Minor in Irish Studies

The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences at Villanova University hosts the Center for Irish Studies. The minor in Irish Studies is open to students from all colleges, and our interdisciplinary program features courses from seven departments. Irish Studies faculty research and teach through a range of disciplines. The Center facilitates courses in anthropology, art history, economics, history, language studies, literature, philosophy, political science, studio art and theatre.

Fifteen credits are required to complete the minor, of which six credits are core requirements: a 3-credit literature survey in English and a 3-credit survey in History. Students may structure and focus five of the many Irish Studies electives into a unified program of study that works with the student's overall goals. The Irish language (Gaelic) two-course sequence can fulfill the College of Arts and Sciences language requirement. Study-abroad courses taken in Ireland may be used for the minor.

Major in Irish Studies

Irish Studies offers a major as a specialization in the Department of Global Interdisciplinary Studies (GIS). The 31-credit major in Irish Studies provides an interdisciplinary and comparative approach to deepen students' understanding of the history, culture, religion, politics, literature, languages, and society of Ireland and produce an in-depth research thesis. Students may sign up for the GIS major and choose their Irish Studies (GIST) specialization through the Department of Global Interdisciplinary Studies in 36 Garey Hall. The GIS Chair and the Director of Irish Studies will work closely with students to develop individual interests, abilities, and career goals while fulfilling their major.

All courses listed here are 3.0 credit unless otherwise noted.
Spring 2021 Course Descriptions

ENG 1975: Ghostly Matters
MW 3:25 p.m. - 4:40 p.m.
Dr. Mary L. Mullen

This class takes up the sociologist Avery Gordon’s claim that haunting produces a “something-to-be-done” by unsettling ordinary life, making the invisible become visible, introducing trouble. We will read ghost stories in order to think about what haunting teaches us about history, culture, social structures, politics, performance, memory, literature. We’ll focus on what kinds of knowledge ghosts provide as we think about slavery and its afterlives as well as colonialism in Ireland. And, in the process, we’ll think about our own stories of haunting—what we haunt and are haunted by. We’ll read Toni Morrison, Dorothy Macardle, Marina Carr and many others. This class is a writing intensive course, and will teach strategies for making interesting, convincing, and unified arguments about literary texts and experiment with forms of creative writing.

ENG 2022: Villanova Meets Literary Belfast
MW 3:25 p.m. - 4:40 p.m.
Alan Drew

A creative writing workshop, you will study contemporary Irish/Northern Irish writers while working on your own creative pieces. Partnering with the Seamus Heaney Centre, Belfast, you will meet those authors to discuss their work and to workshop your own writing.

ENG 3680: Irish Film
Section 001
TR 8:00 a.m. - 9:15 a.m.
Dr. Rena Potok

Fairies and selkies, mythic heroes and warrior queens, occupation and rebellion, famine and exile, the Troubles, and the Celtic Tiger – these are the stories of Ireland. This course will explore Irish culture, narrative, and history through the lens of 20th and 21st century Irish film. Our focus will be on iconic Irish and Northern Irish films, and on next wave Irish cinema – recent works by Irish and Northern Irish women writers and directors, including film shorts and animated shorts. Discussion topics will include Irish myths and legends; British colonialism, Irish nationalism and rebellion; the Troubles in Northern Ireland; Irish music, literature and art; gender politics; religion and the church; emigration; and postcolonial Ireland. In addition to studying the films, we will read seminal works of Irish literature by James Joyce, Eavan Boland and W.B. Yeats that complement the content and sensibility of the film works. Students will
have an opportunity to develop a variety of writing projects, including reflections, analytical arguments, and research papers. We will supplement the films and literary texts with background readings in film studies, Irish mythology, and history.

**ENG 3680: Irish and Palestinian Texts of Conflict**  
Section 002  
TR 9:35 a.m. -10:50 a.m.  
Hannah Khalil, online with two optional in-person periods

This course will be led by the 2021 Charles Heimbold Chair of Irish Studies, Hannah Khalil, a London-based playwright of Palestinian and Irish heritage. The seminar-style course will lead students through discussions of contemporary works of literature from both craft and cultural perspectives, exploring what it means to create texts that confront racism and stereotypes while exploring their literary constructions. Students will compare and contrast what Khalil calls "texts of conflict"—these will cross genres and include plays, novels, poetry, and lyrics, written by writers from Ireland and Palestine. The shared history of the two countries, both once colonies of the United Kingdom, will be explored and will inform class discussions. Students will be asked to consider the texts not merely as works of literature to study and appreciate but also as pieces of cultural resistance.

