

**FILM & TV DRAMA IN IRELAND**  
**COM FT 415**

<b>Lecturer:</b>	Dr. Sheamus Sweeney
<b>Email:</b>	<a href="mailto:sheamus.sweeney4@mail.dcu.ie">sheamus.sweeney4@mail.dcu.ie</a>
<b>Class times:</b>	Week 1 – No Class Weeks 2 – 7: Tuesday, 2pm -5pm Week 8: Mid Term Weeks 9 – 13: Friday, 10am – 1pm Week 14: Final Class and Final Examination

**Course description**

Ireland has a rich history of film and television production, stretching back to the early twentieth century. However, Ireland's peripheral position geographically and culturally between Europe and the US means that film and television from those countries has had a disproportionate effect on its development of a distinct visual media identity. This module provides a historical and thematic overview of film and television drama in Ireland, not limited to indigenous production, but including film and television drama from other countries, particularly Britain and the United States. Different theoretical approaches are incorporated, including political economy, social history, genre studies and cultural studies. Students are encouraged to develop their own critical perspectives on the representation of Ireland and "Irishness," whether these are informed by theories of class, race, gender, etc. The intention is that the combination of approaches taken will provide not only an introduction to film and television drama in Ireland but also a firm basis from which to undertake further studies of film and television.

**Learning outcomes**

On successful completion of this course, a student should be able to:

- Understand the historical development of Irish film and television, both thematically and industrially, and to critically interpret representations of "Irishness" in a variety of visual texts.
- Use the skills developed in class and through independent study to adopt a critical perspective for use in the analysis of film, television, and media narratives more generally.

**Class Time**

The classes are principally taught through 3 hour lecture-seminars, with each focussing on a particular aspect of Irish film and television. Classes are broken down into a mixture of lecture, discussion and screenings. Students are required to engage with class discussions. There will be two complete in-class film screenings during the semester.

Students are assigned preparatory readings each week, all of which are available on the DCU Loop site. These provide background and context for the lecture, but lectures will not address these readings directly. Students are also expected to familiarise themselves with the recommended further reading as these are invaluable resources for essays and exams.

There will be two field trips and two guest lecturers during the semester.

**Important: The use of laptop computers/netbooks and other wi-fi enabled devices (mobile phones, tablet computers etc.) is prohibited during class, except for the purposes of presentations, or other instances that will be specified in advance by the lecturer.**

## BOSTON UNIVERSITY DUBLIN PROGRAMS

Students should familiarise themselves with as much Irish film and television drama as possible, through visits to the cinema, borrowing DVDs from the DCU library and BU library room, and watching television. There are also a number of Irish films and tv programmes on streaming sites like Netflix and Hulu, although these vary throughout the year.

### Assignments and grading

The grading for this course is based on five components. These components and their percentage of the total course grade are as follows:

**1. Attendance and participation (10%):** Attendance and participation in class discussion is essential to get the most out of the course. Students are encouraged to ask questions and are required to actively engage in discussion during presentations.

**2. Quizzes (10%):** There will be a quiz during each portion of the semester, consisting of fifteen questions each, to be completed at the start of class.

**3. Essay (35%):** A selection of essay questions will be assigned in week four. Students are required to complete one, but are also encouraged to propose their own topic. The required length is 2,500 words (+/- 10%). Excessively long quotations should be avoided and all quotations clearly designated by quotation marks and duly acknowledged. All papers must be typed at 1.5 line spacing with a bibliography attached. Drafts will not be proofread, but consultation with the lecturer is encouraged and facilitated. The Harvard referencing system is preferred, but students may use the referencing style of their home institution, provided it is specified in advance. Further details on the Harvard referencing system can be found here: <http://www.library.dcu.ie/LibraryGuides/Citing&ReferencingGuide/player.html>

**Note:** Essays must be submitted to the lecturer in hard-copy at the start of class in week ten. Students must also retain an electronic copy of all essays submitted.

**4. In-class presentation (15%):** Students will give a 12-15 minute group presentation during the final class of the semester. This will be in the form of a “pitch”, made to a hypothetical group of American film / television executives and intended primarily for a US audience. Their proposal **must** be for an Irish themed or related film, or television drama, documentary, reality show etc. An electronic copy of the presentation slides (Powerpoint, etc.) must be submitted prior to class.

