



**LT 354 THE FINEST MUSIC – THE CRAFT OF IRISH POETRY**  
IES Abroad Dublin

**DESCRIPTION:** Over 12 weeks this course will facilitate student engagement with writing creatively with a concentration on poetry. Concurrently participants will trace the development of Irish poetry in the 20th century, from WB Yeats to Seamus Heaney, and on through the 21<sup>st</sup> Century to Sinead Morrissey. Taking place in Dublin, UNESCO City of Literature, the course is a unique opportunity to use the literary heritage and present-day life of the city as a venue for inspiration and learning.

The course will explore themes of nation and conflict up to and through the Northern Irish Troubles in the poetry of Seamus Heaney, Derek Mahon, Paul Muldoon, Medbh McGuckian and others; the dual language tradition and major poets in the Irish language including Nuala Ní Dhomhnaill, as well the representation of women in the canon, both as subject and object, through the poetry of Eavan Boland, Paula Meehan. The concerns and influences of the generation of Irish poets who emerged from the 1990's up to the present day continue to be varied and among those we will look at are Peter Sirr, Vona Groarke and Sinead Morrissey. Our last session will look at the lively performance poetry and spoken word scene in Dublin.

Concurrent with this we will focus on the craft of poetry and development of student's own writing. They will respond to a varied programme of exercises, craft challenges and 'poetry ideas' as well as supportive critiques, in order to draft and redraft a body of work. In weekly workshop sessions we will explore and draw on relevant aspects of craft drawn from the week's reading and seminar. These will include exploring rhyme and metre in forms such as the sonnet and the ballad as well as in free verse. We will also take example from the way poets have drawn from myth, daily life, observation and memory.

Course-related trips will include a visit to the National Library of Ireland, the National Gallery of Ireland, the Irish Writers Centre and the Kavanagh commemorative bench at the Baggot Street end of the Grand Canal where the weekly writing workshop and (in the case of the Irish Writers Centre) performance will also take place.

**CREDITS:** 3 credits

**CONTACT HOURS:** 45 hours

**LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION:** English

**METHOD OF PRESENTATION:**

- Seminars
- Writing exercises
- Workshops
- Course-related trips

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 drawn from aspects of the readings set. Course-related 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.

**REQUIRED WORK AND FORM OF ASSESSMENT:**

- Course participation - 10%
- Class journal – 20%
- Midterm draft portfolio (poetry manuscript & craft essay) – 20%
- Final revised portfolio (poetry manuscript & craft essay ) – 50%

**Participation**

This component will facilitate students to learn from each other and give them the opportunity to practice and develop listening, speaking and persuasion 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:

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- **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.

### Class Journal

The course journal will provide students with the opportunity to reflect on their experience of required readings as well as the weekly writing exercises and workshop. Topics will be identified and prompts provided to ensure that entries are focused and encourage students to work towards a deeper understanding of the craft and art of poetry writing, for their own writing but also their reading of poetry. 10 entries, 400 words each.

### Midterm draft portfolio

By the half-way mark students will have approached the writing of poetry through a variety of forms and approaches. The Midterm draft portfolio will consist of 4- 6 pages of draft poems which will include at least one poem in a set form (i.e. ballad, sonnet, etc.) as well as the first section of the craft essay (see below)

### Final revised portfolio

- 30%: This portfolio of work will consist of at least eight and no more than twelve pages of poems that have been workshopped and redrafted (i.e. eight to twelve poems of one page or four to six poems of two pages or any variant of same). This selection will include at least two poems in a set form. These poems will represent the student's best work of the term, and will be considered for inclusion in the IES Abroad Anthology of Writing.
- 20%: The portfolio will also include a 2000 word craft essay looking at aspects of the work of one or more of the poets on the course, with reference to their influence on student's own work.

### LEARNING OUTCOMES:

By the end of the course students will be able to:

- Assimilate the connections between the poetry tradition in the Irish language and 20- 21<sup>st</sup> Century Irish poetry
- Engage critically and analytically with wide range of Irish poets and place them within a literary and cultural framework.
- Approach writing poetry in its various forms
- Effectively critique draft work and provide constructive oral and written feedback
- Value writing and literature as a means of engaging with and understanding new cultures

### ATTENDANCE POLICY:

IES Abroad courses are designed to take advantage of the unique contribution of the instructor, and the lecture/discussion format is regarded as the primary mode of instruction. Class attendance, including course-related trips, is mandatory.

