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.
Fall 2023 Course Descriptions

**AAH 3007-001: The Art of Ireland**  
**TR 1:00pm – 2:15pm**  
**Dr. Tina Waldeier Bizzarro**

Why did “Star Wars,” Episode VII, choose Ireland’s westerly island of “Skellig Michael” as the rendez-vous scene for Luke and Leah? Ireland’s medieval visual culture provides us with a rich cache of sacred sites and mysterious artifacts. This course seeks to stimulate an interest in and love of the unique art of Ireland—from the Stone Age through the Middle Ages—before the cultures of Western Europe permeated Ireland’s borders, when Ireland was insular and isolated, when it was uniquely Celtic and non-Western. Together, we will investigate: Ireland’s fascinating passage graves and Stone Age art; the defensive architecture of ring and hill forts and living spaces and the sculpture of the Bronze and Iron Ages; the flowering of Christianity in Ireland under Patrick and before, manifest in Ireland’s famous illuminated manuscripts of the Golden Age and in early church architecture; through the development of medieval churches in the 11th and 12th centuries in the Romanesque style. The student leaving this course will have developed a love for and a firm knowledge of the major monuments of Irish Art.  
**Attributes:** Irish Studies

**ENG 1975: Ghostly Matters**  
**MW 3:20pm-4:35pm**  
**Dr. Mary Mullen**

Growing up in Ireland means confronting ghosts. In this class, 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. We’ll take 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. 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.  
**Attributes:** Irish Studies

**GIS 5011: Narratives of Gender and Conflict**  
**TR 4:00pm – 5:15pm**  
**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.

Attributes: Irish Studies, English, Political Science, Peace & Justice, GWS, Diversity 2 and Diversity 3

HIS 3216-001: Ireland Since 1800
TR 1:00pm-2:15pm
Dr. Craig Bailey

This course provides students with an introduction to Irish history, with a particular focus on the development of Irish history and identities from the nineteenth to the early twentieth century, an important and formative period which is generally referred to as “Ireland under the Union”. The role of violence in the making and representation of Irish histories and identities serves as the overarching theme for the course.

The course consists of four units. The first unit, Early Modern Ireland, establishes the background and context necessary to understand and evaluate later developments. The major issues and events covered include the formation of ethnic and religious identities and the conflicts between developing groups in the 16th and 17th centuries, and the conditions in the 18th century that led to political union with Britain in 1800.

The second unit, Pre-famine Ireland, examines the conditions of everyday life in the early 19th century and the structures and institutions that shaped them. We will consider the lives of the poor, the rise of rural or "agrarian" violence, the expansion and limits of the state in Irish society, Catholic struggles for equality and the development of a national system of education.

Unit 3 looks at two major factors that impacted Ireland in the middle of the 19th century, the Great Famine and migration. In addition to examining the crisis of the famine, we will also investigate the responses to it, including migration, and the ways that the relationships between famine and migration have contributed to narratives about Irish identity.

The final unit covers the post-famine period to the early twentieth century. We will follow the tortuous path of Irish nationalism as it developed over this period and consider how its collision with what is known as "unionism" shaped the conflicts of the early twentieth century that eventually resulted in the partition of Ireland.

Attributes: Irish Studies
IS 1111: Introductory Irish Language I  
MWF 8:30am - 9:20am / R 8:30am - 9:45am  
OR  
MWF 11:45am - 12:35pm / R 11:30am – 12:45pm  
(Two Sections)  
Dr. Jonathan O’Neill  

Groundwork in Irish (Gaelic), including oral proficiency, aural comprehension and reading knowledge; for students beginning the study of the language. Supplementary language laboratory work on Irish culture and practicing spoken Irish. Successful completion of the course sequence, IS 111 and IS 1112, satisfies the language requirement for the CLAS. Taught by a Fulbright language instructor from Ireland.  
4.00 credits. Counts toward the Irish Studies minor.

IS 1121-001: Intermediate Irish Language I  
MWF 12:50pm - 1:40pm  
Dr. Jonathan O’Neill  

Review of grammar and vocabulary in Irish (Gaelic). Recitations, readings and oral drills. Suplementary language laboratory work.  
Prerequisites: IS 111 and IS 1112  
4.00 credits. Counts toward the Irish Studies minor.

PHI 2470-001: Irish Thought and Literature  
MW 1:00pm-2:15pm  
Dr. William Desmond  

Ireland is well known for its poets and writers but what of its thinkers? In the past Ireland has also been called “the island of saints and scholars” but again what of its thinkers? Thomas Duddy’s book A History of Irish Thought (2002) offers us helpful resources to address this question. This course will explore some of the main thinkers in the Irish tradition. It will consider whether there is a distinctive style (or perhaps styles) of Irish thought, whether there is a plurality of traditions that yet exhibit distinctive marks. The relation of reason (science) and religion is a major concern in Irish tradition(s). So also is the importance of poetry for the Irish mind. Thinkers to be considered will include Scotus Eriugena, John Toland, George Berkeley, Edmund Burke. We will also look at the explorations of thought in some writers of literature, figures such as Jonathan Swift, James Joyce, William Butler Yeats, Samuel Beckett, Patrick Kavanagh and Seamus Heaney. Some time will also be given to a poet considered to be the major modernist poetry writing in the Irish language: Séan Ó Riordáin. The course will conclude with a consideration of some recent Irish thinkers in the 20th century, including Iris Murdoch, William Desmond, and Richard Kearney.  
Themes to be explored in selected texts include:  

a. (e)migrant thought: the reality of leaving home, and going into exile, either voluntarily and enforced, has been a recurrent reality and theme in Irish writing. What do migration and emigration say about thinking about exile? What is the meaning of exile as religious chosen, as opposed to being forced on one by economic and political oppression and necessity?  
b. intimate/local knowing and universal reason: in Irish history the English as colonizers were thought to be more representative of a universal reason while the local Irish were more particular, somehow at the edges of this universal. We will explore this condition more deeply.
c. exile and home: the condition of “being between” – between one’s first home and the need to build a second home away from home. What is it to remember the first home, and make a new home in the New World (as the US was once called). How does this affect the children of those who have settled in the New World? How to look on the world of one’s ancestors.

d. broken tradition(s): losing a language and finding a voice – the Irish lost their first tongue, the Irish language, and yet in a short time gave rise to some of the great modern writers in English. We will explore this double, plurivocal condition of languages beyond just one dominant univocal language.

e. the sacred and thought; Irish poetry and reflection; laughter/comedy and Irish thought. Irish history shows politics and identity to be deeply intertwined with religious commitments. How does comedy emerge for those who are in the subordinated, or subjugated position in relation to political masters who come from another tradition?

Attributes: Diversity Requirement 1, Irish Studies

PSC 4475-002: Irish Radical: The Political Philosophy of Edmund Burke
MW 1:55pm – 3:10pm
Dr. Liam Kavanaugh

This course will explore the life and work of the 18th Century Anglo-Irish statesman and philosopher Edmund Burke. We will begin by contextualizing Burke’s political philosophy first, in terms of his upbringing and education in Ireland, and second, in terms of his earlier writings on aesthetics, particularly his understanding of the “sublime.” The course will then examine what William Butler Yeats called “Burke’s great melody”: his critiques of the abuses of British government power in Ireland, India, and the American Colonies, and his critique of the abuses of power he perceived in the French revolution. The course aims to situate Burke’s moral and political philosophy within the modern political tradition, while arguing the case that Burke can be considered a “radical” voice for our own times.

Attributes: Irish Studies