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Northumbria University unveils Being Human festival events

Academics from Northumbria University are once again taking part in the national Being Human festival – hosting a variety of free online events which celebrate the humanities and all they have to offer.

From indigenous creation stories, to the representation of sleep in literature, and exploring sex education for marginalised people, this year's events aim to help us to understand ourselves, our relationships with others, and the challenges we face in a changing world.

This is the seventh year the Being Human festival has been held. In light of Covid-19 restrictions this year's programme has been adapted, with events either held online or socially distanced.

The theme of this year's festival – New Worlds – is perfectly timed to reflect on the radical global changes of 2020, from the Covid-19 pandemic to the Black Lives Matter protests and the most important US election in decades.

Northumbria is one of 81 universities and research organisations taking part in this year's festival, with a wide range of free events take place between 12 – 22 November all over the country and online.

Speaking about Northumbria's contribution to Being Human, [Professor Julian Wright](#), head of [Northumbria's Department of Humanities](#), said: "At Northumbria we pride ourselves on bringing important research in the Humanities to a wide audience beyond academia; we've long believed in the Being Human festival as a brilliant way to bring ideas and creativity to life in our community and are proud to be leading these events, which connect to many fundamental aspects of human life, in 2020."

[Professor Katy Shaw](#), Director of Cultural Partnerships at Northumbria University, added: "This year's programme profiles our regional and national partnership working with Wellcome Trust, New Writing North and the Great Museum of the North.

"Uniting experts in the field with creative practitioners and the best of our culture, these partnership events present a unique opportunity for anyone and everyone to engage virtually with the debates that are shaping our world and join us in taking on the challenges of tomorrow."

Find out more about the Northumbria University Being Human festival 2020 events and book your place below:

- [Forty Winks Café](#): Thursday 19 November, 7pm – 8.30pm

Trouble sleeping? Worried about coronavirus? Want to find out more about representations of sleep, health, and illness in contemporary culture, as well as sleep health? Brew your favourite relaxing tea and get cosy at this virtual

café!

This online event, chaired by Claire Malcolm of New Writing North, will feature three short talks by Northumbria University's academics and Q&A sessions. Prof Katy Shaw will introduce the evening by discussing how writings grapple with health issues like the current pandemic. Dr Diletta De Cristofaro will then take you on a science fiction tour of nightmarish sleepless futures. Finally, Prof Jason Ellis will put you to bed with an interactive session and top tips for a good night's sleep.

The group will be collecting your recommendations of books and films about sleep, health, and illness into an online resource, so do start suggesting your favourite titles and passages when registering for the café and through #fortywinkscafé on Facebook and Twitter!

[Book your place at the Forty Winks Café here](#) and follow on Twitter [@writing_sleep](#), [@tedilta](#) and [@ProfKatyShaw](#)

- [Sex Education Zine Café: Thursday 19 November, 6pm – 7.30pm](#)

For marginalised people – particularly women, queer people, and disabled people – learning about sex often involves educating each other and ourselves outside of traditional settings. Join researchers Kit Heyam and Ashleigh Blackwood for a workshop discussing how marginalised people learned about sex in 17th and 18th-century England, how we do it today, and what our vision for the radically inclusive and consent-focused future of sex education might be.

Inspired by the discussion, we'll then invite you to collaborate on making the sex education zine we all wish we'd had. The finished product will be published freely online and deposited in the Wellcome Collection as a community resource.

After the workshop, participants will be emailed a folder of resources for 'zinespiration' and you'll have two weeks to submit your contribution to our collaborative 'Recreating Sex Education' zine. Contributions will be collated, and the zine will be published online and deposited as a print copy in the

Wellcome Collection's zine library.

[Book your tickets for Sex Education Zine Café.](#)

- [Creation/Creating Stories](#): **Available online from 12 – 22 November**

What are creation stories? How are creation stories told? This event will introduce young audiences to Indigenous story-telling and creation stories drawing on the Great North Museum: Hancock's Indigenous collections from North America.

Have a look at our series of videos on Indigenous story-telling and then, using pencils, markers, playdough, or other crafting material at your disposal, create your own story!

You can create a story about the origin of the world or imagine an alternative, new world you would like to inhabit. You will be invited to share your stories with the Museum.

Suitable for ages 5-11 (KS1 and KS2).

[Find out more and access the videos for Creation/Creating Stories here.](#)

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