

Social Work

History of Orphanages and Reformatories: What Went Wrong? ~ Cynthia Faulkner

UD only (Upper Division 300-500)/3 credit hours

This course examines Violence Against Women and Children and their historical antecedents in Ireland. Students will learn about the laws and responses towards child maltreatment such as the Magdalen Laundry (a notorious workhouse) and the Industrial Schools for children. Between 1868 and 1969, more than 100,000 Irish children were taken from their families by the state and placed in so-called industrial schools run by various orders of the Catholic Church. The conditions in these schools, as documented by Mary Raftery first in her award-winning TV documentary *States of Fear* and then in her book *Suffer the Little Children: The Inside Story of Ireland's Industrial Schools*, were appalling. The documentary so shocked Ireland that the prime minister was forced to offer an apology on behalf of the state. Most of the children in industrial schools were placed there because of their parents' poverty. Then the state closed its eyes as the children were abused physically, mentally and sexually by the nuns and priests who were supposed to take care of them. It is noteworthy that Father Edward Flanagan (an Irish Priest and founder of Boystown in Omaha, Nebraska) on a visit to Ireland in 1946 condemned the highly abusive and punitive culture within the Irish industrial schools. Students will also learn about Ireland's Magdalen Asylums - homes that were founded in the 19th and 20th centuries. Some served as a detention for prostitutes undergoing reform. Some were incarcerated simply for being "too beautiful," and therefore in danger of sin. Others were mentally retarded. The inmates of these asylums were discouraged and many forcibly prevented from leaving and sometimes were detained for life. The Holy Saints Magdalen Home for Wayward Girls and Fallen Women was also a prison-like institution in Dublin where unmarried pregnant women were sent in shame until they delivered, after which, without exception, the church took their babies away for adoption. *The Magdalen* by Marita Conlon-McKenna and *Do Penance or Perish: Magdalen Asylums in Ireland* by Frances Finnegan are excellent readings.

Can the course be taken to fulfill major and minor requirements? YES

Can the course be taken to fulfill general elective credits? YES

Are there prerequisites for this course?

NO

Assessment Methods:

Journals (Daily) 25%

Group Project and Presentation 50%

Summative Paper 25%