**Theatre & Culture (THEA 410A)**

**Questions of Identity: “Irishness” in Modern & Contemporary Irish Drama**

MWF 9:00am-10:05am AC B305

Instructor: Dr. Kristi Good Email: [good@lycoming.edu](mailto:good@lycoming.edu)

Office Hours: MW 10:15am-1:15pm AC C108 (or by appointment)

MOODLE KEY: “analysis”

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course will explore a range of texts from the early 1900s to the present day that use the Republic of Ireland as a primary setting. The beginning of this timeline marks a period when theatre promoted the essence of Irish Nationalism and a new Irish identity was being formed, while the plays of the present day seek out a much larger and international audience. Despite this span of over a hundred years and the resulting geographical dissemination, the plays we will investigate in the course are just a sample of a diverse Irish dramatic canon devoted to two main topics: Irish Identity and Irish History.

The particulars of Irish Identity have been a site of contention for hundreds of years as political and economic situations shift and discussions on gender, class, and race insert themselves into the nation’s historical narrative. Irish theatre is but one area that demonstrates Ireland’s passionate fixation with its own troubled history, and as we engage with these plays, we use the following questions to inform our investigation:

1) How is the past—historical, personal, mythical—represented in these plays?

2) How do individual playwrights use the past to raise questions of identity and “Irishness?”

**COURSE OBJECTIVES**

* To gain knowledge of various playwrights and the contextual history that surrounds the creation of their plays.
* To critically interpret the text of a play based on key issues in Irish history.
* To analyze plays both verbally during class discussion and in written form through a comparative paper using the knowledge gained in class.

**MATERIALS (\*Available at the Bookstore)**

*\*The Methuen Drama Anthology of Irish Plays* (London: Methuen, 2008)

*\*Modern and Contemporary Irish Drama* (New York: Norton, 2009)

*Modern Irish Theatre* by Mary Trotter (Cambridge: Polity, 2008) *BUY ONLINE!!!*

*\*Philadelphia, Here I Come!* by Brian Friel

**COURSE POLICIES**

**Professional Conduct**

Students are expected to arrive at class on time and prepared for the day’s activities. Students should show respect to fellow students and the instructor by refraining from sleeping, chatting, attending class under the influence of alcohol and/or drugs, engaging with electronic devices for non-class purposes, or any other disruptive behavior.

**Participation**

Exemplary participation begins with appropriate preparation. Students should prepare for class by reading and completing assignments as per the day-to-day schedule while also preparing questions and comments on the material. Bring your books and plays to class with you so you can reference them. Full participation marks each day will be given according to attendance, alertness, and active participation in discussion. Yes, I will know if you are late or absent. Yes, I can see when you nod off in class or are getting Snapchats from your friends. Yes, I will deduct points if I can’t recognize the sound of your voice by the end of the semester.

**Attendance Policy**

Theatre is an active art. You cannot participate if you are not present.

* According to the Theatre Department policy, class attendance is mandatory; there are no make-up assignments. Much of the information discussed in class is intended to complement your textbook; therefore, you can only learn about it by being present in class.
* Theatre Department policy allows you to accumulate three absences. Your final course grade will be lowered one increment for every absence thereafter (e.g., an A will lower to an A- if you accumulate a total of four absences during the semester, etc.).
* You are expected to arrive to class on time and ready to work. If the door is closed, the instructor has finished taking attendance, and you are late! Because tardiness is disrespectful and disruptive to everyone in the room, every three tardies (or leaving early) equals one absence.

\*Special accommodations can be made for religious observations and official college obligations if advance notice is given to me in writing via email. In extreme cases, such as ER visits or bereavement, please get in touch with me as soon as possible so I am aware of the situation.

**Due Dates**

Your training here is for the professional world, and there are consequences in the professional world when you do not meet your deadlines (you can lose money for your project, you can be demoted, you can even be FIRED). Whether the assignment is due via Moodle or hard copy in class, no late submissions will be accepted. Quizzes, classwork, and assignments missed due to lateness or absence may only be made up in cases of extreme emergency or if alternate arrangements have been made with the instructor prior to the assigned due date.

**Academic Honesty**

Students are expected to follow the College’s Honor Code and do their own work. While some assignments require collaboration, the majority of the work required in this course—exams, quizzes, and writing assignments—must be completed by each student independently, without unauthorized assistance of any kind. See the student handbook for the college’s policies regarding plagiarism.

\*If you find yourself in a situation where you are tempted to cheat, plagiarize, or engage in other types of misconduct, please remember that I am much happier to help you through your difficulties than to fail you or be responsible for your expulsion from the college.

