IRS7011 Belfast: Place, Identity and Memory in a Contested City
MA Irish Studies 2018-19

Convenor: Prof. Peter Gray, Director, Institute of Irish Studies
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12UQ/0G/003 or 27UQ/0G/005
Office hour: Wednesdays 11-12 or by appointment

This module is compulsory for all students taking MA Irish Studies, and open to students on other MA pathways as an option module.

This module introduces students to themes in Irish Studies through an interdisciplinary case study of Belfast. Throughout the module students will be encouraged to consider the ways in which Irish and other identities (municipal, regional, ‘British’, religious, class, gendered etc) have been constructed and contested in the urban environment, in language, literature, political affiliations and social interactions, from the establishment of Belfast as a colonial settlement in the 17th century, to the present day. Students will also be introduced to the ‘Belfast’ approach to Irish Studies as a subject of study dating to the foundation of the Institute in the 1960s, and encouraged to debate its continuing relevance and redefinition.

The module is taught through weekly seminars on Mondays 2.00pm-4.00pm in the Irish Studies Seminar room, 27 University Square 01.003.

Outline of classes for 2018-19

1. Introduction – Belfast’s Irish Studies: definitions and approaches (Peter Gray) [24/9/18]
2. Belfast from colonial to revolutionary town, c.1613-1800 (History – Sean Connolly) [1/10/18]
3. Belfast – industrial giant and cockpit of violence, c.1800-1922 (History – Peter Gray) [8/10/18]
4. Belfast – class, gender and religion in a divided city, 1922-1969 (History – Sean O’Connell) [15/10/18]
5. Belfast in contemporary poetry (English – Gail McConnell) [22/10/18]
6. Fiction and the city (English – Eamonn Hughes) [29/10/18]
7. Staging Belfast: Stewart Parker’s drama (Drama – Mark Phelan) [5/11/18]
8. Languages, place and identity in Belfast (Irish – Micheal Ó Mainnin) [12/11/18]
9. Heritage and redevelopment in a divided city (Urban Planning - Bill Neill) [19/11/18]
10. The Symbolic Landscape of Belfast: Anthropological approaches to Ritual and Symbol (Anthropology - Dominic Bryan) [26/11/18]
11. The Titanic Town: Civic Space and Contemporary Belfast (Anthropology – Dom Bryan) [3/12/18]
12. Field trip to Belfast City Hall Exhibition (Peter Gray) [WED 12/12/18 at 3.30pm]

Learning Outcomes:
1. familiarity with the major themes and debates in Belfast’s history, cultural life and social and political development
2. a critical appreciation with the disciplinary and interdisciplinary literature relating to these themes and the ability to engage with this in analysing questions of national, regional, class, gender and other identities evident in Belfast, past and present
3. a critical appreciation of major debates in interdisciplinary Irish Studies, especially those most associated with the Institute of Irish Studies at Queen’s
4. The ability to write an informed and original analysis of the problems discussed in the module, with particular reference to Belfast in preparation for work on the dissertation

Assessment
Essay (90%)
Class participation (10%)

The Assessed Essay for this module is due for submission on Wednesday 9 January 2019 by 12.00pm. The essay should be 4,500-5,000 words in length (including references). The essay can be on a topic of your choice, related to one or more of the themes addressed in the classes for this module. You must agree a title for your essay with the relevant class tutor and email the module convenor (Prof Gray) with your agreed title no later than Friday 14 December 2018 (12.00pm).

All essays must be thoroughly referenced, with footnotes/endnotes and a bibliography. Please use the referencing conventions most appropriate for the discipline in which your essay is located (n.b. at QUB History now uses Chicago Style referencing conventions: https://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide/citation-guide-1.html)

Submitting Coursework
To submit your coursework, you must upload an electronic copy of your assignment onto the TurnitinUK website (www.turnitinuk.com) prior 12:00 noon on the stated deadline. A link to this website is also provided in the School sharepoint site.

