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**VILLANOVA UNIVERSITY**  
**COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS AND SCIENCES**

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**CENTER FOR IRISH STUDIES**



IRISH STUDIES  
COURSE  
DESCRIPTIONS  
FALL 2024



**CENTER FOR IRISH STUDIES**



## **Minor in Irish Studies**

The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences at Villanova University hosts the Center for Irish Studies. The minor in Irish Studies is open to students from all colleges, and our interdisciplinary program features courses from seven departments. Irish Studies faculty research and teach through a range of disciplines. The Center facilitates courses in anthropology, art history, economics, history, language studies, literature, philosophy, political science, studio art and theatre.

Fifteen credits are required to complete the minor, of which six credits are core requirements: a 3-credit literature survey in English and a 3-credit survey in History. Students may structure and focus five of the many Irish Studies electives into a unified program of study that works with the student's overall goals. The Irish language (Gaelic) two-course sequence can fulfill the College of Arts and Sciences language requirement. Study-abroad courses taken in Ireland may be used for the minor.

## **Major in Irish Studies**

Irish Studies offers a major as a specialization in the Department of Global Interdisciplinary Studies (GIS). The 31-credit major in Irish Studies provides an interdisciplinary and comparative approach to deepen students' understanding of the history, culture, religion, politics, literature, languages, and society of Ireland and produce an in-depth research thesis. Students may sign up for the GIS major and choose their Irish Studies (GIST) specialization through the Department of Global Interdisciplinary Studies in 36 Garey Hall. The GIS Chair and the Director of Irish Studies will work closely with students to develop individual interests, abilities, and career goals while fulfilling their major.

**All courses listed here are 3.0 credit unless otherwise noted.**

# Fall 2024 Course Descriptions

## **ENG 1975: Borders, Migration, National Identity**

**TR 1:00-2:15pm**

**Dr. Rena Potok**

This course will explore the dynamics of borders, migration and exile, and their impact on constructions of national identity. Our areas of focus will be the literatures and borderzones of the United States & Mexico; Ireland & Northern Ireland; Israel & Palestine. In our readings and discussions, we will consider social justice issues such as the border as a means of oppression and a prospect for liberation; and we will view the issue of migration with an eye toward matters of human dignity, gender, vulnerability and marginalization. The course prioritizes teaching students to become more perceptive readers of literature and to hone critical thinking and writing skills, by crafting a variety of formal analytical essays and informal reflections.

We will begin with foundational readings on the concept of the border and expand our field of inquiry to novels, plays, short stories and poems by Oona Frawley, Hannah Khalil, Colum McCann, Mahmoud Darwish, Ruth Almog and others. We will also consider how these texts engage with questions of partition, body politics and hybrid identity. Our immersion in these materials will help us cultivate, in particular, an understanding of the life, history and culture of Ireland, Northern Ireland, Israel and Palestine.

Attributes: Irish Studies, Peace and Justice, Core Lit and Writing Sem

## **ENG 3181: Irish Epics, Visions and Hauntings**

**TR 8:30am-9:45am**

**Dr. Joseph Lennon**

In this class we read great Irish epics, vision tales, gothic stories of hauntings, and ballads of rebellion. We begin with the Old Irish saga *Táin Bó Cuailnge* (Cattle Raid of Cooley) and the satiric middle Irish vision text, *Aislinge Meic Conglinne*. Readings follow through selections of bardic poetry that survived colonial incursions and the collapse of Gaelic social order in the seventeenth century. Two

eighteenth century Irish language works, *Caoineadh Airt Uí Laoghaire* (*Lament for Art Ó Laoghaire*) by Eileen O'Connell and *Cúirt An Mheán Oíche* (*The Midnight Court*) by Brian Merriman, are read alongside works by Anglo-Irish authors Jonathan Swift and Oliver Goldsmith, with an eye toward understanding the seeds of ecological destruction and colonial conflicts between Gaelic and Anglo cultures in Ireland. The course ends with a sampling of gothic tales by Maria Edgeworth, James Clarence Mangan, and Sheridan Le Fanu.

Attributes: Irish Studies, Sustainability Studies

## **HIS 3216: Ireland Since 1800**

**TR 1:00pm-2:15pm**

**Dr. Craig Bailey**

This course provides an introduction to Irish history. The course begins with an overview of Early Modern Ireland to establish the background and context necessary to understand and evaluate later developments. The major issues and events covered include the formation of ethnic and religious identities and the conflicts between developing groups in the 16th and 17th centuries, and the political conditions in the 18th century that led to the Act of Union.

The second section of the course, Pre-famine Ireland through the Great Famine, examines the conditions of everyday life in the early 19th century and the structures and institutions that shaped them. We will consider the lives of the poor, the rise of rural or "agrarian" violence, the expansion and limits of the state in Irish society, Catholic struggles for equality and the development of a national system of education. This history of early-19th century Ireland will provide crucial context that will help us evaluate and understand The Great Famine and its major impact upon Irish society.

The final section of the course covers the post-famine period to the early twentieth century. We will follow the tortuous path of Irish nationalism as it developed over this period and consider how its collision with unionism shaped the conflicts of the early twentieth century that eventually resulted in the partition of Ireland.

Attributes: Irish Studies

### **IS 1111: Introductory Irish Language I**

**Section I & II: TR 8:30am-9:45am**

**Section I Drill: F 12:50pm-1:40pm**

**Section II Drill: F 1:55pm-2:45pm**

**Jonathan O'Neill**

Groundwork in Irish (Gaelic), including oral proficiency, aural comprehension and reading knowledge; for students beginning the study of language. Supplementary language laboratory work on Irish culture and practicing spoken Irish. Successful completion of the course sequence, IS 1111 and IS 1112, satisfies the language requirement for the CLAS. 4.00 credits. Counts toward the Irish Studies minor.

