

HL2033
Irish Writing: Romanticism to Modernism



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Irish Writing: Romanticism to Modernism
(course guide subject to minor changes)

Irish Writing: Romanticism to Modernism surveys the remarkably rich and varied literary tradition of Ireland in the critical period from the Act of Union (1800) to the years following the establishment of the Irish Free State (1922). During this period Ireland experienced agrarian agitation, sectarian strife, Catholic Emancipation, the Great Famine, mass emigration, linguistic conversion, and cultural revival. The period also saw a movement in Irish writing from Romantic and Gothic modes towards Modernism.

This course will study how Irish literature reflected the different tragedies, tensions and transformations in Ireland during the period and also how culture eventually acted as a catalyst to political change. Key texts of Irish Romantic, Gothic, and Modernist writing will be examined.

Irish Writing: Romanticism to Modernism includes canonical Irish prose, poetry, and drama from a selection of female and male writers.

Course Outline

Week One: Ireland, the Ascendancy, and the Union

Edmund Burke, 'Letter to Richard Burke' (1792); Richard Brinsley Sheridan, from 'Union of Ireland with Great Britain' (parliamentary speech, 1799); Robert Emmet, 'Speech from the Dock' (1803)

Week Two: The 'Big House', Absenteeism, and rack-renting

Castle Rackrent (1800) by Maria Edgeworth (novel)

Week Three: The 'National Tale'

The Wild Irish Girl (1806) by Sydney Owenson, Lady Morgan (novel)

Week Four: Irish Melodies

Thomas Moore, selection from *Irish Melodies* (1807–1834) (poetry)

Week Five: Irish Gothic

William Carleton's short story *Wildgoose Lodge* (1833)

Week Six: Irish Gothic

John Sheridan LeFanu's short story *A Chapter in the History of a Tyrone Family* (1839)

Week Seven: Famine and Exile

The Nation, 'A Voice from America' (1843), Aubrey Thomas De Vere, 'The Year of Sorrow Ireland – 1849' (1855); Lady Jane Wilde, 'The Famine Year' and 'A Supplication' (1864) (poetry)

Week Eight: Malady of the Spirit

James Clarence Mangan, selected poetry

Week Nine: Stage Irishmen

Dion Boucicault's play *Arrab-na-Pogue; Or, the Wicklow Wedding* (1864)

Week Ten: Revival

Yeats' play *The Countess Cathleen* (1892), and selected poetry

Week Eleven: Revival

John Millington Synge's play *Playboy of the Western World* (1907)

Week Twelve: 'The Big House', Independence, War

Elizabeth Bowen's novel *The Last September* (1929)

Week Thirteen: Revision

Assessment

Essay (35%): Students will defend an original thesis covering at least two of the works read in class. Essays should include close readings of relevant passages from the work, and should discuss the cultural/historical context of the work. Students must also use at least two secondary sources. Students will be assessed according to their knowledge/understanding of the material, and their ability to express themselves in a clear and organised fashion.

Exam (50%): Students will answer two examination questions. Question 1 will involve identifying short quotations and discussing them in relation to Irish literature of the period. Question 2 will ask them to write a short essay in response to one of a number of prompts on the subject of Irish literature.

Participation (15%): Students will be evaluated on their contribution to in-class discussion. In each case, students will be assessed according to their knowledge of the texts and their ability to understand contrasting perspectives on the material at hand.

Core texts (all other course texts will be made available online via Blackboard)

Edgeworth, Maria. *Castle Rackrent*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008.

Owenson, Sydney, Lady Morgan. *The Wild Irish Girl: A National Tale*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008.

Synge, J. M., O'Casey, Seán, and Yeats, W.B (edited by W. A. Armstrong). *The Playboy of the Western World and Two Other Irish Plays*. London: Penguin, 1987.

Bowen, Elizabeth. *The Last September*. London: Vintage, 1998.

Suggested Secondary Reading

Allen, Nicholas. *Modernism, Ireland and Civil War*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009.

Cairns, David and Richards, Shaun. *Writing Ireland: Colonialism, Nationalism and Culture*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988.

Castle, Gregory. *Modernism and the Celtic Revival*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001.

Cleary, Joe (ed). *The Cambridge Companion to Irish Modernism*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014.

Connolly, S.J. (ed). *The Oxford Companion to Irish History*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998.
Deane, Seamus.

Deane, Seamus. *Celtic Revivals: Essays in Modern Irish Literature 1880–1980*. London: Faber and Faber, 1985.

———. *Strange Country: Modernity and Nationhood in Irish Writing Since 1790*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997.

Deane, Seamus (ed). *The Field Day Anthology of Irish Writing* (Vol. III). Derry: Field Day, 1991.

Eagleton, Terry. *Heathcliff and the Great Hunger*. London and New York: Verso, 1995.

English, Richard. *Irish Freedom – The History of Irish Nationalism*. London: Pan, 2007.

Foster, John Wilson (ed). *The Cambridge Companion to the Irish Novel*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006.

Foster, R. F. *Modern Ireland 1600 – 1972*. New York: Penguin, 1988.

Gibbons, Luke. *Transformations in Irish Culture*. Cork: Cork University Press, 1996.

Hederman, M. and Kearney, R., eds. *The Crane Bag Book of Irish Studies*. Dublin: Blackwater, 1982.

- Kee, Robert. *The Green Flag: A History of Irish Nationalism*. London: Penguin, 1972.
- Kelleher, Margaret and O’Leary, Philip, eds. *The Cambridge History of Irish Literature* (Vol. II). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006.
- Kiberd, Declan. *Inventing Ireland: The Literature of the Modern Nation*. London: Vintage, 1996.
- . *Irish Classics*. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2000.
- Kiberd, Declan and Mathews, P. J. (eds). *Handbook of the Irish Revival: An Anthology of Irish Cultural and Political Writings 1891–1922*. Dublin: Abbey Press, 2015.
- Lee, J. J. *Ireland, 1912-1985: Politics and Society*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989.
- Mackay, Peter; Longley, Edna & Brearton, Fran, eds, *Modern Irish and Scottish Poetry*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011, pp. 20–38.
- McGarry, Fearghal. *The Rising – Ireland: Easter 1916*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010.
- McIlvanney, Liam and Ryan, Ray, eds. *Ireland and Scotland: Culture and Society, 1700-2000*. Dublin: Four Courts, 2005, pp. 129–143.
- Pittock, Murray. *Celtic Identity and the British Image*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999.
- Quigley, Megan. “Ireland” in Lewis, Pericles (ed). *The Cambridge Companion to European Modernism*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011, pp. 170–190.
- Regan, Stephen. *Irish Writing: An Anthology of Irish Literature in English 1789-1939*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008.
- Watson, G.J. *Irish Identity and the Literary Revival: Synge, Yeats, Joyce, and O’Casey* (second edition). Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1979, 1994.