

ENGL 4/654: Studies in Forms & Genres
“Modern Irish Literature: Writing the Nation in Poetry, Fiction, and Drama”
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This course will survey a range of major themes in modern Irish literature and culture by way of the major genres: poetry, fiction, and drama (with a film or two as well). Spanning roughly the beginning of the twentieth century to the present, we will explore ways in which Irish writers have engaged questions of national identity in light of British colonial occupation, independence through civil war, the creation of Northern Ireland and thus of two nations occupying one island, and sectarian conflict known as “The Troubles” that partly resulted from that, the emergence of powerful women’s voices in literature, and the rise and fall of Ireland’s central place in a global, neoliberal capitalist economy. Along the way we will see how ancient legends and myths have been reworked into newer forms, and how literature itself plays a central role in “inventing Ireland” and making Irish identities anew.

Open to both undergraduate and graduate students, we will work through one of the most dynamic national traditions of modern literature. The focus on form and genre should also interest students in Creative Writing. And the focus on “writing Ireland” may interest anyone of Irish descent. *Sláinte!*