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IRSH 249.01: The Irish - Pre-Norman Ireland

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The History of Ireland

Instructor: Traolach Ó Ríordáin

Contact: LA 125

Office Hours: Tuesday and Thursday 3:00 – 5:00

Grading:

1. 2 in-term essays
2. Final end-of-term essay

Attendance: An attendance roll will be kept and all students, without exception, are expected to attend all classes on time. Late arrivals will not be tolerated; if you are late without a valid reason, you may not join the class. Do not miss class. If you accrue more than four absences without valid reason, you will drop a grade. Missing four classes in succession will be taken to mean that you have dropped the class.

Introduction

The purpose of this course is to identify and examine the main cultural influences that impacted and shaped Irish history from the earliest times to the present day. Simply put, this course concerns itself with ideas and ideologies, philosophies and religions and their influence on the cultural, political and social life of Ireland. This is a complex story, so the course is designed in a thematic fashion to facilitate a greater and deeper understanding of the forces at play. All the great intellectual movements of Irish history had a beginning and ascent to a period of great influence – an epoch, if you will – during which they exerted their greatest influence on Irish life. The historical timeline will be divided into the following distinct epochs:

1. Pre-historic and Celtic Ireland – 9,000 BC to 432 AD
2. Christian and Celtic Civilization – 432 – 1169
3. Normans, Feudalism and English Rule in Ireland 1169 - 1529
4. The Reformation and the Destruction of Gaelic Ireland 1529 - 1699
5. Nation-building and Nationalism 1699 - 1921
6. Independent Ireland 1921 - 2010

The reading material for this course is drawn from primary and secondary sources and will be posted on Moodle. Most of the primary material is taken from the Gaelic literary tradition, the compositions of Ireland's cultural elite in response to the new thoughts and ideals taking hold in the country. It is remarkable that it is in the context of change and uncertainty that some of the great works of Irish literature were produced. At the end of this course all students will have a good general knowledge of the history of Ireland, a deeper and more nuanced understanding of the origins and nature of the forces that shaped that history, and the historical framework necessary to appreciate Ireland's literary tradition.

Pre-Historic and Celtic Ireland

1. Pre-Christian Ireland:
 - A. 9,000 – 6,000 BC: Stone Age hunter gathers
 - B. 3,000 BC: New Stone Age - Megalithic people, Farming.
 - C. 2,000 BC: Bronze Age - Beaker People
 - D. 500 BC: Iron Age - Celtic People.
2. The Celts and the Coming of Christianity:
 - A. 500 BC: Coming of Celts, Celtic Society and Politics.
 - B. 4-500 AD: Coming of Christianity – Pelagius, Palladius and St. Patrick.
 - C. 5-800 AD: The effect of Christianity on Irish Society.
3. Ireland's Literature: Myths and Legends - Part I
 - A. Irish Love Poetry
 - B. The Mythological Cycle
 - C. The Ulster Cycle
4. Ireland's Myths and Legends _ Part II
 - A. The Ulster Cycle
 - B. The Fenian Cycle
5. The Vikings and Brian Boru.
 - A. 795- 876: First Viking Raids.
 - B. 916- 937: Second wave of Viking Raids.
 - C. 964-1014: Rise of the Dail gCais – O'Briens- and the career of Brian Boru.
6. The coming of the Normans:
 - A. 1169 - 1366: Arrival of the Normans and conquest of Ireland.
 - B. 1366 – 1477: The Irish fight back and the Decline of the Norman colony.
 - C. 1477 – 1540: Gaelic autonomy to the Reformation.
7. The Tudor Reconquest of Ireland:
 - A. 1529-1547: Henry viii and the Reformation.
 - B. 1553-1558: Queen Mary and the 1st Plantation.
 - C. 1558-1603: Reign of Elizabeth I and the Reconquest of Ireland.
 - D. 1607-09: The flight of the Earls and the plantation of Ulster.
8. Preserving a Nation
 - A. Geoffrey Keating and the Irish Nation
 - B. 1641- 49: Civil War in England and The Ulster Rebellion

C. 1649-54: Arrival of Cromwell, Ordinance survey and Cromwellian Plantation.

9. The Williamite Wars and the Penal Laws:

- A. 1685 – 1690: Reign of James II and the Battle of Boyne.
- B. 1695: Introduction of the Penal Laws.
- C. 1772: First Catholic Relief Act.

10. Protestant Nationalism: United Irishmen, Robert Emmet and Thomas Davis

- A. United Irishmen
- B. Robert Emmet Rebellion
- C. Protestants, Thomas Davis and Irish Gaelic Culture.

11. Daniel O’Connell, Catholic Emancipation, Famine and Emigration.

- A. O’Connell and Catholic Emancipation
- B. 1845 –50: The Great Famine.
- C. 1850 –1920: Irish Emigration; Evolution of Irish Nationalism.

12. Nationalism and Rebellion:

- A. 1850 – 1919: Young Irelanders; Irish America and Irish Nationalism; The Fenians; IRB and Gaelic League.
- B. 1919 –1922: The Troubles and the Civil War.
- C. 1969 –1998: The IRA and the War in Northern Ireland.