**5. Exam (30%):** Students are required to comprehensively answer three out of twelve questions for the exam. Students are excluded from answering an exam question that deals substantially with the topic on which they completed their essay.

### Plagiarism

It is every student’s responsibility to read the Boston University statement on plagiarism, which is available in the Academic Conduct Code. Students are advised that the penalty against students on a Boston University program for cheating on examinations or for plagiarism may be “...expulsion from the program or the University or such other penalty as may be recommended by the Committee on Student Academic Conduct, subject to approval by the Dean.”

## BOSTON UNIVERSITY DUBLIN PROGRAMS

### Reading list

Key readings are assigned each week. However, students are expected to read additional material.

Core books on particular course areas include:

#### Cinema

Barton, Ruth (2004), *Irish National Cinema*

Barton, Ruth and O'Brien, Harvey (eds.) (2004), *Keeping it Real: Issues and Directions in Irish film and television*

Flynn, Roddy and Brereton, Pat (2007), *Historical Dictionary of Irish Cinema*

Ging, Debbie (2012), *Men and Masculinities in Irish Cinema*.

Hill, John (ed) (1994), *Border Crossing: Film in Ireland, Britain and Europe*

Hill, John and Rockett, Kevin (eds.), *National Cinema and Beyond: Studies in Irish Film*

McLoone, Martin (2000), *Irish Film: The Emergence of Contemporary Cinema*

Pettitt, Lance (2000), *Screening Ireland: Film and Television representation*.

Rockett, Kevin, et al (1987), *Cinema and Ireland*

Rockett, Kevin (2004), *Irish Film Censorship*

Rockett, Kevin (2003), *Ten Years After: The Irish Film Board 1993-2003*

#### Television

Sheehan, Helena (2004), *The Continuing Story of Irish Television Drama: Tracking the Tiger* (available online at <http://doras.dcu.ie/4628/> and in hard copy in the DCU library.)

Sheehan, Helena (1987 & 2004), *Irish Television Drama: A Society and its Stories* (available online at <http://doras.dcu.ie/4627/> and in hard copy in the DCU library.)

Corcoran, Farrel (2004), *RTE and the Globalisation of Irish Television*

Savage, Robert (1996), *Irish Television: The Political and Social Origins*

McLoone, Martin and MacMahon, John (eds.) (1984) *Television and Irish Society: 21 Years of Irish Television*

Bowman, John (2011), *Window and Mirror: RTE television 1961-2011*

A more comprehensive list of useful books may be found at: [http://www.iftn.ie/filmography/books\\_irishfilm/](http://www.iftn.ie/filmography/books_irishfilm/)

#### General further reading.

Horgan, John (et al) (eds.) (2007), *Mapping Irish Media*

Kirby, Peadar (et al) (eds.) (2002), *Reinventing Ireland*

McLoone, Martin, et al (1991), *Cultural Identity and Broadcasting in Ireland*

Rolston, Bill (ed) (1996), *War and Words: The Northern Ireland Media Reader*

Horgan, John (2001), *Irish Media, A Critical History Since 1922*

O'Brien, Harvey (2004), *The Evolution of Ireland in Documentary Film*

Rains, Stephanie (2007), *The Irish-American in Popular Culture 1945-2000*.

Further readings may be suggested by individual guest lecturers. Students are also encouraged to read Irish newspapers, particularly articles dealing with film and television. You may want to check out *Film Ireland*, an online magazine dedicated to the Irish film industry: [filmireland.net](http://filmireland.net)

## BOSTON UNIVERSITY DUBLIN PROGRAMS

### Lecture Schedule

**Note:** This schedule may be adjusted to accommodate guest lecturers or changes in cinema release dates. Week numbers are synchronised to correspond with the program calendar. **All “Required Readings” are available on Moodle as PDF files.**

