



Call for Papers – Languages 250 at Trinity – Postgraduate and ECR Conference

To mark the 250th anniversary of modern languages at Trinity College Dublin, the School of Languages, Literatures and Cultural Studies is organizing a postgraduate and ECR conference to be held on Saturday, 21 March 2026 at the Trinity Centre for Literary and Cultural Translation.

The theme of this conference will be the history of modern languages (including Irish) at TCD and the broader cultural and intellectual contributions made by TCD graduates and scholars of our discipline. Home to the oldest continuous chair of modern languages in the world, TCD boasts a rich tradition in the fields of French, German, Hispanic, Irish and Celtic, Italian, Near and Middle Eastern, and Russian and Slavonic Studies as well as European Studies and Translation Studies. Alumni who studied modern languages at TCD include Samuel Beckett, Douglas Hyde, Jennifer Johnston, Derek Mahon, Ethna MacCarthy, Conor Cruise O'Brien, Owen Sheehy-Skeffington, Walter Starkie and JM Synge. Former faculty members include Beckett, MacCarthy, Sheehy-Skeffington, Starkie, TB Rudmose-Brown, Gilbert Waterhouse and Barbara Wright.

Building on Phyllis Gaffney's recent monograph, *Foreign Tongues: Victorian Language Learning and the Shaping of Modern Ireland* (UCD Press, 2024), the conference aims to elucidate the development of modern-language education and scholarship within Trinity over the past two and a half centuries. The conference will also explore the ways in which the study of modern languages at Trinity shaped the work and careers of an array of literary, cultural, and political figures.

The conference will feature a keynote lecture by Dr Daragh O'Connell of University College Cork on the theme of "Dante at the Campanile: Politics, Presences and Purgatories". The contributions may form the basis for a collective publication.

Proposals are invited for 20-minute presentations from postgraduate students and early career researchers working in the modern languages as well as related fields such as education, English Studies, history, and Translation Studies.

Proposals should take the form of a title and 250-300 word abstract along with a short biobibliography. These should be emailed to Dr Max McGuinness (MCGUINM8@tcd.ie) by **Wednesday, 17 December 2025**. Queries should be addressed to the same email address.

Possible topics include:

- History of individual language departments and subjects
- Evolution of curricula and teaching methods
- History of the 1776 Chairs in Modern Languages
- Statistical analyses of staff and student numbers
- TCD Modern Languages Society (and associated language societies)
- History of the Trinity Centre for Literary and Cultural Translation
- Modern languages and espionage
- Modern languages and gender
- Contributions made by individuals associated with modern languages at Trinity including: Jean Allary, Samuel Beckett, Henry Boyd, Rachel Burrows, John Cruickshank, Douglas Hyde, Jennifer Johnston, Brendan Kennelly, Con Leventhal, Ethna MacCarthy, Thomas MacGreevy, Derek Mahon, James Clarence Mangan, Conor Cruise O'Brien, Máirtín Ó Cadhain, Georges Pelorson, Alfred Péron, TB Rudmose-Brown, Owen Sheehy-Skeffington, Walter Starkie, JM Synge, Gilbert Waterhouse, Barbara Wright.

Organizers:

Dr Max McGuinness, Research Ireland Postdoctoral Fellow in French (MCGUINM8@tcd.ie)

Mr Antonio Belfiore, PhD candidate in Italian (belfiora@tcd.ie)

Ms Berenice Daniele, PhD candidate in Italian (danieleb@tcd.ie)