excellence in addition to its strengths in cultural studies, media and journalism, business, law, sports and social sciences. It is one of the UK’s largest universities with over 25,000 students, and is the third largest in the UK for the number of students studying art, design and humanities, subjects which have been taught since the mid-19th century. Since 2004, £130 million pounds have been invested in the NTU environment, and the university is recognised for its success in graduate employability: currently 95% of NTU’s students go on to full-time employment or further studies within six months of graduating.

NTU plays an important role in partnership with local and central government in shaping and delivering on economic strategy, as well as demonstrating leadership in a variety of cultural activities such as the internationally renowned annual GameCity Festival and the first ever World Event Young Artist 2012. In 2011 an NTU student won the highly prestigious Gold award at Graduate Fashion Week and NTU came first in the People and Planet’s Green League of UK universities.

In addition to the portfolio of internationally recognised undergraduate, postgraduate and research activities there are a wide range of specialist groups within NTU which support this summer event. These include the Centre for Research in Advanced Textiles and the Textile Collections and Archives research groups who provide expertise into the textile and social history of Nottingham. Both the Centre for Broadcasting and Journalism (nationally recognised as a leader in journalism courses) and THEM (The History of the East Midlands: urban and rural history of the region from the 17th century) will also add content to the programme.

Nottingham has an extremely rich history and culture for summer students to enjoy. On the doorstep are Lord Byron’s home at Newstead Abbey and the Elizabethan Wollaton Hall (which appears as Wayne Manor in the latest Batman movie). Within walking distance of the campus are Nottingham Castle and Art Gallery, the Nottingham Contemporary, New Art Exchange, Brewhouse Yard Museum of Nottingham Life and, especially in summer, a host of outdoor food and music festivals. There are grisly tours of the city’s darker past, including the 700 year old tales of Robin Hood, which are always popular with international students. NTU staff are involved in the creative and cultural community of Nottingham at senior levels, and will use their knowledge and influence to arrange the best experience for the summer students.

**NTU is therefore well positioned to provide an exception learning experience with state of the art facilities surrounded by an exciting city in the heart of the UK.**
Nottingham Summer School: Creativity, Culture, History and Heritage

30 June - 18 July 2014, 3 weeks

Participants in this summer school will experience a lively academic programme that combines contemporary creative practice with the study of local culture, history and heritage. Upon completing the programme students will be able to communicate with confidence regarding their experience of the UK, how their creativity has developed and their new knowledge of Nottingham’s history and heritage.

Aims and Objectives

To inspire students and broaden their academic knowledge in humanities, arts and design through the interaction with new people and the exploration of new ways of working;
To introduce the UK and Nottingham from a historical perspective, to add some surprises and to demonstrate how the city is a contemporary, exciting place to be;
To build students’ confidence when talking about themselves, their work and their international experience; and
To create new and long-lasting friendships between the summer school students, NTU students, other international students and the academic staff they work with.

Arts, Humanities and Design Programme

Students will attend the following sessions:

Week 1: Museums and Heritage
The world of museums, heritage and the arts is changing rapidly. There is a growing need for multi-skilled professionals who have an international experience of heritage and education work. This course therefore offers the unique opportunity to broaden your vision and develop a network of friends and practitioners from around the world. The programme is ideal for UK and international delegates of all ages and experiences who are interested in social and cultural history and how it is represented today.

In Nottingham and the surrounding region there are many nationally important museums and galleries, as well as castles and countryside estates that celebrate the city’s place in British history. From Victorian workhouses to modern art exchanges, during this week you will get to engage first hand with the local museum and gallery sector, and see how buildings old and new are attracting local, national and international visitors. You will examine local and regional history and contemporary cultures, and develop projects and proposals that respond to new ways of curating to audiences today.

On your doorstep will be Nottingham Castle, The Galleries of Justice, Hardwick Hall and Wollaton Hall. Organised visits will enable you to explore these important buildings and their collections, and you will learn about the museum sector and its funding, and how the interpretation of material culture can affect the artefact on display. You will also learn from professionals about how marketing is exploiting the history of the region.

Lively study activities will support the visits to help you identify key themes as you immerse yourself in British culture and history. You will complete the week by creating a proposal, either individually or in groups, for an exhibition that celebrates the history and heritage of the region.

Week 2: Architecture and History
This programme gives you the opportunity to explore the history of architecture in England. You will immerse yourself in the buildings, designs, construction methods and materials whilst learning about the people who lived and worked in our historic city and countryside.
Nottingham is a vibrant city with unique examples of architecture from the past 1,000 years. It is surrounded by countryside, villages and castles that represent some of England’s best examples of building and town planning. Think Robin Hood and Sherwood Forest, add Civil War and the industrial revolution, and you have the ideal place in the heart of England to learn about the history of architecture through social, political and technological change.

