

HIU34012 Poverty in modern Ireland  
Module Organiser: Dr Carole Holohan  
Duration: All year  
Contact hours: 3 hours per week  
Weighting: 20 ECTS  
Assessment: 60% Examination, 40% Essay

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? How was its meaning and social significance constructed? What was the nature of poverty? When and why did it become an urgent public issue? When does what has hitherto been considered an acceptable level of poverty become unacceptable? And who determines this shift? And does this affect responses to poverty? 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 responses to poverty (the Poor Law; Congested Districts Board; institutionalization) will be examined, as will private responses (charity; philanthropy). We will examine the extent to which international, political and religious ideas framed ideas about poverty and welfare in Ireland. We will study the existing historiography and primary source material in order to assess how historians have written the history of poverty and welfare in Ireland, and we will develop questions that still need to be addressed.