LITERATURE AND IDENTITY: THE IRISH EXPERIENCE
Loyola Marymount University
FYS 1000.65: First-Year Seminar--Fall 2013
TR 3:00-4:15 PM--University Hall 1775

Primary Instructor: Dr. John Menaghan
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COURSE DESCRIPTION
What ish my nation? asks the Irishman Captain MacMorris in Shakespeare’s Henry V. As one critic notes: “Given the agonies of identity that have plagued Irish social and cultural history” this question is “of overwhelming importance in the context of the ongoing violence and tension between the two communities in Northern Ireland, as well as in the context of the often vexed relationship between Ireland and Britain.” In an effort to explore the vital and complex question of Irish identity, this literature-based course will include an examination of celebrated tales of ancient Ireland, the adventures of a mad medieval king whose struggle dramatizes the tensions between Celtic and Christian world views, poems and plays by W. B. Yeats, plays by J. M. Synge, and novels by James Joyce and Flann O’Brien. Students will also have opportunities to perform research on how other aspects of Irish culture—art, music, and dance as well as history, politics, and religion—have contributed to the formation, preservation, and/or transformation of Irish identity.

OBJECTIVES
As a foundational course in the Core Curriculum, this First Year Seminar is designed to:

Strengthen students’ understanding and appreciation of the intellectually challenging experience of college education through a focus on selected works of Irish literature and the complex issue of what constitutes Irish “identity.”

Strengthen students’ critical reading skills, especially the “close reading” of specific literary, critical, and theoretical texts encountered in the course.

Strengthen students’ writing skills, especially the ability to construct probing and persuasive analyses of literary texts and the issues they raise.

Strengthen students’ ability to articulate verbally their insights into the diverse ways in which the writers and works to be discussed explore the varied dimensions of Irish identity.

Strengthen students’ ability to gather and evaluate research materials related to the course content, particularly through the development of library research skills, and to deploy those skills in a research-based final essay.

REQUIRED TEXTS
Over Nine Waves, by Marie Heaney, Faber & Faber, 1995 (978-0-571-17518-5)
A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man, by James Joyce, Penguin, 2003 (978-0-14-243734-6)
The Playboy of the Western World and Other Plays, J. M. Synge (978-0-19-53805-8)

COURSE PACKET: 5 Plays by Yeats + Buile Suibhne
HANDOUTS: Yeats poems and other material

Please purchase the editions I have specified here, so our class discussion will be most productive. It’s very difficult to have a good discussion if everyone has a different edition, with different page numbers.
TENTATIVE SYLLABUS

T  Aug 26  Introduction: Irish Literature and Irish Identity

R  Aug 28  Over Nine Waves, pp. 3-21  (The Tuatha De Danann) & 50-55  (The Milesians Come to Ireland)
            WRITING INSTRUCTION: CHOOSING A TOPIC

T  Sep 2   Over Nine Waves, pp. 65-90 (The Weakness of the Ulstermen, The Birth of Cuchulainn, The Boyhood Deeds of Cuchulainn, Culann’s Hound: Cuchulainn Get His Name, Cuchulainn Takes Up Arms)
            WRITING INSTRUCTION: FROM TOPIC TO THESIS

R  Sep 4   Over Nine Waves, pp. 90-116 (The Wooing of Emer, Bricriu’s Feast)
            WRITING INSTRUCTION: INTRODUCTIONS

T  Sep 9   Over Nine Waves, pp. 126-55 (Cuchulainn and Ferdia’s Fight at the Ford, The Death of Cuchulainn)
            WRITING INSTRUCTION: MIDDLE PARAGRAPHS

R  Sep 11  READER--Yeats: The Green Helmet, On Baile’s Strand (plays) + “Cuchulain’s Fight with the Sea” (poem--handout)
            WRITING INSTRUCTION: CONCLUSIONS

