



Jun 10, 2015 00:00 BST

Researchers and public explore what it means to be human

Northumbria University has been announced as a regional hub for Being Human 2015, the UK's only national festival for the humanities.

The University will host Cities & Citizens, a programme of free public events for Being Human 2015, including a wide range of activities, from talks and film screenings to a pop-up museum, all made possible by a grant from the festival organisers, the School of Advanced Study, University of London.

This activity will build on the success of last year's festival at Northumbria

which saw more than 500 people attend events across Newcastle city centre. Now in its second year, Being Human is supported by the Arts & Humanities Research Council (AHRC), and the British Academy (BA) with support from the Wellcome Trust.

Following a successful application, Northumbria University has been awarded funding to act as a regional hub and hold a series of events during the festival week, 12 – 22 November. Cities & Citizens will champion the excellence of humanities research being undertaken in the North- East and help to demonstrate the vitality and relevance of this today. A total of 41 grants have been awarded to universities and cultural organisations across the UK to participate in the 11 days of Being Human.

The grant will help Northumbria bring together researchers and local communities to engage with the humanities. Cities & Citizens will be part of an 11-day national programme of big ideas, big debates and engaging activities for all ages. The festival will inform, extend and ignite contemporary thinking and imagination around the humanities.

Dr. Claudine van Hensbergen, Senior Lecturer in Eighteenth-Century English Literature said: “We’re delighted to be part of the festival again this year, building on last year’s success in which over 500 members of the public attended events across Newcastle. We’ve got a new and dynamic programme for this year, and hope to attract even bigger audiences. It’s vital that academics engage with the public to demonstrate the importance and relevance of Humanities research to our society, and the festival is a great means of doing this in an exciting and lively manner”.

During the inaugural festival in 2014 more than 60 universities and cultural organisations organised over 160 free events sharing the best and most challenging thinking in the humanities with audiences across the country. Extending beyond face-to-face interactions in the UK, the festival crossed borders on the web, reaching more than 2.2 million across Twitter and website visitors from around the globe.

The 2015 festival programme promises to be exciting, entertaining and thought-provoking, with something for everyone in our diverse communities.

Humanities at Northumbria enjoyed outstanding results in the recent Research Excellent Framework 2014 (REF). English Literature and Language

was rated top 15 in the UK for research quality and History was rated top 20. Northumbria is now ranked in the UK top 30 for research power in English Language and Literature, after climbing 43 places since the 2008 research assessment exercise.

To find out more about Northumbria's Humanities courses, visit www.northumbria.ac.uk/humanities or sign up for one its open days on 26 and 27 June by visiting www.northumbria.ac.uk/openday

Northumbria is a research-rich, business-focussed, professional university with a global reputation for academic excellence. To find out more about our courses go to www.northumbria.ac.uk

If you have a media enquiry please contact our Media and Communications team at media.communications@northumbria.ac.uk or call [0191 227 4571](tel:01912274571).

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