



English 63: Irish Literature

TR 1:30–3 Bennett 222-- **note room change!**

Kathryn Conrad

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Office Hours: W 5–6; Th 3–4

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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, U2, and Sinéad O'Connor. No prior knowledge of Irish history is expected; short historical essays will be included in the readings.

Texts:

Please consult House of Our Own Bookstore, 3920 Spruce, for the required texts for this course.

Modern Irish Drama is currently being reprinted. The remainder of the order should be available at House of Our Own (222–1576) by Jan. 24.

A bulkpack for the course is available at Wharton Reprographics, in the basement of Steinberg–Dietrich.

Students will also be expected to see several films, some of which will be screened:

- Some Mother's Son (see soon: leaving area theatres!)
- The Playboys
- Mother Ireland
- Hush-a-Bye Baby

- The Crying Game

Requirements:

Grades for this course will be based on class participation (which includes attendance, discussion, in-class writing, and listserver participation), two essays (5–7 pages) and a final exam.

Syllabus:

Schedule for the readings is very likely to change. Students are encouraged to suggest readings for the course.

January Tues 14: Introduction. Students should begin to read Moody and Martin for background.

Thurs 16: **Cultural Revolution.** Manifesto for Irish Literary Theatre (*MID*, 378–9); Yeats, *Cathleen ni Houlihan* (*MID*); "Red Hanrahan's Song About Ireland" (Yeats poetry). ***MID* is being reprinted. Copies (20) will be available soon, but in the meantime, the readings for Thurs. are available on my office door (202 Bennett).**

Tues 21: Lady Gregory, *The Rising of the Moon* (*MID*); John Keegan Casey, "The Rising of the Moon." (bulkpack)

Note: Our new classroom is Bennett 222.

Thurs 23: **No class.**

Tues 28: Synge, *The Playboy of the Western World* (*MID*). **Bring in your guess at why there were riots at the first performances of *Playboy*.**

Wed 29, 7 pm: Screening of *The Playboys*. Location: Bennett 323.

Thurs 30: 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" (bulkpack).

February Tues 4: **Political Revolution.** Pearse, "At the Grave of O'Donovan Rossa", poems, *The Singer*; selections from Irish political documents (bulkpack). Read Moody and Martin on Easter Rising.

Thurs 6: The Rising cont. Yeats, "Easter, 1916," "Sixteen Dead Men," "The Rose Tree," "The Leaders of the Crowd."

Tues 11: O'Casey, *The Plough and the Stars*.

Thurs 13: O'Casey, *Juno and the Paycock* and *Shadow of a Gunman*.

Tues 18: 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."

Thurs 20: **Revisions of Ireland** Sinead O'Connor, "A Short, Sharp Shock." Joyce, *Dubliners*. Focus in particular on "The Sisters," "An Encounter," "Araby," "Two Gallants," and "The Boarding House."

Tues 25: Joyce, *Dubliners* cont. Focus in particular on "A Little Cloud," "Counterparts," "Ivy Day in the Committee Room," "A Mother," and "The Dead."

Thurs 27: Joyce cont.

March Tues 4: Finish Joyce, "The Dead". O'Brien, "The land itself"; Sinead O'Connor, "I am stretched on your grave," "Three babies," "Black boys on mopeds," "Famine" (bulkpack). **Paper #1 due.**

Thurs 6: *Mother Ireland* screening and discussion.

(Tues 11: Spring Break.

Thurs 13: Spring Break.)

Tues 18: *TOV*: "In the Middle of the Fields," "Housekeeper's Cut," "The Day of the Christening," "Midwife to the Fairies." Poem: Nuala Ni Dhomhnaill, "An Bhatrail/The Battering."

Thurs 20: *TOV*: "The Wall-reader," "Naming the Names." Poetry: Siobhan Campbell, Linda Anderson (bulkpack).

Tues 25: *TOV*: "Sister Imelda," "The Foundress." Poetry: Kathleen O'Driscoll (bulkpack).

Thurs 27: *TOV*: "Shepherd's Bush," "The Dove of Peace." Poetry: Patricia McCarthy, Eithne Strong, Paula Meehan (bulkpack).

April Tues 1: Finish *TOV* and Meehan. Brien Friel, *Translations (MID)*.

Thurs 3: Thomas Davis, "Our National Language." Nuala ni Dhomhnaill selections (bulkpack).

Tues 8: Seamus Heaney poetry selections.

Thurs 10: Screening, *Hush-a-Bye Baby*. Discussion.

Tues 15: Poetry.

Wed 16: *The Crying Game* screening.

Thurs 17: Discussion, *The Crying Game*. "Guests of the Nation."

Tues 22: *Crying Game*.

Thurs 24: Last day. Final wrap-up. **Final papers due.**

Thurs May 8, 1:30 – 3:30 pm: Final exam.

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