IRST4393/ENGL4393: Irish Literature & Postcolonial Studies

Syllabus, Course Requirements, Texts and Assessment: Fall 2016
Instructor: Jonathan Ó Néill
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Phone: 713-525-3882
Office hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 9:00 to 11:00 am (or by appointment)
Class schedule: Mondays, 12:10 to 1:25 pm
       Wednesdays, 12:10 to 1:25 pm
       William J. Flynn Center for Irish Studies, 4206 Yoakum Blvd.

Course Description
This course presents key authors, texts and concepts in postcolonial studies as it pertains to Ireland and Irish literature. We will begin with an introduction to the term postcolonialism, trace its development as a methodological approach to literature, and then explore the contested application of the term to Ireland. We will then explore relevant concepts such as anticolonialism, nationalism, binaries, stereotypes, and hybridity in our literary texts. In parallel with the literary texts, students will read from scholarly work and interventions in the field. By the end of the course students will be comfortable analyzing, interrogating and critiquing narratives of Irishness, and will be equipped to engage in a postcolonial analysis of literary texts, national narratives and historiographies.

Learning Objectives
Following successful completion of the course, students will have experience and clearly demonstrated abilities in:

● Recognizing and understanding components of postcolonial literature.
● Using close reading to carefully examine a literary text, its contexts and intertexts.
● Interpreting meaning in the text using a postcolonial methodology.
● Understanding and analyzing key arguments and debates from postcolonial studies, in particular as they relate to Ireland.
● Using analysis and critical thinking to form and develop coherent arguments based on their readings of the texts.

Class Structure
The class meets twice per week and will operate as a seminar using the Socratic method. As such, I will keep lecturing to a minimum and we will approach our texts in a robust discursive manner. In order to achieve a deeper, more critical understanding of the texts, this discussion will involve argumentation. It is important to think of the class as a safe space where all contributions are valuable. In order to advance our critical abilities as a group, we will critique each other’s contributions in a constructive manner. For instance whereas “I think that in order to support your argument that the author’s parodying of stereotypes subverts the deployment of British stereotypes of Irishness, you will need to give more evidence from the text” is a constructive comment, whereas “I think that doesn’t make sense” is not.

For this method to be successful, it is necessary that students come to class prepared. This approach means that students must complete the assigned readings in advance of coming to class. Reading at this level involves a critical engagement with the text, a method known as close reading (we will discuss this approach further in the first class). Students will be expected to either annotate the text as they read, or to make clear annotations in a notebook (if using an electronic text that does not allow annotations) and be prepared to ask relevant questions in class. I am comfortable with students using electronic devices in class for this purpose. Students are also expected to have a copy of the appropriate text with them in class (in either print or electronic format), as well as their relevant annotations and prepared questions.

Assessment
All assignments are to be submitted through Blackboard. Assessment deadlines are available in the course schedule below and on Blackboard.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Weekly evaluative blog post and active engagement in class</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research topic idea*</td>
<td>05%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Topic Outline*</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presentation*</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final draft of research project</td>
<td>35%</td>
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Research Topic Idea:

The research topic idea is the subject you choose to research for your final research paper. The idea should consist of a short (300 word) abstract, with an accompanying scholarly bibliography of key supporting texts.

Research Topic Outline:

You will complete the topic outline once you have conducted some preliminary research. The outline should include a description of the argument you will be making/question you will be exploring. It should contain a brief description of at least three supporting points you wish to make within your argument, and a brief description of the relevant literature.

Final Draft of Research Project

The final research project must be a paper of 10-12 pages. It must display original research, critical engagement with the texts, and a progression of your argument. A full marking scheme will be delivered in class.

Academic Integrity

I expect students to abide by an ethical code of conduct in regard to acknowledging the work of others. Quotations from and references to the work/ideas/theories of another scholar must be clearly demarcated using appropriate referencing standards. Paraphrasing the work of another scholar should not amount merely to making minor alterations in the syntax and punctuation of a direct quotation.

Based upon the University Policy on Academic Dishonesty, every offense against academic honesty seriously undermines the teaching-learning process for which the University exists, and such offenses will be dealt with expeditiously according to the following criteria.

