CW/LT356 ‘The Shadows We Cast’: Writing the Irish Short Story
IES Abroad Dublin

DESCRIPTION:
Over twelve weekly sessions, this course will facilitate student engagement with writing creatively, with a concentration on the short story form. Concurrently, participants will trace the development of the modern Irish short story as a literary genre from the late nineteenth century to the present day.

An exploration of the elements of successful storytelling, such as openings, voice, point of view, characterisation, dialogue, and plot, will constitute the backbone of the course. As part of a reflective process on their practice of writing and of reading, students will keep a journal.

As we write, we will explore the influence of the oral tradition of storytelling and Ireland’s dual linguistic heritage on the short story form. We will examine how the genre reached maturity in the work of James Joyce, Frank O’Connor, and Elizabeth Bowen, tracing international influences and resonances as we progress to consider the treatment of the form by such writers as Mary Lavin, John McGahern, Roddy Doyle, Claire Keegan, Kevin Barry, and Danielle McLaughlin.

CREDIT HOURS: 3

CONTACT HOURS: 45

LANGUAGE OF PRESENTATION: English

METHOD OF PRESENTATION:
Each session will consist of a presentation by the tutor and a forum for discussion of the assigned readings. This will be followed by group and individual writing exercises that will focus on spontaneity, experimentation, and the practice of craft. Field trips to sites of cultural, historical, and literary significance, attendance at public readings, performances, and film screenings will complement the students’ experience of this course.

PLEASE NOTE:
The Writing Workshop component to the course will provide students with the opportunity to offer and receive genuine, considered, and constructive criticism of their work. Fundamental to this process is the principle that both individual confidentiality and the integrity of the class be respected at all times.

Trust between students, and between instructor and students, is essential.

Therefore, it is not acceptable to directly or indirectly make reference in the form of character, plot, action, or setting, to the characteristics or actions of any student on the program, any member of staff, or any member of faculty. Participants must also at all times remain sensitive to the convictions of others. Any attempt to directly or indirectly infer prejudice, initiate distress, or cause offence, will result in disciplinary action.

REQUIRED WORK AND FORM OF ASSESSMENT:
NOTE: In addition to the one-hour weekly workshop and core reading requirements, students will be expected to work independently on assigned practical exercises and production tasks, and will need to allocate a minimum of two hours per week for the fulfilment of these responsibilities.

- Participation (10%)
- Course Journal: 12 entries, 400 words each (20%)
- Midterm Submission of Draft Works, 1500 words (30%)
- End-of-term Portfolio, 3000 words (40%)

Participation (10%):
The ambition in including a participation component is to facilitate students learning from each other and to give them the opportunity to practice and develop listening, speaking and persuasive skills. A set of simple guidelines will be introduced at the start of Session 1. These guidelines will be discussed in detail so that students have a clear understanding of what is expected of them. Below is an outline of these guidelines:

- **Outstanding Participant**: Contributions in class reflect exceptional preparation. Ideas are consistently substantive and insightful, and persuasively presented. Absence would significantly diminish the quality of class discussion.
- **Good Participant**: Contributions in class reflect thorough preparation. Ideas offered are usually substantive and insightful, and often persuasively presented. Absence would diminish quality of class discussion.
- **Adequate Participant**: Contributions in class reflect satisfactory preparation. Ideas are sometimes substantive and insightful, but seldom offer a new direction for the discussion. Absence would diminish quality of class discussion.
- **Non-Participant**: Little or no contribution in class. Subsequently, there is limited basis for evaluation. Absence would not affect the quality of class discussion.
- **Unsatisfactory Participant**: Contributions in class reflect inadequate preparation. Ideas offered are seldom substantive, provide little insight, and are rarely constructive. Absence would improve the quality of class discussion.

**Course Journal: 12 entries, 400 words each (20%)**:
The Journal component of the assessment for this course will provide students with the space to reflect on both their experience of the required readings and of the weekly writing workshops. Topics will be identified and prompts provided to ensure that each Journal Entry is focused and encourages students to work towards a more sophisticated and deeper appreciation of writing as an art form.

**Midterm Submission of Draft Works, 1500 words (30%)**:
By the half-way mark, students will have approached the writing of short fiction from a variety of perspectives and in a variety of ways. The Midterm Submission will consist of character sketches, plot outlines, dialogue exercises, flash fiction pieces, and first drafts of at least one and not more than three short stories.

**End-of-term Portfolio, 3000 words (40%)**:
This portfolio of work will consist of at least three and no more than five stories that have been thoroughly drafted and workshopped. These stories will represent the student’s best work of the term, and will be considered for inclusion in the IES Abroad Anthology of Writing.

**GRADE DESCRIPTORS**
The following will be applied when grading the three written assessment instruments i.e. Course Journal, Midterm Submission of Draft Works, and End-of-term Portfolio.

‘A’ work represents an excellent to extraordinary performance demonstrating a thorough understanding of the subject. An ‘A’ answer will exhibit a detailed knowledge of the relevant material as well as a broad base of knowledge.

‘A’ equals 70-100 percent in the Irish grading system
- Answers the question clearly and comprehensively in a focused way
- Superior understanding of the argument
- Demonstrates high level of critical thinking
- Gives evidence of wide relevant reading and research
- Is lucid and well written
- Demonstrates the ability to apply learning to situations
- Clearly explains relevant theory and cites relevant evidence
- Has excellent structure and organisation
- Synthesizes material found in sources

‘A-’ grade constitutes a well-organised and structured answer to the question, that is reasonably comprehensive, generally accurate and well informed.
A- equals 65-69 percent in the Irish grading system
- Answers question fully and clearly
- Has good structure and organisation
- Shows evidence of relevant reading and research
- Is well written
- Clearly explains relevant theory and cites relevant evidence
- Uses relevant examples
- Lacks errors of any significant kind
- Has a good structure and organisation

'B+/B/B-' work shows inconsistency in standard, may contact occasional technical or factual flaws, and may exhibit some difficulties with the organisation of the material or with the full understanding of the problem.

