

## SU404 GAELIC LITERATURE AND CULTURE (3 credits)

**COURSE OBJECTIVE:** To introduce the student – in the first half of the course – to the extant narrative literature of the period 600-1200, to familiarize him/her with the main strands which run through much of it, and to read and interpret a selection of texts (in translation) from that period with a view to gaining a better understanding of the mindset(s) which created that literature. By the end of this first part of the course the student should be equipped with the necessary tools with which to engage critically with the literature during further independent reading.

Despite the vicissitudes of history and the flagging fortunes of the Irish language, Gaelic literature not only manages to survive, but is now actually displaying signs of vibrant and exciting creativity. Though very much citizens of the world, contemporary Gaelic authors are conscious of their inherited tradition and freely exploit the rich resources of Gaelic folklore, thus creating a unique and distinctive spirit in their writing. The second half of the course will focus on contemporary literature in the Irish language.

A knowledge of Irish is not a prerequisite; all classes will be through English. Introductory classes in the Irish language will be provided to interested students.

### **COURSE OUTLINE:**

#### **Part I**

1. The beginnings of literacy in Ireland; an introduction to the sources and methods of interpretation of Old and Middle Irish literature (Part I)
2. The beginnings of literacy in Ireland; an introduction to the sources and methods of interpretation of Old and Middle Irish literature (Part II)
3. Tales of the *Ulaid* (*Táin Bó Cúailnge*)
4. Tales of the Monastery (Early Irish Poetry)
5. Tales of the Otherworld I (*Echtrae Chonnlaí*)
6. Tales of the Otherworld II (*Immram Brain*)
7. Tales of the *Fianna* (*Accallam na Senórach*)

#### **Part II**

1. "Irish Ireland" or a "Mongrel Race": The Gaelic Literary Revival
2. Pádraic Ó Conaire: An Intense Awareness of Human Loneliness
3. The Islandman and Rural Autobiographies
4. Máirtín Ó Cadhain: The Road to Bright City
5. Translating the Gaelic Worldview: Modern Irish Poetry in Translation
6. Nuala Ní Dhomhnaill: Folklore, Fairy Forts and the Modern World
7. Fight or Flight: The Poetry of Gearóid Mac Lochlainn

### **COURSE BIBLIOGRAPHY: Part I**

McCone, K. 1990

Pagan Past and Christian Present in  
Early Irish Literature  
Early Irish Literature

Dillon, M. 1948

Cross, T.P. &

Slover, C.H. 1936

Ancient Irish Tales

Gantz, J., 1981

Early Irish Myths and Sagas

McCone, K. 2000

Echtrae Chonnlaí and the Beginnings of  
Vernacular Narrative Writing in Ireland

Greene, D. & O'Connor F. 1967

A Golden Treasury of Irish Poetry

Kinsella, T. 1969

The Táin

Murphy, G., 1956  
Dooley, A. & Roe, H. 1999  
O'Neill, T. 1984  
Cross, T.P. 1952  
Welch, R. 1996

Early Irish Lyrics  
Tales of the elders of Ireland  
The Irish Hand  
Motif-Index of Early Irish Literature  
The Oxford Companion to Irish Literature

### Further Reading:

Caerwyn Williams, J.E. &  
Ford, P. 1992  
Carney, J. 1967  
Jackson, K.H., 1951  
Koch, J.T. & Carey, J.  
Mallory, J.P., 1992  
Wooding, J., 2000

Mac Cana, P. 1980  
Ó Corráin, D. 1989

The Irish Literary Tradition  
Medieval Irish Lyrics  
A Celtic Miscellany  
The Celtic Heroic Age  
Aspects of the Táin  
The Otherworld Voyage in Early Irish Literature:  
An Anthology of Criticism  
The Learned Tales of Medieval Ireland  
'Early Irish hermit poetry?' in *Sages, Saints and*  
*Storytellers*, (edd.) D. Ó Corráin, L. Breathnach,  
K. McCone, 251-67

