



For the policy-makers, sociologists, politicians and commentators involved, defining poverty and identifying the best ways to eradicate it are key questions. Historians, however, have different concerns. We are often more interested in the problematisation of poverty and ask when and why did it become politicised? We also examine responses to poverty and examine how the welfare landscape evolved over time. More recently, historians have tried to address the experience of poverty, centering those who received relief, and were subject to processes, tests and incarceration.

In this module we will examine the way issues around poverty and welfare have been formulated and reformulated during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries in Ireland. Official and private or voluntary responses to poverty will be examined. We will probe the extent to which international, political and religious ideas framed ideas about poverty and welfare, and we'll consider the role of power and class that were fundamental to the welfare landscape on the island. We will study the existing historiography and primary source material in order to assess how historians have written this history, and we will develop questions that still need to be addressed.