Irish Writing in English

Department of History
Dr Ruan O’Donnell

The History Department operates two Summer Schools: Irish Life and Literature and Visual Culture in Ireland. This draws on the strengths of the Department, which include Modern Irish History; Irish folklore and cultural history.

Course Description

The Irish Writing in English summer school comprises three linked streams that analyse and contextualise the culture, history and traditions of modern Ireland. The first stream utilises an autobiographical approach to examine the distinctive features of Irish writing in English. This in-depth assessment of writers and their work is complemented by the second stream, entitled ‘Ireland during the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries’, which surveys the most important social, political and economic developments of the period. The final stream will concentrate on Ireland’s traditional culture with particular reference to folklore, music and song. This summer school will be of interest to students of literature, history, folklore, cultural studies and liberal arts.
Topics Covered

• Distinctive features of Irish writing in English
• Ireland under the Act of Union
• Republicanism and loyalism
• Catholic emancipation
• Origins and consequences of the Great Famine
• The struggle for independence and the emergence of the Irish state
• Ireland’s traditional culture with particular reference to folklore, music and song

Primary Texts

► Irish Writing in English


► Modern Ireland


► Traditional Irish Culture

Screening Ireland: Ireland in Film and Television
Department of Culture and Communication
Dr Emma Bidwell

The University of Limerick School of Culture and Communication was formed at the beginning of the academic year 2014-15. The School houses the following subjects: Irish Language and Literature, English, Journalism, and Technical Communication and Instructional Design.

Course Description
This course will offer an introduction to Irish cinematic and televisual culture. In particular, it will focus on how the notions of Ireland and Irishness have been represented by Irish and Irish-based directors in documentary and cinema production. Additionally, the course will equip students with the necessary vocabulary for the critical discussion of film. No specialised knowledge of film or television is required, and the course will be of particular interest to students of Irish studies, sociology, history, media, literature and cultural studies.
Topics Covered

• Film techniques and the grammar of cinema
• Stereotypes and conventions
• Cinema and Irish society
• The history of Irish cinema (including the history of Ireland)
• Depictions of “The Troubles” in cinema
• Text to screen

Primary Texts

McQueen, Steve. (2008). Hunger. Icon Film.
As a result of organic growth, the Department of Sociology has developed significantly since its inception. The Sociology staff have a wide range of teaching and research interests which are reflected in the content of modules available to Sociology students. These modules examine the media, inequality, social exclusion, gender, ethnicity, youth and community, education, work, urban regeneration, health, and poverty. Inspired by the mission statement of the University, the mission of the Department is to help bring about a better society by:
• Providing training in conceptual frameworks for the critical analysis of society
• Fostering skills in producing reliable evidence
• Shaping actions and policies through research and engagement
• Developing new and alternative visions of the future
Course Description

Over the last two decades Irish society has experienced a period of rapid social, cultural, economic and ideological change. From 1994 to 2007, Ireland experienced an economic boom, commonly known as the Celtic Tiger. During this thirteen-year period, prosperity, affluence and optimism stood at unprecedented levels for many. As a result, Irish society became more secular, globalised, consumerist and multicultural. Since 2008 as a result of the impact of the global financial crisis, Irish society has stood at a perplexing crossroads where national and international recession, unemployment, political and social uncertainty, and increasingly social protest can all be found, in spite of a stated ‘economic recovery’. This summer school illustrates to students how a sociological lens can help us increase our understanding of the challenges and contradictions faced by contemporary Irish society.

Topics Covered

The course investigates social change in Irish society through the particular themes of:

- Social exclusion
- Inequalities
- Representations

These theoretical concepts and themes will be applied to particular examples of social change in contemporary Irish society, including:

- Economic boom and bust
- The Irish Traveller community
- Globalisation
- Class, gender and sexuality
- Urban regeneration and gentrification
- Educational inequality in Ireland
- Migration
- Media
- Citizenship

This summer school will be of interest to students of sociology, social anthropology, social policy and cultural studies.

Primary Texts

Visual Culture in Ireland 1400–1950

Department of History
Dr Niamh A. O’Sullivan

The History Department operates two Summer Schools: Irish Life and Literature and Visual Culture in Ireland. This draws on the strengths of the Department, which include Modern Irish History; Irish folklore and cultural history.