T  Sep 16  READER--Yeats: At the Hawk’s Well, The Only Jealousy of Emer & The Death of Cuchulainn (plays) + “Cuchulainn Comforted” (poem--handout)
            WRITING INSTRUCTION: INTERPRETING EVIDENCE

R  Sep 18  Over Nine Waves, pp. 117-26 (Deirdre) & READER--Deirdre, Yeats (play)
            WRITING INSTRUCTION: ANTICIPATING OBJECTIONS

T  Sep 24  Deirdre of the Sorrows, Synge
            WRITING INSTRUCTION: GRAMMAR, STYLE, CITATION

R  Sep 26  Deirdre of the Sorrows, Synge (VIDEO)
            CRITICAL ESSAY DUE AT THE BEGINNING OF CLASS

T  Oct 1   Synge: The Playboy of the Western World, Acts 1 & 2

R  Oct 3   Synge: The Playboy of the Western World, Act 3
            Modules 1 and 2 of Literacy Information Tutorial Due
            (Both tests will close at 2:30 PM, so you must take them before that time)

1This syllabus represents the instructor's best judgment and projection of the course plan during the periods addressed therein. It is subject to change due to forces beyond the instructor's control or as deemed necessary by the instructor in order to fulfill the educational objectives of the course. Students are responsible for taking account of any changes or modifications announced in class, sent to them by email, or posted on LMU’s course management system MYLMU Connect. Make sure that you keep this syllabus handy, and consult it often throughout the semester.
T  Oct 8  Joyce: A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man, Chapter 1
R  Oct 10 Joyce: A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man, Chapter 2
T  Oct 15 Joyce: A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man, Chapter 3
R  Oct 17 Joyce: A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man, Chapter 4

Modules 3 and 4 of Literacy Information Tutorial Due
(Both tests will close at 2:30 PM, so you must take them before that time)

T  Oct 22 Joyce: A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man, Chapter 5
R  Oct 24 Over Nine Waves, pp. 155-179 (Finn)
WRITING INSTRUCTION: TYPES OF EVIDENCE

T  Oct 29 Over Nine Waves, pp. 180-221 (Finn)
WRITING INSTRUCTION: DEMONSTRATION OF MLA DATABASE

R  Nov 1 READER--Buile Suibhne, pp. 48-91 (Note: approx. 23 pages total)
WRITING INSTRUCTION: MLA FORMATTING

T  Nov 5 READER-- Buile Suibhne, pp. 91-159 (Note: approx. 23 pages total)
WRITING INSTRUCTION: ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHIES

R  Nov 7 O’Brien: At Swim-Two-Birds, pp. 9-53
T  Nov 12 O’Brien: At Swim-Two-Birds, pp. 53-101
R  Nov 14 O’Brien: At Swim-Two-Birds, pp. 101-145
T  Nov 19 O’Brien: At Swim-Two-Birds, 145-196
R  Nov 21 O’Brien: At Swim-Two-Birds, 196-248
T  Nov 26 O’Brien: At Swim-Two-Birds, 248-315
R  Nov 28 NO CLASS--Thanksgiving

T  Dec 3 WRITING INSTRUCTION: INTEGRATING SECONDARY SOURCES
R  Dec 5 WRITING INSTRUCTION: AVOIDING RESEARCH PITFALLS
ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY DUE

T  Dec 10  RESEARCH PAPER DUE by 3 PM

Note: There is no final exam for this course.

Work Load Expectations: See http://www.lmu.edu/Assets/LMU+Credit+Hour+Policy_Final.pdf
COURSE WORK / EXPECTATIONS

Extensive Reading, Careful Preparation, Faithful Attendance, and Engaged Participation

Writing Exercises

A Critical Essay (3-5 pages)

A Literacy Tutorial

An Annotated Bibliography

A Final Research Paper (7-10 pages)

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

*Education is not filling a bucket,*  
*but lighting a fire.*  

--W.B. Yeats

*You cannot teach a man anything.*  
*You can only help him find it within himself.*  

--Galileo Galilei

In this course students will be given the following opportunities:
1. To study and make connections among a range of Irish literary texts in relation to the theme of the course as well as in the larger context of Irish history and culture;
2. To strengthen their reading, writing and critical thinking skills through the regular exercise of those skills in class discussion, writing exercises, and a critical essay;
3. To develop library research skills vital to college students & apply them to the composition of an annotated bibliography and a final research paper.

