The Art of the Syllabus (Nottingham, 1 Jan-30 Jun 26)

University of Nottingham, Jan 1–Jun 30, 2026
Deadline: Nov 17, 2025

Chloe Julius

Every year the Centre for Research in Visual Culture organises its programme around a given theme. This year's theme is The Art of the Syllabus, and for the first time we are inviting scholars to propose papers to present as part of our research seminar programme from January to June 2026.

In histories of the teaching of art, photography and art history, the syllabus is often sidelined. Teachers, students, institutions, even government policy: these are the threads usually pulled upon to tell this history. There is a logic to this marginalisation. Without a teacher, students, or an institution, a syllabus is redundant – a dormant document awaiting activation. Moreover, even though archives are filled with records of syllabi that have been activated, anyone who has been in a classroom knows that the syllabus itself is a poor record of what was discussed. At the same time, the syllabus captures a kind of pre-history of the classroom. It is a record of the best intentions of the teacher before the reality of the students (and the institution) intervenes. By using the syllabus as the starting point for our discussions, we are hoping we might capture the histories of teaching that never came to pass as well as those that did.

If our theme relates to your current research, we would like to hear from you. We are especially interested in hearing from scholars working on pre-twentieth century histories of art, photography and art history pedagogy, although scholars of the twentieth- and twenty-first centuries are of course welcome as well. We are less interested in hearing about completed research projects. Conversely, if you are at the beginning of a project that resonates with our call, please do consider working through your early ideas at the CRVC.

Please send a short (250 word) blurb and (50 word) bio to chloe.julius@nottingham.ac.uk by 17 November. All of our seminars take place in person on Wednesdays at 4pm. Talks should be planned to run for 45 minutes to an hour, and will be followed by a lively discussion. Travel will be reimbursed up to £150.

Reference:
CFP: The Art of the Syllabus (Nottingham, 1 Jan-30 Jun 26). In: ArtHist.net, Oct 8, 2025 (accessed Nov 15, 2026), <https://arthist.net/archive/50827>.