Course Description

In recent years, Ireland’s art and its architecture has generated an unprecedented interest at both a nation and international level as awareness grows of Ireland’s rich visual heritage. In examining Ireland’s visual legacy, this summer school looks at what shaped Irish art and architecture, including the influence of political, social and cultural forces, its relationship to major art movements in Europe and examine representations of Ireland in film. Students will learn how to interpret works and look beyond the image by engaging in critical analysis. They will also study how visual material can be an important tool in historical analysis. This summer school will be of interest to students of history of art, history of architecture, film, visual studies, history, cultural studies and liberal arts, no prior knowledge of history of art or architecture is needed.
Topics Covered

• Portraits and politics
• Landscape art in Ireland
• Women artists
• Material culture
• Irish public sculpture
• The Arts & Crafts Movement
• Irish Modernism
• Pre-Ascendancy architecture
• Georgian architecture in Ireland
  (including a visit to Georgian Limerick and the renowned Hunt Museum)
• Gothic Revival
• Irish film

Primary Texts

Crookshank, Anne and the Knight of Glin. *Ireland’s painters 1600-1940* (New Haven and London, 2002)


Creative Writing
Department of Culture and Communication
Dr. Niamh Hehir

The University of Limerick School of Culture and Communication was formed at the beginning of the academic year 2014-15. The School houses the following subjects: Irish Language and Literature, English, Journalism, and Technical Communication and Instructional Design.
Course Description

This Creative Writing summer school offers students an exciting opportunity to develop their short-story writing skills. Students will attend a daily series of lectures and workshops on topics such as ‘strategies for creating effective characters’, ‘approaches to writing dialogue’ and ‘considering structure and plot in short fiction’. Through an analysis of the work of established short-story writers, students will identify and explore strategies for effective short-story writing. With regular writing activities and ongoing feedback on their writing, students will work collectively and individually to complete their own piece of short fiction. Students will also benefit from a unique opportunity to work with Professor Joseph O Connor, a world renowned writer of short and long fiction, and the University of Limerick writer-in-residence, Donal Ryan, who’s debut novel, The Spinning Heart, was short-listed for the 2013 Man Booker Prize in Literature.

Topics Covered

- Moving from idea to outline
- Planning, plotting and structure
- Choosing a narrative viewpoint
- Setting the scene
- Creating effective characters
- Writing realistic dialogue
- Descriptive writing techniques
- Effective uses of symbols, motifs and metaphors

Primary Texts

Students will be provided with copies of a range of short stories that will be analysed in class.
Law in Ireland
School of Law
Laura Donnellan

The School of Law at the University of Limerick prides itself on providing an innovative, enriching and student-centred learning environment. The School boasts outstanding academic staff members who are internationally recognised as experts in their fields and houses three very active Centres of Research – the Centre for Criminal Justice (CCJ), the International Commercial and Economic Law Group (ICEL), and the Research Cluster for Understanding Emotions in Society (CUES) – all of which are at the cutting edge of legal research. The School has also fostered strong international links with Law Schools across North America, Europe and Asia creating a diverse, multinational student base at both undergraduate and postgraduate level.
Course Description

The Law in Ireland Summer School provides a concise but comprehensive overview of the Irish legal system and examines Ireland in the wider context of the European Union. The course introduces the discipline of law through an examination of the functioning of the Irish legal system, sources of law and legal methodology. The course will begin with a brief historical discussion of the common law in Ireland. It will then proceed to examine the events leading up to the 1922 Constitution and its subsequent dismantling resulting in the 1937 Constitution. The organs of the state and development of fundamental rights will be the focus of this part of the course. The course will examine the European Union and its impact on Irish law. Students will be introduced to the main private law subjects including contract law and company law. The course will then examine criminal law in Ireland. Depending on the current research interests of the instructors, there will be an opportunity for students to engage in discussions on diverse areas, for example, sex offenders, women prisoners, the law and its application to sport and the protection of minorities under the European Convention of Human Rights. Law in Ireland will be of particular interest to Irish studies, politics and pre-law students; no legal background is necessary.

Topics Covered

• Introduction to the Irish Legal System
• The legal profession (Judges, Solicitors, Barristers, Director of Public Prosecutions, Attorney General
• The Court system in Ireland
• The Irish Constitution and Fundamental Rights
• Introduction to the Law of Contract, the Law of Torts, Equity and Company Law
• Introduction to the Law of the European Union
• Introduction to Criminal Law

Primary Texts

Raymond Byrne, Paul McCutcheon, The Irish Legal System (6th ed.) (Dublin: Bloomsbury Professional, 2014)
Henry Murdoch, Murdoch’s dictionary of Irish law (5th ed.) (Haywards Heath: Tottel, 2008)
Bunreacht na hÉireann (The Constitution of Ireland)
Historical Perspectives of Justice in Ireland: Folk Devils, Fornicators and Families

School of Law
Dr. Kathryn O’Sullivan

The School of Law at the University of Limerick prides itself on providing an innovative, enriching and student-centred learning environment. The School boasts outstanding academic staff members who are internationally recognised as experts in their fields and houses three very active Centres of Research – the Centre for Criminal Justice (CCJ), the International Commercial and Economic Law Group (ICEL), and the Research Cluster for Understanding Emotions in Society (CUES) – all of which are at the cutting edge of legal research. The School has also fostered strong international links with Law Schools across North America, Europe and Asia creating a diverse, multi-national student base at both undergraduate and postgraduate level.

