

Sophister Module Description Template 2024-25

Full Name: Irish short fiction

Short Name: Irish short fiction

Lecturer Name and Email Address: Paul Delaney (delanep@tcd.ie)

ECTS Weighting: 10

Semester Taught MT/HT: HT

Year JS/SS: SS

Module Content:

'We may not be very good at economics or honest politics, but we certainly know how to write a short story.' So *The Irish Times* commented on the publication of Anne Enright's edited anthology, *The Granta Book of the Irish Short Story* in 2010. This Option considers the basis for this claim, tracing the genre of short fiction in Ireland from the early decades of the twentieth century to the present.

Building on aspects of the JF 'Irish Writing' module, this Option explores stories by key prose writers of the post-independence years; it also engages with major writers of the mid-to-late twentieth century, before concluding with classes on some of the most accomplished short-story writers writing today. In essence, the module argues for an understanding of a short-story tradition which is vibrant and poetic, challenging, productive, and diverse. The Option begins with an introductory session on contexts and theories; other short-story theories – local and comparative – will be introduced as the module develops.

Learning Outcomes:

On successful completion of this module students should be able to:

1. Identify the principal characteristics of the short-story form (or forms) as it has been practised in twentieth century and contemporary Irish writing.
2. Situate this knowledge in a broader historical, cultural and literary context.
3. Employ a range of interpretive strategies, using an advanced critical vocabulary, to engage in a close reading of a select body of texts.
4. Evaluate those texts in oral and written presentations, and transfer discipline specific competencies to cognate subjects and related professions.

Learning Aims:

- Introduce students to a diverse group of writers from across the last one hundred years.
- Engage with a rich selection of those writers' works in close detail.
- Demonstrate an awareness of the different ways those writers have worked with – and consequently developed – the parameters of the short-story form.

Assessment Details:

- Number of Components: 2
- Name/Type of Component(s): Essay
- Word Count of Component(s): 2,000 and 4,000
- Percentage Value of Component(s): 30% and 70%

Preliminary Reading List:

This module will explore selected texts from a broad range of authors; and stories will be made available through Blackboard. Students interested in reading ahead might consider Anne Enright's anthology *The Granta Book of the Irish Short Story* (2010) and Sinéad Gleeson's recent selection *The Art of the Glimpse: 100 Irish Short Stories* (2020). Older anthologies, including Benedict Kiely's *The Penguin Book of Irish Short Stories* (1981), Frank O'Connor's *Classic Irish Short Stories* (1985), and William Trevor's *The Oxford Book of Irish Short Stories* (1989), remain in print and have retained their importance.

In recent years, Faber & Faber has produced (almost) biennial volumes of contemporary Irish short fiction, highlighting some of the best writing today; two anthologies were edited by the late David Marcus (2005 and 2007), and further books have been edited by Joseph O'Connor (2011), Kevin Barry (2013), Deirdre Madden (2015), and Lucy Caldwell (2019). Sinéad Gleeson's award-winning anthologies, *The Long Gaze Back* (2015) and *The Glass Shore* (2016), are two other excellent places to start.

Please note:

- Curricular information is subject to change.
- Information is displayed only for guidance purposes, relates to the current academic year only and is subject to change.