

Fresher/Sophister Module Description Template 2025-26

Full Name: 'Blow-Ins: contemporary women writers and artists on rural Ireland'

Short Name: 'Blow-Ins'

Lecturer Name(s) and Email Address(es): Dr Julie Bates; batesju@tcd.ie

ECTS Weighting: 5

Semester Taught MT/HT: MT

Year JF/SF/JS/SS: JS

Module Content:

This module looks at five women whose creative work represents the experience of living and working in contemporary rural Ireland. These women include two Irish farmer-artists: Miriam O'Connor and Orla Barry, who uprooted themselves from their urban lives as visual artists and became farmers. O'Connor now keeps cattle in Cork and Barry keeps sheep in Wexford, and they both combine their work as farmers with their creative practice. The module also includes the American writer Alice Lyons and English writer Claire-Louise Bennett, who use fiction to represent the experience of being an outsider in the west of Ireland. The fifth woman on the module is the American writer and artist Erica Van Horn, whose 'Living Locally' series of artists' books are anchored in daily life in rural Tipperary. The module has alternating lectures and seminars each week.

Learning Outcomes:

- Learn about five women writers and artists living and working in rural Ireland today.
- Develop a method of close reading across a range of genres, from fiction to artists' books.
- Assess how these recent artworks and publications fit within or complicate traditional representations of rural life in Irish Studies.

Learning Aims:

- To study a selection of highly acclaimed works of recent literature and art.
- To examine the ways in which these works explore the dynamic between creative practice and place.
- To consider these works in the context of scholarship from Irish Studies.

Assessment Details:

- Number of Components: 1
- Name/Type of Component(s): Essay
- Word Count of Component(s): 3,000 words
- Percentage Value of Component(s): 100%

Preliminary Reading List:

Orla Barry, *Shaved Rapunzel, Scheherazade & the Shearling Ram from Arcady* (Mu.ZEE Ostend & Wexford Arts Centre: 2019)

Claire-Louise Bennett, *Pond* (Dublin: Stinging Fly, 2015)

Notes From Sheepland, documentary about Orla Barry, dir. Cara Holmes (2023)

Alice Lyons, *Oona* (Dublin: Lilliput Press, 2020)

Miriam O'Connor, *Tomorrow is Sunday* (Dublin: Gallery of Photography, 2020)

Erica Van Horn, 'Living Locally' series of artists' books (Coracle, 2002–2019)

Please note:

- Curricular information is subject to change.
- Information is displayed only for guidance purposes, relates to the current academic year only and is subject to change.