

# **Contemporary Irish Society**

## **Syllabus**

**Spring 2006 Semester**

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### **Aim of the Course**

The aim of the course is to introduce students to the key features of Irish society and the key currents underpinning social change in Ireland in the 21st Century. Ireland, as a society, has experienced both incremental and accelerated social change in the latter half of the twentieth century. The former is characterised by the struggles that emerged between the forces of tradition and the forces of modernity whereas the latter emanates from radical economic change and hyper-globalisation. In order to understand change we must first understand what has gone before. Thus the course begins with a profile of Irish society and a historical overview of its core features in the latter half of the 20th century. It then moves on to examine continuity and change in some of the key categories of Irish society such as religion, culture, economy and politics via their two step encounter with modernity and hyper-modernity.

### **Methodology**

The course is delivered through a series of lectures and participative class discussions with a strong emphasis on dialogue and debate. Where appropriate, the classes will be supplemented by audio-visual material, guest lectures and field trips.

### **Grading Criteria**

Class participation and attendance	10%
Two quizzes	20%
Essay	40%
Final Exam	30%

Essay titles will be distributed in week two. Essays should be between 2,000 and 2,500 words long and are due on or before 5 p.m. Wed. 8<sup>th</sup> February.

The quizzes take place at the beginning of Lecture 7 and Lecture 16 (31 January and 21 February respectively), and are in the form of multiple-choice questions.

Exam questions will be based on topics covered in class. There will be a wide choice.

Both the essays and exams will be graded on the basis of evidence of reading, the understanding displayed, the analysis provided and the clarity of presentation.

## Core Text

Tovey, H. and Share, P. (2003) *A Sociology of Ireland* (2nd Edition), (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan)

## Additional Reading

Corcoran, M.P and Peillon, P. (2002) *Ireland Unbound; A Turn of the Century Chronicle*, (Dublin: I.P.A)

Fanning, B. (2002) *Racism and Social Change in Ireland* (Manchester: M.U.P)

Horgan, J. (2001) *Irish Media, A Critical History*, (London: Routledge)

Inglis, T. (1998) *Moral Monopoly*, (Dublin: UCD Press)

Kirby, P. (2002) *The Celtic Tiger in Distress: Growth with Inequality in Ireland*, (New York: Palgrave)

O'Toole, F (2003) *After the Ball; Ireland After the Boom*, (Dublin: New Island Books)

Peillon, M, and Slater, E. (1998) *Encounters with Modern Ireland: A Sociological Chronicle 1995-1996*, (Dublin: I.P.A)

FitzGerald, G. (2005) *Ireland in the World: Further Reflections* (Dublin, Liberties Press)

## Part One

*Lecture 1 – Tuesday, 17 January: Aims, Introductions, Myths and Stereotypes*

Introductions and overview.

Reading: Tovey and Share pp. 42 - 51.

*Lecture 2 – Wednesday, 18 January: The Catholic Church and Changing Beliefs*

For most of the State's history the Catholic Church has had a state supported monopoly on the spiritual, moral and educational life of its population. This monopoly has seen its influence extend into various other spheres of Irish social life. This lecture sketches the outlook and influence of the Church in these spheres whilst also pointing to the forces which have, relatively recently, challenged its centrality in Irish life.

Reading: Chapter 14 in Tovey and Share and/or Chapter 15 in Fitzgerald.

*Lecture 3 – Thursday, 19 January Ireland and Modernity: The Emergence and Development of the Irish State*

A historical account of the development of the influential institutions, ideologies and interest groups that have emerged from and constituted the Irish State and its political, economic and cultural landscape in the twentieth century. Irish ethno-nationalism has been at the centre of Irish cultural identity. In this class we trace the trajectory of its development and the ways in which it has informed and continues to shape public life, even as it is re-shaped by emerging 'cosmopolitan' identities.

Reading: Chapters 3, 4 and 12 in Tovey & Share.

*Lecture 4 – Tuesday, 24 January: The Gift of the Gab*

In this class it is proposed that we look at the Irish language, its origins and use. The decline in the use of Irish is a matter of concern for those who believe it impacts on national identity. We will also take a look at the oral tradition and at our use of Hiberno English

Reading: Chapter 1 in Fitzgerald

*Lecture 5 – Wednesday, 25 January: The Media in Ireland*

Lecture five addresses the structural development of the media in Ireland and traces its interplay with the social, democratic and cultural life of the country. Of particular interest is the contested role of the public broadcaster and its centrality in Irish public life. In this lecture we focus on the role played by the Mass

Media in shaping the National identity. We will examine the implications for Irish culture, which is sandwiched between two media giants.

