



2025 AHSS International Summer School

Programme Topic: Irish Studies

**Academic Lead:
Peter Gray**

**Dates: 22 June – 3
July 2026**

Topic Summary: The 2-week Irish Studies programme takes a deeper dive into understanding identities in Ireland and their relationship with the wider world, through explorations of the country's history, culture and language, with particular reference to the acute divisions over identity in the north. The first week looks at historical topics including:

- the origins and structural legacies of colonialism and religious change in shaping Ulster's conflicting 'ethno-religious' communities
- how the relationships between these communities have changed, sometimes in surprising ways, over time
- the wider contexts of Irish economic development, famine, gender relations, mass emigration and the rise of an overseas diaspora, alongside the political ideologies of nationalism and unionism
- the causes and consequences of the partition of Ireland through to the experience of the Northern Irish 'Troubles' of 1968-98 and their aftermaths
- how the 'difficult' past of Ireland is remembered and represented today, including in the Ulster Museum

In week two we will focus on the cultural expressions of Irish identity, looking at

- the decline and revival of the Irish language, with a visit to the Culturlann language centre
- the contribution to Irish culture and identities of some of the country's leading writers from the 18th century to the present
- how Troubles-era and contemporary Northern Ireland has been represented on screen, in poetry and in novels
- the week includes a field trip to Nobel Prize-winning poet Seamus Heaney's 'Homeplace' at Bellaghy and a plantation 'big house' in the Ulster countryside.

Intended Learning Outcomes

- Develop a more rounded understanding of the culture and history of the north of Ireland, and its relations with the rest of the island and overseas
- identify and analyse primary and secondary sources and literary texts relating to Ireland as appropriate
- undertake independent library-based research as appropriate



WEEK 2

Monday 22 June 2026

| Time | Session/Activity | Academic Lead | Location |
|-------------------|---|---------------|----------|
| 9.30am - 11.00am | History: The Plantation of Ulster and its Legacies (Prof Crawford Gribben) | PG | |
| 11.00am – 11.30am | Break | | |
| 11.30am – 1.00pm | History: The Failed Revolution of 1798 in its Atlantic Contexts (Dr Andrew Holmes) | PG | |
| 1.00pm – 2.00pm | Lunch | | |
| 2.00pm – 3.30pm | History: Famine and Land in the 19th Century (Prof Peter Gray) | PG | |

Tuesday 23 June 2026

| Time | Session/Activity | Academic Lead | Location |
|-------------------|--|---------------|----------|
| 9.30am - 11.00am | History: Belfast – the Rise and Fall of an Industrial Giant (Prof Peter Gray) | PG | |
| 11.00am – 11.30am | Break | | |
| 11.30am – 1.00pm | History: Mass Emigration and Irish Diaspora (Dr Sophie Cooper) | PG | |
| 1.00pm – 2.00pm | Lunch | | |
| 2.00pm – 3.30pm | History: Nationalism and Unionism in Ireland, 1830-1916 (Prof Peter Gray) | PG | |

Wednesday 24 June 2026

| Time | Session/Activity | Academic Lead | Location |
|-------------------|--|---------------|----------|
| 9.30am - 11.00am | History: Revolution, Partition, Independence: Ireland, 1916-23' (Prof. Fearghal McGarry) | PG | |
| 11.00am – 11.30am | Break | | |
| 11.30am – 1.00pm | History: Women's Experience and identities in Modern Ireland (Prof Elaine Farrell) | PG | |
| 1.00pm – 2.00pm | Lunch | | |
| 2.00pm – 3.30pm | History: Northern Ireland from Partition to the Origins of the Troubles (Dr Peter McLoughlin) | PG | |



Thursday 25 June 2026

| Time | Session/Activity | Academic Lead | Location |
|-------------------|--|----------------------|-----------------|
| 9.30am - 11.00am | History: From Troubles to Peace Process in Northern Ireland (Dr Ruth Duffy) | PG | |
| 11.00am – 11.30am | Break | | |
| 11.30am – 12.30pm | History: Memory and Memorialisation in Contemporary Northern Ireland (Dr Gordon Gillespie) | PG | |
| 12.30pm – 1.30pm | Lunch | | |
| 1.30pm – 3.30pm | Visit to Ulster Museum: Representing the Troubles Gallery (Dr Gordon Gillespie and Prof Peter Gray) | PG | |

Friday 26 June 2026

| Time | Session/Activity | Academic Lead | Location |
|-----------------|------------------------------|----------------------|-----------------|
| 9.30am - 5.00pm | North Coast Fieldtrip | PG | |



WEEK 3

Monday 29 June 2026

| Time | Session/Activity | Academic Lead | Location |
|-----------------|--|----------------------|-----------------|
| 9.30am - 1.00pm | Field Trip to Culturlann, Belfast: The Languages of Ireland (Prof Micheal Ó Mainnin) The Irish Language Revival (Róisín Nic Liam) | PG | |
| 1.00pm – 2.00pm | Lunch | | |
| 2.00pm – 3.30pm | Culture: Writing Ireland and Colonialism (Dr Daniel Roberts) | PG | |

Tuesday 30 June 2026

| Time | Session/Activity | Academic Lead | Location |
|-------------------|---|----------------------|-----------------|
| 9.30am - 11.00am | Culture: Screening the Troubles (Dr Des O’Rawe) | PG | |
| 11.00am – 11.30am | Break | | |
| 11.30am – 1.00pm | Culture: The Irish Gothic (Dr Sinead Sturgeon) | PG | |
| 1.00pm – 2.00pm | Lunch | | |
| 2.00pm – 3.30pm | Culture: Class identities in Irish writing (Dr Michael Pierse) | PG | |



Wednesday 1 July 2026

| Time | Session/Activity | Academic Lead | Location |
|--------------------------|---|----------------------|-----------------|
| 9.30am - 11.00am | Culture: Seamus Heaney, the Troubles and Poetry in the North (Dr Scott McKendry) | PG | |
| 11.00am – 11.30am | Break | | |
| 11.30am – 1.00pm | Culture: Contemporary Poetry in Belfast (Dr Scott McKendry) | PG | |
| 1.00pm – 2.00pm | Lunch | | |
| 2.00pm – 3.30pm | Culture: Writing Contemporary Belfast: <i>Milkman</i> (Dr Eamonn Hughes) | PG | |

Thursday 2 July 2026

| | | | |
|--------------------|---|-----------|--|
| 9.30am- 4pm | Irish Studies Field Trip: Seamus Heaney Homeplace, Bellaghy, and Springhill House, Moneymore (Prof Peter Gray) | PG | |
| 6.00- 8.00 | End of Summer School Reception and Dinner | | |