Course Description

“In Ireland, you cannot divorce the literary [and one could add, the cultural] from the historical, from the political,” as Seamus Heaney has noted. The aim of this course is to explore the validity of this observation by focusing on how contemporary Northern Irish film and fiction portray, reflect on, engage with the socio-political conflict, known as the “Troubles” in Northern Ireland, and the ensuing “Peace Process.” More particularly, the course aims to highlight the transformations in representing the Troubles, which accelerated with the beginning of the Peace process in the 1990s. To achieve this end the close reading of novels and films will be embedded in contextualised readings theoretically informed by cultural studies, postcolonial studies, trauma studies and memory studies. The focal points in our discussions will be the representation of violence in art – the negotiation between the ethical and the aesthetic in representing violence, violence and the city, violence and the body – trauma, the relationship between trauma and memory, art as a site of commemoration and of counter-memory; modes of re-visioning personal and cultural identities and modes of reconfiguring the city, especially the city of Belfast, treated as synonymous with violence in much of 1970s and 80s “Troubles fiction.”

Requirements

1. **In-class participation:** Since most classes are planned to be interactive, their success will largely depend on the students’ readiness to read/watch and discuss the assigned material. To give students an idea what the focal points of the discussion are planned to be a list of questions will be provided before each class. However, students are also requested to come to class with their own questions in mind. We will integrate those questions into the discussion.

2. **Plot tests:** Plot tests showing the students’ familiarity with the assigned novels or films can be expected at the beginning of each class. **Failing more than three of these plot tests will result in failing the entire course.**

3. **Home essay:** an essay of about 2500-3000 words, word processed (double-spaced, type size 12) that meets the formal and academic requirements of a research paper: use of secondary material and scholarly documentation, conforming to the MLA Style, are required. The essay can focus on texts discussed in the course addressing an aspect, dimension not discussed in class or can explore issues discussed in the course in other Northern Irish cultural narratives (films or novels) not appearing as required reading for the course. The deadline for submitting the home essay is 12 pm, 10 January.

4. **Class attendance:** more than three absences will result in failing the entire course.

**NB! Out of all the course components, only one re-sit will be granted; in case you fail in more than one component, the course is a failure.**

Grading

The final grade will consist in the following:

1. In-class participation 20%
2. Plot tests 10%
3. Home essay 70%

SCHEDULE
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Reading</th>
<th>Visuals</th>
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| 1.    | 19 Sept                                                                 | **Introduction:** Changing interpretative models of the ‘Troubles’ and changing narrative models for representing the ‘Troubles’  
Recommended reading: Joe Cleary, “‘Fork-tongued on the Border Bit’: Partition and the Politics of Form in Contemporary Narratives of the Northern Irish Conflict.” |                                                                                             |
| 2.    | 26 Sept                                                                 | **The representation of political violence (violence and sexuality):**  
**Bernard McLaverty, Cal (1983)**  
Recommended visuals: film adaptation of Cal (dir. Pat O’Connor 1984) |                                                                                             |
| 3.    | 3 Oct                                                                   | **The representation of political violence (violence and the city):**  
**Eoin McNamee, Resurrection Man (1994)**  
Recommended reading: Richard Haslam, “‘The Pose Arranged and Lingered Over’: Visualizing the ‘Troubles.’” (pp. 205-08); Shane Alcobia-Murphy, “What Do I Say When They Wheel Out their Dead’: The Representation of Violence in Northern Irish Art” Irish Literature Since 1990 (pp. 287-94); Glenn Patterson, “Butchers’ Tools”; Caroline Magennis, “‘Laid it Open to the Bone’: The Hermeneutics of the Tortured Body in Resurrection Man”; Eamonn Hughes, “‘Town of Shadows’: Representations of Belfast in Recent Fiction.” Religion and Literature (1996)  
Recommended visuals: film adaptation of Resurrection Man (dir. Marc Evans 1997) |                                                                                             |
| 4.    | 10 Oct                                                                  | **“Anticipatory illuminations”: Revisioning personal and cultural identities (revisioning the city):**  
**Glenn Patterson, Fat Lad (1992, Ch 1-9)** |                                                                                             |
| 5.    | 17 Oct                                                                  | **Glenn Patterson, Fat Lad (1992, Ch 10-17)**  
| 6.    | 24 Oct                                                                  | **“Anticipatory illuminations”: Revisioning personal and cultural identities (affording dignity to memory):**  
**Deirdre Madden, One by One in the Darkness (1996)**  
NB! On 25 Oct (12 p.m.) our institute will host a reading by Deirdre Madden as part of the EFACIS Irish Itinerary |                                                                                             |
| 7.    | 31 Oct                                                                  | **CONSULTATION WEEK (NO CLASS)** |                                                                                             |
| 8.    | 7 Nov                                                                   | **The Satirical turn in the 1990s (revisioning the city):**  
**Robert McLiam Wilson, Eureka Street (1996, Ch 1-10)** |                                                                                             |
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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
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<tr>
<td>12. 5 Dec</td>
<td>Iconic events of the Troubles remembered and refigured&lt;br&gt;Hunger strikes films:&lt;br&gt;<em>Some Mother’s Son</em> (dir. Terry George 1996) and <em>H3</em> (dir. Les Blair 2001)&lt;br&gt;Recommended reading: Jennie Carlsten, “Mourning and Solidarity: The Commemorative Models of <em>Some Mother’s Son</em> and <em>H3.</em>” <em>Genre and Cinema</em>; David Lloyd: “‘Going Nowhere’: Oral Space in the cellblock” and “‘The Breaker’s Yard’: From Forensic to Interrogation Modernity”; Cahal McLaughlin (2009) “Cold, Hungry and Scared: Prison Films from the Troubles.” <em>Ireland in Focus: Film, Photography and Popular Culture</em></td>
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<td>14. 19 Dec</td>
<td>Evaluation</td>
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**Availability:** There are enough copies of *Cal* and *Fat Lad* and *The Rest Just Follows* for everyone, the other 3 novels are available in 8 copies in the department library (Rm 116/3); the films are available in the department library (Rm 101).

- The required secondary readings are available in 8 printed course packets.
- All the texts (primary, secondary, required, recommended) are also available in scanned format in the department library (Rm 101).

**Recommended reading:**


