

Reading Ireland A

Michaelmas Term 2020

10 ECTS

Module description

This team-taught module introduces students to a broad range of texts, authors and issues in Irish writing. Students work across genres and forms, encountering canonical and less often studied works. This comparative module proposes various ways of thinking about Irish literary texts, while at the same time providing a sound knowledge of the social, cultural and political conditions in which these texts were written, produced and read. The lectures for Reading Ireland A this semester are organized around the theme ‘geography and migration’.

Learning outcomes

Upon successful completion of this module, students will:

- Be confident discussing some key figures and texts in Irish writing
- Employ a well-developed range of critical terms in discussion of the texts and genres
- Show a sound critical awareness in evaluating the relationship between texts and contexts, situating literary analysis within broader cultural and historical frameworks
- 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

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Assessment: Two 3,000-word essays

Module Outline

- 1 Reading Ireland: introduction (DO’S)
- 2 Gerald of Wales, *History and Topography of Ireland* (1188) (Professor Andy Murphy) [preferred edition: Penguin Classics 1982]
- 3 Edmund Spenser, excerpts from *A View of the Present State of Ireland* (1596) (Dr Ema Vyroubalová)**
- 4 Jonathan Swift, ‘A Modest Proposal’ (1729) (Professor Aileen Douglas)**
- 5 Maria Edgeworth, *Ennui* (1809) (Dr Jarlath Killeen) [preferred edition: Penguin Classics 1992 of *Castle Rackrent* and *Ennui*]
- 6 Reading Ireland: discussion (DO’S)
- 7 Reading week
- 8 W.B. Yeats and Lady Gregory, *Cathleen ni Houlihan* (1902); J. M. Synge, *Riders to the Sea* (1904) (Professor Chris Morash)**

- 9 James Joyce, 'The Dead' (1914) (Dr Sam Slote)**
- 10 Sheila Wingfield, *Beat Heart, Beat Drum* (1946) (Dr Tom Walker)**
- 11 Elizabeth Bowen, *A Time in Rome* (1960) (Dr Rosie Lavan)
[preferred edition: Vintage 2010]
- 12 Conclusion (DO'S)

Texts

Texts marked with a double asterisk (**) will be made available as pdf versions via Blackboard. However, students are encouraged to source their own copies of core texts, purchasing them new or second-hand or borrowing them from the Library.

Recommended secondary reading

For general background: Terence Brown, *Ireland: A Social and Cultural History, 1922–2002*, 4th edn (London: Harper, 2004), is an excellent place to start.

In addition, the following texts provide a range of critical and theoretical approaches to Irish literature and culture. You may find it helpful to refer to some of them over the course of the module. Specific suggestions for secondary reading will be provided by individual lecturers.

Brown, Michael, *The Irish Enlightenment* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2016).

Carpenter, Andrew, 'Introduction', to *Verse in English from Eighteenth-Century Ireland* (Cork: Cork University Press, 1998), pp. 1-34.

Cleary, Joe, *Outrageous Fortune: Capital and Culture in Modern Ireland* (Dublin: Field Day, 2006).

—, and Claire Connolly eds., *The Cambridge Companion to Modern Irish Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

Connolly, Claire, *Theorizing Ireland* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002).

—, and Marjorie Howes eds., *Irish Literature in Transition*, 6 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020).

Cullingford, Elizabeth Butler, *Ireland's Others: Gender and Ethnicity in Irish Literature and Popular Culture* (Cork: Cork University Press, 2001).

Deane, Seamus, *Celtic Revivals: Essays in Modern Irish Literature 1880-1980* (London: Faber & Faber, 1985).

Douglas, Aileen, Moyra Haslett, and Ian Campbell Ross, eds., 'Irish Fiction, 1660-1830', *Irish University Review* 41.1 (Spring/Summer, 2011).

Eagleton, Terry, *Crazy John and the Bishop and Other Essays on Irish Culture* (Cork: Cork University Press, 1998).

Gibbons, Luke, *Transformations in Irish Culture* (Cork: Cork University Press, 1996).

- Gillespie, Raymond, and Andrew Hadfield, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of the Irish Book. Vol. III. The Irish Book in English, 1550-1800* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006).
- Graham, Colin, *Deconstructing Ireland: Identity, Theory, Culture* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2001).
- Greene, Nicholas, *The Politics of Irish Drama: Plays in Context from Boucicault to Friel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).
- Kelleher, Margaret, and Philip O'Leary eds., *The Cambridge History of Irish Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006). 2 vols.
- Declan Kiberd, *After Ireland: Writing from Beckett to the Present* (London: Head of Zeus, 2017).
- , *Inventing Ireland: The Literature of the Modern Nation* (London: Vintage, 1996).
- , *Irish Classics* (London: Granta, 2000).
- , *The Irish Writer and the World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).
- Kirkland, Richard, and Colin Graham eds., *Ireland and Cultural Theory: The Mechanics of Authenticity* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1999).
- Leerssen, Joep, *Mere Irish and Fíor Ghael: Studies in the Idea of Irish Nationality, its Development, and Literary Expression Prior to the Nineteenth Century* (Cork: Cork University Press, 1986)
- Lloyd, David, *Anomalous States: Irish Writing and the Post-Colonial Moment* (Dublin: Lilliput, 1993).
- Longley, Edna, *The Living Stream: Literature and Revisionism in Ireland* (Newcastle: Bloodaxe, 1994).
- 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).