

# ENP11016 *The City and Children's Literature*

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| <b>Module type</b>    | Optional (approved module: MPhil in Children's Literature)                 |
| <b>Term / hours</b>   | Hilary / 22  |
| <b>ECTS</b>           | 10   |
| <b>Coordinator(s)</b> | Dr Pádraic Whyte<br>( <a href="mailto:whytepa@tcd.ie">whytepa@tcd.ie</a> ) |
| <b>Lecturer(s)</b>    | Dr Pádraic Whyte   |
| <b>Cap</b>            | Depending on demand  |

## Module description

This module facilitates the exploration of representations of the city in a diverse range of children's texts. In many children's narratives set in the city empowerment is depicted as only possible through direct engagement with the urban space, a landscape Michel de Certeau describes as 'a space of enunciation' where the act of walking can offer the opportunity for subversion and transformation. With a particular focus on issues of power, this module will examine the portrayal of young protagonists and analyse the ability or inability of characters to upend traditional power structures and to navigate and understand urban environments. Through this lens of the city in literature, students will also be introduced to a series of related subject areas, including adventure, child-adult power-dynamics, education, national identity, history, narrative voice, gender, race, and sexuality. The texts explored feature real and imagined cities, and are written and/or illustrated by authors from around the world, including from Ireland, the United Kingdom, the USA, Germany, and Spain. Discussions will be positioned within the context of broader cultural and literary debates and will incorporate a number of theoretical approaches, particularly those related to representations of space and place.

## Assessment

The module is assessed through a 5,000-word essay.

## Indicative bibliography

### Week 1 (Introduction to Criticism and Contexts)

- We will discuss a range of texts, examining the history of representations of cities in children's literature. We will also refer to criticism and theory used to explore such representations. Extracts will be made available on Blackboard.

### Week 2 (Dublin)

- Patricia Lynch, *The Bookshop on the Quay* [1956]. Dublin: Poolbeg. 1995.

Week 3 (New York)

- Enright, Elizabeth, *The Saturdays* [1941]. Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Puffin Books, 1984.

Week 4 (Tehran)

- Marjane Satrapi, *Persepolis: The Story of a Childhood* [2000]. London. Jonathan Cape. 2006.

Week 5 (Berlin)

- Erich Kastner, *Emil and the Detectives* [1929]. Trans. by Eileen Hall. London. Red Fox. 1995.

Week 6 (London)

- Siobhan Dowd, *The London Eye Mystery*. London. David Fickling Books. 2007.

Week 8 (Barcelona)

- Carlos Ruiz Zafón, *Marina* [1999]. London. W & N Publishers. 2013.

Week 9 (Paris)

- Brian Selznick, *The Invention of Hugo Cabret*. London: Scholastic. 2008.

Week 10 (Student presentations)

Week 11 (The Nature of the City)

- Shaun Tan, *Tales From the Inner City*. London. Walker Books. 2018.

Week 12 (Social Justice and City Spaces)

- Angie Thomas, *The Hate You Give*. London. Walker Books. 2017.

### Learning outcomes

Upon successful completion of this module, students should be able to:

- LO1 Evaluate methods of theoretical, historical and generic engagement with children's literature and the city.
- LO2 Discuss specific texts through the lens of particular theories and be able to analyse a range of children's books in some detail.
- LO3 Write well-structured and technically accurate pieces under research conditions, demonstrating the knowledge and understanding acquired and engagement with a range of critical and methodological perspectives.
- LO4 Undertake independent research and take responsibility for their own learning experience.

LO5 Develop existing critical and analytical skills, become empowered citizens, and think beyond the confines of 'learning outcomes'.