Course Description

This summer school will take students on a fascinating journey exploring the historical development of three selected pillars/themes of justice in Ireland: punishment, sexuality and families. Students will investigate the historical development of punishment in Ireland (‘folk-devils’), the historical regulation of sexual behaviour and offending (‘fornicators’) and the historical evolution of family justice in Ireland (‘families’). Ireland’s historically low crime rates will be juxtaposed with the historically high level of control exerted over other members of society, such as unmarried mothers, those suffering mental illness, debtors and children. This summer school promises to deliver a distinctive learning experience for all students who will gain a deep insight into the historical context in which justice policy within these specific pillars/themes was not only constructed, but also developed and ultimately applied.
Topics Covered

• Concepts and institutions of justice in Ireland
• Processes of punishment
• Criminalisation of homosexuality
• Definition and punishment of sexual offences
• Meaning of ‘family’ & ‘family justice’

Primary Texts


Connelly, Gender and the Law in Ireland (Dublin: Oak Tree Press, 1993).

The School of Law at the University of Limerick prides itself on providing an innovative, enriching and student-centred learning environment. The School boasts outstanding academic staff members who are internationally recognised as experts in their fields and houses three very active Centres of Research – the Centre for Criminal Justice (CCJ), the International Commercial and Economic Law Group (ICEL), and the Research Cluster for Understanding Emotions in Society (CUES) – all of which are at the cutting edge of legal research. The School has also fostered strong international links with Law Schools across North America, Europe and Asia creating a diverse, multi-national student base at both undergraduate and postgraduate level.

Course Description

Terrorism undoubtedly represents one of the most challenging international crimes in contemporary times. The exponential growth of terror cells and sophisticated international criminal networks is recognised as one of the defining features of the twenty-first century thus far. In light of these developments, this summer school will introduce students to the criminal justice system and theories relating to crime and terrorism. Students will learn about the practical operation of the criminal justice system, as well as being introduced to theoretical perspectives on criminal justice, including criminological and penological theories. In particular, drawing on the Irish experience, students will be provided with an insight into trends and theories on terrorism.
Topics Covered

- Theories of crime and justice
- Structure of the criminal justice system
- Terrorism & terrorist activity
- Due process rights of criminal defendants
- Definitions of 'crime'

Primary Texts


Ireland’s Myths and Legends
Department of Culture and Communication
Dr. Emma Bidwell and Dr. Bernie McCarthy

The University of Limerick School of Culture and Communication was formed at the beginning of the academic year 2014-15. The School houses the following subjects: Irish Language and Literature, English, Journalism, and Technical Communication and Instructional Design.

Course Description

Ireland is famous for its myths and legends, stories of mythical creatures (including leprechauns and banshees) and ancient tales of heroes and warriors. The earliest Irish literatures describe legendary figures on heroic quests and adventures. The Tuatha Dé Danann (the peoples of the Goddess Danu), Balor of the Evil Eye, the Táin Bó Cúailnge (Cattle Raid of Cooley), the warrior Queen Meabh, Finn Mac Cumhaill and the Fianna are among the characters and events populating the ancient landscapes of Irish myth and legend. These tales were drawn upon to establish the foundations and influence the evolutions of Irish identity, and they continue to shape Ireland’s cultural, political and literary movements today. Using a range of well-known stories, children’s literature, films and media, we will consider the enduring importance of Irish myth and legend and the persistence of these themes in contemporary society. Students will gain a knowledge of the importance of mythology and will learn to appreciate Ireland’s literary and cultural history more fully.
Topics Covered

• Myth, legend and Irish history
• Ireland’s medieval manuscripts
• Ireland’s cultural revolution
• Myth, legend and military upheaval
• Retelling Irish myth and legend
• Irish myth and legend in film
• How myth and legend influence international and domestic understanding of Irish identity

Primary Texts


Into the West (1992). Mike Newell. Entertainment Film Distributors. Film.