### **IS 1121: Intermediate Irish Language I**

**TR 2:30pm-3:45pm**

**Jonathan O'Neill**

Review of grammar and vocabulary in Irish (Gaelic). Recitations, readings and oral drills. Supplementary language laboratory work.

Prerequisites: IS 1111 and IS 1112

4.00 credits. Counts toward the Irish Studies minor.

### **IS 3100: Threatened Literary Cultures**

**TR 10:00am-11:15am**

**Jonathan O'Neill**

Approximately 43% of the world's languages are endangered. What does this mean for the history culture and literature of the peoples who speak them, and for the heritage of a less diverse world? This course will explore minority- and indigenous-language storytelling and culture (Irish-language culture, Indigenous American & Australian cultures, and Ainu culture (Japan)). We will analyze the contexts that have contributed to the minority status of these cultures, consider how their literary culture interacts with this status, and question how minority-language cultures address aspects of sustainability and revitalization (both in their language and the environment). Finally, we will address what globalization means for these cultures, and examine solidarity across geographical boundaries and historical time. The course will intersect with aspects of postcolonial studies, sociolinguistics, and ecolinguistics.

Attributes: Irish Studies

**PHI 2470: Irish Thought and Literature**

**MW 3:20pm-4:35pm**

**Dr. William Desmond**

Ireland is well known for its poets and writers but what of its thinkers? In the past Ireland has also been called “the island of saints and scholars” but again what of its thinkers? Thomas Duddy’s book *A History of Irish Thought* (2002) offers us helpful resources to address this question. This course will explore some of the main thinkers in the Irish tradition. It will consider whether there is a distinctive style (or perhaps styles) of Irish thought, whether there is a plurality of traditions that yet exhibit distinctive marks. The relation of reason (science) and religion is a major concern in Irish tradition(s). So also is the importance of poetry for the Irish mind. Thinkers to be considered will include Scotus Eriugena, John Toland, George Berkeley, Edmund Burke. We will also look at the explorations of thought in some writers of literature, figures such as Jonathan Swift, James Joyce, William Butler Yeats, Samuel Beckett, Patrick Kavanagh and Seamus Heaney. Some time will also be given to a poet considered to be the major modernist poetry writing in the Irish language: Séan Ó Ríordáin. The course will conclude with a consideration of some recent Irish thinkers in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, including Iris Murdoch, William Desmond, and Richard Kearney. Themes to be explored in selected texts include:

- a. (e)migrant thought: the reality of leaving home, and going into exile, either voluntarily and enforced, has been a recurrent reality and theme in Irish writing. What do migration and emigration say about thinking about exile? What is the meaning of exile as religious chosen, as opposed to being forced on one by economic and political oppression and necessity?
- b. intimate/local knowing and universal reason: in Irish history the English as colonizers were thought to be more representative of a universal reason while the local Irish were more particular, somehow at the edges of this universal. We will explore this condition more deeply.
- c. exile and home: the condition of “being between” – between one’s first home and the need to build a second home away from home. What is it to remember the first home, and make a new home in the New World (as the US was once called). How does this affect the children of those who have settled in the New World? How to look on the world of one’s ancestors.
- d. broken tradition(s): losing a language and finding a voice – the Irish lost their first tongue, the Irish language, and yet in a short time gave rise to some of the great modern writers in English. We will explore this double, plurivocal condition of languages beyond just one dominant univocal language.
- e. the sacred and thought; Irish poetry and reflection; laughter/comedy and Irish thought. Irish history shows politics and identity to be deeply intertwined with religious commitments. How does comedy emerge for those who are in the subordinated, or subjugated position in relation to political masters who come from another tradition?

Attributes: Diversity Requirement 1, Irish Studies

**PSC 6900: Social Movements in Divided Societies (PSC Senior Seminar)**

**T 4:00pm-5:50pm**

**Dr. Cera Murtagh**

Social movements are fundamental to political change in any society. In deeply divided societies, movements must navigate particular openings and barriers. Social movements can be central to the outbreak of conflict in such places, and they can play a pivotal role in building peace. They can be a force for exclusion and division, and they can be a driver for justice, equal rights and unity. This course examines the multiple, complex and critical roles social movements play in divided societies. It explores a range of different types of mobilization, from nationalist movements to movements for civil rights, peace, anti-apartheid, public health, gender rights, LGBTQ+ rights and the environment. It analyses the political opportunity structure these movements face in a deeply divided society: the barriers and openings they meet and the strategies they use in response. Case studies

include Northern Ireland, South Africa, Rwanda, Liberia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Lebanon and the USA. The course takes an intersectional lens to this topic, with a focus on social justice and equality on the basis of gender, sexuality, race, ethnicity, class and more.

Attributes: Irish Studies

**THE 3300: Modern Irish Drama**

**TR 2:30pm-3:45pm**

**Dr. Bess Rowan**

The dawn of modernism occurred at a key moment in Ireland's history. It is neither accident, nor secret, that Ireland's fight for independence from England coincided with an explosion of nationalist modernist writing, particularly in the theatre. This course will trace the key plays from the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century through the century's conclusion, paying particular attention to those works that deal with the fight for Irish independence. This seminar will involve both literary and performance analysis and will provide opportunities for either a final paper or a final performance. No previous performance experience required.

Attributes: Irish Studies, GWS