Course Description:
This course will provide a thorough introduction to the most interesting and important works of Irish literature from the Middle Ages to the present, with a special focus on the continuity and transformation of tradition as well as on the shifting aesthetic, political and social contexts in which Irish literature has been produced. Readings will include Old and Middle Irish saga and poetry, satire from the 18th century, and selections from the work of W. B. Yeats, Lady Augusta Gregory, J. M. Synge, James Joyce, Samuel Beckett, Seamus Heaney, Brian Friel, Nuala ni Dhomhnaill, Paul Muldoon and Eavan Boland. We will also focus on the ways a number of the major trends in literary theory and criticism have been applied to the interpretation of this diverse material. This will include an exploration of the question of the relationship between the study of literature, mythology and history and of the concept of tradition itself.

Required Texts:


*Please note that many course documents will only be available for you to download and print from Blackboard. In order to access these documents, go to cc.bbprod.cuny.edu and follow the instructions for the creation of an account.*

Learning Goals
By the end of the semester, students will:
- Acquire a deeper appreciation and understanding of the prose, poetry, and drama of Irish literature from the Middle Ages to the present in the context of Irish history and culture.
- Acquire an enhanced ability to recognize the poetic elements of diction, figurative language, imagery, tone, sound and rhythm and understand the ways in which they function in a wide range of texts.
- Acquire an enhanced ability to recognize the conventions of medieval tales, modern
short fiction and drama.
- Acquire an understanding and appreciation of the diverse ways in which modern Irish writers experiment with and exploit a wide range of traditional Irish themes and motifs and lyrical subgenres and fixed forms.
- Improve their ability to read more productively and to recognize the conventions of critical and theoretical academic essays.
- Be able to analyze in a clear and convincing written argument the relationship between the form and the content (the style and the meaning, the rhetorical and the thematic dimensions) of some of the richest works of literature written in English.
- Be able to make very convincing use of evidence quoted from the texts of poems, of plays and short works of fiction as well as secondary critical and theoretical sources in their analytical essays and in their discussion board posts.

This course can be used to fulfill the College Option Literature Requirement.

**Course Requirements:**
You will be required to produce two essays, each of approximately 1,000-1,250 words (4-5 pages) for the semester. In addition, you will be required to post written responses to class readings (between 300-500 words) on Blackboard (“Discussion Board”) prior to our class meeting (usually) on Friday each week. In these responses you will record your questions, thoughts and explorations of the assigned texts and you will receive a general grade for this work at the end of the semester. You are expected to participate in class discussions and you will be required to do at least one in-class presentation on a reading assignment. You must meet a standard of adequate attendance. Any student with more than one unexcused absence should expect this to be reflected in the final grade. All writing assignments must be typed, double-spaced, in 12 point type, with 1” margins. You must take the time to proofread and edit all of your work and you must use MLA guidelines for citing sources and constructing a works cited list. There will also be a final examination.

Final course grades will be determined as follows:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Weight</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Preparation and Participation</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading Responses</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Essay 1</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Essay 2</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final exam</td>
<td>20%</td>
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</tbody>
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**Assignment for Tuesday, August 31:**
Please read, generate and post on the "Discussion Board" of Blackboard by or before 10 PM on Monday, August 30 responses (300 to 500 words) to "The Hag of Beare" and "The Adventures of the Sons of Eochaid Mugmedon." And please be sure that you have read all of the handouts distributed on the first day of class.

**Please note that weekly assignments for the semester are available in the
LIST OF REQUIRED READINGS IN ORDER

Seamus Heaney’s “Digging,” translations of “Pangur Ban,” “My Hand is Weary with Writing,” “The Scribe in the Woods,” *The Hag of Beare* (first day handouts)

*The Adventures of the Sons of Eochaid Mugmedon* (Blackboard)
*The Adventure of Cormac Grandson of Conn* (Blackboard)

*The Destruction of Da Derga’s Hostel* (Blackboard)

*Fingal Ronain (The Kin-Slaying of Ronan)* (Blackboard)

*The Story of Mac Da Tho’s Pig and Hound* (Blackboard)

*How the Tain Bo Cuailnge was Found Again* (Blackboard)
*The Pangs of Ulster* (Blackboard)
*Exile of the Sons of Usliu* (Blackboard)
*Cuchulainn’s Courtship of Emer, and his Training in Arms* (Blackboard)
*The Death of Aife’s One Son* (Blackboard)
*Cuchulainn’s Boyhood Deeds* (Blackboard)

From Patrick K. Ford’s *The Celtic Poets*
*The Boyhood Deeds of Finn*
*Athirne and Amairgen*
*The Spirit of Poetry*
*Imbas Forosnai: Illuminating Inspiration*
*Athirne the Insistent*
*Guaire’s Greedy Guests*
*The Vision of Mac Con Glinne*

Seamus Heaney’s *Sweeney Astray*

Aogan O Rathaille’s “Brightness Most Bright” (Blackboard)
Eileen O’Connell’s “Lament for Art O’Leary” (Blackboard)

Brian Merriman’s *The Midnight Court* (Blackboard)

Anthony Raftery’s “I am Raftery” and “Raftery’s Praise of Mary Hynes”

James Clarence Mangan’s “Dark Rosaleen”
William Butler Yeats (Yeats’s Poetry, Drama, And Prose)

Poetry:

Drama:
Cathleen Ni Houlihan
On Baile’s Strand
The King’s Threshold

Prose:
“Hopes and Fears for Irish Literature” “The De-Anglicising of Ireland”

John Millington Synge:
The Shadow of the Glen, Riders to the Sea, The Playboy of the Western World, “The Passing of the Shee,” excerpt from The Aran Islands,
“Preface” to Playboy, “Preface” to Poems and Translations (all on Blackboard)

James Joyce:
“The Day of the Rabblement”
The Holy Office (Blackboard)

Poetry of Seamus Heaney, Paul Muldoon, Nuala ni Dhomhnaill, Eavan Boland (all available on Blackboard)