School of Histories and Humanities HH1002

UNDERSTANDING IRELAND

THE TRINITY SEMESTER START-UP PROGRAMME (SSP)

SAMPLE COURSE HANDBOOK AUTUMN

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Contact hours:     Classroom contact  36 hours
                   Self-directed study:  
                   Two assignments and 
                   seminar preparation  96 hours

Weighting:         5 ECTs
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1. Academic Calendar

Michaelmas Term (Semester 1)

*Understanding Ireland Dates*

- Welcome reception: Sunday Week 1
- Lectures commence: Monday Week 1
- Assignment 1 deadline: Tuesday Week 2
- SSP ends: Friday Week 3
- Assignment 2 deadline: Friday after week 3

*Normal Teaching Term Dates*

- Freshers’ week
- Teaching term starts
- Reading week
- Teaching term ends
- Revision week
- Assessment week

Hilary Term (Semester 2) for full year students

*Normal Teaching Term Dates*

- Teaching term starts
- Reading week
- Teaching term ends
- Revision week
- Assessment week
2. Course Description

2.1. Overview

Welcome to Understanding Ireland: The Trinity Semester Start-Up Programme (SSP)! This module offers international students the best possible foundation for settling into their time at Trinity. The programme is unique in providing both an orientation to life in Trinity and an academic introduction to understanding Irish history and culture—all before normal teaching begins.

The programme takes place for three weeks before the start of normal teaching term. It covers the first one-sixth of your semester work commitment at Trinity (5 ECTS). Attendance at lectures, seminars and field trips is compulsory and all assignments must be successfully completed in order for credit to be awarded. The remainder of the student’s work commitment is covered by the undergraduate courses which they will undertake during normal teaching term between September and December.

2.2. What will I be studying?

Understanding Ireland immerses you in the rich world of Irish history, art and literature. The module consists of two interlinked strands covering three themes: The Story of Ireland, Representing Ireland and Visualising Ireland.

A. The Story of Ireland: History and Literature

This section represents two themes: History and Representation. It invites the student to explore seminal events, leading personalities, key debates and contested views from St Patrick in the fifth century to the Irish Revolution and the dawn of the Irish Free State in 1922. Students are also introduced to key
Irish writers including Jonathan Swift, W.B. Yeats and Seamus Heaney and explore how their prose and poetry informed and reacted to key events in Irish history from the eighteenth century through to the Northern Irish conflict of the late twentieth century. The theme includes a field trip to some of the most important historical sites in Ireland. Students also attend a play at the Abbey Theatre and an in-house screening of an Irish film.

**B: Visualizing Ireland: Archaeology, Art and Architecture**

This section explores the overlapping influences and impact of archaeology, art and architecture on Ireland from the early Middle Ages to modern times. It looks at representations of Irishness in art and architecture from the Book of Kells through to the use of architecture to project particular forms of national identity in the twentieth century. Students are encouraged to explore the rich collections in the National Gallery and National Museum, both of which are on Trinity’s doorstep.

Each strand of this module is taught by a combination of lectures and small-group sessions known as ‘seminars’. Within each strand, the focus of lectures and seminars is upon detailed assessment of key events, personalities, debates, influences, and texts. You will receive guidance on relevant readings and sources through which you will gain a broader overview of the relevant period and topic.

Lectures take place in the mornings between Monday and Wednesday, while seminars take place once a week on Thursdays. Some afternoons are dedicated to field trips which complement the lectures and seminars. Students also participate in a number of field-trips related to their areas of study.

The programme is co-ordinated by the **School of Histories and Humanities** which comprises the Departments of History, History of Art and Architecture,
Classics and The Centre for Women and Gender studies and is taught by academic staff and teaching assistants from the School. The School has a strong international research profile and students enjoy access to a broad range of expertise in areas as varied as classical, medieval, and modern history; the history of art and architecture; archaeology; Latin and Greek language and literature; and gender and women’s studies.

