Inventing Ireland

**DRAFT**

COURSE DETAILS

Course Designator and Number: TH4382
Number of Credits: 3
Language of Instruction: English
Instructor: Martha Johnson (marthaj@umn.edu)

COURSE DESCRIPTION

What does the idea of being “Irish” mean? The content of this course will employ a cultural studies and performative theory approach to exploring the development and representation of Irish identity and “Irishness” in the 20th Century through the lens of literature, drama, and film. This three-week long study abroad course will include pre-departure readings and films, on-site readings and activities, and a final project due upon return.

Since the turn of the century, a conscious effort has been made to “save” Irish culture. The Irish literary revival began with the efforts of WB Yeats, JM Synge, and Lady Gregory Augusta in the foundation of the Abbey Theatre, where the group will both tour and attend a production. Early works by these three writers such as Cathleen Ní Houlihan (Yeats), Riders To the Sea (Synge), and The Rising Of the Moon (Augusta) were influential in promoting the nationalism and pride in Irish language and ancient mythology preserved in ancient sites such as Glendalough and Newgrange (both south of Dublin and planned for visits). These efforts fueled the Easter uprising of 1916 at the General Post Office in Dublin, resulting in the execution of nationalist rebels at Kilmainham Gaol (both of which we will visit) and public support for the civil war. The establishment of the Gaelic League continued to fuel nationalism during the 1920s.

Since this time, Ireland (and in fact those of Irish heritage in other countries) has continued to produce dramatic and literary works that seem to have a unique fascination with the topic of Irish culture and Identity. Strands of identity, diaspora, and the artists’ relationship with Irishness are
important themes for James Joyce, Samuel Beckett, Brendan Behan, and Brian Friel. Modern playwrights such as Martin McDonagh and Marina Carr as well as screenwriters and directors Neal Jordan and Jim Sheridan continue to represent the complexity of Irishness. Simultaneously, the global emigration from Ireland of the previous century has resulted in large populations of those who consider themselves to be Irish around the world. The preservation of Irish “culture” through music, dance (e.g., Riverdance), and the branding of pubs has created a unique external dynamic of representation. The recent efforts to establish an Irish National Theatre, the establishment of the Irish Film Centre, and the building of the Smock Alley Theatre (all of which we will visit) are the latest evolutions promoting the importance of drama, film, and the arts in Irish society. Since joining the EU, Ireland has also seen unprecedented immigration of increasingly diverse populations, changing notions of what it means to be Irish from a racial and religious perspective.

By studying the history and works engaged in creating and interpreting this idea of Irish identity, both from and external to Ireland, students will be asked to engage in a more complex way with the ideas of heritage, culture, and national identity in general. Students will also read selected essays on culture, and Irish history.

**Course Objectives**

The *Inventing Ireland* course focuses on the development of cultural identity through the arts and literature of Ireland from the beginning of the 20th Century to today. In doing so, it also covers a wide range of general or liberal education objectives.

**Learning Outcomes**

**Can locate and critically evaluate information:** Throughout the course students will be asked to identify and critically engage with cultural stereotypes, representation, and issues of identity. They will also be asked to consider the broader implications of the representation of any culture through the arts by using Ireland as a case study.

**Can communicate effectively:** In all aspects of the course, students will advance their positions and ideas through writings, presentations, and class discussion. In addition to faculty evaluation of student work, students will also benefit from other students’ responses. Students similarly hone their speaking skills by presenting their chosen theme or thread to the group.

**Can identify, define, and solve problems:** Students will be challenged by activities such as the photo scavenger hunt, designed to develop their ability to identify the branding of cultural identity and essentialism. By understanding imagery and representation, they will be better equipped to engage in a discourse around cultural issues.

**Understand diverse philosophies and cultures within and across societies:** The course is designed to, at its heart, consider the diverse concepts of culture and will ask students to compare Irish culture with other cultures by considering conflicting notions of culture. Particularly by considering the Northern Ireland and Republic of Ireland binary, students will examine the role of the arts and literature in representing diverse voices.

**Have acquired skills for effective citizenship and life-long learning:** The course activities—facilitating a group, presentations, debates, living in apartments, navigating through a different
culture and city, etc.—will foster the leadership, teamwork, and problem-solving skills that are essential to civic engagement. The course will also examine the role of the arts in citizenship as a form of social commentary and resistance.

