

Sophister Option Description 2021/22

Option Name: Childhood, Youth, and Irish Writing

Option Short Title: Childhood, Youth

Lecturer Name and Email Address: Martina Devlin, devlinm1@tcd.ie ECTS Weighting: 10

Semester/Term Taught: Hilary

Year: SS

Module Content

Week 1: Introduction

Stories from *The Lucky Bag* (ed by Eilís Dillon, et al, 1984): James Plunkett, 'Weep for Our Pride' and Frank O'Connor, 'My Oedipus Complex'.

Week 2: Gender and Child/Adult Power Dynamics

More stories from *The Lucky Bag* (ed by Eilís Dillon, et al, 1984): Polly Devlin, 'The China Doll', and Brian Friel, 'The Potato Gatherers.'

Week 3: History and Life Writing

Brendan Behan, *The Borstal Boy* (1958)

Week 4: Memory and Perspective

Seamus Deane, *Reading in the Dark* (1996)

Week 5: Language and the Family

Carlo Gébler, *The Eleventh Summer* (1985)

Week 6: Presentations Formative Assignment

Week 7: Reading Week

Week 8: Memory and Coming of Age

Éilís Ní Dhuibhne, *The Dancers Dancing* (1999)

Week 9: Revisioning History

Siobhan Dowd, *Bogchild* (2008)

Week 10: Loss of Innocence

Mary Costello, 'You Fill Up My Senses' from *The China Factory* (2012), and first forty pages of *Academy Street* (2014)

Week 11: Family Dysfunction

Christine Dwyer Hickey, *Tatty* (2004)

Week 12: Reflection and Revision

Learning Outcomes:

On successful completion of this module students should be able to

1. Discuss and evaluate the construction of childhood and youth in a broad range of Irish writing from the twentieth and twenty-first centuries
2. Distinguish between 'literary childhoods' and 'children's literature'
3. Relate textual analysis to broader cultural debates
4. Undertake independent research and take responsibility for their own learning experience
5. Develop existing critical and analytical skills, become empowered citizens, and think beyond the confines of 'learning outcomes'

Option Learning Aims:

This module facilitates the exploration of the construction of childhood and youth in Irish writing. Students will be given the opportunity to analyse texts written for adult readers as well as texts written for children. The module will examine texts through the lens of 'childhood and youth', and students will be introduced to a series of subject areas including myth, folklore, community, education, history, borders, transitional spaces, postcolonialism, gender, and sexuality. With a focus on texts from the twentieth and twenty-first centuries,

discussions will be positioned within the context of broader cultural debates and will incorporate a number of theoretical approaches. Students will be asked to participate in a compulsory independent research project using the Pollard Collection of Children's Books (if accessible) held at Trinity College Library.

Assessment Details:

- Number of Components: 1
- Name/Type of Component(s): Essay
- Word Count of Component(s): 5,000 – 6,000 words
- Percentage Value of Component(s): 100%