2.3. Aims and Objectives

On completion of the module students should be able to:

- Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of Ireland in a historical, cultural, and political context.
- Present both oral and written analysis of aspects of Irish history, culture and society.
- Engage in discussion of seminal events, personalities, debates, influences, and texts relating to Ireland.
- Record and present information in a systematic manner.
- Write a scholarly essay appropriate for an undergraduate student in the humanities.

2.4. Field Trips

Excursions to national cultural institutions and historical landmarks are integral to the programme. Within Dublin, you will attend a performance at The Abbey Theatre (founded by W. B. Yeats in 1904) and visit Croke Park, headquarters of the Gaelic Athletics Association (GAA). You
will go on a field trip to a site of major historical importance outside the capital, such as the Hill of Tara (the ancient seat of the High Kings of Ireland) and Trim castle (pictured above), one of the most impressive castles built by the Anglo-Normans after the invasion of Ireland in the late twelfth century.

List of Field Trips

(Please consult your timetable for schedules)

Week 1:
- Tuesday - Abbey Theatre (evening – no transport necessary)
- Friday - Trim/Tara (group 1) – Coach provided
  Glasnevin Museum (group 2) – coach provided

Week 2:
- Tuesday – Film screening (evening – on campus)
- Friday - Trim and Tara (group 2) – Coach provided
  Glasnevin Museum (group 1) – Coach provided

Week 3:
- Wednesday - GAA museum and stadium tour (group 1)
- Thursday - GAA museum and stadium tour (group 2)

2.5. Timetables

In your ‘welcome pack’, the Understanding Ireland co-ordinator provides you with:

(i) A timetable showing details for the whole course.
(ii) A seminar timetable showing the times and locations of your individual seminar groups.
(iii) A list of field trips with dates and times
Please consult your timetables for details of the times and locations of lectures, seminars and field trips.

3. Lectures and Seminars

3.1. Lecture List
Lectures take place between 10 am and 1.30 pm on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday of Understanding Ireland Weeks 1–2, and on Friday of week 3. Lectures last for approximately 50 minutes. Students are required to be punctual and to sign in each morning.
During the lectures you are encouraged to listen attentively and to take notes, which will assist you later in completing your written assignments. It is appropriate to ask questions during lectures if the lecturer invites you to do so. It is compulsory that you attend the final lecture and sign out of the programme.

A. The Story of Ireland: History and Literature

1. Introduction Patrick Walsh
2. 1169 and all that Peter Crooks
3. The Nine Year’s War Ciaran Brady
4. Oliver Cromwell and Ireland Micheál Ó Siochrú
5. Penal Era or Golden Age: 18th Century Ireland Patrick Walsh
6. The Gaelic Revival Tim Murtagh
7. The Irish Revolution Anne Dolan
8. Contemporary Ireland Patrick Walsh
9. Debating Modern Ireland Class debate
B: Visualizing Ireland: Archaeology, Art and Architecture

1. The Landscape of Ireland  
   Mark Hennessy
2. The Book of Kells  
   Rachel Moss
3. Irish Art and the Anglo-Norman invasion  
   Rachel Moss
4. Angels and Apes: Representations of Irishness  
   Catherine Lawless
5. The architecture of Trinity College Dublin  
   Christine Casey
6. Aspects of Irish Art in the Nineteenth Century  
   Philip McEvansoyea
7. Ireland and the Classical Tradition  
   Suzanne O’Neill
8. Building Temples of Unionism and Nationalism in the two Irelands  
   Suzanne O’Neill

3.2. Seminars
All students will have one Seminar each week in each of the three themes of the ‘Understanding Ireland’ module. Seminars are small discussion groups of 10 to 12 students. The discussions are led by a lecturers and teaching assistants and the topics for the Seminar are related to the two strands of the ‘Understanding Ireland’ module.

Seminars take place on Thursdays during Understanding Ireland Weeks 1–2. 
Seminars all take place in the Arts Building.

