

**Modern Irish Short Story**  
College of the Holy Cross, Spring 2001  
MWF 11:00-11:50 pm, O'Neill 101

Instructor: Paige Reynolds  
Office Hours: Fenwick 220, W 2:00 –3:00 or by appointment  
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**Required Texts:**

Trevor, William, ed. *Oxford Book of Irish Short Stories* (Oxford UP)  
Somer, John and John J. Daly, eds. *Anchor Book of New Irish Writing* (Bantam, Doubleday, Dell)  
DeSalvo, Walsh, and Hogan, eds. *Short Fiction by Irish Women Writers* (Beacon Press)

**Recommended Text:**

R.F. Foster, *Oxford History of Ireland* (Oxford UP)

**Objectives:** The modern Irish short story as we know it developed from the sketches, idylls, and short tales of nineteenth-century authors like Jane Barlow and Seamus O'Kelly. In the early twentieth century, the realism found in continental short fiction also began to impact Irish fiction, as evidenced by collections like George Moore's *The Untilled Field* and Joyce's *Dubliners*. These early texts will serve as the departure point of our exploration of the Irish short story, which we'll examine through the lens of themes related to twentieth- and twenty-first-century Irish life – themes such as gender, religion, adolescence, identity, community, exile, and borders. We'll read short fiction by Sean O'Faolain, Frank O'Connor, Elizabeth Bowen, Mary Lavin, and others writing in the middle of the twentieth century. Their "canonical" work will be interspersed with contemporary short stories, particularly those by women writers from both the Republic and Northern Ireland. These short stories will allow us the opportunity not only to read good fiction, but also to learn more about modern Irish culture.

**Requirements:**

**Participation and Preparation (20%).** Come to class with questions, puzzles, observations, and other responses to the text at hand. Work to weave your responses to an individual text into the other texts that we'll read this semester. Obviously, this means you must read closely and critically. If it becomes clear that you have not read and cannot enter into the discussion, this will bode ill for your grade.

**Papers (short papers 20% each, final paper 30%).** During the semester, you will write two short papers (4-5 pgs) on particular questions related to texts we've discussed in class. Your final paper will be a significant analysis of any text we've read this semester. The final paper should be about 10 pages, typed, double-spaced. It must adhere to MLA guidelines. If you don't know what those are, buy a stylebook. I recommend Diana Hacker's *Writer's Reference*, which is available at the college bookstore.

**Film Review (10%).** You will be responsible for a short review of John Huston's film of Joyce's *The Dead* (1987). We'll discuss the details of this assignment further as the due date approaches.

**Conferences.** Plan to meet with me during office hours at least once this semester. Also, please feel free to talk with me about reading or writing during office hours.

**Absences.** You must attend every class. An unexcused absence will significantly lower your grade. If you have a genuine emergency/illness or you discuss the absence with me in advance, we will discuss your options.

**Final Grade.** Your final grade is composed of the following: two short papers (40%), film review (10%), final paper (30%), class participation (20%).

### **Reading and Assignment Schedule:**

W 1/17 Introduction

F 1/19 Conlon, "Telling" (A 131-134)

### **Literary Genealogies**

M 1/22 Folktales (O 1-18)

W 1/24 Swift, "A Modest Proposal" (handout); Goldsmith, "Adventures of a Strolling Player" (O 19-26); Edgeworth, "The Limerick Gloves" (O 27-51)

F 1/26 Barlow, "The Stay-at-Homes" (handout); Hall, "Good Spirits and Bad" (handout)

M 1/29 Carleton, "The Death of a Devotee" (O 52-77), "The Party Fight and Funeral" (handout)

W 1/31 Yeats, "Red Hanrahan" (handout)

F 2/2 No class.

### **Ways of Telling**

M 2/5 O'Conaire, "My Little Black Ass" (O 267-270); Griffin, "The Brown Man" (O 73-77)  
**First Paper Due**

W 2/7 Moore, "Home Sickness" (handout); Joyce, "The Dead" (O 228-266)

F 2/9 Donoghue, "Seven Pictures Not Taken" (A 135-139); Ni Dhuibhne, "Midwife to the Fairies" (B 31-38); Matthews, "Granny" (B 39-40); Hartigan, "Pure Invention" (B 79-85)

### **Traditions**

M 2/12 O'Kelly, "The Weaver's Grave" (O 182-227)

W 2/14 Kelly, "The Intruders" (B 86-92); De Vere White, "Desert Island" (O 401-411)

