



Study abroad.

SYLLABUS

IRISH LITERATURE AND CULTURAL POLITICS

Instructor: Dr Diana Pérez García

Contact Hrs: 45

Language of Instruction: English

DUBLIN, IRELAND

Course Description: This course explores the politics of representation in the construction of personal and national identities *vis-à-vis* the ruling authorities or the state in Ireland. We will investigate the way modern Irish writers have responded to Ireland under the British Empire, the fight for Irish independence in 1921, post-independence Ireland and twentieth-century modernity. We will examine literary production as both a response and a challenge to the personal, cultural, and historical context that frames its production. The course starts by providing an overview of literary production in the 1700s and 1800s by focusing on two key texts by Jonathan Swift and Maria Edgeworth but focuses on the twentieth century: covering W.B. Yeats, J.M. Synge, and Sean O'Casey and the Irish Abbey Theatre; James Joyce; 1940s and 50s Ireland, Northern Ireland during the Troubles; and gender representation in Irish literature today. It draws upon the following theories: post-colonialism, modernism, deconstruction and gender theory. The course texts are a selection of plays, poems, short stories, essays, and film.

Required reading:

1. Course Packet
2. J.M. Synge, *The Playboy of the Western World*.
3. Sean O'Casey, *The Plough and the Stars*.
4. James Joyce, *Dubliners*.
5. Brian Friel, *Dancing at Lughnasa*.
6. Frank McGuinness, *Observe the Sons of Ulster Marching towards the Somme*.

Week 1 Inventing Ireland

Seminar 1 Course theme, Irish history and culture. Declan Kiberd's 'Introduction and A New England Called Ireland' pp1-29 *Inventing Ireland: The Literature of the Modern Nation*. (London: Vintage, 1996) Course Packet

Seminar 2 Ireland under colonial rule. Text: Jonathan Swift 'A Modest Proposal' (I will supply a copy of this for the class.) Text: Maria Edgeworth 'The Limerick Gloves' (I will supply copies of these for the class.)

Seminar 3 The 1916 Easter Rising; The War of Independence (1919-1921) and Civil War (1922-23) Extracts from RTE documentary *Mise Eire* and *Seven Ages of the Irish State*. Patrick Pearse, 'Oration at the Graveside of Jeremiah O'Donovan Rossa'. (I will supply a copy of this for the class.)

Week 2 Ireland on the Stage: Yeats, Synge, and O'Casey and the Abbey Theatre

Seminar 4 W. B. Yeats, Poetry, the Abbey Theatre, and the Revival

Selection of Yeats's Poems and *Cathleen ni Houlihan* (I will supply copies of the poems and play.)

Seminar 5 J.M. Synge and the Playboy Controversy. Text: J.M. Synge: *The Playboy of the Western World*.

Seminar 6 Rebellion Revisited. Text: Sean O'Casey: *The Plough and the Stars*.

Week 3 James Joyce and Ireland in the 30s, 40s and 50s

Seminar 7 James Joyce's *Dubliners*. 'Counterparts', 'A Little Cloud', 'Eveline', and 'The Dead'.

Seminar 8 Patrick Kavanagh, selected poems (I will supply copies of this for the class.)

Seminar 9 Brian Friel, *Dancing at Lughnasa*.

Week 4 Northern Ireland and the Troubles

Seminar 10 Introduction to Northern Ireland and the Troubles. Selections from the poetry of Louis MacNiece, Seamus Heaney and Ciaran Carson. (I will supply copies of the poems.)

Seminar 11 Frank MacGuinness, *Observe the Sons of Ulster Marching Towards the Somme*.

Seminar 12 Film: Neil Jordan's *Breakfast on Pluto* (2006).

Week 5 Gender and Politics in Ireland today

Seminar 13 Gender and violence in *Breakfast on Pluto*.

Seminar 14 Gender and narrative. Selection of short stories by Irish female writers from the *Picador Book of Irish Short Stories*. (I will supply copies of these for the class.)

Seminar 15 Gender and poetry. Evan Boland and Medbh McGuckian, selected poems by both authors and selected passages from Evan Boland's *Object Lessons*. (I will supply copies of this for the class.)

Course Evaluation:

Grades correspond are based on essay and exam performance, class presentations, attendance and overall contribution in class discussion.

25% will correspond to an essay-based exam comprising two questions to be discussed as two separate essays in two hours in the last week of the course.

25% will be allocated to a 2,500 words written assignment to be selected from a variety of topics covering all aspects of the course.

25% will be allocated to class presentations and projects, which will be team-based and will take place every week for the duration of the course.

25% will correspond to participation and attendance: close reading of texts prior to the class, contribution to discussion during the class, class attendance and attendance to excursions. This aspect of evaluation is considered of equal importance to all others and students are expected to contribute to the successful discussion of the texts studied in the program.