### Course Bibliography: Part II

#### Basic Text

Gearóid Mac Lochlainn, *Stream of Tongues: Sruth Teangacha*, 2002.  
Nuala Ní Dhomhnaill, *Selected Poems: Rogha Dánta*, 2000.  
Nuala Ní Dhomhnaill, *Pharaoh's Daughter*, 1990.  
Flann O'Brien, *The Poor Mouth*, 1993.  
Máirtín Ó Cadhain, *The Road to Brightcity and Other Stories*, Eoghan Ó Tuairisc (transl.), 1986.  
Pádraic Ó Conaire, *The Finest Stories of Pádraic Ó Conaire*, 1986.  
Pádraic Ó Conaire, *The woman at the window*, 1931.  
Máirtín Ó Cadhain, *Dhá Scéal: Two Stories*, 2006.  
Tomás Ó Criomhthain [Tomás O'Crohan], *The Islandman*, (1971) 2000.  
Padraic Pearse, *Short Stories of Padraic Pearse*, 1989.

#### Further Reading:

Bo Almqvist, 'Of Mermaids and Marriages', *Béaloideas* (1990), 1-74.  
Michael Cronin, *Translating Ireland: Translation, Languages, Cultures*, Cork University Press, 1996.  
Douglas Hyde, 'The Necessity for De-Anglicising Ireland', in *Language, Lore and Lyrics: Essays and Lectures*, 1986.  
Declan Kiberd, 'Basket Autobiographies', *Irish Classics*, 2000, 520-43.  
Nuala Ní Dhomhnaill, *Selected Essays*, 2005.  
Máire Cruise O'Brien (Máire Mhac an tSaoi), 'An tOileánach', *The Pleasures of Gaelic Literature*, ed. John Jordan, 1977, 25-38.  
Máirtín Ó Cadhain, 'Irish Prose in the Twentieth Century' in J.E. Caerwyn Williams (ed.), *Literature in Celtic Countries*, 1971, 139-51.  
Philip O'Leary, *The Prose Literature of the Gaelic Revival 1881-1921*, 1994.  
Philip O'Leary, *Gaelic Prose in the Irish Free State 1922-1939*, 2004.

### **REQUIREMENTS FOR CREDITS:**

1. Attendance at lectures and participation in seminars.
2. One essay of 1,500 words on a subject of your choice, subject to the agreement of the Course Professor.
3. Written examination of material covered in lectures and seminars.

### **COURSE PROFESSORS:**

#### **John Walsh, M.A., Ph.D. (Director)**

Dr. John Walsh is a Lecturer in the School of Irish at the National University of Ireland, Galway, where he teaches sociolinguistics and language policy. His PhD, awarded by Dublin City University, examined the influence of the Irish language on Ireland's socio-economic development. Previously, he worked as a journalist with the Irish state broadcaster, RTÉ, and with the Irish language television station, TG4. His current research interests include implementation of language legislation, Irish language policy, language and media.

#### **Kicki Ingridsson, M.A.**

Kicki Ingridsson is currently working as a lecturer of Old Irish and Celtic Civilization in the School of Irish at the National University of Ireland, Galway, teaching courses in Old Irish language and literature, Celtic society, Celtic kingship and Mythology. She studied for her B.A, M.A. and Ph. D. in Celtic languages at the University of Uppsala, Sweden. Her research topics are based on early Irish saga text in general and text editing in particular.

#### **Éadaoin Ní Mhuircheartaigh, M.A.**

Éadaoin Ní Mhuircheartaigh is a graduate of Trinity College Dublin, where she studied Irish and Spanish. Following her primary degree, she did an MA in Modern Irish at the National University of Ireland, Galway, focusing on the folklore surrounding Piaras Feirtéar, a poet and chieftain of the 17<sup>th</sup> Century. She is currently finishing research on her PhD in the School of Irish, NUI Galway. Publications include *Cláiocha Arda*, a DVD on writer Máirtín Ó Cadhain by Acadamh na hOllscolaíochta Gaeilge (2006) and *Drámaí Thús na hAthbheochana* with Nollaig Mac Congáil, (2008).