



Department of English Studies

General information		
Name of the course	Modern British and Irish Literature	
Course instructor	Dr Aidan O'Malley, Assistant Professor	
Study programme	Undergraduate Study Programme in English Language and Literature	
Status of the course	Compulsory	
Academic year	2022-2023 (winter semester)	
Language	English	
ECTS credits and manner of instruction	ECTS credits	4
	Number of class hours (Lectures + Exercises + Seminars)	30+0+0

1. COURSE DESCRIPTION
1.1. Course objectives
<p>This course will survey 20th-century British and Irish Literature, introducing students to the main literary movements and trends in this period and to a selection of key texts. The presentation of these texts will be couched in the context of other contemporary artistic productions and intellectual developments. In particular, students will gain an appreciation of the relationships between these literary texts and the most important political and social events of the twentieth century, such as: the World Wars, the rise of feminism, decolonisation. Each week, the lecture will focus on a particular era/movement (in a chronological order), and the seminar class will consider a significant text(s) from this period. Setting off with Oscar Wilde's play <i>The Importance of Being Earnest</i>, this course first examines the shifting aesthetic and cultural worlds of the early 20th-century. Attention is then turned to World War I and its various aftermaths, in particular the emergence of Modernism, and the role of women in society and literature (Thomas, Sassoon, Brooke, Eliot, Woolf). The Irish Literary Revival and its links with political changes in Ireland are then discussed via Yeats and Joyce. Mid-century Britain is examined through the perspectives offered by the poetry of Auden, Larkin and Dylan Thomas. Another aspect of post-World War II literary experience—the theatre of the absurd—is explored through the dramas of Beckett and Pinter. The Northern Irish 'Troubles' and their literary reverberations are gauged by focusing on Heaney's work. And the course concludes with a look at the contemporary, multicultural London portrayed by Zadie Smith.</p> <p>In order to give a representative account of this vast period, this course concentrates on dramas and poetry, as this gives students the opportunity to do the required reading.</p>
1.2. Course enrolment requirements and entry competences required for the course
Excellent level of written and spoken English. Students will also have taken and passed (a) course(s) equivalent to Introduction to Literature 1 and 2.
1.3. Expected course learning outcomes
At the conclusion of the course, students will have been introduced to major twentieth-century British and Irish writers and have acquired an understanding of the social and political contexts informing their works.

1.4. Course content

1. The Death of Victorian England. Oscar Wilde, *The Importance of Being Earnest*
2. Edwardian cultural life; World War I: Voices from the trenches. Rupert Brooke, 'The Soldier'; Edward Thomas, 'Adlestrop', 'Tears', 'Rain', 'As the Team's Head Brass'; Siegfried Sassoon, '"They"', 'The Rear-Guard', 'The General', 'Glory of Women', 'On Passing the New Menin Gate'; Wilfred Owen, 'Dulce Et Decorum Est', 'Strange Meeting', 'Disabled'
3. Aftermath of World War I; Introduction to Modernism. T.S. Eliot, 'The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock'; 'The Hollow Men'
4. The Woman Question; Suffragette Movement. Virginia Woolf, *A Room of One's Own*
5. Ireland; Cultural Nationalism and the 1916 Rising. W.B. Yeats, 'No Second Troy'; 'September 1913'; 'An Irish Airman Foresees his Death'; 'Easter, 1916'
6. Joyce. James Joyce, 'The Dead'
7. Mid-Century British Poetry. W.H. Auden, 'Musée des Beaux Arts', 'In Memory of W.B. Yeats'; Dylan Thomas, 'Fern Hill', 'Do Not Go Gentle into That Good Night'; Philip Larkin, 'This Be the Verse', 'Aubade'
8. Postmodernism: Theatre of the Absurd 1. Samuel Beckett, *Waiting for Godot*
9. Theatre of the Absurd 2. Harold Pinter, *The Dumb Waiter*
10. Northern Ireland; The 'Troubles'. Seamus Heaney, 'Digging'; 'The Tollund Man'; 'Mid-Term Break'; 'Funeral Rites'; 'Casualty'; 'From the Frontier of Writing'
11. The Empire Writes Back; Decolonisation and immigration from former colonies. Zadie Smith, *White Teeth*

1.5. Manner of instruction

- ✓ Lectures
- ✓ Individual assignments