The School uses a system of anonymous marking, so do not include your name on the assignment. Please include your student number, module code, and title of assignment, and the word count.

Please keep an electronic receipt for all Submissions. All assignments are retained by the School for scrutiny by internal and external examiners.
All assignments submitted after the deadline will be penalized 5 percentage points for working day, to a maximum of five days (25%), after which a mark of 0 will be recorded.

Registering for TurnItInUK
You will be pre-enrolled for all your modules on TurnItInUK, but you will need to complete your Turnitin registration the first time that you use it.

You will receive a welcome email with temporary password. Log in to www.turnitinuk.com using your @qub.ac.uk email address and this password, and change the password as you prefer. **You do not need to create a new account.** Any queries should be directed to the main School office.

Word Count Penalty
Students must ensure that they adhere to the word limit set by the Module Convener for any piece of assessed work and should indicate word length of the title page. The word count in assignments is inclusive of ALL in-text references (meaning any footnote or endnote) but NOT the bibliography or any material included in appendix or appendices.

If students breach the upper limit specified, they may gain an unfair advantage and markers are not required to read beyond the stated word limit. Moreover, meeting the stipulated requirements is one of the skills that is being assessed and achieving the stipulated length is directly related to other assessment criteria (such as a concise argument, clear focus, etc). **Work that exceeds the stated maximum, beyond a tolerance of 10%, faces a penalty of 3%.**

Extensions and Exceptional Circumstances
As part of the Exceptional Circumstances procedures, students who believe they will miss an assignment deadline because of illness, etc., must request an extension via the ‘Request for an Extension to an Assignment Deadline’ form, either electronically to happ@qub.ac.uk or to the Main Office at 25 University Square. The form should be submitted in advance of the deadline or, in exceptional circumstances, within three days following the stated deadline. Students should ALSO email their Module Convener directly to discuss the reasons for the request and agree a new deadline. Extensions will not normally be longer than five working days.

**ALL requests MUST be accompanied by supporting evidence (usually medical documentation as detailed in the guidance on the Request form. Requests without supporting evidence will be rejected.**

Students are strongly encouraged to speak to their Personal Tutor or Advisor of Study, as well as their Module Convener, for support and guidance should any circumstances arise that affect their attendance or assessment in their modules.

Plagiarism
The School takes a very severe line on students who plagiarise work. Students who attempt to pass off another’s work as their own will receive a mark of ZERO. In some cases, acts of plagiarism can result in the student failing the entire degree. Remember, plagiarism includes...
information from books, newspapers, journals and the Internet. All suspected cases of plagiarism will be investigated in line with University procedures. Marks cannot be awarded twice for the same piece of work, which includes exam answers. Any answer reproducing work previously submitted for assessment will be awarded a mark of ZERO, and any assignment repeating work from another module will be awarded a mark of ZERO. The module convenor will be happy to clarify what constitutes unacceptable repetition of module material.

For details of University Regulations on Academic Offences, see: http://www.qub.ac.uk/directorates/AcademicStudentAffairs/AcademicAffairs/ExaminationsandAssessment/AcademicOffences/

The page also provides a link to guidance on how to identify and avoid plagiarism. Please also refer to the School’s Student Handbook Guide for more information about referencing and plagiarism, and advice on essay-writing.

For further help with research, essay writing, referencing, avoiding plagiarism and other similar issues with your studies, please see your module convenor or personal tutor. The Learning Development Service, which is an excellent resource for your continued learning, academic support, and the enhancement of the university experience:

http://www.qub.ac.uk/directorates/sgc/learning/

**Reading Lists and Questions**

These two texts are strongly recommended for introducing the themes of the module:

S.J. Connolly (ed.), *Belfast 400: people, place and history* (Liverpool, 2012)

