

## Taught MA in Modern English

### Semester 1

#### **EH5712 Poetics and Politics of Irish Identity**

This module will explore conscious and unconscious aspects of identity across a range of contemporary Irish narrative and poetic texts. It will explore how different and singular aspects of identity are voiced and created in a contemporary Irish context. Looking at the chosen texts through the lenses of deconstructive, psychoanalytic and presentist theoretical paradigms, the module will explore how fictive voices can often access and express truths that are not available to normative discourses. It will also historicise the modes of identity within which these texts were produced, as well as demonstrating how the works deconstruct and interrogate such notions of identity. A comparative and contrastive investigation of the poetic construction of a selected number of contemporary Irish texts will also be offered. Issues of genre-specific construction will be addressed in poetry and the novel. Texts will span a continuum of high and popular culture, looking at issues of symbolic, cultural and social capital, and modes of close reading, as well as the imbrication of texts and contexts, will be used as critical tools, along with theoretically-driven readings. The course will look at 21<sup>st</sup> century poetry and novels, in order to offer a critique of current poetic and political imbrications of identity. Among the texts taught are: Sean Hewitt, *Tongues of Fire* (2020); Stephen Sexton, *If All the World and Love Were Young* (2019); Sally Rooney, *Normal People* (2018); Naoise Dolan, *Exciting Times – A Novel* (2020); Anne Enright, *The Gathering*, (2007) and Paul Howard, *Braywatch*, (2020).

#### **EH5742 Modern American Fiction**

This module will study a range of work by American authors writing in the genres of the novel and the short story. It will explore the diversity of experience reflected in these texts in terms of a changing socio-cultural context for their writing from the 1930s to the 21<sup>st</sup> century as well as exploring experimentation in narrative style. These texts will also be read through a theoretical lens including postmodernism, feminist theory, race theory and trauma theory. The texts being studied cover this particular timespan in order to chart a changing literary response to cultural upheavals in a society defined by contradiction and

diversity. This course aims to provide students with an insight into a range of those diverse voices and diverse responses to profound challenges associated with race, gender, and class to name but a few. Among the texts to be studied are: Zora Neale Hurston, *Their Eyes Were Watching God*; Raymond Chandler, *The Big Sleep*; Ernest Hemingway *The Snows Of Kilimanjaro And Other Stories*; Walter Mosley *Devil in a Blue Dress*; *A Good Man is Hard to Find and Other Stories*; Toni Morrison, *Beloved*; Don DeLillo, *Falling Man* (2007) and Richard Ford's *The Granta Book of the American Short Story* (Vol 2).

### **EH5771 Migration and Biopolitics in 21<sup>st</sup> Century Literature**

This module will explore questions of displacement, migration, and belonging in the 21st Century. Through analysis of a range of novels and short stories from 2000 to present this module will determine how cultural production is responding to some of the most important sociological questions of contemporary life. This 3 hour weekly seminar will analyse how literature is asking us to engage with contemporary discourses of borders, national security, global mobility, diaspora, and identity. It will analyse detailed knowledge of a diverse range of contemporary world literature detailing the experience of migrations and movements, and offer an understanding of some of the theoretical tenets fundamental to contemporary literary production and critical interpretation. It will formulate an awareness of the political and cultural complexities involved in the study of issues such as: ethnicity; globalisation; migration, borders, biopolitics, nation, and poverty and inequality. As countries close their borders COVID-19 has heightened our awareness of the relevance of biopolitics in healthcare and movement. Among the texts studied are: Zadie Smith, *White Teeth* (2000); Chika Unigwe, *On Black Sisters' Street: A Novel* (2012); Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, *Americanah* (2013); Vladimir Lorchenkov, *The Good Life Elsewhere* (2014); Mohsin Hamid, *Exit West* (2017); Viet Thanh Nguyen, *The Refugees* (2017) and Melatu Uche Okorie, *This Hostel Life* (2018).

### **EH5761 Research Methodology 1**

The aim of the two research methods module is to prepare students for the thesis component of the course. The first module will focus on the selection of a research question, the structuration of the argument and the development of a critical matrix

through which to analyse the argument. Research seminars with members of staff and with doctoral students in which issues of subject and topic-selection, referencing conventions, the balanced use of theoretical paradigms and the development of structural and argumentative skills will be analysed. Interview and discussions will facilitate the choosing of a thesis supervisor, who will help with the other sections of the module. A planned structural outline will be developed, along with an outline bibliography of both hard copy and electronic resources. The University of Limerick variant of the Harvard referencing style will be used, and the referencing of electronic media, such as websites and electronic books will be studied. Use of bibliographical tools such as RefWorks and Endnote will also be modelled. A detailed dissertation outline structural form will be completed by each student at the end of this module. Students are also encouraged to attend selected sessions of the department's postgraduate seminar, delivered online.

