



This module explores the political, social, economic and cultural life of the first two decades of Irish independence. From the Anglo-Irish Treaty to the end of the Second World War, this module examines the expectations and the realities of independence.

The module revolves around a central question, posed by W.T. Cosgrave in February 1931, but still apposite and challenging to any interpretation of these years: 'what has the average man in the street got out of his independence and self-government?' It is the purpose of this module to encourage students to explore the range and variety of possible answers, and to prompt them to ask a whole series of questions of their own. The module also concentrates on a number of the questions that have been emerging in the recent historiography of this period. Was there a counter-revolution in the first years of the state? To what extent had there been a revolution at all? What were the consequences of the years of violence, and the impact of the civil war on the political culture that followed? Did independent Ireland become indelibly shaped by the nature of its foundation? What defined relations with the Northern State? What did people aspire to and what were they afraid of? Popular politics and dissent in the state, from Sinn Féin to the army mutineers to the Blueshirts and beyond, will be looked at through the prism of these and other questions.

This module draws on a wide variety of primary source materials, and a range of sources are provided for seminars each week. However, from government files to cabinet minutes, from private papers to Oireachtas debates, from films and novels and women's magazines, from jazz records to diocesan archives, and anything and everything in between, students are expected to conduct their own primary research in the various archival repositories in Dublin.