Date	Lecture Title / Activity
Week 2 (Lecture 1)  Tuesday, 2pm – 5pm	<p><b><i>Introductory Lecture / Origins of Irish film.</i></b></p> <p>This lecture is split into two parts. The first half provides an introduction to film studies through the analysis of various film and tv clips. The second half will look at the beginnings of film production in Ireland, from the early to the middle years of the twentieth century. No reading this week.</p> <p><b>Additional reading:</b> 1) Chapters 1-3 in <i>Irish National Cinema</i> – Ruth Barton. 2) Chapters 1-2 in <i>Screening Ireland</i> – Lance Pettitt.</p> <p><b>Screening:</b> Clips from a variety of films and television dramas.</p>
Week 3  Tuesday, 2pm – 5pm	<p><b><i>The first Irish Film Board: from origins to interregnum.</i></b></p> <p>This lecture examines the origins of the Irish Film Board; from attempts in the 1940s to develop state funding for a film industry to the short-lived first Film Board and its aftermath in the 1980s and early 1990s. Particular attention will be paid to the “first wave” filmmakers of the 1970s, the early career of director Neil Jordan in the 1980s, and the emerging success of Irish film in the period between the first and second Irish Film Board.</p> <p><b>Required Reading:</b> 1) <i>Screening the green</i> – Debbie Ging (pp.1-12) 2) <i>Irish film study guide</i> – Tony Tracy (pp.3-4)</p> <p><b>Additional Readings:</b> 1) Chapter 4 in <i>Irish National Cinema</i> – Ruth Barton. 2) Chapter 6 in <i>Irish Film</i> – Martin McLoone. 3) Chapters 2-3 in <i>Screening Ireland</i> – Lance Pettitt.</p> <p><b>Screening:</b> Extended clips from a variety of Irish films.</p>
Week 4  Tuesday, 2pm – 5pm	<p><b><i>Screening class 1: The Quiet Man (1952)</i></b></p> <p><i>The Quiet Man</i>, by renowned Western director John Ford, is an iconic if divisive vision of Ireland. It tells the story of an Irish emigrant, played by John Wayne, who returns to his home in the west of Ireland after many years in Pittsburgh. Initially ridiculed by some for its seemingly stereotyped and clichéd vision of Ireland, recent years have seen a number of more nuanced interpretations. The screening will be preceded by a short introductory lecture.</p> <p><b>Required Reading:</b> 1) <i>The myth of hidden Ireland</i> – Michael Gillespie 2) <i>What the Quiet Man said</i> – Joseph Bierman</p> <p><b>Additional Reading:</b> 'This is Ireland, Sean, not America' – Lance Pettitt <i>Screening Ireland</i> (pp.64-67).</p>
Week 5  Tuesday, 2pm – 5pm	<p><b><i>The second Irish Film Board: The end of National Cinema?</i></b></p> <p>The period since the reactivation of the Irish Film Board in 1993, has been one of unprecedented activity for the Irish film industry. This was partially helped by the economic boom that occurred during the period. Yet the increasing variety of Irish films and Ireland’s place in an increasingly globalised world order raises questions. When Ireland seems to be more and more like everywhere else, what is the role of a National Cinema?</p>