## **Semester 2**

### **EH5741      Modernism Texts and Contexts**

This module introduces a range of experimental writing by novelists and short story writers and explores ways in which these works reflect the multiple transformations of society during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. A specific area of enquiry in this module is an examination of the emergence of modernist aesthetics and the shaping of modernist texts through shifts in print culture and publishing practices. Recent scholarship in the digital literary humanities and intersections with book history, print and periodicals culture as well as in editing theory has offered modernist scholars, through new digital technologies, multiple ways in which to access and understand modernist literary texts. Engaging with these different fields including the digital literary humanities will develop new skills, fresh approaches to the set texts and a broader understanding of the modernist period. Among the texts to be studied are: Katherine Mansfield's *Selected Stories*; Olive Schreiner's *Story of an African Farm*; Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray*; *The Young Rebecca: Writings of Rebecca West 1911-1917*; *Virginia Woolf: Selected Short Stories* and *Virginia Woolf's Orlando*.

## **EH5792      World Literature**

The module will introduce students to a major new field of literary and cultural inquiry, asking them to engage with contemporary literary and cultural theory and to participate in advanced training in academic writing skills including bibliographic skills, the use electronic research tools for sourcing, storing and presenting research materials. This module provides a study of modern and contemporary literature in varieties of English and in translation, from a diverse range of national and regional cultures. Two central aims of the module are 1) to explore the relationship between socio-cultural context and literary genre and form, and 2) to consider the developments, appropriations and re-formations of the English language across the world. Students will investigate semantic and other issues involved in literary translation and will develop knowledge and insight into diverse philosophies, religions, ideologies and cultural movements. The module will be interdisciplinary in form and content, and will theorize and historicise key contemporary texts, across genres, from Asia, Africa, Europe, and the Americas. Among the texts studied are: Jean Rhys, *Voyage in the Dark* (1934); V.S. Naipaul, *A House for Mister Biswas* (1961); Jorge Luis Borges, *Labyrinths: Selected Stories and Other Writings* (1962); Arundhati Roy, *The God of Small Things* (1997); W.G. Sebald, *Austerlitz* (2001); David Mitchell, *Cloud Atlas* (2004); Chimamanda Ngozi Adiche *Half of a Yellow Sun* (2006); Nadeem Aslam, *The Wasted Vigil* (2008); Yiyun Li, *The Vagrants* (2009) and Colum McCann, *Let the Great World Spin* (2009).

## **EH5732      Contemporary Postcolonial Literature and Theory**

With the collapse of global colonial empires in the early decades of the twentieth century, post-colonial theory has emerged as one of the most important critical theories attempting to articulate a response to centuries of colonial occupation. Both in literature and critical theory, post-colonialism seeks to explore the complex matrix of linguistic, historic and nationalistic discourses that has emerged in the wake of the colonial exercise. Writers such as Margaret Atwood, Salman Rushdie and J. M. Coetzee exemplify the post-colonial quest for self-realisation within a dual tradition, and this trait can also be clearly seen in the work of writers from Ireland, Africa, Australia, and the Middle East. Post-colonial theory, exemplified in the writings of Edward Said, Homi K. Bhabha, Gayatri Spivak, Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, Stuart Hall and Declan Kiberd, amongst others, provide crucial insights into the development of contemporary post-colonial ideologies and provide an essential platform

for the analysis of the literature of post-colonial cultures. Among the texts to be studied are: Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities*; Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin, *The Post-Colonial Studies Reader*; Homi K. Bhabha, *Nation and Narration*; Edward Said, *Orientalism*; Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, *Decolonising the Mind*; and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, 'Can the Subaltern Speak?'

#### **EH5782          Research Methodology 2 Pass/Fail**

Research seminars with members of staff, and individual meetings with advisors during the semester are seen as part of the dissertation writing process. The structural outline which was prepared in the previous module is now used to create a timeline and a chapter word-count target. The management of time in terms of reading, note-taking and drafting individual chapters is analysed through seminars, workshops and attendance at the Departmental postgraduate Seminar, presented online. A schedule of meetings, with appointed tasks and timelines is set up in this module, all leading to a smooth transition from the modules into the thesis-drafting and writing stage of the programme.

#### **EH5751          Dissertation**

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This module is one wherein self-directed research is conducted under the guidance and supervision of a faculty member. The skills learned in EH5761 Research Methodology 1, and in EH5782 Research Methodology 2 are utilised to bring this project to fruition. The dissertation is an individual project which asks and addresses a central research question, or questions; engages with primary material through dialogue with secondary and critical sources; as well as being guided by a theoretically-informed reading practice. A number of iterations are produced which, with editorial and argumentative emendations by the supervisor, and with learned self-editing and peer-editing input, will lead to a completed piece of research of between 15,000 and 20,000 words. Over the course of these 4 research method and output modules, students will:

- learn how to write a research thesis of between 15,000 and 20,000 words;
- develop skills in working with an academic supervisor and taking guidance and advice;

- become proficient in synthesising theoretical and critical opinions with their own argument;
- gain proficiency in the use of referencing software such as RefWorks or Endnote, and in the application of the UL/MIC *Cite It Right* stylesheet;
- develop good self-editing and communication qualities;
- enable the completion of a long project through efficient time-management and drafting processes.