N. Allen and A. Kelly (eds), *Cities of Belfast* (Dublin, 2003)

**Additional General Reading on Belfast**

J. Bardon, *Belfast: an illustrated history* (Belfast, 1982)


P. Craig (ed.), *The Belfast anthology* (Belfast, 1999)


O. Purdue (ed.), *Belfast: The emerging city 1850-1914* (Sallins, 2012)


W.A. Maguire, *Belfast* (Keele, 1993)

**Historic atlases**


**1. Irish Studies in Belfast: Place and Identity**

S.J. Connolly (ed.), *Belfast 400: people, place and history* (Liverpool, 2012), ch 1

E.E. Evans, *The personality of Ireland* (Cambridge, 1973)

2. **Belfast from colonial to revolutionary town c1613-1800**
(Prof Sean Connolly)

Questions
- Why did Belfast become the most successful urban centre in Plantation Ulster?
- Was 18th Century Belfast a ‘Presbyterian Town’? What were its social and economic characteristics?
- How divisive was the revolutionary decade of the 1790s in Belfast and what legacy did it leave?

Core Readings
2. [W. Bruce and H. Joy] *Belfast Politics . . . Thoughts on the British constitution* (the 1794 edition printed by Henry Joy), pp 52-65. There is a complete text on Google Books, but be sure you are the right version. The text relates to the review and celebration of the French Revolution on 14 July 1792, and the debate on Catholic emancipation that followed.
3. S.J. Connolly (ed.), *Belfast 400: people, place and history* (Liverpool, 2012), chs 2-5

Further readings
A. Blackstock, *Double traitors? The Belfast Volunteers and Yeomen 1778-1828* (Belfast, 2000)
R. Gillespie, *Early Belfast: the origins and growth of an Ulster town to 1750* (Belfast, 2007)
R. Ó Baoill, *Hidden history below our feet: the archaeological story of Belfast* (Belfast, 2011)
N. Rodgers, *Ireland, slavery and anti-slavery* (London, 2007), ch. 7

3. **Belfast – Industrial giant and cockpit of violence 1800-1922**
(Prof Peter Gray)

Questions
- Why and when did Belfast’s urban politics transition from radicalism to conservatism?
- How successful was Victorian Belfast in developing a ‘civic culture’?
- What was the relationship between class and sectarianism in Belfast, c.1850-1922?
- Was Belfast an ‘Irish’ or a ‘British’ city?

Core Reading
S.J. Connolly (ed.), Belfast 400: people, place and history (Liverpool, 2012), chs 6-7

Further Reading
J.C. Beckett et al (ed.), Belfast: the making of the city (Belfast, 1983), chs 9-12
J. Bew, The glory of being Britons: civic unionism in 19th-century Belfast (Dublin, 2009)
S.J. Connolly, ‘Belfast – the rise and fall of a civic culture?’ in O. Purdue (ed.), Belfast: the emerging city 1850-1914 (Sallins, 2013)
S.J. Connolly, ”Like an old cathedral city”: Belfast welcomes Queen Victoria’, Urban History, 39 (2012)
M. Doyle, Fighting like the devil for the sake of god: Protestants, Catholics and the origins of violence in Victorian Belfast (Manchester, 2009)
J. Gray, City in revolt: James Larkin and the Belfast dock strike of 1907 (Belfast, 1985)
B. Griffin, The Bulkies: police and crime in Belfast 1800-65 (Dublin, 1997)
A.C. Hepburn, A past apart: studies in the history of Catholic Belfast (Belfast, 1996)
A.C. Hepburn, Catholic Belfast and nationalist Ireland in the era of Joe Devlin, 1871-1934 (Oxford, 2008)
C. Hirst, Religion, politics and violence in 19th-century Belfast: the Pound and Sandy Row (Dublin, 2002)
K. Hughes, The Scots in Victorian and Edwardian Belfast: a study in elite migration (Edinburgh, 2013)
A. Morgan, Labour and partition: the Belfast working class 1905-23 (London, 1991)
A.F. Parkinson, Belfast’s unholy war: the Troubles of the 1920s (Dublin, 2004)
H. Patterson, Class conflict and sectarianism: the Protestant working class and the Belfast labour movement 1868-1920 (Belfast, 1980)
B. Walker, Ulster politics: the formative years, 1868-1886 (Belfast, 1989)
J.J. Wright, The ‘natural Leaders’ and their world: politics, culture and society in Belfast, c.1801-1832 (Liverpool, 2012)