**Writing Skills**

The development of effective writing skills is an essential component of any college education, regardless of the student’s major or the course subject matter. Proper grammar, correct spelling, and careful proofreading are expected on all written assignments. Both the form and content of writing assignments will be considered in grading. Peer editing, rough drafts, consultation with writing tutors and/or re-writes of written assignments may be required at the instructor’s discretion.

**FAQs**

**What if I require special accommodation in the course?**

Lycoming College provides academic support for students who officially disclose diagnosed learning, physical, and psychological disabilities. If you have a diagnosed disability and would like to seek accommodations, please contact Jilliane Bolt-Michewicz, Assistant Dean of Academic Services/Director of the Academic Resource Center. Dean Bolt-Michewicz will help you arrange for appropriate academic accommodations. She can be reached by calling (570) 321-4050, emailing [michewicz@lycoming.edu](mailto:michewicz@lycoming.edu), or visiting her office (Academic Resource Center, 3rd Floor of Snowden Library). Please contact your instructor during the first week of class to discuss accommodations to help you succeed in the course.

\*If you require different assignment deadlines from the ones noted in the syllabus, you are responsible for arranging new dates with the instructor and will be held to the same consequences as other students if those new deadlines are not met.

**When is the best time to talk to you?**

You can chat with me before or after class or during my office hours regarding quick questions or information. If you have any concerns that require a more private setting or more time to discuss, please email me or see me before/after class to set up a time to meet. Also, I am always happy to chat via email if you feel more comfortable using that medium.

**How often do you check your email?**

I check my email fairly often, but do not always have time to respond right away. I promise to respond to your email within 24 hours, but I do my best to respond on the same day I receive it (especially if I perceive it to be an urgent matter).

**What’s my grade?**

You can access your grade at any time on Moodle and should check it frequently. This is the best way to keep from being surprised at the end of the semester. If you check your grade regularly, you will be more likely to catch any potential mistakes that I make when entering point values. If you notice something amiss, tell me! If you wait until the end of the semester, it is very unlikely that either of us still has the original assignment for reference, and I will have to rely on the current entry to be fair to everyone. Points deducted for absences/tardies will not be subtracted until the end of the semester. Check in with me at any time to see how many absences/tardies you have.

**Do you have any formatting requirements for papers?**

Yes. All papers must be double-spaced, use Times New Roman (12 point) font, have 1” margins, and contain your name in the header (the margin header, not the first line of the page). You may use MLA or Chicago styles for citations. They must be stapled and handed in during class on the day they are due, unless it is an online Moodle submission.

**Do you give extra credit?**

There is no guarantee that extra credit opportunities will be offered. They are offered only at the discretion of the instructor and will be offered to the class as a whole. Details regarding any extra credit opportunities will be given in class and posted on Moodle.

**ASSIGNMENT BREAKDOWN**

**Student Presentations**

Each Monday there will be a Student Presentation on a topic of Irish history or culture. Each individual student will select a topic and give a 20-25 minute presentation, which will include the following elements:

* Power Point Presentation
* At least 10 Images/Videos
* 2-page “Study Guide” for the other members of the class, featuring highlights of your presentation and a bibliography of relevant sources

Your presentation should be interesting and informative. We will need your information to help understand the context of our plays and to help us when writing our Final Papers. DO NOT BORE US. DO NOT STAND THERE AND READ THE SLIDES. Think about incorporating a class activity, game, or worksheet to immerse us in your topic. After your presentation, we will open the class up for discussion about your topic to expand our knowledge.

**Irish Glossary/Discussion Question**

**Glossary**

For each play we read, you will create a list of Irish words and phrases that you do not understand. These could be in the Irish language (Gaeilge) or part of the cultural idiom. For example, what we call a “kitchen stove,” the Irish call a “cooker.” We might describe someone who’s had a few alcoholic drinks as “tipsy,” while the Irish might say he’s “in his cups.” Once you’ve assembled a list, make an attempt to define each item using context clues or a brief Google search.

**Discussion Question**

You will develop one discussion question based on the play you read. Small groups will engage with the questions and open them up to the larger class for consideration. Here are some simple rules for creating good discussion questions.

Good discussion questions:

* are open-ended, meaning they can have a variety of responses, rather than a simple “yes” or “no.”
* depend on careful reading of the text, often times focusing on a small segment and asking us to connect it to the larger work.
* make and challenge connections between the text and other works, issues, or themes in the course.

