



Trinity College Dublin

Coláiste na Tríonóide, Baile Átha Cliath

The University of Dublin

Ireland in Rebellion, 1782-1916

Course Description

This is a free 14-week online course about the making of modern Ireland. In 2016 Ireland will commemorate the centenary of the 1916 Rising, the failed rebellion which none the less inspired the national movement for Irish independence. The 1916 Rising is seen as one of the critical moments in Irish history, and there are many debates about how it should be commemorated (or celebrated) and whether the Irish state which was created afterwards has lived up to the ideals of the founding fathers of 1916. This course explores those debates, but also situates them within the wider context of the development of Irish republicanism, going back to the ideals of Theobald Wolfe Tone and the United Irishmen in the 1790s. It also examines the development of the constitutional nationalist tradition which was often in conflict with the forces of radicalism and violence. The course explores the making of modern Ireland, and the forces which led to the creation of the independent Irish state.

This period witnessed the birth of the modern Ireland as both a parliamentary tradition and a revolutionary tradition, were developed, intersected, and ultimately clashed. It explores the difficult and often violent relationship between Ireland and Britain, in a period when ideas of nationalism and republicanism were being debated around the world. It also explores the tension between the supporters of the constitutional nationalist tradition in Ireland, and those who argue Irish independence would never have been achieved without the use of violence.

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Course Lecturer

Professor **Patrick Geoghegan** has taught in Trinity College Dublin since 1999. A winner of the Provost's award for teaching excellence in 2009, he employs innovative methods to develop the critical and independent thinking skills, and also the communication skills, which are a key part of the Trinity Education. An expert on the Anglo-Irish relationship in the late-eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, as well as on the competing themes of

constitutional nationalism and radical republicanism, his books include: *The Irish Act of Union: A Study in High Politics, 1798-1801* (1999); *Lord Castlereagh* (2002); *Robert Emmet: A Life* (2003); *King Dan: The Rise of Daniel O'Connell, 1775-1829* (2008); and *Liberator: The Life and Death of Daniel O'Connell, 1830-1847* (2010). Committed to all aspects of outreach and engagement with society, he presents the award-winning weekly history programme, *Talking History*, on Newstalk radio, podcasts for which are available to download on iTunes.

Overview

The course runs for 14 weeks. Each week usually involves five pieces of video, each approximately 15 minutes long. Combined they form a coherent theme for the week. There will usually be four mini lectures, and one interview with a leading expert. The entire course is 17 hours long.

Weekly Overview

1. The Challenge of the 1916 Rising: Irish History from the American War of Independence to the First World War.

This introductory week explores the Proclamation of the 1916 Rising, the founding document of the modern Irish state. It also provides an overview of the major themes of the course, using the career of the great eighteenth century political theorist Edmund Burke as a prism through which the competing tensions of physical force and constitutional nationalism can be explored.

Guest interviews:

Dr. Patrick Prendergast, Provost and President of Trinity College Dublin.

Professor Micheál Ó Siochrú, Department of History.

2. The Age of Revolution, 1775-1796: Ireland and the Atlantic World.

This week looks at the winning of Irish legislative independence in 1782 and the influence of the American and French Revolutions on Ireland. In the 1790s the ideal of an independent

Irish republic convinced some people that separation from Britain was necessary, and this led to the failed French invasion at Bantry Bay in Cork in 1796.

Guest interview: **Dr. Lisa-Marie Griffith.**

3. Ireland in Flames: the 1798 Rebellion.

This week looks at one of the bloodiest conflicts on Irish soil, when 30,000 people were killed in the summer of 1798, and the Irish, British, and French armies clashed in a struggle for supremacy. It explores how the high ideals of the rebellion were compromised, and how it gave way to brutal, sectarian carnage. The defeat of the Irish revolutionaries helped shape Irish history for the next century.

Guest interview: **Dr. Lisa-Marie Griffith.**

4. The Irish Act of Union, 1800

The immediate legacy of the 1798 Rebellion was the decision of the British government to abolish the Irish parliament and rule directly from London. The Irish Act of Union was passed through bribery and corruption, and the illegal methods and the loss of Irish national pride, became a focal point for constitutional nationalists.

Guest interview: **Dr. Seán O'Reilly**, Trinity College Dublin.

5. Robert Emmet and the Rebellion of 1803

In 1803 a young, idealistic Irish revolutionary, Robert Emmet, led a doomed rebellion against British rule in Ireland. It failed, and he paid for that failure on the scaffold. Before he died he delivered a speech from the dock that has gone down in history as one of the greatest courtroom orations in history. It was memorised in its entirety by a young Abraham Lincoln, who later referenced it during the American Civil War. These classes will explore the speech – and the reasons for the failure of the rebellion – and how Emmet, a naive twenty-five year old, became the symbol of Irish nationalism and inspired the 1916

leaders. The key document which will be discussed and re-enacted in class is Robert Emmet's speech from the dock.

