

Sophister Option Description 2025/26

Option Name: Childhood, Youth, and Irish Writing

Option Short Title: Childhood, Youth

Lecturer Name and Email Address: Pádraic Whyte, whytepa@tcd.ie

ECTS Weighting: 10

Semester/Term Taught: Hilary

Year: SS

Module Content*

Week 1: Introduction – Childhood and Youth

Stories from *The Lucky Bag* (ed by Eilís Dillon, et al, 1984)

Polly Devlin, 'The China Doll'

Brian Friel, 'The Potato Gatherers'

Week 2: Periodicals and Collections

Our Boys, Christian Brothers

Atalanta, LT Meade

The Pollard Collection of Children's Books

Week 3: Storytelling and Readership

Padraic Colum and Jack B. Yeats, *The Big Tree of Bunlahy* (1934)

Week 4: Memory and Perspective

Seamus Deane, *Reading in the Dark* (1996)

Week 5: Adventures in the 1980s

Carolyn Swift, *Robbers on TV* (1989)

Week 6: Student Presentations

Formative Assignment. Details on Blackboard.

Week 7: Reading Week

Week 8: Sexualities

CG Moore, *Gut Feelings* (2021)

Week 9: Memory, language, and Coming of Age

Éilís Ní Dhuibhne, *The Dancers Dancing* (1999)

Week 10: Genders and Rewriting Myth

Deirdre Sullivan, *Savage Her Reply* (2021)

Week 11: TBC**Week 12: Creative/Formative Assignment and Revision**

Creative response, inspired by a text or theme on the module. Or a standard presentation.

**Please note that module content is subject to change. A final schedule and full reading list will be provided on Blackboard before term begins.*

Please note that students may be asked to conduct additional readings and tasks throughout term.

Students are expected to source the texts from the Library or from a bookshop. If a text is particularly difficult to find, Pádraic will do his best to provide a scanned copy on Blackboard.

Learning Outcomes:

On successful completion of this module students should be able to

1. Discuss and evaluate the construction of childhood and youth in a broad range of Irish writing from the twentieth and twenty-first centuries
2. Distinguish between 'literary childhoods' and 'children's literature'
3. Relate textual analysis to broader cultural debates
4. Undertake independent research and take responsibility for their own learning experience
5. Develop existing critical and analytical skills, become empowered citizens, and think beyond the confines of 'learning outcomes'

Option Learning Aims:

This module facilitates the exploration of the construction of childhood and youth in Irish writing. Students will be given the opportunity to analyse texts written for adult readers as well as texts written for children. The module will examine texts through the lens of 'childhood and youth', and students will be introduced to a series of subject areas including myth, folklore, community, education, history, postcolonialism, race, ability, genders, and sexualities. With a focus on texts from the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, discussions

will be positioned within the context of broader cultural debates and will incorporate a number of theoretical approaches. Students are expected to read the assigned texts **as well as** any assigned critical material for each week. Students are also expected to engage fully with class discussions and to complete any formative tasks.

Assessment Details:

- Number of Components: 1
- Name/Type of Component(s): Essay
- Word Count of Component(s): 5,000 – 6,000 words
- Percentage Value of Component(s): 100%

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.**