



English 590: 20th-century Irish Literature

course website: <http://eagle.cc.ukans.edu/~kconrad/590home.html>

TR 11-12:20 * 220 Fraser Hall

Prof. Kathryn Conrad



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(movie still, Some Mother's

Son) (<http://www.somemothersson.com/cmp/movie.html>)

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(photo of Yeats)

Description:

Irish theater critic Stephen Gwynn said of W. B. Yeats's play *Cathleen ni Houlihan*, "I went home asking myself if such plays should be produced unless one was prepared for people to go out to shoot and be shot." His comment proved prophetic: many of the Irish men and women who fought in the 1916 Easter Rising spoke of Yeats's play as their inspiration. As this anecdote suggests, writing and politics have been--and still are--closely and explicitly intertwined in Ireland. In this course, we will look not only at the literary and political responses to Ireland's history of British colonial rule, but also the challenges to the politics of the Irish State articulated by contemporary writers. We will explore a variety of genres, including essays, poetry, film, and pop music; and we will examine works by a range of

authors and artists, including W. B. Yeats, James Joyce, Patrick Pearse, Sean O'Casey, J. M. Synge, Nuala ni Dhomhnaill, Seamus Heaney, and Sinead O'Connor. No prior knowledge of Irish history is expected; short historical essays will be included in the readings.

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(Joyce, from [The Brazen Head](http://www.microserve.com/~thequail/libyrinth/joyce.html) (<http://www.microserve.com/~thequail/libyrinth/joyce.html>) site)

Required Texts:

- Reserve readings (available at Wilson reserve desk for 2 hours, no overnight)
- *Modern Irish Drama (MID)*
- *Territories of the Voice (TOV)*
- Joyce, *Dubliners*
- Yeats, *Collected Poems*
- NiDhomhnaill, *The Astrakhan Cloak*
- Muldoon, *Selected Poems*
- *Pillars of the House*

Recommended Text:

- Moody and Martin, *The Course of Irish History* --for historical context.

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(West Belfast mural (<http://eagle.cc.ukans.edu/~kconrad/murals.html>))

Requirements:

- **Participation (20%):**

All students will be expected to attend class and participate in classroom discussion. Five unexcused absences will result in the failure of this course. *Part of the participation grade may be based on attendance of at least one Irish-related event (probably a poetry reading).*

- **Papers (60% for undergraduates, 80% for graduate students):**

UNDERGRADUATES will be expected to write two 5–6 page papers or one 10–12 page paper. See syllabus for due dates.

GRADUATE STUDENTS will write one 15–20 page paper on a subject of their choice.

You are encouraged to come up with your own paper topics, though some topics will be provided. You are also strongly encouraged to discuss topics and drafts (in advance of the due date) with me.

- **Final examination (20%, undergraduates only):**

Undergraduates will complete a take-home final examination *due* no later than the scheduled final examination date and time for the class.

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([West Belfast mural \(http://eagle.cc.ukans.edu/~kconrad/murals.html\)](http://eagle.cc.ukans.edu/~kconrad/murals.html))

Online Resources:

- [Irish-related Links \(http://eagle.cc.ukans.edu/~kconrad/#irish\)](http://eagle.cc.ukans.edu/~kconrad/#irish) on my homepage.
- [Irish literature, mythology, folklore, and drama \(http://www.luminarium.org/mythology/ireland/\)](http://www.luminarium.org/mythology/ireland/) site--some great links.
- [Irish folksongs page \(http://www.acronet.net/~robokopp/irish.html\)](http://www.acronet.net/~robokopp/irish.html)--lyrics to many well-known folksongs, along with audio files of many of the melodies. Thanks to Jarrod Fobes!
- [Global Gaeltalk \(http://eagle.cc.ukans.edu/~maclaoch/\)](http://eagle.cc.ukans.edu/~maclaoch/)--an excellent compilation of Irish language resources from fellow 590 student Jonathan Hale.
- Thelma Simons's Irish page--from another fellow 590 student; includes great photos of Ireland.

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([Photo from N. Ireland \(http://eagle.cc.ukans.edu/~kconrad/irealb.html\)](http://eagle.cc.ukans.edu/~kconrad/irealb.html))

Syllabus:

This reading schedule is tentative and is VERY likely to change. Changes will be announced in class and major changes will be posted to this website.