**GIS 5011: Narratives of Gender and Conflict**  
MW 3:25 p.m. - 4:40 p.m.  
Dr. Jennifer Joyce & Dr. Cera Murtagh

The relationship between gender and war is an inextricable one. From mobilization to combat to violence, one’s experience of war is profoundly shaped by one’s gender. Indeed, the relationship runs deeper still. Gender can inform the very nature of war in a given context, while gender dynamics can themselves be transformed by war.

This course explores the intersection of conflict and gender through a multi-disciplinary prism that brings together literature, film, political science and sociology, among other perspectives. The course examines two core questions: how does gender mediate one’s experience of war? And, what is the relationship between gender and political conflict: how does gender shape war, and vice versa?

We address these questions theoretically, exploring, for example, the relationship between gender and nationalism and between masculinities and war. But we also examine these questions empirically, exploring issues like sexual violence and LGBT+ rights in real world conflicts.

In taking a multi-disciplinary approach, we seek to gain a rich and rounded understanding of gender and conflict. We aim to gain a deeper insight into these issues through literary and artistic narratives and representations of gender and war. Combining works of fiction, including novels, short stories, and film, with scholarly criticism from Political Science, Sociology, Anthropology, and Literature, among other disciplines, this course offers students the opportunity to gain both a
solid grounding in the politics of conflict and peace, and its gendered nature, as well as a deeper sense of the lived experiences of conflict.

We will adopt a comparative, global perspective on gender and conflict, examining a number of cases of historic and contemporary conflict, including Nigeria, Bosnia, Herzegovina, Kosovo, and the United States. Yet our primary focus will be investigating the core case of Northern Ireland in order to gain an in-depth understanding of these issues in one context, and, because Northern Ireland stands as a critical case in the study of gender, conflict, and peace.

**HIS1060-002: Medieval Britain and Ireland**  
MWF 12:40 p.m. - 1:30 p.m.  
Dr. Rebecca Winer

Ever wonder who St. Patrick and King Arthur really were? Then this is the course for you! (No previous knowledge of Irish or British history required.) This course explores the British Isles and Celtic world from around 400 to 1200 A.D. Through tackling historical questions and close-reading primary sources we will analyze the role of the Church, the achievements of extraordinary kings, brehon lawyers, chroniclers, saints, poets and women in these societies. We will seek to bring the everyday lives and enduring ideals of these medieval people to life. By contrasting the rise of centralized monarchy in England and Scotland to enduring smaller kingships in Ireland and comparing legal systems; we will gain an appreciation of the institutional achievements of these different cultures. Focusing on the spiritual debt owed by the English to the Irish, as well as the disintegration of relations with the arrival of the Normans after their conquest of England in 1066, we will strive for a nuanced overall understanding of the differences between the peoples of this region. We will also delve into the roots of the Anglo-Saxon apartheid of the native British, the Norman colonization of the Anglo-Saxons and medieval English colonialism and oppression of the Irish.

**HIS 2286: Irish-American Saga**  
MWF 12:40 p.m. - 1:30 p.m.  
Father Joe Ryan

Come and celebrate your Irish heritage! Irish Americans were once seen as a threat to mainstream society, today they represent an integral part of the American story. More than 40 million Americans claim Irish descent and the culture of the Irish and Irish Americans have left an indelible mark on society. The scope of the course will reflect the main issues in Irish American history beginning in the seventeenth century, through the famine and mass immigration of the nineteenth century, to the present day. The course will help students understand the complexity of the Irish American experience. The course requirements will include full class participation, three examinations, and two papers; One a family history paper ten pages in length, and a five to seven page research paper.
IS 1112: Irish Language II
MWF 8:00 a.m. - 8:50 a.m.
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MWF 12:40 p.m. - 1:30 p.m.
Alene O’Malley

Groundwork in Irish (Gaelic), including oral proficiency, aural comprehension, and reading knowledge; for students with no prior knowledge of Irish. Supplementary language laboratory work and oral drills.