

Staging “The Troubles”: Politics and War in Twentieth-Century Irish Theater and Film
Professor Shaffer/Fall 2015

English 363 (crn: 16658); Theater 365 (crn: 16721)

Class: 210 Palmer Hall; TR: 3:30-4:45 pm

Office: 300 Palmer Hall; *3976; TR: 1:45-3:00 pm and by appointment

This course will explore selected theatrical and filmic treatments of the Irish “Troubles” of the past century. “The Troubles” has been used in Ireland for the past 125 years to denote the island’s political violence and attendant ethno-nationalist strife (in 1905, for example, Irish author James Joyce wrote of “the troubles in our native land”). Instances of this political strife include the struggle for Irish independence from British imperial rule (the failed rebellion of 1798, the Easter Rising of 1916, and the Anglo-Irish War of 1919-21, for example); the Irish Civil War (1922-23); and the fight for civil/equal rights in Northern Ireland (1968-1998). This course will consider both canonical and contemporary Irish plays, films, and songs that depict, anatomize, and critique “the troubles” and its myriad sociocultural ramifications. It will explore the extent to which selected plays and films engage in a dialogue with various political movements and events, with each other, and with key articulations of Irish (and Northern Irish) national identity. The course will incorporate major critical readings/debates.

Course Texts:

Carolan, Stuart. *Defender of the Faith*

Friel, Brian. *Selected Plays*

Harrington, John, ed. *Norton Critical Edition of Modern and Contemporary Irish Drama, 2nd.ed.* (N)

McCafferty, Owen. *Quietly*

McDonagh, Martin. *The Lieutenant of Inishmore*

O’Casey, Sean. *Three Dublin Plays*

Other primary and secondary texts available on Moodle (M)

Class Policy:

Written work submitted late will be penalized at the rate of one letter grade per 24-hour period. One unexcused absence per semester will be permitted; two or more will negatively affect your final grade. Failure to complete any major assignment or to attend class on a regular basis will result in a failing grade in the course. All work for this course must be done in strict compliance with the Rhodes Honor Code.

Requirements:

Two critical essays of 5 pages (approx. 1500 words) each: 40%

One research essay of 10 pages (approx. 3000 words): 40%

Participation, attendance, presentations, reading quizzes: 20%

Reading and writing assignments are due on the class dates listed below. Please bring the appropriate text(s) to class each day.

Thursday	August 27	Course Introduction
Tuesday	September 1	Yeats and Gregory, <i>Cathleen Ni Houlihan</i> (N)
Thursday	3	Gregory, <i>The Rising of the Moon</i> (N) + film
Tuesday	8	Friel, <i>Translations</i> (N)
Thursday	10	<i>Translations</i> + formulate questions for visitor Nick Hutchison
Tuesday	15	<i>Michael Collins</i> (film; M)

Thursday	17	<i>Michael Collins</i> and essay
Tuesday	22	Chronology of Modern Irish History through the Irish Civil War
Thursday	24	O'Casey, <i>The Shadow of a Gunman</i>
Tuesday	29	<i>Shadow</i> + 30 mins with actor/director Nick Hutchison on <i>Translations</i>
Wednesday	30	First Critical Essay due to Turnitin.com before midnight
Thursday	October 1	O'Casey, <i>Juno and the Paycock</i> (N)
Tuesday	6	<i>Juno</i>
Thursday	8	Irish Troubles Songs through the Irish Civil War
Tuesday	13	<i>Bloody Sunday</i> (film; M)
Thursday	15	Friel, <i>The Freedom of the City</i>
Tuesday	20	Fall Break
Thursday	22	<i>Freedom</i>
Tuesday	27	Chronology of Recent Irish History/Northern Irish Troubles, 1968-98
Thursday	29	<i>The Crying Game</i> (film; M)
Tuesday	November 3	<i>Crying Game</i> and essay
Wednesday	4	Second Critical Essay due to Turnitin.com before midnight
Thursday	5	McDonagh, <i>Lieutenant of Inishmore</i>
Tuesday	10	<i>Lieutenant</i> + Carolan, <i>Defender of the Faith</i>
Thursday	12	<i>Defender</i>
Tuesday	17	<i>Omagh</i> (film; M)
Thursday	19	'71 (film; M)
Tuesday	24	'71 (film) + <i>New Yorker</i> essay + conferences re. research essay
Thursday	26	Thanksgiving Break
Tuesday	December 1	<i>Five Minutes of Heaven</i> (film; M)
Thursday	3	McCafferty, <i>Quietly</i>
Tuesday	8	Northern Irish Troubles Songs, 1968-98
Monday	14	Research Essay due to Turnitin.com before midnight