\*Both the Glossary and Discussion Question should be typed and handed in on the day they are due. They can be on the same paper.

**Midterm Exam**

The Midterm Exam will draw from all parts of the course and could include multiple choice, matching, true/false, fill in the blank, short answer, and essay questions. Content can range from Irish vocabulary to playwright biographies to student presentation material to play comprehension.

**Final Paper**

The course will culminate in a final comparative paper that will address two Irish plays: one should be from the syllabus, the other does not have to be. The paper should be 4-6 pages and use at least three secondary sources in its examination of the two plays; these sources can come from our syllabus, the student presentation bibliographies, and/or outside research.

**GRADING BREAKDOWN**

Student Presentation 250 pts.

Glossary/Discussion Question (10@20pts.) 200 pts.

Midterm Exam 100 pts.

Final Paper 250 pts.

Participation (4 quarters@50pts.) 200 pts.

Total: 1000 pts.

**Student Presentations**

1.25 The Playboy Riots Presenter:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

2.1 Easter Rising/Irish War for Independence Presenter:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

2.8 The Famine & Irish Immigration Presenter:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

2.15 The Catholic Church in Ireland Presenter:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

2.22 The History of Gaeilge Presenter:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

3.14 Jim Larkin/Sackville Street Riots Presenter:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

3.21 The Magdalene Laundries/Women’s Issues Presenter:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

3.28 The Aran Islands Presenter:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

4.4 Irish Folklore Presenter:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

4.11 The Celtic Tiger Economic Boom Presenter:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

DAY-TO-DAY SCHEDULE

Week 1

1.11 Syllabus; What is Irish/Identity?; Rang Gaeilge

For **Wednesday, January 20th: READ AHEAD!**

* MCID, “The Irish Dramatic Revival,” various, pp. 401-423
* MCID, “Image-Maker for Ireland: Augusta, Lady Gregory,” Saddlemyer, pp.449-452
* *Cathleen Ní Houlihan* (1902) by W.B. Yeats & Lady Augusta Gregory

1.13 KC/ACTF NO CLASS

1.15 KC/ACTF NO CLASS

Week 2

1.18 Library Session: “Researching for Student Presentations”

For Next Class:

* MCID, “The Irish Dramatic Revival,” various, pp. 401-423
* MCID, “Image-Maker for Ireland: Augusta, Lady Gregory,” Saddlemyer,

pp.449-452

* *Cathleen Ní Houlihan* (1902) by W.B. Yeats & Lady Augusta Gregory

1.20 *Cathleen Ní Houlihan* Presentation & Discussion

1.22 Rang Gaeilge

For Next Class:

* MCID, “The Controversy over *The Playboy of the Western World*,”

Yeats, pp. 462-464

Week 3

1.25 The Playboy Riots Student Presentation

For Next Class:

* *The Playboy of the Western World* (1907) by John Millington Synge

1.27 *The Playboy of the Western World* Discussion

1.29 Rang Gaeilge

For Next Class:

* MIT, “Chapter 3: The Abbey Becomes Institution: 1916-1929,” **pp. 63-**

**74**

Week 4

2.1 Easter Rising/Irish War for Independence Student Presentation

For Next Class:

* *Juno & the Paycock* (1924) by Sean O’Casey

2.3 *Juno & the Paycock* Discussion

2.5 Rang Gaeilge

For Next Class:

* PIM, “Chapter 3: The Exiled Past: The Return of the Irish Immigrant,”

pp. 78-99 (Moodle PDF)

Week 5

2.8 The Famine/Irish Immigration Student Presentation

For Next Class:

* *Philadelphia, Here I Come!* (1964) by Brian Friel

2.10 *Philadelphia, Here I Come!* Discussion

2.12 Rang Gaeilge

For Next Class:

* MIT, “Chapter 7: Theatres Without Borders: Irish Theatre in the

1980s,” **pp. 153-165**

Week 6

2.15 The Catholic Church in Ireland Student Presentation

For Next Class:

* *Báilegangáire* (1985) by Tom Murphy

2.17 *Báilegangáire* Discussion

2.19 Rang Gaeilge

For Next Class:

* “An Eye on the Survey” (PDF—Moodle)
* “The Hedge Schools” (PDF—Moodle)

Week 7

2.22 The History of Gaeilge Student Presentation

For Next Class:

* *Translations* (1980) by Brian Friel

2.24 *Translations* Discussion

2.26 Rang Gaeilge

For Next Class:

Midterm Brush-Up Session—BRING ALL WORKSHEETS!

