



# UCF IN LONDON STUDY ABROAD 2023

*Reflection By: Maria Christou*

## Technology and Professional:

On our first day at the National Film and Television School, we met with our NFTS contacts for an opening chat, then had a tour of the school's facilities. We then had our first workshop with Tom Fisher, titled "Building Stories, Brick by Brick," in which we flexed our creativity and discussed the importance of collaboration. Afterward, we had our second workshop of the day with Clare Cream and Poonam Sahota of the Marketing, Distribution, Sales, and Exhibition department titled, "Pitch Me, Baby," in which we learned tips for pitching our ideas and speaking publicly. Our final workshop of the day was "Sound Design for Film and Television" with Guy Hake. In the evening, we attended a screening and Q&A for two student films, *Death of the Gods* and *Christmas in Antwerp*, which both blew me away.

On our second day, we split into small groups and participated in a practical workshop in which we shot a scene! It was an enlightening experience to collaborate as a team to get our scene cast, blocked, and shot in just a few hours. In the evening, we had the pleasure to attend a live Zoom Q&A with Christopher McQuarrie, filmmaker who most recently co-wrote and produced *Top Gun: Maverick*, and Eddie Hamilton, editor on *Top Gun: Maverick* and other major films. It was really interesting to hear valuable advice from these two professionals and learn from their vast experience in the industry.

Throughout the rest of our first week, we attended workshops with Sound Recordist Lawrence Gartshore, Cinematographer Stuart Harris, Assistant Director Richard Lingard, and recent directing graduate Simon London. All three of these individuals had so much valuable knowledge to share and I learned so much from them.

Once we gained a base knowledge of filmmaking, it was time to prepare for our short films. We entered the preproduction phase, creating our script breakdowns, shot lists, storyboards, and production schedules. Finally, we spent a day shooting our films and another day editing the footage.



## ALL-STAR LINEUP OF MASTERCLASSES:

**AI & TV with Dr. Alex Connock of Creative Business, Distribution and Acquisition with Poonam Sahota, Casting with Jane Arnell of Casting, and trends in the film sector with Adrian Wootton, the CEO of Film London and the British Film Commission.**

We finished our last day with a screening of the short films that we have been working on over the past week. I am incredibly proud of the work we accomplished in two short weeks. I will always be so grateful for my time at the NFTS. I truly met the best people, learned so much, and had tons of fun along the way.





## UNFORGETTABLE! SITE VISITS:

Pinewood Studios, Warner Bros, & BBC

### Industry Site Visits:

We had the honor of touring the legendary Pinewood Studios, where so many iconic films were made [some of my favorites include Mamma Mia! (2008), Les Miserables (2012), and lots of Marvel projects]. It was a dream come true to be standing on an active film set. We also got to tour Sony's Digital Media Production Centre Europe, another remarkable space.

After Pinewood, we visited the Warner Bros. Studio Tour London - The Making of Harry Potter at Leavesden. As a massive fan of the Potter films, I was geeking out the entire time. It was so exciting to see the genuine props, sets, and costumes from the films, as well as gain a deeper understanding of the filmmaking process of the franchise.

Our third site tour was at the BBC. We got to see the top-notch spaces in the building, including the Newsroom, Gallery for Studio K, set of The One Show, and Radio Theatre.



## TOURED THE LONDON COLISEUM

Largest theatre in the West End  
currently housing We Will Rock You.

Bob Holland, the Associate Artistic Director of the English National Opera, showed us around and shared his rich experience in the opera and theatrical world.



*The locations we visited throughout our two weeks abroad were sensational. We are fortunate to have been able to see places that are so relevant to the industries we aspire to be in.*





## Tourist Visits:

It would not be a study abroad trip without the abroad part! While in the UK, we were able to balance work and play by going on some fun tourist visits.

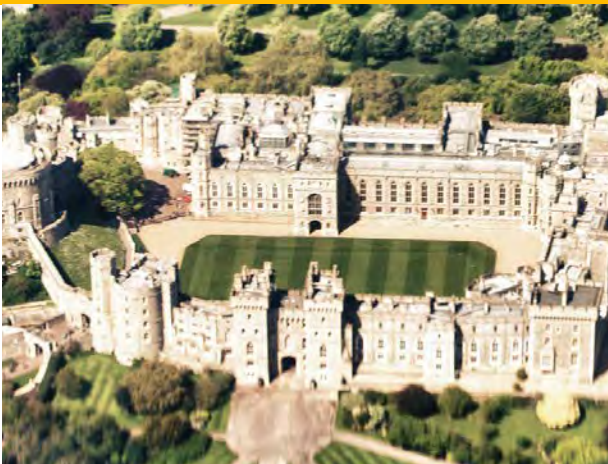
We had a day trip to Oxford and were able to explore the town at our own pace. I did a lot of shopping at the many bookstores in the area and toured the historic Christ Church. The school was stunning, and I loved seeing the several filming locations for the Harry Potter films within.

Our second-day trip was in Windsor. Windsor was lovely. Many of us enjoyed a delicious lunch at the multicultural street market in town. After, we visited Windsor Castle, where we got to pretend to be royals for a day as we strolled through the ornate rooms and lush gardens.

## CHRIST CHURCH OXFORD, ENGLAND



## WINDSOR CASTLE ENGLAND



Additionally, we had two days off when we had the freedom to go wherever we pleased. I took advantage of this time to take the train into London and explore the city. I was able to see much of London in just these two days, with my favorite areas being Notting Hill and Soho.

A final highlight of our tourist activities was the two productions we watched on the West End - Back to the Future The Musical and Mamma Mia! Both of these shows were an absolute blast. It was wonderful to experience and appreciate the great work done on the West End by the phenomenal actors, technicians, artists, and creatives that make it happen.

*We are so lucky to have been able to fit heaps of practical and cultural education into just a brief two-week program*