**Have mastered a body of knowledge and a mode of inquiry:** Students must demonstrate their understanding of the role of the arts and literature in the cultural representation of Ireland, including the major artists and writers of 20th-Century Ireland; the political history of Modern Ireland; political, artistic, cultural, societal, economical and religious factors this time; and the ways in which the global branding of Irish culture has come about.

**Understand the role of creativity, innovation, discovery, and expression across disciplines:** Students will consider the role of the arts and performance in generating and influencing politics and society and as a form of resistance.

**Responsibility and accountability by making appropriate decisions on behavior and accepting the consequences of their actions:** Students will be faced with numerous challenges while in Ireland. In many cases, actions and decisions students make will impact not only the individual students, but all the students in the class. It is the intent that this course will help students make appropriate decisions that will lead to positive outcomes. The group will be asked to develop an honor code for behavior and standards for group dynamics.

**Independence and interdependence by knowing when to collaborate or seek help and when to act on their own:** Throughout this course, students will be required to work together on various assignments, but there will also be times when individual work will be required. Certain activities will be designed to foster independence. If there are questions regarding this, it is important to ask. Also, living in a different culture will require students to continually consider when they need to seek help or figure the situation out on their own.

**Goal orientation by managing their energy and attention to achieve specific outcomes:** This course is an academic course. Students will need to manage their time carefully in order to meet the academic requirements for successfully completing this course. At the same time, students will want to experience the life and culture of Ireland. Balancing one’s time is a very important skill in a global seminar.

**Self-awareness by knowing their personal strengths and talents and acknowledging their shortcomings:** Living abroad is a wonderful opportunity to learn about oneself. Many students find that they learn much about themselves and their home culture while abroad. The nature of living, learning, and traveling with a group requires self-awareness and a recognition of complementary strengths and weaknesses.

**Resilience by recovering and learning from setbacks or disappointments:** Living and navigating in another country is not always easy. There will be times when students become frustrated at the pace of living, the lack of personal space, or the intensity of the experience—this is natural. It is intended that students will be able to learn and grow from these and other setbacks that may occur during the course.

**Appreciation of differences by recognizing the value of interacting with individuals with backgrounds and/or perspectives different from their own:** Throughout the time in Ireland,
students will encounter a myriad of differences in culture, customs, and beliefs. Despite the many cultural similarities and shared common language, there are also many differences. It is the intent of this course for students to understand and appreciate these differences.

**Tolerance of ambiguity by demonstrating the ability to perform in complicated environments where clear-cut answers or standard operating procedures are absent:** Given the inherently ambiguous nature of culture, the course is designed to engage with and ultimately embrace the complexity of identity issues.

**Methodology**

This class will meet in a seminar format. There will be numerous field trips in and outside of Dublin. Approximately half the instructional time will be in the classroom and half will be devoted to visiting theaters, museums, cinemas, and other places of interest. We will engage multiple guest speakers.

**Required Readings/Materials**

- **Readings:**
  - *Cathleen Ni Houlihan*—WB Yeats
  - Selected poems of WB Yeats
  - *The Rising of the Moon*—Lady Gregory
  - *Riders to the Sea*—JM Synge
  - *Dubliners*—James Joyce (selected stories)
  - *Waiting For Godot*—Samuel Beckett
  - *The Beauty Queen of Leenane*—Martin McDonagh
  - *By the Bog of Cats*—Marina Carr
  - Selected poems of Seamus Heaney

- **Films:**
  - *The Quiet Man*
  - *Michael Collins*
  - *The Commitments*
  - *Sing Street*
  - *In the Name of the Father*
  - *Once*
  - *The Guard*
  - *5 Minutes of Heaven*
### Grading Rubric

