Reading Ireland A

Michaelmas 2018

10 ECTS

Course description
This team-taught course introduces students to a range of texts, authors, and issues in Irish writing. Students will work across genres and forms, encountering canonical and less often studied works. This is an innately comparative course which proposes and encourages various ways of thinking about Irish texts, while at the same time providing a sound knowledge of the social, cultural, and political conditions in which these texts were written and read.

Learning outcomes
Upon successful completion of this course, students will:

- Be confident discussing key figures and texts, and associated contexts, in Irish writing
- Employ a well-developed range of critical terms in discussion of the texts and genres studied
- Show a sound critical awareness in evaluating the relationship between texts and contexts, situating literary analysis within broader cultural and historical discussions
- Relate the texts studied to relevant debates in criticism and theory, within and beyond Irish literary studies
- Generate questions, and robust comparative arguments, about these texts and authors, and pursue independent research to develop them

Course convenors: Dr Rosie Lavan and Dr Paul Delaney (lavanro@tcd.ie / delanep@tcd.ie). Any queries about the course may be directed to Dr Lavan in the first instance.

Assessment
Two 3,000 word essays.

Course outline

Week 1 (13 September): Introduction (PD/RL)

Week 2 (20 September): Issues of representation in Irish literature (PD/RL)

Week 3 (27 September): Edmund Spenser, ‘A View of the Present State of Ireland’ (c. 1596) (Dr Ema Vyroubalová)

Week 4 (4 October): Jonathan Swift, ‘A Modest Proposal’ (1729) and selected poems (Dr Amy Prendergast)

Week 5 (11 October): Patrick Kavanagh, The Great Hunger (1942) (Dr Tom Walker)

Week 6 (18 October): Discussion and consolidation (PD/RL)
WEEK 7: READING WEEK


Week 10 (15 November): Tom Murphy, *A Whistle in the Dark* (1961) (RL)

Week 11 (22 November): Eilís Dillon, *The Island of Horses* (1956) (Dr Jane Carroll)

Week 12 (29 November): Conclusion (PD/RL)

Texts

Students are encouraged to source their own copies of course texts, purchasing them new or second-hand or borrowing them from the Library, but where indicated pdf versions will be made available via Blackboard.

Recommended secondary reading

The following texts provide a range of critical and theoretical approaches to Irish literature and culture. You may find it helpful to refer to them throughout the course. More specific suggestions for secondary reading will be provided by individual lecturers.

For background, Terence Brown’s *Ireland: A Social and Cultural History*, 2nd edn (London: Harper, 2004) is an excellent place to start: it would be extremely worthwhile to read this cover to cover.


Murray, Christopher, Twentieth-Century Irish Drama: A Mirror Up to Nation (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997).

Vance, Norman, Irish Literature Since 1800 (Abingdon: Routledge, 2002).