ATTENDANCE

Attendance at each class is worth points toward your final grade. Thus every absence means the loss of those same points. In addition, every class missed means the loss not just of Attendance but also of Participation (and often Exercise) points, since you cannot participate in any class you miss or receive credit for an exercise assigned for that class. Your goal, then, should be to avoid missing class for any but the most pressing reasons. Given that this class meets only twice a week, you cannot miss more than 2 classes without it having an effect on your grade. Your wisest course, then, is to reserve those 2 absences to cover any serious illness or emergency that may arise.

GRADING

20%--Attendance & Participation  
20%--Writing Exercises & Annotated Bibliography  
20%--Critical Essay  
10%--Information Literacy Tutorial  
30%--Research Paper

EMAIL COMMUNICATION

There may be times when I need to communicate with the entire class via email, so it is essential that you regularly check your lion.lmu.edu email address or forward your lion account email to your preferred email address. You are responsible for being aware of and acting on any such email messages.
**PARTICIPATION**

The first criterion of success in any human activity, the necessary preliminary, whether to scientific discovery or to artistic vision, is intensity of attention [.

--W.H. Auden

Although obviously organized and informed by the knowledge and expertise of your instructors, this is not a lecture class but one centered largely on what might be called **Directed Discussion**. As the term “directed” implies, our discussions will not be formless or casual conversations, any more than the works assigned are formless and casual collections of words. Rather, the discussions will be directed toward defined goals: to understand what a particular work seems to be doing and saying, how a particular word, device, or technique is used within a work or works, how the overall design of a work shapes and frames its constituent parts, how pairs or groups of works by the same or several different writers are both related to and distinct from one another. Similarly, the writing instruction modules will address techniques and issues in an ordered, systematic fashion.

Our goal throughout the semester will be to arrive at a deeper, more complete understanding of any work or issue we discuss. Such understanding (and the deeper pleasure this more complete understanding yields) can only be arrived at if we refine our ability to “tune in” to the gestures, both simple and complex, that any work of literature makes in an effort to capture our attention and reward our engagement with it. An even broader goal is to be readers on whom (to paraphrase Henry James) “nothing is ever lost.” By repeatedly practicing engaged reading, discussion and writing you will come over time to see more within and understand more about any work you encounter. By exercising and refining your critical faculties you can also enjoy a richer experience of any work, any piece of writing, any artistic construct, and perhaps even any “real life” situation you encounter in the future.

What do you need to do, then, to prepare yourself to take an active and constructive part in each class discussion?

**First, note that you are required to have your own copy of each required text & to bring the text to class!**

Next, to be properly prepared you obviously need to complete the assigned reading, but you should strive to read actively rather than passively, noting the subject, movement, sound and shape of a work, key devices and techniques used, etc.

In addition, you need to complete in advance any exercise assigned. In fact, I will often begin our discussion of a work by asking several students to share their exercises with the class. You need, then, to come to class on time, ready to contribute, and expecting to be called on during our discussion.

In short, an informed and focused discussion involving the entire class can only happen if all of its members have completed the reading and any writing assignment before each class and have come equipped, prepared, and eager to make a vital contribution to that discussion.

