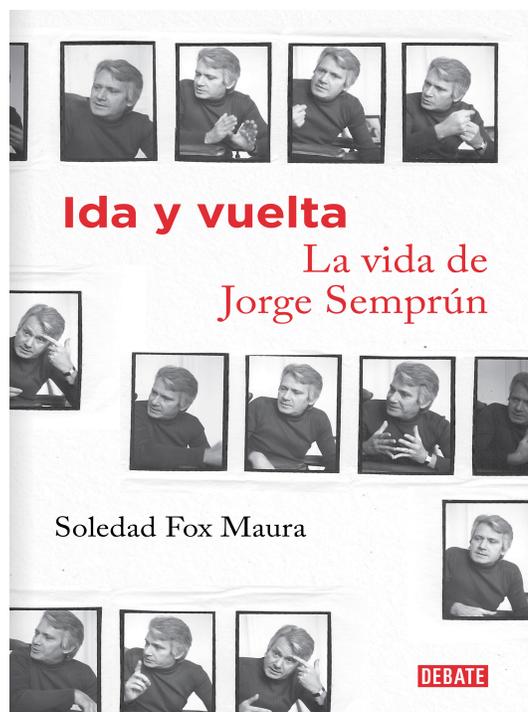


DEPARTMENT OF HISPANIC STUDIES
TRINITY COLLEGE DUBLIN

JORGE SEMPRÚN: THE BIOGRAPHY
OF AN AUTOBIOGRAPHER

Professor Soledad Fox Maura, Williams College

Thursday 20 October 2016 - 6 p.m.
Arts Building, Room 5052



Jorge Semprún (1923-2011), Spanish by birth, Parisian by adoption, was a legendary figure at the forefront of 20th-century European history. Semprún's multifaceted story offers something for everyone. His experiences intertwined with the history of European politics: the Spanish Civil War, the French Resistance, the Holocaust, Communism, and democracy. He was equally at home among the *madriños* of his childhood, fellow prisoners of Buchenwald concentration camp, politicians, and artists and writers such as his close friend Yves Montand, or Gabriel García Márquez. He is best known internationally as a prize-winning and Oscar nominated novelist, memoirist, and screenwriter. In Spain, his extraordinary achievements were recognized when he was named Minister of Culture in the late 1980s. Semprún knew the European political world and its ideologies from the front lines. After repeatedly risking his life in the 1930s, 1940s, 1950s, and 1960s, he withdrew from backing any one political party. He devoted the remaining decades of his life to his autobiographical work, and his investment in the idea of a new Europe.

Professor Soledad Fox Maura will discuss her new biography of Jorge Semprún. In addition to the complexities involved in any kind of life-writing project, Fox Maura will also address the issues she faced when writing about someone who had himself produced many literary versions of his own life. Her talk will also explore the relationship between the subject's self-fashioning and the biographer's task.

This work arises out of her research into international aspects of Spanish history and culture, with a focus on Spaniards abroad and foreigners in Spain. She is interested in the individual protagonists of the Spanish Civil War and World War II, and the intersections between narrative, memory, and archival materials.

She holds a B.A. from Sarah Lawrence College and a Ph.D. in comparative literature from the Graduate Center of the City University of New York. She has been a Fulbright Senior Research Scholar, and a member of the jury of the Premios Príncipe de Asturias, Spain's version of the Nobel Prize. She has published numerous scholarly articles and has been interviewed by the BBC and the *New Yorker*.