SU406 NEGOTIATING IDENTITY IN IRISH TRADITIONAL MUSIC
AND DANCE (3 Credits)

COURSE OBJECTIVE: This course will examine key practices in Irish traditional music and
dance since 1800. Both music and dance offer opportunities for negotiating identity within
communities, and declaring those identities externally. The changes which took place in
performance practice reflect wider changes in society, and were an essential part of both culture
in Ireland and among the Diaspora. Underlying much of the recent intellectualising of traditional
music, and indeed the whole question of identity, is the issue of authenticity and tradition.
Students will explore these issues and will also have the opportunity to take sean-nós singing and
dance workshops as vocational support to the academic programme.

COURSE OUTLINE:
Week 1 Introduction to Irish music and dance

Week 2 Piping
    Song traditions

Week 3 Development of ensemble
    Irish dance 1870-1960

Week 4 Revivals of Irish music and dance 1960

Week 5 Music identity in the new millennium

Selected readings
Rachel Fleming, “Resisting cultural standardization: Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann and the
257.
Mary Friel, Dancing as Social Pastime in the South-East of Ireland, 1800-1897. Dublin: Four
Susan Gedutis, See You at The Hall: Boston’s Golden Era of Irish Music and Dance. NH:
Northeastern University Press.
Reg Hall, The Social Organisation of Music-making: The Irish in London After the War. Cork:
Colin Harper and Trevor Hodget, Irish Folk, Trad and Blues—A Secret History. London: Cherry
Adam Kaul, “The limits of commodification in traditional Irish music sessions.” Journal of the
Louis Marcus, “Seán Ó Riada and the Ireland of the Sixties” in The Achievement of Seán Ó
Diane Negra, “Consuming Ireland: Lucky charms, cereal, Irish Spring Soap and 1-800

Reading materials will be made available at class.

**REQUIREMENTS FOR CREDITS:**

1. Attendance at lectures and participation in seminars.
2. One essay of 1,500 words assigned by instructor.
3. Examination of material discussed in classes and seminars.

**COURSE PROFESSOR:**

Méabh Ní Fhuartháin, M.A.

Méabh Ní Fhuartháin was educated at University College Cork, Boston College and Brown University. She has taught in Boston College and University College Cork and presently is affiliated with the Centre for Irish Studies at NUI, Galway. An ethnomusicologist, her main research area is in Irish traditional music, specifically in emigrant communities and also contemporary platforms for music and dance. Méabh is currently a Government of Ireland Scholar, researching Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann during the period 1951-1971. She has published numerous reviews and articles on Irish traditional music, and is a subject editor for *The Encyclopaedia of Music in Ireland*. 