B+ equals 60-64 percent in the Irish grading system
- Answers question adequately
- Has structure and organisation
- Does not use enough examples but the examples used are good
- Resources are used but not as many as A/A-
- Few (fewer than two) judgment/content errors
- The work may not demonstrate critical thinking

B equals 55-59 percent in the Irish grading system
- Is adequately presented
- Gives an incomplete answer to the question
- Demonstrates a basic understanding of the topic
- Shows evidence of some relevant reading or research
- Includes some examples
- Contains errors (2)
- Does not offer sufficient evidence to justify assertions
- Style of writing could be improved
- No evidence of critical thinking
- Descriptive rather than analytical analysis

B- equals 50-54 percent in the Irish grading system
- Poorly structured and presented
- No examples given to support/justify assertions
- Modest evidence of research
- Barely adequate/poor writing style
- Shows some attempt to engage with the material
- Contains errors (more than 2)
- Modest understanding of the topic
- Descriptive rather than analytical analysis

'C+/C' work reflects only a limited familiarity with the standard literature and/or methods of the subject. It may display superficiality in understanding and/or the use of material, an over reliance on knowledge at the expense of development or argument, analysis or discussion and may lack continuity or be inadequately organised.

C+ equals 45-49 percent in the Irish grading system
- Attempts to answer the question
- Shows little evidence of the relevant reading
- Little understanding of the topic
- May contain significant errors
C equals 40-44 percent in the Irish grading system
- Barely attempts to answer the question
- A lack of understanding of the topic
- Does meet all the requirements of the assignment
- Relies on only one source of information
- Shows very little evidence of the required reading
- Poorly written with grammar and/or spelling errors

A 'Fail' grade demonstrates a complete misunderstanding of the question or the answer may not relate to the question. The answer will only contain a small amount of relevant information and be incoherently presented. It has few positive characteristics and several errors. It could also not meet the assignment criteria (deadline and/or word limit).

Fail is 39 percent or less in the Irish grading system
- Failure to answer the question
- Shows no evidence of the relevant reading
- Does not offer relevant examples, ideas
- Poorly structured and organised
- Contains multiple errors
- Does not meet the requirements of the assignment

LEARNING OUTCOMES:
Knowledge Skills: Cultural, Historical, and Literary

By the end of the course students will be able to:
- Interpret how cultural trends throughout the nineteenth, twentieth, and twenty-first centuries are represented in the Irish short story
- Illustrate how post colonialism and a multilingual heritage have shaped Irish culture and literature

Critical Thinking Skills: Oral and Written
- Approach writing a short story in its various forms
- Identify and understand how stories convey meaning
- Effectively critique draft work and provide constructive oral and written feedback

Attitudinal Skills: Affective and Behavioural
- To value writing and literature as a means of engaging with and understanding new cultures

ATTENDANCE POLICY:
IES Abroad Dublin courses are designed to take advantage of the unique contribution of the instruction and the lecture/discussion format, regular class attendance is mandatory. Any missed class, without a legitimate reason will be reflected in the final grade. A legitimate reason would include: documented illness or family bereavement. Travel, (including travel delays) is not a legitimate reason.
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<th>Week</th>
<th>Content</th>
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| **Week 1** | **Focus on Writing: The Short Story Form**  
‘Sideways Talkers’: Introducing Storytelling in Ireland  
Presentation, discussion, and writing workshop |  
| **Week 2** | **Focus on Writing: Character and Character Development**  
Brave Old World: Irish Short Fiction at the turn of the 20th Century  
Presentation, discussion, and writing workshop |  
**Week 3**

**Focus on Writing: Narrative and Point of View**  
‘Everything Changes’ Part I: Joyce’s ‘Dubliners’  
*Presentation, discussion, and writing workshop*


**Week 4**

**Focus on Writing: Stream of Consciousness**  
‘Everything Changes’ Part II: Joyce’s ‘Dubliners’  
*Presentation, discussion, and writing workshop*


**Week 5**

**Focus on Writing: Suggestion, Implication, and Symbolism**  
Changed Utterly: Nationalism and the Irish Short Story  
*Presentation, discussion, and writing workshop*

Selected short stories by Mary Lavin and Sean O’Faoláin  
Presentation, discussion, and writing workshop |
|--------|---------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
 ‘An Anatomist of the Single Day’: John McGahern  
Presentation, discussion, and writing workshop |
Ambassador of the ‘New Irish’: Roddy Doyle  
Presentation, discussion, and writing workshop |
Postcards from the Edge: Irish Writers at Home and Abroad  
Presentation, discussion, and writing workshop |
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<td>About the Town: Kevin Barry and Anne Enright</td>
<td>Presentation, discussion, and writing workshop</td>
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<td>Carrying the Fire: Short Stories from Contemporary Ireland</td>
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<tr>
<td>Claire Keegan</td>
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<td>End-of-Term Creative Writing Showcase to follow Session 12</td>
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**REQUIRED READINGS:**

• Morris, Thomas. We Don’t Know What We’re Doing. London, Faber & Faber, 2015.

RECOMMENDED READINGS:

RECOMMENDED ONLINE, ARCHIVE, AND EXHIBITION RESOURCES:
• Chester Beatty Library
• Irish Museum of Modern Art
• National Archives of Ireland
• National Print Museum
• National Library of Ireland
• Irish Film Institute & Irish Film Archive
• Irish Writers’ Centre
• The Stinging Fly – Irish Literary Magazine and Press
• Winter Pages – Ireland’s Annual Anthology for the Arts