

Literature

The Irish Literary Tradition from The Tain to Toibin ~ Barbara Burch

LD (Lower Division 100-200)/UD (Upper Division 300-400)

3 credit hours

Introduced bluntly, the title of my course, "The Irish Literary Tradition from The Tain to Toibin" will sound unrealistic for a two week course: However, this will not be a traditional survey that looks at multiple works from a series of literary periods. Instead, students will be assigned a chronological list of "greatest hits," each of which will be discussed and placed in historical context. We will begin The Tain and end with Tobin's "The Testament of Mary." The Tain will be the lengthiest reading and I will urge students to read this work in advance, with the appropriate assistance from me. "The Testament of Mary" is a 95 page novella that students can easily read in two to three hours. (On the trip I will introduce Toibin, and connect him to the themes we have discussed. Hopefully, students will be able to finish this reading in on the trip, or even the plane ride home. All other readings will be relatively brief selections (10 - 15 pp) from Jonathan Swift, William Butler Yeats, John Synge, James Joyce, Elizabeth Bowen, and several contemporary poets (Seamus Heaney, Eilean ni Chuilleanain, Ciaran Carson). Brief lectures, group discussion and field trips (a number of possibilities are listed in my answer to question 30) will provide students with opportunities to reread, analyze and appreciate the texts in depth. By the end of the course students should understand: 1) That Ireland possesses a thriving literary tradition that rivals the British Literary tradition; 2) How the Irish literary tradition has been shaped by Irish Myth and Folklore 3) How the Irish literary tradition has been influenced by medieval monastic culture. 4) The ways in which Ireland's political history has shaped its literary production (Colonialism and "The Troubles," specifically). Note: Certainly, any one of these objectives could be the focus of an entire course. However, my goal is to construct and lead discussions of our reading list in ways that introduces students to these issues and gives them a basis for further research or reflection independently or in additional course work.

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?

Students enrolled in LD version of this course should have completed the freshman composition requirements specified by their institution. Students enrolled in the UD version of this course should have completed one semester of World or British Literature Survey.

Assessment Methods:

Lower Division Requirements:

Class Preparation, Participation and Discussion (Students will fill out and submit a rubric evaluating their participation in lecture and discussion groups) 25 %; Journal/Scrapbook documenting trip (Students will be provided with writing prompts and ideas about for reflecting on photographs, materials collected via field trips, etc.) 25%; Final Exam 25%; 5 to 7 page analysis of a reading or group of readings from the course (Prompts will be provided and students will be required to submit and revise a draft after the trip) 25%.

Upper Division Requirements:

Class Preparation, Participation and Discussion (Students will fill out and submit a rubric evaluating their participation in lecture and discussion groups) 25 %; Journal/Scrapbook documenting trip (Students will be provided with writing prompts and ideas about for reflecting on readings, site visits, artifacts, photographs, or other materials collected via field trips, etc.) 25%; Final Exam 25%; 8 to 10 page research paper (5 sources) that investigates an author or groups of authors studied in more depth (Prompts will be suggested and students will be required to submit and revise a draft after the trip) 25%.

- 1) The lower and upper division courses will both require final papers, but the students taking the course for upper division credit will be required to read additional texts by their selected author and to support their analysis with at least five secondary sources.
- 2) The rubric for evaluating class preparation and participation will reflect reasonably higher expectations for students taking the course for upper division credit.
- 3) Students taking the course for upper division credit will be required to finish a timeline assignment as part of their journals. This will be an optional assignment for students taking the course for lower division credit.
- 4) Upper division students will read a short selection from the first chapter of Ulysses.