- **Thurs 8/20: ** Introduction. Students should begin to read Moody and Martin for background.
- **Tues 8/25: *Cultural Revolution*.** Manifesto for Irish Literary Theatre (*MID* , 378–9); Yeats, *Cathleen ni Houlihan* (*MID*); "Red Hanrahan's Song About Ireland" (Yeats poetry).
- **Thurs 8/27:** Lady Gregory, *The Rising of the Moon* (*MID*); John Keegan Casey, "The Rising of the Moon." (handout).
- **Tues 9/1:** Synge, *The Playboy of the Western World* (*MID*). ***Bring in your guess at why there were riots at the first performances of Playboy.***
- **Wed 9/2, 7 pm** (or as announced in class): Screening of *The Playboys*.
- **Thurs 9/3:** Rose poems and discussion of movie. Yeats: "To the Rose Upon the Rood of Time," "To Ireland in the Coming Times." Owen Roe MacWard: Three versions of Dark Rosaleen"; Joseph Mary Plunkett: "I See Blood Upon the Rose" (handout).
- **Tues 9/8:** (movie continued)
- **Thurs 9/10: *Political Revolution*.** (Poetry continued). The 1916 Easter Rising. Patrick Pearse: poems, speech, *The Singer*. (reserve).

- **Tues 9/15:** Pearse and Rising reserve materials cont. Yeats, "Easter, 1916," "Sixteen Dead Men," "The Rose Tree," "The Leaders of the Crowd."
- **Thurs 9/17:** O'Casey, *Juno and the Paycock* (MID) and *Plough and the Stars* (handout).
- ****Tues 9/22: **** O'Casey plays cont. Yeats, "Meditations in a Time of Civil War," "The Coat," "Man and the Echo," "The Circus Animals Desertion," "In Memory of Eva Gore-Booth and Con Markievicz," "A Stick of Incense," "Crazy Jane Talks With the Bishop" (not discussed)
- **Thurs 9/24:** O'Casey, *Juno* continued.
- **Tues 9/29: *Revisions of Ireland.*** Joyce, *Dubliners* cont. Focus in particular on "The Sisters."
- **Thurs 10/1: FIELD TRIP to Spencer Research Library. Meet in classroom first.**
- **Tues 10/6:** Joyce, continued. "An Encounter," "Araby," "Two Gallants."
- **Thurs 10/8:** "The Boarding House," "A Little Cloud."
- ****Tues 10/13:** Undergraduates: 1st paper due (note date change). ******"Counterparts," "A Mother."
- **Thurs 10/15:** "Ivy Day in the Committee Room," "The Dead."
- **Tues 10/20:** *Ulysses* , Chs. 1 and 3.
- **Thurs 10/22:** Sinéad O'Connor, "A Short, Sharp Shock." (handout) Sinéad O'Connor, "I am stretched on your grave," "Three babies," "Black boys on mopeds," "Famine" (handout).
- **Tues 10/27: CLASS CANCELLED for family emergency.**
- ***Thurs 10/30: reading day--no class.***
- ****Tues 11/3: ** TOV:** "In the Middle of the Fields," "Housekeeper's Cut," "The Day of the Christening."
- **Thurs 11/5:** "Midwife to the Fairies." Poem: Nuala Ni Dhomhnaill, "An Bhatrail/The Battering."
- **Tues 11/10: TOV:** "The Wall-reader," "Naming the Names."
- **Thurs 11/12:** Poetry: Siobhan Campbell, Linda Anderson, Kathleen O'Driscoll (POH).
- ****Tues 11/17: ****Screening, *Hush-a-Bye Baby*.
- ****Thurs 11/19: **** Discussion of movie. Stories: "Shepherd's Bush," "The Dove of Peace." (TOV). Poetry: Eithne Strong, Paula Meehan (POH).
- **Tues 11/24:** Brien Friel, *Translations* (MID).
- ***Thurs 11/26: Thanksgiving.***
- ****Tues 12/1: Poetry: ****Muldoon: Hedgehog, Identities; The Weepies, Cuba, The Boundary Commission, Anseo, Why Brownlee Left, Truce; The Sightseers, Quoof, The Frog, Aisling; The Coney, Meeting the British, Louis.

Ni Dhomhnaill: An Traein Dubh/The Black Train, Caitlin/Cathleen, An Sceach Cheal/The Whitethorn Bush, and poems from The Voyage section: 1. Cathair De Chi/The City of God, 2. An Turas Farraige d'Oiche/Night-Crossing, 3. An Bhreasail/Hy-Breasil, 5. An tOilean/The Island, 7. Poiblioct/Publicity.

- Wed 12/2: *The Crying Game* screening.
- **Thurs 12/3: ** Discussion, *The Crying Game* and "Guests of the Nation."
- **Tues 12/8: last day: **summary and review. **Final papers due; take-home examinations (for undergraduates) handed out.**
- **Take-home final examination due on Dec. 17, 12 noon. You may turn in your exam to my office (2035 Wescoe) or to the English Department office (the staff will put the exam in my mailbox).**

PLEASE let me know, preferably via e-mail, what you'd like me to do with your final paper. If you don't plan ever to pick the paper up, please tell me that, too--it'll save me time when I'm grading it. Thanks!
kconrad@ukans.edu

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