The course will open with an orientation to Nottingham to help you appreciate the city’s social and industrial history, both above and below ground. The castle and caves of Nottingham bring to life a wealth of architectural and social history, explaining the darker side of the city’s past and how people lived and worked through good times and bad. You will explore village life and architecture, and see one of the few remaining aguarian systems still operating today. The countryside residences of Hardwick Hall and Wollaton Hall will be visited as examples of Elizabethan grandeur, and Chatsworth House, a home to aristocracy for more than five centuries, will also be toured. Lord Byron’s ancestral home at Newstead Abbey will be visited, situated in the historic Sherwood Forest which is famed for its association with Robin Hood and his outlaws. All of these visits will be supported by an interactive lecture programme.

By the end of the course you will have a new appreciation for architecture in England, plenty of photographs and sketchbook records of what you have seen.

Week 3: Fine Art and the City
Reflecting the success of the first ever World Event Young Artists in September 2012 that attracted over 1,000 artists from 100 countries to Nottingham, this practical course will immerse you in the vibrant art scene that the city is famous for. It is ideal for creative people wishing to explore their artwork in an international context and within a modern studio environment.

The work you produce during the week will respond to your new experiences of Nottingham and the UK. You will be encouraged to share your own ideas of culture and identity, celebrating similarity and stereotype through studio exercises that might include drawing, painting, mixed media, image making and performance. Through practical research you will get the opportunity to create and exhibit solo and group artwork, learning the importance of visual exploration in the field of fine art and beyond.

During the course you will receive regular individual and group critiques to help measure your development, as well as being given advice on how the skills gained on this course can help with your future career prospects. The key themes will be:

- Inquisition and discovery: Discovering Nottingham and how to capture its identities and cultures through visual exploration. Learning the importance of being inquisitive and pushing the boundaries of your thinking in both a conceptual and contextual way.
- Sharing experiences: Developing your confidence for self-directed study through carefully supported student and staff-led sessions. To be able to critically review and engage with your own practice and your peers.
- Mapping exercises: Placing your ideas, concepts and arts practice within the timescales of the project, looking at every aspect from production to exhibition.
- Observation: Observing people, landscapes and city cultures through a range of mediums.
- Reflection: Reflecting on the processes and outcomes. As well, reflecting on how your artistic practice may be perceived beyond the course by a number of audiences: academia, public and professional bodies.
- Discussion: Throughout the course there will be a series of group and personal tutorials delivered by a specialist.

There will be talks from local artists and visits to artist’s studios and galleries during and outside of class time. You will meet graduates and practitioners to help build your new network on international artists.

By the end of the week you will have a portfolio of new work, an appreciation for working in an international atmosphere, and new inspiration to take home.
The course runs Monday to Friday 10:00 – 16:00 (25 hours tuition) for three weeks. Classes will be made up of people aged 18 or above who have enrolled independently or as groups. Students will therefore be working alongside people from across the UK and overseas and meeting local practitioners, professionals and other students, all the time building their global network of fellow artists and designers. Subjects will be delivered by a range of tutors who are active in the local creative community and/or lecturers from NTU. Students will therefore develop a new perspective to their work based upon their engagement with fellow students, in addition to their new creative and technical skills.

**Ideal Participants**

The ideal participant will have completed at least one-year of undergraduate studies and have an interest and contagious enthusiasm for culture, history, heritage and the arts. They will have good academic standing and the confidence to work with others, learn from their peers and give supportive feedback. Participants must be open to people of all cultural and social backgrounds as Nottingham is a lively city with a diverse population. Students must be able to show support for their fellow students and be part of a group that promotes inclusivity.

**Credit**

A Record of Study listing the workshops and lectures that were attended (and the duration of each) will be provided at the end of the course with an explanation of NTU credits, to facilitate conversion of this credit into a programme of study at home if necessary.

**Monitoring**

Students will be in regular contact with the programme leaders to ensure they are happy with the content. The tutors will ask students to complete feedback questionnaires at regular points to monitor the content of their studies, in addition to regular informal feedback.

**Testimonials**

**Cora (Cornell University)**

"Being completely immersed in a city that is an elegant collage of old and new architecture brought daily questions for the cohort about how to approach design in a changing urban landscape.