4. Belfast – class, gender and religion in a divided society, 1922-69
(Prof Sean O’Connell)

Discussion questions
• How can historians employ oral history as a source through which we explore Belfast’s history?
• How can historians employ autobiography for the same purpose? In what ways does the autobiography differ from the oral history interview?
• An age of progress? Can this term be applied in relation to social change in Belfast between 1945 and the mid-1960s?
• What insights are offered on Belfast’s history if we begin the research process by probing class, gender and the issues of everyday ‘history from below’?

Reading assignments

All read
M. Elliott, Hearthlands: a memoir of the White City housing estate in Belfast (2017) chapter 6 – scanned on QOL

and
Group 1

Group 2
P. Hodson, ‘Titanic struggle: memory, heritage and shipyard deindustrialisation in Belfast’, forthcoming Historical Workshop Journal 2019 – pre-publication copy on QOL
M. Blood, Watch my lips, I’m speaking! (2007) – Chapter two is on QOL

Group 3
G. Mulvenna, Tartan gangs and paramilitaries: the loyalist backlash (2016) Ch 1 on QOL. Full ebook at https://www.cambridge.org/core/books/tartan-gangs-and-paramilitaries/5A732E22AA4126B4D510DD1FB8608EFC1
E. O’Callaghan, *Belfast days: the diary of a teenage Catholic* (2014) (a diary rather than autobiography as such but contains elements that contrast markedly with the oral history accounts in Tartan gangs)

Further reading
B. Messenger, *Picking up the linen threads: a study in industrial folklore* (1978)
Ron Weiner, *The rape and plunder of the Shankill: people and planning* (Belfast, 1976)

5. *Belfast in Contemporary Poetry*
(Dr Gail McConnell)

Seminar Reading List:

Questions:
1. How do Carson, Gillis, Morrissey and Flynn represent Belfast in the aftermath of the Belfast Agreement of 1998?
2. To what extent is Belfast shown to be making itself new in the contemporary period?
3. Consider the variety of poetic forms. What effects are created by the short line, lack of punctuation and white space around Carson’s poems? What does the length and stanzaic rhyme pattern of Flynn’s ‘Letter to Friends’ enable?
4. What forms of community formation exist in these literary representations of Belfast? What fractures are highlighted?
5. Consider how contemporary Belfast is represented in relation to (a) gender, (b) class, (c) sectarianism.

Suggested Further Reading
Alexander, Neal. ‘Remembering the future: poetry, peace and the politics of memory in Northern Ireland’. Textual Practice 2016 (online publication)


6. Fiction and the City
(Dr Eamonn Hughes)

Reading
Nicholas Allen and Aaron Kelly (eds), Cities of Belfast (Dublin, 2003), esp Introduction

Questions
In addition to any reading of the set texts, it will be of equal value for this class to think about your ‘encounters’ with Belfast: the terms you use to describe the place and events in it over the last fifty years, and how you regard the ways in which both the place and events in it have been represented in various cultural forms. By ‘cultural forms’ I mean all forms: from poetry to Hollywood blockbusters, from pop songs to journalism, from tourist brochures to TV programmes, from photography to comic books, from academic articles to ‘Troubles trash’ (the term used to describe thrillers about the ‘Troubles’). In the light of this, please come to class prepared to discuss at least one example of a cultural representation of Belfast.

• Is Belfast exceptional – a place apart – or can it be compared to other places?
• Is Belfast absolutely defined by the ‘Troubles’, or should other matters be considered?
• Consider how the city fits, or fails to fit, into an Irish context.
• Is Belfast an Irish city?
• Consider the relationship between gender and the various spaces of the city.