Definition

Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited, to:

1. Cheating on an examination or test; for example, by copying from another’s paper or using unauthorized materials before or during the test;

2. Plagiarism, which represents as one’s own the work of another, whether published or not, without acknowledging the precise source;
3. Knowing participation in the academic dishonesty of another student, even though one’s own work is not directly affected; and

4. Any conduct which reasonable persons in similar circumstances would recognize as dishonest in an academic setting.

**Penalty**

The penalty for an incident of academic dishonesty is, at the discretion of the faculty member, either a mark of zero for the work in question or the grade of “F” for the course.

For more information on the universities policies regarding academic integrity please see: [http://libguides.stthom.edu/plagiarism](http://libguides.stthom.edu/plagiarism)

(See next page for schedule)
# Course Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week Beginning</th>
<th>Class Topic</th>
<th>Assessment</th>
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<tr>
<td>Aug 22</td>
<td>M: Introduction&lt;br&gt;W: Postcolonialism</td>
<td>Journal entry – every Friday</td>
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<td>Aug 29</td>
<td>M: Postcolonialism&lt;br&gt;W: Postcolonialism</td>
<td>Journal entry – every Friday</td>
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<td>Sept 05</td>
<td><strong>M: Labor Day</strong>&lt;br&gt;W:Postcolonialism &amp; Ireland</td>
<td>Journal entry – every Friday</td>
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<td>Sept 12</td>
<td>M: Postcolonialism &amp; Ireland&lt;br&gt;W: James Joyce <em>The Dead</em></td>
<td>Journal entry – every Friday</td>
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<td>Sept 19</td>
<td><strong>M: James Joyce <em>The Dead</em></strong>&lt;br&gt;W: Flann O’Brien <em>The Poor Mouth</em></td>
<td>Journal entry – every Friday</td>
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<td>Sept 26</td>
<td>M: Flann O’Brien <em>The Poor Mouth</em>&lt;br&gt;W: Flann O’Brien <em>The Poor Mouth</em></td>
<td>Journal entry – every Friday&lt;br&gt;Research topic idea due</td>
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<td>Oct 03</td>
<td>M: Brendan Behan <em>The Hostage</em>&lt;br&gt;W: Brendan Behan <em>The Hostage</em></td>
<td>Journal entry – every Friday</td>
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<td>Oct 10</td>
<td><strong>M: Fall Break</strong>&lt;br&gt;W: Brendan Behan <em>The Hostage</em></td>
<td>Journal entry – every Friday&lt;br&gt;Topic Outline Due</td>
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<td>Oct 17</td>
<td>M: Brian Friel <em>Translations</em>&lt;br&gt;W: Brian Friel <em>Translations</em></td>
<td>Journal entry – every Friday</td>
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<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Class</td>
<td>Instructor</td>
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| 10. Oct 24 | M: Brian Friel *Translations*  
W: Brian Friel *Translations* | Journal entry – every Friday |
| 11. Oct 31 | M: Brian Friel *Making History*  
W: Brian Friel *Making History* | Journal entry – every Friday  
In-class presentations |
| 12. Nov 07 | M: Jennifer Johnston  
W: Jennifer Johnston | Journal entry – every Friday |
| 13. Nov 14 | M: Jennifer Johnston  
W: Jennifer Johnston | Journal entry – every Friday |
W: Thanksgiving Break | Journal entry – every Friday |
| 15. Nov 28 | M: Postcolonialism & Irish Studies  
W: Postcolonialism Irish Studies | Journal entry – every Friday |

Dec 05       | Monday, December 5: Last Day of Classes - Review |
Dec 14       | Final Research Project Due |
Dec 19       | Final Grades Released to Students December 20. |

**Disability Accommodations**

Students with a documented disability needing academic accommodations are requested to make an appointment to meet with me at their earliest convenience. Please do not discuss these issues during class as I cannot guarantee confidentiality. Students with disabilities will also need to contact Counseling and Disability Services in Crocker Center. The contact details for this office are (713) 525-2169 or 6953, and cds@stthom.edu.