

# Industry Weekly Digest

School of Hospitality & Tourism Management



## Bear Grylls in Belfast

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Last semester, the final year International Events Management students took digital camera glasses with them to Belfast. This added an important experiential dimension from the fieldtrip to the classroom assignment. The result was an incredible set of immersive presentation pitches about events as regeneration and conflict resolution in the city.

In this digest, Dr Jonathan Skinner, Reader in the Anthropology of Events explains more.

Have a great weekend!

# Experiential learning with digital glasses at Surrey

**Jonathan Skinner**

November 2021, the level six **International Event Management** class at the University of Surrey took Bear Grylls to Belfast. Specifically, we took several pairs of his digital glasses with us whilst we explored the use of space in the divided city, and the nature of event-based regeneration in the Titanic Quarter - Europe's largest waterfront development area.

The student assignment was to make a digital presentation of a new urban events strategy for the city drawing upon their academic readings, and presentations made in the field to them by staff working for the **Titanic Foundation**, local festival arts organisation **BEAT Carnival**, and local tour guides of the interfaces - the flashpoints of the city.



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I have used digital glasses in my teaching practice for nearly a decade now, inspired by collaborations with Clinical Professor in Simulation and Clinical Skills **Gerry Gormley** at Queen's University Belfast. We used **GoPros** to film medic students in simulated ward activities and then interviewed them using the first person Point-of-View footage to understand their thought processes and decision-making (**Skinner and Gormley 2016**). In the context of event management we were examining the use of space, the blank canvas of a post-industrial landscape - that is part Titanic Slipway, part Titanic 'museum' and themed and restored boutique **Titanic Hotel**.

Students saw “first-hand” the constraints of the conflict and the difficulty in establishing socially inclusive spaces in the city - the theme of our pre-trip talk by our industry **Visiting Fellow Lucy Spokes** (Head of Public Engagement, University of Cambridge). The students mixed and mashed up their photos and digital clips of the visit into professional video pitches. They came to evince what Trudie Walters (2021: 528) refers to as ‘theory in action’ as the classroom became the real world in front of a full high definition 1080P camera lens. As Erick Zhang, one of our students noted in his evaluation of the module, this became “a precious experience during this period of time under COVID”.

Skinner, J. (2016) ‘Walking the Falls: Dark Tourism and the Significance of Movement on the Political Tour of West Belfast’, *Tourist Studies*, 16(1): 23-39. 21. DOI: [10.1177/1468797615588427](https://doi.org/10.1177/1468797615588427)

Skinner, J. and G. Gormley (2016) ‘Point of view filming and the elicitation interview’, *Perspectives on Medical Education* 5(4): 235-239. DOI: [10.1007/s40037-016-0278-0](https://doi.org/10.1007/s40037-016-0278-0) (open access)

Walters, T. (2021) ‘Delivering Employable Event Studies Graduates: Student Perspectives on the Benefits of Experiential Learning’, *Event Management* 25(5): 521-533. DOI: [10.3727/152599518X15299559637653](https://doi.org/10.3727/152599518X15299559637653)