Reading: Chapter 15 in Tovey and Share

*Lecture 6 – Thursday, 26 January: An Educated Population*

Much has been made of the contribution made to the Celtic Tiger by the ready availability of a well-educated work force. This lecture will examine the structures and practices in the field of education in Ireland

Reading: Chapter 8 in Tovey and Share

*Lecture 7 – Tuesday, 31 January Sport, Leisure and Entertainment: Popular Culture in Ireland*

The profile of Ireland's cultural contribution to the world has always been disproportionate to the country's size. Lecture eight assesses the trajectory of cultural development and the cultural constitution of Ireland throughout the 20thC. Of particular interest is the way in which the culture of everyday life involves an interweaving of the global and the local. The significance of these features of cultural life is often overlooked in examinations of national and local identity. This class will seek to tease out the contribution they may have made to the creation of modern Ireland.

**(THIS CLASS WILL BEGIN WITH A SHORT MULTIPLE CHOICE QUIZ COVERING THE TOPICS COVERED TO THIS POINT)**

Reading: TBA

*Lecture 8 – Wednesday, 1 February: Small Island: Big World*

In this class it is hoped to discuss those aspects of our society, which have ripples beyond our shores. Amongst the topics will be the Diaspora, Neutrality, the European Union, The United Nations and globalisation

Reading: Chapters 6 and 19 in Tovey and Share, Chapter 13 FitzGerald.

*Lecture 9 – Thursday, 2 February: Tourism, Industry and Agriculture*

An overview of how these sectors have shaped modern Ireland and its landscapes. The changing face of employment patterns and the prospects for the future will also be examined.

Reading: Chapter 13 in Tovey and Share.

**Friday, 3 February: Field trip to Belfast**

*Lecture 10 – Tuesday, 7 February: Ethnicity and Multiculturalism*

Ireland has gone very swiftly from a situation of emigration to one where there is a significant inflow of foreign workers and asylum seekers. This has presented its own challenges and issues. As a society we have to face up to the prospects of racism and pluralism. It might be instructive too to review how we deal with minorities within our own society

*Lecture 11 – Wednesday, 8 February.: Inside the Tiger: From Bust to Boom*

This lecture explores some of the key explanations of the 'Celtic Tiger' economy and how it's impact on the social fabric of the country. This will be a guest lecture by Elaine Coyle of University College Dublin

Reading: TBA

*Lecture 12 – Thursday, 9 February: The Political System and Structures*

This will be an opportunity for students to have an overview of the way our political system works and the way the affairs of the country are administered. They will be able to make comparisons with the American system and it should lay some groundwork for the Dail visit on 16<sup>th</sup> Feb

*Lecture 13 – Tuesday, 14 February: Guest lecturer, Gerry Mullins*

*Lecture 14 – Wednesday, 15 February: Field Trip: The Dail. A visit to the administrative heart of the Irish State*

*Lecture 15 – Wednesday, 15 February: Field Trip to see “I Keano” – evening theatre trip (supersedes Thursday’s lecture)*

*Lecture 16 – Tuesday, 21 February: Revision*

**(THIS CLASS WILL BEGIN WITH A SHORT MULTIPLE CHOICE QUIZ COVERING THE TOPICS COVERED FROM LECTURE 7 TO THIS POINT)**

*Lecture 17 – Thursday, 23 February: Final Exam (10:30 a.m – 12:30 p.m, Classroom C199)*

**Note: Some changes may take place in the required reading, in the organisation of field trips or in the participation of guest lecturers as circumstances dictate. These will be advised nearer the time.**

### **Terms and Conditions**

Full attendance and participation in class is required.

Essays must answer the question or topic set. Essays must include discussion of different positions from the material researched, must develop an argument and reach a conclusion. Do not use overly long quotations; however, quotations, where applicable, must be clearly designated by quotation marks and accredited as to source. All essays must be typed and one and a half times spaced, with a front page indicating the title, the name of the student, and to whom it is submitted. All essays must contain footnotes and a bibliography, including Internet sources. It is essential that you cite all your sources in the text or in footnotes. Please note that proper and full referencing is a marking criterion. Originality of thought, theoretical insight, and clear exposition is likely to lead to good grades.

### **Plagiarism**

All students are responsible for having read the Boston University statement on plagiarism. This 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 plagiarism will be ‘...*expulsion from the program or the University or other such penalty as may be recommended by the Committee on Student Conduct subject to approval by the Dean*’.

