Reading Ireland A

Michaelmas Term 2022
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 will be 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

Module convener: Dr. Darrell Jones and Dr. Jarlath Killeen

Assessment: Two 3,000-word essays

Module Outline
1 Reading Ireland: introduction (Dr. Darrell Jones)
2 Gerald of Wales, History and Topography of Ireland (1188) (Professor Andy Murphy)
3 Edmund Spenser, excerpts from A View of the Present State of Ireland (1596) (Dr Ema Vyroubalová)**
5 W.B. Yeats and Lady Gregory, Cathleen ni Houlihan (1902); J. M. Synge, Riders to the Sea (1904) (Professor Chris Morash)**
6 Reading Ireland: discussion (Dr. Darrell Jones)
7 Reading week
8 Irish Gothic? Bram Stoker, Dracula (1897) (Dr. Jarlath Killeen)
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)
12 Conclusion (Dr. Darrell Jones)
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


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.

Cleary, Joe, Outrageous Fortune: Capital and Culture in Modern Ireland (Dublin: Field Day, 2006).
Cullingford, Elizabeth Butler, Ireland’s Others: Gender and Ethnicity in Irish Literature And Popular Culture (Cork: Cork University Press, 2001)