

## HL 3034 Irish Writing: Modernism to the Contemporary (January 2022)



### Introduction

In order to convey some of the enormous diversity of subject matter, artistic distinction, and historical range, this course will offer detailed explorations of Irish mythology, philosophy, literature, and film. Beginning with the idea that Irish artistic and intellectual endeavour is both distinctively Irish and, simultaneously, unmistakably European, we will investigate a variety of questions related to this idea. For example, what does one mean by distinctively Irish? Why has an island of circa 5-6 million people produced, per capita, among the highest number of Nobel prizes in Literature, and has made such an enormous contribution to Anglophone literature, European philosophy since the 18th Century, and modern music, especially in recent decades. What makes Ireland European, apart from the fact that European Modernism looks extremely different without the contributions of Yeats, Joyce, Beckett, George Moore, and Flann O'Brien? Such questions, and many more, will be considered in an effort to locate a sense of the "Irish mind", if such a thing actually exists.

### Formative feedback

Feedback is central to this course. Students will receive both written and verbal feedback from the lecturer. They will receive written feedback in response to their research proposals, as each proposal will be returned individually. Digital copies of final essays will also be submitted so that extensive feedback on grammar, style and content can be provided.

## Primary Readings

1. Flann O'Brien, *The Poor Mouth*
2. Aidan Higgins, *Bornholm Night-Ferry*
3. Brian Friel, *Dancing at Lughnasa* (provided)
4. Dermot Healy, *A Goat's Song*
5. John Banville, *The Sea*
6. Sebastian Barry, *The Secret Scripture*
7. Anne Enright, *The Gathering*
8. Mike McCormack, *Solar Bones*

**Films:** *The Crying Game*/*The Butcher Boy*/*A Company of Wolves*/*Breakfast on Pluto* (all dir. Neil Jordan)

**Drama:** (handouts)

**Short Fiction:** Selected Short Stories (provided)

**Additional Optional Viewing:** *In the Name of the Father* (dir. Jim Sheridan), *The Secret of Roan Inish* (dir. John Sayles), *The Wind that Shakes the Barley* (dir. Ken Loach)

## Method of Instruction

3 Hour Seminar

## Course Assessment

Continuous Assessment

10% - Participation: You will actively contribute to classroom discussions, activities and group work.

50% - Research Abstract & Final Essay:

- You will write an academic **abstract** in advance of writing your major research essay. This is a required skill that is distinct from the essay itself.
- Your argumentative **essay** will comprise 2000 words, including citations on a subject agreed with the course coordinator.

40% - In Class Test: The **In-Class-Test** will test a broad range of literary-critical skills, across a range of materials drawn from the primary readings in the course.

## Course Coordinator:

Neil Murphy

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## Planned Weekly Schedule

Week	Topic	Reading / Activities
1 Jan 12	Introduction to Ireland/Irishness/Constructions of Irishness – and Irish literature	Handouts
2 Jan 19	Ireland and Modernism	Joyce and Beckett
3 Jan 26	Postmodern unmaking and Irish Culture	Flann O'Brien <i>The Poor Mouth</i>
4 Feb 2	Neil Jordan – Film and Fiction	Selected films by Neil Jordan

5 Feb 9	Fiction & Forms of Memory	Dermot Healy's <i>A Goat's Song</i>
6 Feb 16	The Irish Short Story	Handouts
7 Feb 23	Brian Friel & the Music of Time	Brian Friel's <i>Dancing at Lughnasa</i>
March 2	<b>RECESS</b>	<b>RECESS</b>
8 March 9	The Reconstruction of Reality	Higgins, <i>Bornholm Night-Ferry</i>
9 March 16	Reconstructions of the Past	Banville, <i>The Sea</i>
10 March 23	Madness and telling tales	Barry, <i>The Secret Scripture</i>
11 March 30	Trauma, Time and Memory	Enright, <i>The Gathering</i>
12 April 6	Narrating Death	Mike McCormack, <i>Solar Bones</i>
13 April 13	Conclusion	