Week 8

2.29 Midterm Brush-Up Session

For Next Class:

MIDTERM!!!

3.2 In-Class Midterm

3.4 Rang Gaeilge—Lá Fhéile Pádraig (St. Patrick’s Day)

For Next Class:

* MCID, “Translating Women into Irish Theatre History,” Trotter, pp.

600-606

* PIM, “Chapter 1: Past Traumas: Representing Institutional Abuse” pp.

18-52 (Moodle PDF)

Week 9 SPRING BREAK! NO CLASS!

Week 10

3.14 The Magdalene Laundries/Women’s Issues Student Presentation

For Next Class:

* *By the Bog of Cats* (1998) by Marina Carr

3.16 *By the Bog of Cats* Discussion

3.18 In-Class Movie

For Next Class:

* MIT, “Chapter 8: A New Sense of Place: Irish Theatre since the 1990s,”

pp. 176-194

Week 11

3.21 Jim Larkin/Sackville Street Riots Student Presentation

For Next Class:

* *The Steward of Christendom* (1995) by Sebastian Barry

3.23 *The Steward of Christendom* Discussion

3.25 GOOD FRIDAY—NO CLASS

Week 12

3.28 The Aran Islands Student Presentation

For Next Class:

* *The Cripple of Inishmaan* (1996) by Martin McDonagh

3.30 *The Cripple of Inishmaan* Discussion

4.1 Rang Gaeilge

View *Man of Aran* (1934) by Robert Flaherty

For Next Class:

* PIM, “Chapter 6: Haunted Pasts: Exorcising the Ghosts of Irish

Culture,” pp. 152-170 (Moodle PDF)

Week 13

4.4 Irish Folklore Student Presentation

For Next Class:

* *The Weir* (1997) by Conor McPherson

4.6 *The Weir* Discussion

4.8 Comparative Paper Prompt/Rubric

For Next Class:

* “Modern Ireland: Multinationals and Multiculturalism,” Banks, pp. 1-

29 (Moodle PDF)

Week 14

4.11 The Celtic Tiger Student Presentation

For Next Class:

* *The Pride of Parnell Street* (2008) by Sebastian Barry (Moodle PDF)

4.13 *The Pride of Parnell Street* Discussion

For Next Class:

Paper Topics Due

4.14 Paper Topics Workshopping

For Next Class:

Paper Outline/Main Points Due

Week 15

4.17 Paper Workshopping

4.19 Paper Workshopping

For Next Class:

Rough Draft Due

4.21 Rough Draft Workshopping

Week 16

FINALS Comparative Paper Due

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

**COURSE GOALS**

**This course partially fulfills the following Approved Institutional Expected Student Learning Outcomes:**

Upon graduation, a Lycoming College graduate will:

* have achieved depth of learning in at least one field of study
* have demonstrated intellectual breadth through the study of the arts, humanities, mathematics, natural and social sciences, and modern or ancient languages
* have enriched his/her education through the completion of one or more enhanced academic experiences
* understand cultural diversity
* be able to communicate effectively in both written and oral forms
* be able to think critically
* have demonstrated information literacy skills and technological competence appropriate for his/her discipline

**This course partially fulfills the following Departmental Learning Goals for Theatre:**

* Understanding of the distinctive roles performed by each of the artists who contribute to the creation of a theatrical production: playwright, actor, director, scene designer, lighting designer, costume designer, makeup designer, and sound designer.
* Ability to analyze and evaluate dramatic texts, both as literature and as blueprints for production, from a variety of perspectives: performance, directorial, design, and technical.
* Ability to analyze and evaluate theatrical productions from a variety of perspectives: performance, directorial, design, and technical.
* Ability to create and deliver a formal presentation about some aspect of theatre theory and/or practice.
* Understanding of the historical development of Western theatre and drama from Ancient Greece to the present and their relationship to the distinctive social, political, and cultural aspects of each era.
* Understanding the diversity of global cultures through the focus of theatre and drama.
* Fundamental understanding of the actor’s creative process and the ability to apply those skills in performance.
* Ability to create and deliver a formal presentation about some aspect of theatre theory and/or practice.
* Comprehension of specific techniques required by various acting styles and the ability to apply those skills to create different acting styles, including realism, classical, and Shakespearean.
* Understanding of the director’s creative process and the ability to apply those skills in the creation of a theatrical production.
* Understanding of the historical development of Western scene, lighting, and costume design and the ability to apply design aesthetics to particular theatrical productions.
* Refinement of effective speaking, writing, and critical thinking skills.