F 2/16 Boylan, "The Little Madonna" (A 74-81); Kelly, "En Famille" (A 82-91); Montague, "An Occasion of Sin" (O 482-494); Conlon, "Park-going Days" (B 164-170)

### **Personal Histories**

M 2/19 Plunkett, "Weep for our Pride" (O 425-436); O'Faolain, "First Conjugation" (O 515-525)

W 2/21 MacMahon, "The Ring" (O 388-391); Mathews, "The Strangest Feeling in Bernard's Bathroom" (A 140-151)

F 2/23 MacLavery, "Life Drawing" (O 541-551); Lavin, "In the Middle of the Fields" (B 1-16); Burke, "All Fall Down" (B 177-182)

### **"Irishness" and Colonial Contexts**

M 2/26 Bowen, "Her Table Spread" (O 311-318); Bowen, "Summer Nights" (A 3-31); Bowen, "A Day in the Dark" (B 183-190)

W 2/28 O'Connor, "Guests of the Nation" (O 342-353); MacLavery "Between Two Shores" (A 56-67)

F 3/2 Barrington, "Village without Men" (B 228-238)

**M 3/5- F 3/9 Spring Break!**

### **Facing Change, Denying Change**

M 3/12 Lavin, "Sarah" (O 392-400); O'Faolain, "Melancholy Baby" (B 62-78)

W 3/14 O'Connor, "The Long Way Home" (A 260-276); Mulkerns, "Loser" (O 437-444)

F 3/16 O'Flaherty, "The Fanatic" (O 300-310); Mathews, "The Story of the German Parachutist Who Landed Forty-Two Years Too Late" (A 152-167)

### **Religion and Mystery**

M 3/19 Corkery, "The Priest" (O 172-181); Le Fanu, "Green Tea" (O 78-108); Friel, "The Diviner" (O 469-481)

W 3/21 Kiely, "The Pilgrims" (O 412-424); Trevor, "Death in Jerusalem" (O 455-470); Strong, "The Bride of Christ" (B 41-45); O'Brien, "Sister Imelda" (B 139-157)

F 3/23 McCabe, "The Hands of Dingo Deery" (A 183-199)

### **Community**

M 3/26 O'Connor, "The Majesty of the Law" (O 354-362); Boyle, "Pastorale" (O 363-374); Johnston, "Trio" (B 171-176)

W 3/28 O'Brien, "Irish Revel" (O 495-514); Banville, "Persona" (A 211-219); Ni Dhuibhne, "The Garden of Eden" (A 253-259)

F 3/30 Boylan, "Housekeeper's Cut" (B 17-30); Beckett, "Failing Years" (B 216-225); Kelly, "Amnesty" (B 114-130)

### **Gender and Sexuality**

M 4/2 Moore, "Albert Nobbs" (O 109-151)

W 4/4 O'Cadhain, "The Hare-Lip" (O 375-381); Sommerville and Ross, "Philippa's Fox-Hunt" (O 157-171); Stephens, "The Triangle" (O 271-276)

F 4/6 Dorsey, "A Sense of Humour" (A 235-252); Treacy, "Made in Heaven" (B 131-138); Bardwell, "The Dove of Peace" (B 244-256); Cooke, "The Foundress" (B 191-200)

M 4/9 Smyth, "Near the Bone" (A 68-73); Hogan, "The Airedale" (O 552-563)

W 4/12 Binchy, "Shepherd's Bush" (A 92-107); Murphy, "A Curse" (B 226-227)

### **Second Paper Due**

**F 4/14 – M 4/9 Easter Recess!**

### **Ireland from Elsewhere**

W 4/18 Cary, "Bush River" (O 277-286); Hogan, "The Bombs" (A 44-55); Sweeney, "Lord McDonald" (A 227-234)

F 4/20 O'Faolain, "The Faithless Wife" (O 317-337); McGahern, "The Beginning of an Idea" (O 526-540); O'Loughlin, "The Making of a Bureaucrat" (A 220-226)

**Literary Ireland Today**

M 4/23 Devlin, "Naming the Names" (A 108-139); Barr, "The Wall Reader" (B 46-52); McKay, "Checkpoint" (B 239-243)

W 4/25 McCann, "Fishing the Sloe-Black River" (A 279-281), "Cathal's Lake" (A 282-292)

F 4/27 Enright, "What Are Cicadas?" (A 168-174), "Men and Angels" (175-182)

M 4/30 Jordan, "The Dream of a Beast" (A 293-354)

**W 5/2 Study Period**

**TBA Final Paper Due**