

Bespoke Courses

Bespoke courses are the perfect option for groups that would like to explore a specialist topic in depth, create a course around a specific theme or idea, or build practical career skills. We are always excited to discuss your ideas and work with you to build a course that will stimulate and inspire your students, as well as instil skills and knowledge which will serve them in academia and beyond.

Bespoke courses can take place online and in-person depending on your preference and location. We can design workshops, talks, practical skills sessions and more, and work with your group for a session as short as an hour or a series over days, weeks or even months. Students might create a community outreach project, create an online exhibition, write exhibition labels or even work on designing a symposium.

Bespoke courses are a premium, custom-designed, all-access offer. The cost of your custom course will reflect the bespoke nature of the work. You will be sent a course outline and price after a Zoom meeting to discuss your idea. If your course is linked to a grant or project please include information about this when you make your enquiry.

Please send us a completed booking enquiry form to: courses@wordsworth.org.uk



Bespoke Course Examples

University A: Making history and literature accessible to the public

University A designed a four-day course that explored the question 'How can a museum in the central Lake District, focused on the lives and writings of William and Dorothy Wordsworth, help us respond to the world we find ourselves in?' The university's goal was to for the students to learn project management and programme design skills. Their course included talks from staff on topics such as events, community outreach and funding applications; guided research and discussion session to discuss ideas for public engagement projects; workshops exploring William and Dorothy Wordsworth's writing; and practical workshops including making ink and sewing notebooks. The workshops first gave students a thorough grounding in the Wordsworths and the Romantic period, and then explored how to make these subjects accessible to the public in creative ways, giving students the skills and knowledge to write an application for a public outreach project of their own devising.

University B: Taking a creative approach to commonplace books



University B designed a three-day course themed around 'commonplacing', including close work with Dorothy Wordsworth's commonplace book and Dora Wordsworth's sketchbooks. The students were already keeping art journals as part of their study abroad programme, and wanted to extend this theme by approaching historical literature with an artistic and creative approach.

Over three days they spent time examining historical commonplace books in the collection and presenting to their peers on their findings; learning practical skills for object handling, working with archive materials, and transcribing historic handwritten documents; making ink, paper and sewing their own notebooks to use as commonplace books; and lino printing, writing and sketching in their commonplace books. They divided their time between the library and outdoor spaces, studying what the Wordsworths documented about their world, and how they did so, while spending time in the Wordsworths' favourite places and composing poems on how they felt, recording their experiences abroad, and copying out favourite poems and extracts

University C: Learning how to curate a museum exhibition



University C, who were on a study abroad, designed a course that took place over a month, with four full days of contact time and independent project work between sessions. The course considered the question 'what are the barriers to enjoying an exhibition of fine art?' and explored ideas about barriers, diversity and inclusivity in culture and heritage. The students, who were from a mix of disciplines, worked on two projects.

Students interested in PR and Marketing worked with the Wordsworth Grasmere team and their peers to shoot a short film documenting their experiences of their course, with the intention that this promotional video would be shown at a major Romanticism conference. All of the students worked on a project focusing on exhibition curation and breaking down barriers, researching paintings in the collection and putting them forward for consideration to be included in a forthcoming exhibition, and learning how to write exhibition labels. Students received detailed feedback from curators on their projects during and after the course. composing poems on how they felt, recording their experiences abroad, and copying out favourite poems and extracts.

Wordsworth

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University D: Building expertise in cultural and creative project development



University D were awarded funding to work with an external partner – in this case Wordsworth Grasmere – on an extended knowledge exchange project. The project would a) involve collaboration with the wider community and b) help the external partner access the university's expertise. As part of this project the university designed a three-day in-person course accompanied by a virtual introduction prior to the course and virtual student presentations a month after the course. While at Wordsworth Grasmere students spent time with curators, the Community Outreach Officer and an artist practitioner. Through a combination of academic and practical workshops they learned how to effectively work with different types of audiences in engaging and creative ways, and how arts organisations design and budget for outreach projects. The students then spent a month designing their own outreach projects, and presented these projects to the Wordsworth Grasmere team for detailed feedback. This course enabled students to build knowledge and expertise in cultural and creative project development and develop innovative routes within the creative disciplines towards employment and entrepreneurship within the cultural sector.



University E: Seeing through the eyes of an artist: Wordsworth's process, poetry and letters

University E had originally planned a study abroad programme themed around 'seeing through the eyes of artist', in which students were encouraged to explore their own creativity through a combination of experiences and the study of the lives and work of writers and artists. During the first year of the pandemic this trip was cancelled, but they redesigned the trip as a virtual one, with Wordsworth Grasmere leading three sessions. These three virtual workshops focused on Wordsworth's process of composition and his connection to nature; connecting his autobiographical work *The Prelude* to the students' experiences of being in their twenties; and exploring the Wordsworth family's letters, understanding how people of the past stayed connected, and writing their own letters. This course not only gave the students an insight into a poet's life and writing process that complemented their broader course, but also provided them with inspiration and new skills during a time of isolation and great mental distress during Covid-19 lockdowns.

University F: The writer's museum from a museological perspective

University F, based in Canada, arranged a customised virtual tour of Dove Cottage and the Museum exploring the writer's museum from a museological perspective. This tour formed one of three different virtual historic house tours that the students took, after which they each wrote an essay on the writer's museum of their choice. Students visited Dove Cottage and the Museum with a curator and discussed different approaches when presenting an historic house and Museum to the public: when to include explanatory text and when to omit it? To furnish a space with 'props' to bring it to life, or to leave it empty? How do you balance the concepts of 'family home' and 'historic space'? The visit created space for thoughtful debate as well as an insight into different philosophies of curation.