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	<p><b>Required Reading:</b> 1) <i>Screening the green</i> – Debbie Ging (pp.13-27) 2) <i>Irish cinema and the New International Division of Cultural Labour</i> – Roddy Flynn.</p> <p><b>Additional Readings:</b> 1) “About Adam and Paul: film policy in Ireland since 1993” - Roddy Flynn in <i>Mapping Irish Media</i>. 2) Chapter 6 in <i>Screening Ireland</i> – Lance Pettitt 3) Chapters 5-11 in <i>Irish National Cinema</i> – Ruth Barton.</p> <p><b>Screening: Extended clips from a variety of Irish films.</b></p>
<p>Week 6</p> <p>Tuesday, 2pm – 5pm</p>	<p><b>From The Burke Enigma to Red Rock: the rise of Irish crime drama.</b> The crime genre is one of the most popular in television drama, and one whose popularity has increased in recent years. Ireland has been no exception. From sporadic early attempts to replicate the successful cop shows of other countries, the years since the Celtic Tiger have seen a number of original crime dramas emerge. More unusually for Irish television drama, not all of these have been set in Dublin. While some were co-productions and not all have been loved by either critics or audiences, one drama, <i>Love/Hate</i>, has etched itself into the wider culture in an unprecedented way. Furthermore, January 2015 sees the launch of another new crime drama, <i>Red Rock</i>, set in Dublin.</p> <p><b>Required Readings:</b> 1) <i>Love/Hate: series two review</i> – Paul McGuirk. 2) Second reading to be advised.</p> <p><b>Additional Reading:</b> 1) <i>Amber</i>, Screenworks and the production of culture – Denis Murphy. 2) “RTE drama” in <i>The continuing story of Irish television drama</i> – Helena Sheehan. (Section on detective series)</p> <p><b>Screening: <i>Love/Hate</i> (2010).</b></p>
<p>Week 7</p> <p>Tuesday, 2pm – 5pm</p> <p><b>QUIZ 1 at beginning of class.</b></p>	<p><b>“Make ‘em laugh!”: The curious history of Irish television comedy.</b> From its earliest days, Irish television tried to replicate the situation comedy formula that proved successful in both Britain and the US. Unfortunately most attempts failed to achieve either popular or critical success. This began to change in the 1990s with the success of <i>Father Ted</i>, produced on British television, in a period which saw not only the authority of the Catholic Church decline but the beginning of economic prosperity in Ireland. The success of <i>Father Ted</i> along with the more recent success of <i>Moone Boy</i> and <i>Mrs Brown’s Boys</i>, has prompted the suggestion that successful Irish comedy is possible... just not in Ireland.</p> <p><b>Required Reading:</b> 1) <i>Doesn't Mary have a lovely bottom?</i> – Lisa McGonigle. 2) <i>The Ballykissangelisation of Ireland</i> – Ruth Barton</p> <p><b>Additional Reading:</b> 1) “British production of Irish television drama” in <i>The continuing story of Irish television drama</i> – Helena Sheehan. (Sections on <i>Father Ted</i> and <i>Ballykissangel</i>.) 2) Chapter 9 in <i>Screening Ireland</i> – Lance Pettitt.</p> <p><b>Screening: <i>Father Ted</i> (1995) and another screening.</b></p>
Week 8	<b>MID-SEMESTER BREAK</b>
<p>Week 9</p> <p>Friday, 10am – 1pm</p>	<p><b>Guest lecturer</b> Irish diaspora and Irish-Americans in popular culture, with a focus on film and television. This is a very popular guest lecture, and very appropriate for the St. Patrick’s Day holiday.</p>
<p>Week 10</p> <p>Friday</p>	<b>Cinema field trip.</b>

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<p>Week 11</p> <p><b>ESSAY DUE</b></p>	<p><b>Guest lecturer</b></p> <p><b>ESSAY DUE BEGINNING OF CLASS</b></p>
<p>Week 12</p> <p>Friday, 10am – 1pm</p>	<p><b>Revolutionary Ireland On Screen</b> This is a special lecture for the centenary of the 1916 Easter Rising, and will look at a range of different film and television dramatisations of what has been dubbed the decade of commemorations, starting with the Dublin Lockout of 1913, and continuing on through 1916 and the War of Independence.</p> <p><b>Required Reading:</b> To be advised</p> <p><b>Additional Reading:</b> To be advised</p> <p><b>Screening:</b> A selection of clips.</p>
<p>Week 13</p> <p>Friday, 10am – 1pm</p>	<p><b>Screening Class 2: Michael Collins (1996).</b> Neil Jordan’s <i>Michael Collins</i> was deemed of such importance on its release that it was given a deliberately low certification, despite its often violent content, so schoolchildren could see it. It broadly tells the story of the Irish republican Michael Collins, who was a leader during the War of Independence. It is a somewhat controversial film, with some people criticising its revisionist approach to Irish history, particularly its contrasting portrayals of Collins and Eamon DeValera. Jordan is arguably Ireland’s most important film director. In addition to Irish films like <i>Angel</i> (1982), <i>The Company of Wolves</i> (1984), and <i>The Butcher Boy</i> (1998), he is known to international audiences for <i>Interview with the Vampire</i> (1994), <i>The End of the Affair</i> (1999), and HBO series <i>The Borgias</i> (2011). The screening will be preceded by a short introductory lecture, and followed by a discussion.</p> <p><b>Required Reading:</b> To be advised</p> <p><b>Additional Reading:</b> To be advised</p>
<p>Week 14</p> <p>Wednesday, 7pm -10pm</p>	<p><b>Group Presentations and Summing Up.</b> This class also offers a chance to review the module, and to revisit and clarify some key points. Students will also be encouraged to provide feedback about their experience of the module.</p>
<p>Week 14</p> <p>Friday, 11am – 1pm</p> <p><b>EXAM</b></p>	<p><b>Final Examination</b></p>