



Griffith College Dublin

Irish Literature and Society

This module explores two related topics and examines them through lectures, seminars and relevant field trips:

a) Introduction to Anglo-Irish Literature

This module is designed as an introduction to Anglo-Irish literature, that is, to modern literature in Ireland written in the English language. Focusing on the writings of such authors as Oscar Wilde, W. B. Yeats, J. M. Synge, and James Joyce, the aim of this course is to familiarise students with literary, social and cultural factors that led to the development of a body of literature that is of great importance in both national and world contexts.

Readings

The Importance of Being Earnest (1895).
Cathleen Ni Houlihan (1902).
The Playboy of the Western World (1907).
'The Dead' (1914), from Dubliners.

Topics

Oscar Wilde

The discussion will focus on Wilde's comic masterpiece The Importance of Being Earnest (1895), in which the Irish playwright satirizes the social and moral conventions of late Victorian English high society.

W. B. Yeats

This will focus on Yeats whose one-act play Cathleen Ni Houlihan (1902) is a prime example of mingling mythical symbolism and nationalism that is characteristic of the Celtic revival from the turn of the nineteenth century.

J. M. Synge

The "peasant" play The Playboy of the Western World (1907) caused public outrage and riots for challenging nationalist stereotypes about the Irish people.

James Joyce

The short story The Dead (1914) offers a nostalgic and critical look back at the Ireland Joyce left behind, and which explores such issues as Irish nationalism, the Irish language, and the traditional cultural division between East and West of Ireland.

b) Twentieth Century Irish Literature

This topic covers a range of modern Irish writers whose influence has been felt far beyond their own shores. Students will be able to picture a century of Irish writers who inform one another and respond to recurring themes in the Irish imagination in different ways. The course presents a broad canvas of influences on which the relationships between the subject matters of the different writers can be plotted. Students will form an understanding of the nature of modern Irish culture.

Irish literature in the twentieth century has remained consistently obsessed with the theme of exile and the idea of traumatized memory. The impossibility of return, retrieval and social integration has created an experimental literature of deferral, or principle evasiveness. Topics include: the Irish Revival/Renaissance; Joyce; Heaney; Kavanagh, Poetry of the Troubles; Beckett; Field Day; Paul Muldoon; Behan; the Contemporary Irish Novel; Seamus Deane, amongst others.

Readings

Joyce, James, Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man.

Beckett, Samuel, Waiting for Godot.

Heaney, Seamus, North.

Muldoon, Paul, Quoof.

Boland, Eavan, "The Journey" in Collected Poems.

Deane, Seamus, Reading in the Dark.

Corcoran, Nbeil, After Yeats and Joyce: Reading Modern Irish Literature.

Deane, Seamus, Celtic Revivals: Essays in Modern Irish Literature.

This module also includes visits to the Theatre, including the National Theatre, Museums such as the Dublin Writers Museum, The James Joyce Center, and The National Gallery. The West of Ireland field trip also incorporates aspects of the life of W.B. Yeats, John Millington Synge, and James Joyce.