Readings
A selection of readings for each Seminar will be available in on the Understanding Ireland webpage. You can access the course material at this link once you have registered for the programme:
http://histories-humanities.tcd.ie/visiting/understandingireland/materials/

Your password is *****. Please ensure that you click on the login button, if you press enter it will not allow you access.
Make sure that any additional web resources you use are academic in nature: reliable web resources are those listed on the [Library's e-resources page](#).

**Preparation for Seminars**

You must read the assigned documents carefully before the Seminar and come prepared to engage in a group discussion. You do not need to have ‘all the answers’. In fact, for the purposes of discussion, it is quite useful if you write down some questions that occur to you as you are reading the documents, or any thoughts the readings provoke in you. You can then bring these questions and ideas to the group during the Seminar.

**Seminar Topics**

**Strand A: The Story of Ireland: History and Literature**

**Week 1:** ‘A filthy people, wallowing in vice’: Anglo-Norman perceptions of a conquered people. *An appraisal of the writings of Gerald of Wales and his views on the native Irish population.*

**Week 1:** Cromwell and Ireland: seventeenth-century criminal or war hero? *An assessment of the historiography surrounding Oliver Cromwell and the Cromwellian conquest.*

**Week 2:** Literature and the Northern Irish Troubles

**Week 2:** The 1916 rebellion: memory and remembrance. *An examination of the Easter Rising and the Battle of the Somme.*

**Strand B: Visualizing Ireland**

**Week 1:** The Book of Kells: A Treasure at Trinity College Dublin

**Week 2:** Visualizing Ireland’s Medieval Past: Medievalism and Modern Irish Identity
4. Written Assignments

4.1. Overview

Each student must complete and submit two written assignments for assessment. Written work must be submitted in hard copy before the deadline in the relevant essay boxes opposite the History corridor.

(i) Assignment 1 (40% of total Mark): 1000 words to be submitted on the Tuesday of Understanding Ireland Week 2. You may write on any topic covered in a lecture, seminar or excursion, with the proviso that this is a piece of academic writing. It should include footnote references to your sources together with a bibliography with at least two printed sources from Trinity’s Library (in addition to any web sources you use).

(ii) Final essay (60% of total mark): 2,500 words to be submitted by the end of the week following Understanding Ireland. You should choose an essay from the list provided, or alternatively agree an essay title with your seminar leaders. You may not write on a topic without discussing the title in advance with your seminar leader.

4.2. Academic Writing

Please ensure that your written work is typed (double-spaced) and that it conforms to normal conventions for academic writing. You should cite all your sources and include a bibliography. In particular, please make an effort to consult printed sources from Trinity’s magnificent collection in the Library. Do not base your academic writing on unsubstantiated sources discovered on the internet.
A document providing an overview of expectations for academic writing in the humanities will be circulated at the Introductory Lecture. If you have any queries about what is expected of you in terms of the presentation of written work, your seminar leaders will be glad to discuss these points with you.

4.3. Final Essay Topics

Each student enrolled on Understanding Ireland is required to write a 2500-word essay. Students are encouraged to choose a topic from the selection of essay titles offered below. Alternatively, you may design an essay title of your own, but you must agree the title in advance with your seminar leader.

Strand A: The Story of Ireland: History and Literature

Students are encouraged to choose a topic from the selection of essay titles offered below. Alternatively, you may design an essay title of your own, but you must agree the title in advance with your seminar leader.

1. Did the Anglo-Norman invaders become more ‘Irish than the Irish themselves’?

2. Did the Reformation fail in Ireland?

3. ‘The 1641 rebellion was an attempt to create an independent Ireland.’ Discuss

4. Has Oliver Cromwell been unfairly criticized by Irish historians?

5. What was the purpose of the eighteenth-century penal laws?

6. Does the Abbey Theatre present an unreal, idealised version of Irishness?
7. ‘Our gallant allies in Europe’: the 1916 Rising could not have happened without the wider context of World War I.

