

Contemporary Irish Drama: Mirror Up To a Nation  
 English 363/Theater 365; crn 25331; spring 2015  
 203 Palmer Hall: TR: 12:30-1:45 pm  
 Professor Shaffer: 300 Palmer Hall; \*3976  
 Office Hours: TR: 1:45-3:00 pm and by appointment

No nation in the English-speaking world has produced as many important dramatists, and as many influential plays, over the past century as Ireland. This course will survey Irish works for the stage between 1968 and 1998 against the backdrop of Ireland's inward-looking, mid-century socio-cultural paralysis and its subsequent "Celtic Tiger" boom; the political "troubles" in Northern Ireland and other legacies of British colonialism; the island's continuing challenges of poverty, emigration/depopulation, alcoholism, and equal rights/opportunities for women; and the contested role of various social institutions--church, school, family, pub, and theater--in Irish life. We will explore the ways in which a number of colorful, poignant, tragicomic Irish plays of the late-Twentieth Century engage in a dialogue with each other, with reigning theatrical conventions, and with key articulations of Irish national identity. Encounters with the plays will be supplemented with selected criticism and films.

Course Texts:

Friel, Brian. *Molly Sweeney*

Friel, Brian. *Selected Plays*

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

McDonagh, Martin. *The Beauty Queen of Leenane and Other 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 allowed; 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. Bring the appropriate text(s) to class each day.

|          |                   |   |
|----------|-------------------|---|
| Thursday | <b>January 15</b> | Course Introduction   |
| Tuesday  | 20                | <i>Rocky Road to Dublin</i> (film)                                  |
| Thursday | 22                | Friel, <i>Lovers</i> (M)  |
| Tuesday  | 27                | <i>Lovers</i>   |
| Thursday | 29                | Keane, <i>Big Maggie</i> (M)  |
| Tuesday  | <b>February 3</b> | <i>Bloody Sunday</i> (film)   |
| Thursday | 5                 | Friel, <i>The Freedom of the City</i>                               |
| Tuesday  | 10                | <i>Freedom of the City</i>  |
| Thursday | 12                | Friel, <i>Aristocrats</i>   |
| Tuesday  | 17                | <i>Aristocrats</i> + critical essay due by 11:59 pm to turnitin.com |
| Thursday | 19                | Friel, <i>Faith Healer</i>  |
| Tuesday  | 24                | <i>Faith Healer</i>   |
| Thursday | 26                | Friel, <i>Translations</i>  |
| Tuesday  | <b>March 3</b>    | <i>Translations</i>   |
| Thursday | 5                 | Friel, <i>Molly Sweeney</i>   |
| Tuesday  | 10                | Spring Break  |
| Thursday | 12                | Spring Break  |
| Tuesday  | 17                | <i>Molly Sweeney</i>  |

|          |                |   |
|----------|----------------|---|
| Thursday | 19             | McDonagh, <i>The Beauty Queen of Leenane</i>                    |
| Tuesday  | 24             | McDonagh, <i>A Skull in Connemara</i>                           |
| Thursday | 26             | McDonagh, <i>The Lonesome West</i>                              |
| Tuesday  | 31             | McDonagh+ <i>critical essay due by 11:59 pm to turnitin.com</i> |
| Thursday | <b>April 2</b> | Easter Break  |
| Tuesday  | 7              | McPherson, <i>The Weir</i> (N)                                  |
| Thursday | 9              | <i>The Weir</i>   |
| Tuesday  | 14             | Carr, <i>By the Bog of Cats</i> (N)                             |
| Thursday | 16             | <i>Bog of Cats</i>  |
| Tuesday  | 21             | Readings  |
| Thursday | 23             | Readings  |
| Tuesday  | 28             | Presentations   |
| Thursday | 30             | Presentations   |
| Tuesday  | <b>May 5</b>   | <i>Research essay due by 11:59 pm to turnitin.com</i>           |