Guest interview: **Mr. Justice Adrian Hardiman** of the Supreme Court of Ireland.

6. Daniel O'Connell and the Winning of Catholic Emancipation, 1801-1829

Daniel O'Connell, praised by President Barack Obama when he visited Ireland in 2011, is hailed as 'The Liberator', the man who raised a country that was on its knees and won it its religious freedom. This week focus on the greatest constitutional nationalist in Irish history, and how he mobilised the world's first mass peaceful democratic movement. The tension with revolutionary nationalism is also explored.

Guest interview: **Mr. Justice Adrian Hardiman** of the Supreme Court of Ireland.

7. The Struggle for Repeal, 1830-1847

Following the winning of Catholic emancipation in 1829 Daniel O'Connell turned his attention to the winning of Irish parliamentary independence. His campaign also attacked slavery in the United States, winning him the support of Frederick Douglass, John Quincy Adams, and other leading abolitionists. This week explores the rise, fall, and resurrection of the parliamentary struggle.

8. The Famine, Young Ireland, and the Fenians.

During the Great Irish Famine one million people died, and another million were forced to emigrate. This catastrophe devastated Irish society and created a legacy of resentment and bitterness, not just in Ireland but in Irish-America and around the world. This week explores how the Famine changed the nature of Irish politics forever. It also explores two further attempts to create an independent Irish republic, with the revolutionary activity of the Young Ireland movement and later the Fenians. Drawing on supporters in the United States (who carried out raids on Canada), and in Britain, the rebellions ultimately ended in failure.

This week will explore what went wrong, and how the revolutionary activity moved from open conflict to secret assassinations, sabotage, and terrorism.

Guest interview: **Professor Ciaran O'Neill**, Department of History.

9. The Rise and Fall of the 'Uncrowned King of Ireland'.

Charles Stewart Parnell became the great Irish constitutional leader of the second half of the nineteenth century. His campaign in the British parliament almost succeeded in winning Home Rule for Ireland, and restoring the Irish parliament. It failed, and that failure damaged the peaceful movement and created an irresistible momentum for war. Land was the focal point for much of the tensions on the island, and this week will also explore how it occasionally erupted into violence, and how the political responses created a whole new land settlement in Ireland.

Guest interview: **Professor Ciaran Brady**, Chair of Early Modern History and Historiography, Trinity College Dublin.

10. Unionism versus Nationalism: Ireland in Crisis, 1900-1912.

This week looks at two crucial figures in Irish nationalism and unionism – Roger Casement and Edward Carson. One wanted an independent Irish republic, the other that Ireland would remain an integral part of the British empire. Both were prepared to go to war to achieve these aims. Their competing visions set Ireland on an inexorable path towards war.

Guest interview: **Dr. Tomás Irish**, University of Swansea (and formerly of Trinity College Dublin)

11. From Lockout to War, 1912-1916

The partition of Ireland began much sooner than it was recognised by law. This week look at how Ireland was spilt on religious and political lines, and how the country almost erupted

into open civil war in 1912-1914. It also examines the major industrial dispute, the 1913 Lockout, and Irish involvement in the first world war.

Guest interview: **Professor David Fitzpatrick**, Chair of Modern History, Trinity College Dublin.

12. The 1916 Rising.

The 1916 Rising is believed to represent the birth of the Irish state. Although it ended in failure, with the leaders executed and the rebellion crushed, it inspired a wave of activity that culminated in the winning of Irish independence in 1921. This week will explore the iconic 1916 Proclamation, the leaders of the rebellion, and the reasons for the failure, and how the failure was transformed into success.

Guest interview: **Mr. Justice Adrian Hardiman** of the Supreme Court of Ireland.

13. The Winning of Irish Independence: 1917-1923.

The penultimate class explores what happened after 1916, as the war of independence broke out in 1919 and eventually forced the negotiation of the Anglo-Irish Treaty and the creation of the Irish Free State. The partition of Ireland, and the Civil War of 1922-1923 provided a bloody epilogue to the events of the course.

Guest interview: **Professor Eunan O’Halpin**, Chair of Contemporary Irish History, Trinity College Dublin.

14. Commemorating Ireland: Challenges and Opportunities.

Ireland is preparing to commemorate the centenary of the 1916 Rising in 2016 as well as the events of the period 1912-1923. But there is a serious debate about whether these events should be celebrated, or just remembered, and what form these commemorations should take. This final week explores some of the challenges of commemoration, from the way the 1798 and 1803 rebellions have been commemorated. It will explore the nature of

commemoration, the nature of public history, and how the events of the period can and should be remembered.

Guest interview: **Professor Anne Dolan**, Department of History.

Professor Micheál Ó Siochrú, Department of History.