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Letter grade</th>
<th>Score or percentage</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>93–100</td>
<td>Achievement that is outstanding relative to the level necessary to meet course requirements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90–92</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>87–89</td>
<td>Achievement that is significantly above the level necessary to meet course requirements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>83–86</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>80–82</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>77–79</td>
<td>Achievement that meets the course requirements in every respect.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>73–76</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>70–72</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D+</td>
<td>67–69</td>
<td>Achievement that is worthy of credit even though it fails to meet fully the course requirements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>60–66</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F (or N)</td>
<td>0–59</td>
<td>Represents failure (or no credit) and signifies that the work was either (1) completed but at a level of achievement that is not worthy of credit or (2) was not completed and there was no agreement between the instructor and the student that the student would be awarded an I.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S</td>
<td></td>
<td>Achievement that is satisfactory, which is equivalent to a C- or better.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td></td>
<td>(Incomplete) Assigned at the discretion of the instructor when, due to extraordinary circumstances (e.g., hospitalization) a student is prevented from completing the work of the course on time. Requires a written agreement between instructor and student.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Summary of How Grades Are Weighted

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignments</th>
<th>Percentage of grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class attendance, participation, and readings</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Site introduction</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On-site photo project/presentation</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On-site film/play analysis exercise</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Godot exercise</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identity theme presentation</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final paper</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Overall grade</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Assessment Details

The instructor will deduct points for spelling and grammar mistakes, so students should edit all assignments carefully.

Throughout the course, students will be asked to engage with the subject of Irish identity and consider its development and representation in a variety of ways.

While on site, students will complete:
- A photo project focused on representation and identity
- An oral presentation highlighting a site, building, organization, or person pre-assigned by the instructor
- A one- to two-page analysis of an Irish film or play read or seen during the course with a focus on aspects of Irish identity addressed or portrayed
- A prepared statement on what or who Godot is and a rationale for why

During the last couple of days of meetings, each student will present for 10 minutes on one theme or thread of identity of their choosing. This should be based in a dialogue format, but “threads”
should draw on explicit examples from at least three of the works we have studied or seen as well as other artistic or cultural sources (art, architecture, music, etc).

**Final Essay:** 1,000 words minimum

The final essay should be an expansion on the student's presentation. The essay should analyze one theme or thread of identity from both a cultural and representative perspective and cite at least three films or works we have studied. Students should critically engage with ideas of culture, religion, gender, politics, and modern Ireland through the lens of the various plays, films, and performances they have seen.

This essay is due by a date designated by the instructor (approximately a week after the group's return from Ireland).

**Class Participation:**

This class is designed to provide an intellectual and interactive environment for students. Rather than lecturing, the professor serves as a facilitator for discussion. Therefore, it is important that students be prepared for each class by completing the readings, taking notes on the readings, and participating in the discussions.

At the University of Minnesota, one credit is defined as equivalent to an average of three hours of learning effort per week necessary for an average student to achieve an average grade in the course. Over the course of a semester, this is equivalent to 45 hours of work for each credit. This is a three-credit course, which means it will require a total of 135 hours of work. We will have class for 3–4 hours each day for three weeks, which means that students must devote 4–5 hours outside of class each day. Global Seminars are designed to be intensive courses. The work will include reading the assigned texts, analyzing the material, writing papers, and visiting different places. In addition to the work during the seminar, students must complete some additional reading and writing before they leave for Dublin.
COURSE CONTENT

Thursday, May 13

Depart U.S.
- Meet in airport lower level at 1 p.m. to check in as a group

Friday, May 14

Intro to Dublin
- Settle in to housing
- Grocery shopping
- Welcome dinner

Saturday, May 15

Intro to Dublin & Overview of Irish History
- Class 10 a.m.–12:30 p.m.
- Introduction/orientation
- Honor code
- Guest lecture (history)
- City tour
- Kilmainham Gaol
- Due:
  - Cúchulainn, Queen Maeve, and The Battle of the Boyne
  - Culture exercises

Sunday, May 16

Free Day
- Evening viewing of The Quiet Man

Monday, May 17

Theatre & Nationalism
- Class 10 a.m.–12 p.m.
  - Discussion of photo exercise
- National Library and Yeats exhibit
● Evening viewing of *Michael Collins*
● **Due:**
  ○ Be prepared to discuss *Cathleen Ni Houlihan*, selected Yeats poems
  ○ The Leprechaun, St. Patrick, Maude Gonne notes

**Tuesday, May 18**

**Theatre & Nationalism**
● Class 10 a.m.–12 p.m.
● Afternoon viewing of *The Dead*
● **Due:**
  ○ Be prepared to discuss *The Rising of the Moon*