"By participating in NTU's short courses, I was able to study different creative media in a completely foreign setting, learning from instructors that I would otherwise have no access to. The faculty at NTU was welcoming and knowledgeable about photography, graphic design, modelling and many other topics, while also catering to my interest in architecture in a new setting.

"The students we met showed us exactly what it means to be a student in the UK and specifically in Nottingham, and some of my fondest memories are sharing our differences in culture with our student ambassadors.

"My time in the UK has already proven to influence my design decisions as I approach an increasingly global field, and I hope to return sometime soon!"

**Naomi (Loyola Marymount University)**

"The time I spent this summer in Nottingham was some of the best weeks of my life. I cannot begin to explain how incredible and illuminating this experience was.

"Throughout the process I gained a better understanding of myself and of how the cultures of the UK and US diverge and overlap.

"One of my personal highlights of the trip was a small tea shop called Lee Rosy's that had a wonderful array of teas and cakes and I enjoyed spending time there with various people on the trip.

"In addition to interesting art classes, Nottingham Trent University (NTU) planned a diverse array of tours, talks and activities in the city! Everything that was planned was informative, interesting and of course full of laughter with the group!"
Rachel (North Carolina State University)

"The city is beautiful. The mix of modern, Georgian and Victorian architectural styles contributes to the rich city fabric.

"The myriad of restaurants offers numerous new food options to try, the city's attractions offer different historical and cultural perspectives, and there is an active student-centric night life.

"The people are incredibly friendly and quite welcoming. As a visitor, I felt as though many people were trying to help make my experience memorable by offering me their 'must see' attractions of the city as well as helping to provide me with an insider perspective.

"As an architecture student, my favourite aspect was having access to NTU's expansive shop. The tools and equipment cover the entire basement of one of the buildings and I was able to experiment with machinery I had never used before. Technologically, the University is quite impressive and the faculty and staff are all friendly, helpful and approachable.

"Overall, I had an amazing experience. Coming from a small town in the US I knew Nottingham was going to be different but it more than exceeded my expectations. Even after the month I spent there I feel as though there is still so much more to explore and I can't wait to go back!"

Rachel (Ball State University)

"The time I had in England was an incredible three weeks of non-stop learning, exploration and discovery.

"I went from place to place being stunned by what I saw and learned. (For instance) we were shown a selection of lace and looked through portfolios in the lace archives and my entire perspective on the medium was completely flipped. I gained a new appreciation for lace as an art, and used this new understanding as the aesthetic inspiration for my final exhibition piece.

"Though we had been told that the British were very reserved, from my experience just the opposite seemed to be true. Most everyone that I met – whether I encountered them through the program, in a pub or on the streets - seemed very willing to start up a friendly conversation with me.

"Learning about the town of Nottingham, and all of England, was an irreplaceable opportunity that I most highly suggest to everyone interested in expanding their worldly knowledge."

Justin (Cornell University)

"I was surprised at how much freedom I was given to explore my own interests in the disciplines I chose. Beyond the classroom, Nottingham Trent did a phenomenal job of supplementing the experience with informative tours and diverse workshops.

"The Market Square was a fantastic place to relax; the great diversity of restaurants kept us exploring; the University campus was beautiful and very centrally located.

"I not only have a new home, but friends with which I shared it. I am not speaking solely of my fellow participants but also local Nottingham students, coordinators, professors and deans.

"It was easily one of most productive, educational and enjoyable months of my life.

"To prospective students I would have no reservations in recommending it as tremendous experience."

Karen (University of Southern California)

"I always knew that England was somewhere I wanted to visit in my lifetime, but my experience at NTU was unlike anything I could have imagined. I don’t even know where to begin or how to exactly articulate the immense and incredible impact this program has had on my life and my goals. It was just a never ending learning process.

"The school is wonderful, in terms of faculty and facilities. The people were welcoming and friendly, always willing to offer advice and suggestions. Most of all, the classes were just so interesting. I learned so much about my own interests and how I wanted to apply these skills to my own goals in
life. The city has such rich history and beautiful architecture, and many of the sites were just so picturesque.

"To my surprise, Nottingham was just the perfect size to get to know and love. Coming from Los Angeles, a city that is so vast that a car is needed to get from A to B, I really appreciated and loved how close the shops and eateries were to campus. Some of my favourite places were the thrift stores and restaurants located in the city centre. My "go-to" places for food were the Orange Tree and Lee Rosy’s for their restaurant ambiance; I could spend hours in those places chatting with a friend or collecting my own thoughts.

"I have never felt more grateful for such an experience to live and really explore the arts and culture of the UK, and I would not have had it any other way. Nottingham literally became my second home, and I can’t wait to return one day."

All words courtesy of the students.