To reinforce the importance of engaged, active, and focused discussion, please note that I will evaluate your level of participation, both for individual classes and cumulatively, in relation to the following scale:

0=Absent

1=Unprepared and/or disengaged or missing part of the class (late arrival and/or early departure)

2=Attentive throughout but making limited contributions to the discussion

3=Actively engaged throughout, and making meaningful contributions to the discussion

4=Actively engaged throughout, and making not only meaningful but astute contributions that move the discussion forward and/or combine earlier insights into a coherent whole (Note: requires “Active Listening”)
WRITING ASSIGNMENTS

Writing Exercises: You will be required to complete various writing exercises, in response to prompts focused on the texts to be discussed in a particular class. These exercises are designed to help you both to process the assigned reading and to generate ideas for class discussion. You must type your exercises and print them out before class. Collectively, these exercises are worth 10% of the final grade. N.B.: Not only are exercises due at the beginning of class, but in order to get credit for an exercise you must attend class on the due date and be able to share what you’ve written during that same class. Thus no late exercises will be accepted, nor will any submitted “in absentia” either in print or by email.

Critical Essay: The critical essay (3-5 pages) will focus on one or more pieces of literature encountered in the initial weeks of the course and the question of Irish identity. For this essay, the focus will be on “close reading” and analysis of the primary text, rather than on research.

Annotated Bibliography: As the deadline for your research paper approaches, you will be required to prepare an annotated bibliography that includes a minimum of 6 scholarly articles or book chapters unearthed in the course of your ongoing research and relevant to your research paper.

Research Paper: Each student’s research paper (7-10 pages) will focus on a topic chosen in consultation with the instructors. The chosen topic must also be focused on the issue of Irish identity and one or more of the literary texts encountered in the course. However, “close reading” and analysis must be augmented by research into relevant secondary sources, the insights they provide, and the challenges they present to the writer’s own interpretation of the text(s).

Note: Over the course of the semester students will receive instruction on various aspects of the writing process. For issues that arise outside class time, you will also have access to an online site that offers information on topics such as Writing, Research, Grammar & Mechanics, and Avoiding Plagiarism. Purdue University’s Online Writing Lab (OWL) website owl.english.purdue.edu is free, and you are encouraged to use it while working on the various writing assignments.

INFORMATION LITERACY TUTORIAL

You will be responsible for completing a four-part information literacy tutorial designed by the LMU librarians. The different parts of the tutorial, which you will access through MyLMUConnect, are designed to familiarize you with choosing a research topic, different types of sources, how to locate these sources, and how to use these sources. Each tutorial will take approximately one hour to complete. After you have completed each part of the tutorial, you will be tested on the material. The combination of the four test scores will constitute 10% of your final grade. You must complete the information literacy tutorials on time in order to get credit for them.

RESOURCES FOR STUDENTS

Tutoring Center: The Tutoring Center is located in the Academic Resource Center, on the second floor of Daum Hall. Experienced tutors are available to help students who wish to improve their writing. For an appointment, call 338-2847.

Advising: For questions about the undergraduate curriculum, see your adviser in the English department. If you are an English major, the College of Liberal Arts also has Student Ambassadors, who can help with certain aspects of advising.

Disability Support Services: Persons with disabilities are welcome in this classroom. If you have a disability and need specific accommodations, please register with DSS and then let us know. DSS is located in the Academic Resource Center, Room 224 in Daum Hall. The phone number is 338-4535.
COURSE POLICIES

1. All written work must be typed double-spaced on medium-weight paper with 1-inch margins.
2. Faithful attendance and engaged participation are basic requirements for successfully completing this course. Frequent absence, tardiness, and/or passivity will damage a student’s grade.
3. Critical Essays, Annotated Bibliographies & Research Papers handed in late will be downgraded one grade per day (e.g., A to A- for one day, A to C- for seven days). Extensions will only be granted in special circumstances, and then only at the discretion of the instructor.
4. Both the critical essay & the research paper must be submitted to earn a passing grade in this course.
5. Plagiarism of any kind constitutes grounds for failing the entire course. To avoid plagiarism, all use of and reference to secondary sources (including other people's ideas) must be documented following MLA guidelines. For further information on both plagiarism and proper formatting of citations, consult the MLA Handbook or the online MLA Style guide at http://libguides.lmu.edu/content.php?pid=25618&sid=184710.