7. Staging Belfast: Stewart Parker
(Dr Mark Phelan)

SET TEXTS: Stewart Parker, Pentecost and Northern Star from Stewart Parker: Plays
2 (London, 2000)

Questions:

Pentecost:
1) How does the stage setting of this terrace home function as a material and metaphysical metaphor for the themes of the play?
2) Consider the roles and relationships of the three women in the play.
3) Discuss the role of the ghost in the play (and consider the role of ghosts in all modern Irish / European drama, or to the theme of Ireland being “haunted” by history)
4) Research the Ulster Workers’ Council Strike which provides the setting of the play. What is the significance of this?
5) Consider the final scene of the play. What is happening here? Pay particular attention to how the stage directions, the final speeches and how the dramaturgical arc of the play concludes in this scene.
6) Discuss the significance of the plays’ title and unpack other instances of religious imagery and iconography which Parker deploys to generate a “secular Pentecost”.

Northern Star:
1) The play is written in a pastiche form drawing on Jacques’ idea of the ‘Seven Ages of Man’. Identify each of these ages as well as the different voices/styles of different Irish playwrights Parker ventriloquises in the play. Consider why Parker adopts this form. How does it serve as a metatheatrical comment on both the canon of Irish drama and on historiography itself.
2) Consider the significance of the stage setting: “Ireland, the continuous past”.
3) Consider McCracken’s moving final speech about going for a dander in Belfast. We will discuss this in class.
4) Glenn Patterson called Parker as the “Bard of Belfast”. How would you evaluate this appellation on the basis of these two plays?
5) In the late 1960s Parker expressed a desire, as recorded in his journals, to become a “stateless person” but in 1987 in an interview, described himself as a “Belfast playwright,” explaining, “it’s the only kind of description that makes any sense to me.” Though he has spent much of his adulthood living and working outside his native city, why do you think he described himself so?
RECOMMENDED READING:
Stewart Parker, *Dramatis Personae*, QOL
‘Ulster Workers Council Strike’ on CAIN website: http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/events/uwc/index.html

8. Languages, place and identity in Belfast
(Prof Micheal Ó Mainnin)

Questions for discussion

- What is the relationship between language and power, language and ethnicity and language and nation?
- How does the concept of national identity, especially where it is fluid or contested, intersect with linguistic identity?
- What is the relationship between national, cultural and linguistic identity in Belfast and what are the implications for social cohesion, conflict resolution, and societal well-being?

Readings
Fionntán de Brún (ed.), *Belfast and the Irish Language* (Dublin, 2006)
Dominic Watt & Carmen Llamas (eds), *Sociolinguistics: Language and Identities* (Edinburgh, 2009).

9. Heritage and development in a divided city
(Prof Bill Neill)

Questions for consideration

1. ‘Development demonstrates that devolution is delivering.’ To what degree is such an approach to redevelopment crowding out other urban imaginaries for Belfast?
2. To what degree are proposals for a Conflict Transformation Centre at the Maze and the rebranding of Queen's Island as Titanic Quarter complementary or in tension in marketing heritage in Greater Belfast?

3. Does the new logo for Belfast launched in September 2017 succeed in representing the ‘New Belfast’?

Readings


Other perspectives on development/heritage


10. The Symbolic Landscape of Belfast: Anthropological approaches to Ritual and Symbol (Dr Dominic Bryan)
Questions

- What role do symbols and rituals play in identity formation?
- How do we explore change by examining ‘traditional’ rituals and symbols in Belfast?
- Why are ephemeral symbolic displays so important in the understanding the geography of Belfast?

Key readings


11. The Titanic Town: Civic Space and Contemporary Belfast

(Dr Dominic Bryan)

Questions

- Can Belfast be considered to be a ‘post-conflict’ city?
- To what extent is the physical landscape of Belfast still shaped by the 1969-98 conflict?
- What is ‘shared space’?

Key Readings


12. Visit to Belfast City Hall