

Sophister Module Description Template 2023-24

Option Name:	Irish short fiction
Lecturer Name:	Paul Delaney
Email Address:	delanep@tcd.ie
ECTS Weighting:	10
Semester/Term Taught:	HT 2024
Year:	SS

Learning Outcomes:

On successful completion of this module students should be able to:

1. Identify the principal characteristics of the short-story form as it has been practised in twentieth-century and contemporary Irish writing.
2. Situate this knowledge in a broader historical, cultural and literary context.
3. Employ a range of interpretive strategies, using an advanced critical vocabulary, to engage in a close reading of a select body of texts.
4. Evaluate those texts in oral and written presentations, and transfer discipline specific competencies to cognate subjects and related professions.

Option Learning Aims:

'We may not be very good at economics or honest politics, but we certainly know how to write a short story.' So *The Irish Times* commented on the publication of Anne Enright's edited anthology, *The Granta Book of the Irish Short Story* in 2010. This Option considers the basis for this claim, tracing the genre of short fiction in Ireland from the early decades of the twentieth century to the present.

Building on aspects of the JF 'Irish Writing' module, this Option explores stories by key prose writers of the post-independence years; it also engages with major writers of the mid-to-late twentieth century, before concluding with classes on some of the most accomplished short-story writers writing today. In essence, the module argues for an understanding of a short-story tradition which is vibrant and poetic, challenging, productive, and diverse. The Option begins with an introductory session on contexts and theories; other short-story theories – local and comparative – will be introduced as the module develops.

Option Content:

This module will explore selected texts from a broad range of authors; and stories will be made available through Blackboard. Students interested in reading ahead might consider Anne Enright's anthology *The Granta Book of the Irish Short Story* (2010) and Sinéad Gleeson's recent selection *The Art of the Glimpse: 100 Irish Short Stories* (2020). Older anthologies, including Benedict Kiely's *The Penguin Book of Irish Short Stories* (1981), Frank O'Connor's *Classic Irish Short Stories* (1985), and William Trevor's *The Oxford Book of Irish Short Stories* (1989), remain in print and have retained their importance. In recent years, Faber & Faber has produced (almost) biennial volumes of contemporary Irish short fiction, highlighting some of the best writing today; two anthologies were edited by the late David Marcus (2005 and 2007), and further books have been edited by Joseph O'Connor (2011), Kevin Barry (2013), Deirdre Madden (2015), and Lucy Caldwell (2019). Sinéad Gleeson's award-winning anthology, *The Long Gaze Back* (2015), is another excellent place to start.

Seminars will be arranged as follows:

1. Introduction
2. Liam O'Flaherty and Frank O'Connor
3. Mary Lavin and Seán O'Faoláin
4. Elizabeth Bowen and Maeve Brennan
5. John McGahern and Edna O'Brien
6. Bernard MacLaverty and William Trevor
7. Reading week
8. Eugene McCabe and Evelyn Conlon
9. Éilís Ní Dhuibhne and Emma Donoghue
10. Claire Keegan and Kevin Barry
11. Lucy Caldwell and Danielle McLaughlin
12. Conclusion

Assessment: Short essay (2,000 words, 30%); essay (4,000 words, 70%)