UNIVERSITY POLICIES

Academic Honesty: Academic dishonesty will be treated as an extremely serious matter, with serious consequences that can range from receiving no credit for assignments/tests to expulsion. It is never permissible to turn in any work that has been copied from another student or copied from a source (including the Internet) without properly acknowledging the source. It is your responsibility to make sure that your work meets the standard of academic honesty set forth in the “LMU Honor Code and Process” which appears in the LMU Bulletin 2010-2011 (see http://www.lmu.edu/about/services/registrar/Bulletin/Bulletins_in_PDF_Format.htm.)

Disruptive and Threatening Student Behavior (Fall 2010): “Disruptive behavior which is persistent or significantly interferes with classroom activities may be subject to disciplinary action. A student may be referred to the Office of Student Judicial Affairs if their behavior constitutes a violation of the conduct code.” The following three LMU documents are available for your reference:

1. The LMU Student Affairs brochure Disruptive and Threatening Student Behavior (Fall 2010).
3. LMU’s Community Standards (see http://www.lmu.edu/studentlife/Judicial_Affairs/Standards_Publication.htm for the Student Conduct Code, Section IV. D.).

Americans with Disabilities Act: Students with special needs as addressed by the Americans with Disabilities Act who need reasonable modifications, special assistance, or accommodations in this course should promptly direct their request to the Disability Support Services Office. Any student who currently has a documented disability (physical, learning, or psychological) needing academic accommodations should contact the Disability Services Office (Daum Hall Room 224, 310-338-4535) as early in the semester as possible. All discussions will remain confidential. Please visit http://www.lmu.edu/dss for additional information.

A PLACE APART
We live in a world full of distractions. The policies and guidelines below are designed to promote an atmosphere in class conducive to focused, intense discussion free of distractions from the world beyond the classroom—to render the classroom a place apart in which to interact and learn and grow.

1. Arrive on time and stay till the end of class.

2. Have your required text & other assigned material on your desk & ready to consult at the start of class.

3. Keep the desk clear of other materials, except for notebook/paper, pen/pencil/highlighter, and any relevant handouts.

4. Turn off and stow away cell phones and other devices before class starts. NO TEXTING!

5. No use of laptops in class.

6. Remain focused on the discussion as well as attentive to and respectful of both the instructors’ and fellow students’ contributions to the proceedings.

7. Address all remarks to the instructor and/or to the class as a whole. No “side talk” to one or more other students.

8. Whether or not you typically contribute to the discussion a lot, a little, or somewhere in between, you must stay engaged and ready to respond when called on.

9. Stay focused on the discussion until the very end. No “packing up” while class is still in session.

10. Regular attendance is required, with excused absences permitted only for compelling reasons.

11. No eating in the classroom.

Grading Floors
An overall average of 96% will receive a grade of A.
An overall average of 92% will receive at least a grade of A-.
An overall average of 88% will receive at least a grade of B+.
An overall average of 85% will receive at least a grade of B.
An overall average of 82% will receive at least a grade of B-.
An overall average of 78% will receive at least a grade of C+.
An overall average of 75% will receive at least a grade of C.
An overall average of 72% will receive at least a grade of C-.
An overall average of 75% will receive at least a grade of C.
An overall average of 72% will receive at least a grade of C-.
An overall average of 65% will receive at least a grade of D.
An overall average of 55% will receive a grade of F. (*See Policies)

Emergency Preparedness: To report an emergency or suspicious activity, contact the LMU Department of Public Safety by phone (x222 or 310-338-2893) or at the nearest emergency call box. In the event of an evacuation, follow the evacuation signage throughout the building to the designated safe refuge area where you will receive further instruction from Public Safety or a Building Captain. For more safety information and preparedness tips, visit http://www.lmu.edu/emergency.

Note: By remaining enrolled in this class, you will be agreeing to be bound by all of the terms and policies stated herein.