ECU22022 — Economy of Ireland B

Module Information	
Module Code	ECU22022
Module Title	Economy of Ireland B; *The Development of the Irish Economy*
Department	Economics
Year Group	Senior Fresh
Module Personnel	Ronan Lyons
Academic Year	2026–27
Credit Weighting	5 credits
Semester	Semester 2
Contact Hours	Two hours of lectures per week for eleven weeks, plus five hours of tutorials.

Module Content	
Module Description	This module examines the economic development of Ireland over the long run, from the early modern period to the present day. It treats Ireland as a small, open economy on the European periphery, whose fortunes were shaped by its shifting relationship with Britain, with Europe and with the wider world, and by the movement of people, capital, goods and ideas across its borders. The module's central concern is twofold: rhythms of integration and disintegration, traced from the commercialising economy of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, through the Union, the Great Famine and post-Famine convergence, to independence, protectionism, the turn to Europe and the Celtic Tiger; and the long-running question of what drove Ireland's distinctive trajectory: geography, demography, institutions, policy or contingency. The module is organised in four sections — the economy as a system; Ireland before independence; Ireland before the Celtic Tiger; and Ireland since the 1990s — and situates the Irish experience within its European and global context.

Module Content	
Module Learning Aims	The aim of this module is to give students a solid understanding of the economic forces that have shaped the Irish economy from the mid-sixteenth century to the early twenty-first century. It examines the major phases of that development — in particular its recurring waves of integration and disintegration — and the role played by underlying factors such as geography, demography, disease, institutions, technology, warfare and policy. The module gives students a sense of the long-run movement of Irish living standards relative to Britain, Europe and the wider world, and situates the Irish experience within the great debates of economic history: the causes and consequences of the Great Famine, the sources of post-Famine convergence, the costs and legacy of protectionism, the turn to Europe, and the rise, fall and recovery of the Celtic Tiger economy. To do all this, it introduces the tools economists use to measure economic success and to think systematically about an economy. A willingness to read, interpret and critique long-run quantitative evidence is expected, as is a willingness to read widely.
Learning Outcomes	Upon successful completion, students will be able to: • Outline the major phases in the economic development of Ireland from the early modern period to the present, and trace the long-run movement of Irish living standards relative to Britain, Europe and the wider world. • Explain the role of underlying factors, including geography, demography, disease, institutions, technology, warfare and policy, in the integration and disintegration of the Irish economy, and evaluate competing explanations of its distinctive trajectory. • Account for the causes and consequences of major episodes in Irish economic history, including the Great Famine, post-Famine convergence and emigration, independence and protectionism, the turn to Europe, and the Celtic Tiger and the 2008 crisis. • Interpret and critically assess long-run quantitative evidence (population, emigration, real wages, prices, trade and GDP per capita) alongside institutional and narrative sources. • Critically read and synthesise relevant academic scholarship, and construct clear, evidence-based written arguments about the development of the Irish economy.

Module Content	
Indicative Reading / Resources	The module is supported by a textbook written specifically for it: Ronan Lyons, *The Development of the Irish Economy since the 16th Century*. It will be made available to students ahead of the module; organised around the module's structure, it is the main point of reference. The works listed below are key supplementary texts, and each topic points to further, more specialised reading. Three general texts cover much of the material: Cormac Ó Gráda, *Ireland: A New Economic History, 1780–1939* (Oxford, 1994); Andy Bielenberg & Raymond Ryan, *An Economic History of Ireland since Independence* (Routledge, 2013); and John O'Hagan & Francis O'Toole (eds.), *The Economy of Ireland: National and Sectoral Policy Issues* (14th ed., 2021). *Further reading:* broad reference works include relevant chapters of *The Cambridge History of Ireland* (Cambridge, 2018) and Louis Cullen, *An Economic History of Ireland since 1660*. Each topic points to further, more specialised reading — for example on the Great Famine (Ó Gráda; Mokyr), on long-run Irish output and living standards (Kenny–Lennard–O'Rourke; Andersson–Lennard), and on the modern economy and the 2008 crisis (Barry; Honohan–Ó Gráda).

Assessment	
Assessment Components	Group project: 35% Written exam (invigilated): 65%
Assessment Details	Assessment has two components. **Group project (35%, during term).** A group assessment undertaken during the term, in which students test claims about Irish economic history against evidence. Full details of the task, the group arrangements and the submission dates will be provided at the start of the module. **Written exam (65%, end of semester, invigilated).** An individual end-of-semester written examination that rewards synthesis and argument across the themes developed over the whole module rather than recall.

Additional Information	
Prerequisites	ECU11011–ECU11014: Introduction to Economics A and B (or equivalents).
Co-requisites	None
Any other information	2026/27 note: this module is different in content (and assessment) to modules with the same code in previous years.