**Wednesday, May 19**

**Theatre and Nationalism**
● Class 10 a.m.–12:30 p.m.
● Evening literary pub crawl
● **Due:**
  ○ Be prepared to discuss *Dubliners selected stories*
  ○ Molly Malone, Oscar Wilde notes

**Thursday, May 20**

**The West**
● Depart for west of Ireland in the morning
● Cliffs of Moher
● Overnight in Galway
● Class in Galway
● **Due:**
  ○ Gaelic sports, Irish language notes

**Friday, May 21**

**The West**
● Inismore
● Tour of Dun Aengus
● Evening viewing of *The Guard*
● **Due:**
  ○ Be prepared to discuss *Riders to the Sea, The Beauty Queen of Leenane*
  ○ Dun Aengus notes
Saturday, May 22

Return to Dublin

Sunday, May 23

Modern & Postmodern Ireland
- Class 10 a.m.–12:30 p.m.
- Free day
- Evening viewing of The Commitments
- Due:
  - First on-site paper and photo assignment due at midnight

Monday, May 24

Modern & Postmodern Ireland
- Class 10 a.m.–12:30 p.m.
- Tour of Smock Alley
- Evening viewing of Once
- Due:
  - Be prepared to discuss Waiting For Godot
  - Godot assignment
  - The Díal Éireann, The Celtic Tiger notes

Tuesday, May 25

Modern & Postmodern Ireland
- Class 10 a.m.–12:30 p.m.
- Afternoon excursion to Glendalough
- Evening viewing of In the Name of the Father
- Due:
  - Be prepared to present photo to class

Wednesday, May 26

The Troubles
- Class 9 a.m.–12:30 p.m.
- Guest lecture
- Afternoon viewing of 5 Minutes of Heaven
Due:
  ○ Be prepared to discuss Selected Poems of Seamus Heaney
  ○ Orange Day Marching notes

Thursday, May 27

The North
  ● Morning departure for Giant’s Causeway
  ● Overnight in Belfast

Friday, May 28

The North
  ● Guest lecture—Dr. Peter Collins
  ● Belfast tour
  ● Newgrange
  ● Return to Dublin

Saturday, May 29

Free Day

Sunday, May 30

Free Day

Monday, May 31

The Margins
  ● Class 10 a.m.–12:30 p.m.
  ● Due:
    ○ Be prepared to discuss By the Bog of Cats
Tuesday, June 1

Irish Reimagined
- Class 10 a.m.–12:30 p.m.
- Guest lecture—Seona Mac Reamoinn

Wednesday, June 2

Changing Ireland
- Class 10 a.m.–12:30 p.m.
- Guest speaker
- Career exercise and re-entry

Thursday, June 3

Final Presentations
- Class 10 a.m.–12:30 p.m.
- Final presentations

Friday, June 4

Final Presentations
- Class 10 a.m.–12:30 p.m.
- Final presentations
- Final dinner

Saturday, June 5

Depart
POLICIES

Attendance Policy

Students are expected to be on time and attend all classes while abroad. Many instructors assess both attendance and participation when assigning a final course grade. Attendance alone does not guarantee a positive participation grade; the student should be prepared for class and engage in class discussion. See the on-site syllabus for specific class requirements.

University of Minnesota Policies & Procedures

Academic integrity is essential to a positive teaching and learning environment. All students enrolled in University courses are expected to complete coursework responsibilities with fairness and honesty. Failure to do so by seeking unfair advantage over others or misrepresenting someone else’s work as your own can result in disciplinary action. The University Student Conduct Code defines scholastic dishonesty as follows:

Scholastic Dishonesty

Scholastic dishonesty means plagiarizing; cheating on assignments or examinations; engaging in unauthorized collaboration on academic work; taking, acquiring, or using test materials without faculty permission; submitting false or incomplete records of academic achievement; acting alone or in cooperation with another to falsify records or to obtain dishonestly grades, honors, awards, or professional endorsement; altering forging, or misusing a University academic record; or fabricating or falsifying data, research procedures, or data analysis.

Within this course, a student responsible for scholastic dishonesty can be assigned a penalty up to and including an “F” or “N” for the course. If you have any questions regarding the expectations for a specific assignment or exam, ask.

Student Conduct

The University of Minnesota has specific policies concerning student conduct. This information can be found on the Learning Abroad Center website.