8. How have writers responded to the Northern Irish Troubles? Discuss with reference to at least two authors.

**Strand B: Visualizing Ireland**

You should choose an essay from the list provided, or alternatively agree an essay title with your seminar leaders. *You may not write on a topic without discussing the title in advance with your seminar leaders.*

1. Using paintings and/or decorated texts in Book of Kells as examples, discuss how the manuscript was intended to be viewed or seen rather than read.

2. Discuss the Virgin and Child painting, fol. 7v, in the Book of Kells. Consider the image in terms of the subject matter, perspective and framing. Explain how the components of the painting work to create a cohesive composition and how the image indicates its relationship with the Gospel text.

3. Select a painting in the Book of Kells and compare the architectural forms depicted with other buildings or structures. Suggested examples or architecture in the Book of Kells: Temptation painting (f. 202v), canon table colonnades (ff. 1v-5r), portrait of Matthew (28v), portrait of Christ (32v), Mount of Olives (114r), portrait of John (291v). Suggested buildings for comparison: St. Columba’s House Kells, Columba Chapel Iona, Santa Costanza Rome, St. Vitale Ravenna, Palace Chapel Aachen, Church of the Holy Sepulchre Jerusalem.

4. The Gospel writers (Matthew, Mark, Luke and John) were often depicted with tools for writing. Non-invasive technology has allowed us to understand many previously unknown details about the manufacture
and use of manuscripts. Discuss the practice of making manuscripts and how it can inform the interpretation of manuscript paintings.

5. Select an object from Ireland’s medieval past – such as the ‘Tara’ brooch, the Celtic Cross, interlace ornament – and discuss how its later replication transformed it into an icon. Explain where replicas have been used (museums, graveyards, jewelry, etc.) and whether these have remained true to the originals or become new forms in their own right. Discuss the association between these replicas and Irish identity.

6. Watch The Secret of Kells and note the medieval elements. Consider how the style and narrative of the film emulate early medieval Irish objects and buildings. Discuss how this 21st century film presents the Irish past and what the visual culture it invokes says about Irish identity.

5. REGISTERING FOR COLLEGE

Any student who did not register for College online before arrival will be able to do so in a designated area on the first day of the programme. Once registered, students will receive their user ID and password and will have full access to College networks, libraries and the gym. Please note, registration for College is not the same as registering for individual modules. This must be done with specific departments at a later date.
6. ECTS and Registering for Modules

6.1. ECTS

The credit system in use in Trinity College Dublin is the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS). ECTS credits represent the student workload required to achieve the desired outcomes of modules and programmes where 60 credits is the norm for full-time study over one academic year (40 weeks).

Credits are obtained by individual students upon successful completion of the academic year or course. One-year and part-year visiting students are awarded credit for all individual modules successfully completed. Visiting students who study at Trinity for Michaelmas term only should undertake 30 ECTS, while those here for the full year should undertake 60 ECTS.

When you are choosing your modules it is vital to ensure that your home institution is satisfied with your choice so seek the full permission of your home institution before taking up a module. Remember, Understanding Ireland accounts for 5 ECTS. You should check with the study abroad coordinator in your home institution to ascertain how these credits transfer to the system for awarding academic credit.

6.2. Registering for Modules

Registering for modules is not done online. Visiting students must register for modules in the individual School or Department where they wish to study.
During the second week of Understanding Ireland, there is a designated session at which you will receive information concerning registering for modules followed up by a sign-up session for modules in the School of Histories and Humanities specifically for SSP students.

6.3 Non-E.U. Visiting Student Co-ordinator

Each school/department has a Non-E.U. Visiting Student Co-ordinator, who is a designated member of staff who looks after visiting students and will assist them in their choice selection and registration for modules. A list of these officers will be made available at the information day on the Tuesday of SSP Week 2.