

Online MA in Gaelic Literature

Department of Modern Irish University College Cork

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This is 90-credit course comprising 6 (10-credit) taught modules, two of which are compulsory, and a dissertation (GA6019: c. 12,000 – 15,000 words) which is valued at 30 credits. The taught modules are described here.

SEMESTER 1

GA6013 The Transmission and Interpretation of Gaelic Literature

COMPULSORY MODULE

Semester 1

Module Objective: To explore Gaelic literature as transmitted and interpreted in the written medium.

Module Content: For much of Gaelic literary tradition, the manuscript - vellum and paper - constituted the staple accessory of the man of letters, and this module will address Irish manuscript tradition in the context of literary production. The print medium will also be treated of, particularly with regard to the literature of Reformation and Counter-Reformation, and to the re-discovery and re-interpretation of Gaelic literature at the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th. Texts such as Eleanor Hull, *The Cuchulain saga in Irish literature* will be referenced.

GA6012 The Social and Cultural History of the Irish language, 1200-2000

COMPULSORY MODULE

Semester 1

Module Objective: To examine how the Irish language functioned in society over the centuries. It discusses the composition of the Irish-speaking community, and how that changed with time.

Module Content: Some sociolinguistic theory is introduced in order to provide a framework for the presentation. The module focuses on the interrelation between Irish and English as a result of the colonization of Ireland by England. Sources in both Irish and English are drawn upon to give flesh to the narrative. This module will be of particular interest to students who

wish to find out more about the history of Ireland. Texts to include Aidan Doyle, *A history of the Irish language: from the Norman Invasion to Independence*.

GA6015 Gaelic Ireland, 1600-2000 A.D : the International Dimension

ELECTIVE MODULE

Semester 1

Module Objective: This module addresses the interaction by Irish speakers and writers with the everyday life and intellectual worlds of Britain, Continental Europe, the Americas (particularly the United States) and Australasia from the 17th century to the present. It examines how this engagement is reflected in Gaelic documentation and other media produced in Ireland as well as the host countries, reflecting a continuum of human experience from alienation to acculturation.

Module Content: A review of key manuscript, printed and oral sources will introduce students to functional and imaginative compositions or writings on the subject (read in the original together with translations). The latter comprise correspondence, diaries, novels, short stories, travelogues, textbooks and other forms of scholarly discourse, set in a chronological framework which takes account of the study regions' varying importance to Ireland at different moments in time. Texts such as those available through the Corpus of Electronic Texts (celt.ucc.ie) will be referred to during this module.

GA6033 Fionn mac Cumhaill in Gaelic Tradition

ELECTIVE MODULE

Semester 1

Module Objective: To learn about the development of the Finn Cycle, centred around the legendary heroic figure of Fionn mac Cumhaill, from its origins to the present day.

Module Content: This course will provide a survey of the Finn Cycle, the substantial body of literature and lore based around the heroic figure of Fionn mac Cumhaill, from its origins to the present day: this will include the mythological origins of Fionn and his Fiann, the representation of Fionn in the manuscript texts and folklore of both Ireland and Scotland over the centuries, and the growth of interest in Fionn beyond the Gaelic world especially from the time of James Macpherson (1736-96) onwards. Close readings will be made of a number of representative texts, both poetry and prose, covering important developments in the Finn cycle and students will also be familiarised with current scholarly investigations in this field.

SEMESTER 2

GA6016 Place Names and Sense of Place in Gaelic Literature

ELECTIVE MODULE

Semester 2

Module Objective: To study Irish language place names and their anglicised forms, and to examine how these are used in depictions of landscape and sense of place in Gaelic literature.

Module Content: The vocabulary of Irish place names will be discussed and the process of anglicisation of Irish forms will be examined in detail. The collection and study of Irish place names will be analysed with particular reference to literary sources.

GA6010 Beginners' Irish Language

ELECTIVE MODULE

Semester 2

Module Objective: To instruct students in the basic vocabulary and grammatical structures of the Irish language.

Module Content: Language exercises for beginners, involving reading, writing, speaking and listening.

GA6032 Women's Poetry in Gaelic Society

ELECTIVE MODULE

Semester 2

Module Objective: To study women's poetry in Gaelic Ireland and Scotland, and to place this poetry in its social and historical contexts.

Module Content: This module presents the evidence for women's poetry in Gaelic society, including: the (fairly scanty) pre-1600 evidence; the lament tradition; women's praise-poetry; the nature of poetic expression in Gaelic society; the suppression of women's poetry; and the oral nature of most of our sources. The module will conclude with an examination of the major present-day Irish and Scottish Gaelic women poets and the extent to which they draw from tradition. The module will be taught through the medium of English, and translations of Gaelic texts will be supplied.

GA6014 The Phases of Gaelic literature***ELECTIVE MODULE*****Semester 2**

Module Objective: To explore the diversity and development of Gaelic literature over time.

Module Content: Emphasis will be placed on continuity and diversity in literary production from the medieval to modern periods: from the poetry and saga literature of early Christian times, through the bardic era (1200-1650), the poetry and song of conquest, plantation and penal times, to the re-affirmation of Gaelic literature in the 19th and 20th centuries. This module will incorporate case-studies of texts, authors and genres. Texts to include samples of bardic poetry, saga literature, nature and love poetry.

Indicative Timetable

For the part-time option, all taught modules must be completed in Year 1. Please note that each module is six weeks in duration. Course-work involves weekly readings, discussion-group participation, and essays. Students should take this into account if selecting parallel modules.