- **Excused Absence:** Students can be excused from class in the case of a documented medical issue, family emergency or appointment at INIS.
- **Unexcused Absence:** All other absences from class are unexcused e.g. travel/travel delays, family and friends visiting. Each unexcused absence will result in a 5% deduction from final grade.
- **Pattern of Absence:** If a student shows a pattern of absences, they may be subject to an Administrative Review including, but not limited to, a letter sent to their school, a probationary period, and/or exclusion from the programme.
- **Missed Class Content:** In the case of an absence, it is the responsibility of the student to source and review all content covered in that class (e.g. through Moodle, from class peers etc.)
- **Missed Assessment:** Absence on the date of scheduled assessments does not entitle the students to a rescheduling of these assessments.

- **Punctuality:** Students are expected to be on time for all classes, a pattern of late attendance will negatively affect participation grade.
- **Excused Absence Request:** Students must submit a completed Excused Absence Request on Moodle at least one hour before the start of class. All supporting documentation for this request e.g. Doctor's note / appointment receipt from INIS, should be submitted to the Student Affairs Coordinator in a timely manner.
- All Excused Absence Requests will be assessed by the Student Affairs Coordinator who will liaise with the student and advise faculty accordingly. The IES Student Privacy Policy will be adhered to in this process.

#### CONTENT:

Week	Content	Assignments
<b>Week 1</b>	<p>Focus on writing: The Short Lyric</p> <p><b>'The Finest Music'</b> The historical and linguistic background to 20<sup>th</sup> century Irish poetry, which includes the earliest vernacular lyric poetry in Europe</p> <p>seminar and writing workshop</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Riordan, <u>The Finest Music</u>, pp xv-xxxiii, 1-26</li> <li>• Kiberd, <u>Irish Classics</u> pp 1-55</li> <li>• Kinsella, <u>The Táin</u>, pp ix – 39</li> </ul>
<b>Week 2</b>	<p>Focus on writing: The Ballad</p> <p><b>'To Ireland in the Coming Times'</b> The early poetry of WB Yeats - from Romantic to Modernist</p> <p>seminar and writing workshop</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Heaney <u>Selected Yeats</u>, pp xi-xxv, 3 -35</li> <li>• Foster, <u>The Apprentice Mage</u>, pp 112-162,</li> <li>• Kiberd, <u>Inventing Ireland</u>, pp 99- 136</li> <li>• Mary Oliver, <u>Rules for the Dance</u>, p50-61</li> </ul>
<b>Week 3</b>	<p>Focus on writing: The Sonnet</p> <p><b>'How can we know the dancer from the dance?'</b></p> <p>A look at the later career and influence of WB Yeats through the exhibition 'The Life and Works of WB Yeats' in the National Library of Ireland</p> <p>Trip to the WB Yeats Exhibition at the National Library of Ireland with writing workshop in the sonnet to take place on-site.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Heaney, <u>Selected Yeats</u>, pp 43-50, 60-84, 120, 128-131</li> <li>• Heaney, <u>Finders Keepers</u> "Yeats as an Example?" pp 96-112</li> <li>• Groarke, <u>WB Yeats Special Issue</u>, pp 22-55</li> </ul>
<b>Week 4</b>	<p>Focus on writing: Re-seeing the ordinary</p> <p><b>'Nothing whatever is by love debarred '</b> The poetry of Patrick Kavanagh from anti- pastoralist to rebirth by Dublin's Grand Canal.</p> <p>Seminar and trip to the Grand Canal, the site of many of Kavanagh's most famous poems as well as a commemorative sculpture and bench. Writing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kavanagh, <u>Selected Poems</u>, pp ix-xli, 3-16, 101, 119-129</li> <li>• Heaney, <u>Finders Keepers</u>, pp 134-145</li> <li>• Fryatt, "Patrick Kavanagh's Potentialities" in <u>Oxford Companion</u> pp181-195</li> </ul>

	workshop to take place along the towpath of the Grand Canal.	
<b>Week 5</b>	<p>Focus on writing: Ways to use myth</p> <p><b>At a tangent</b> The use of myth and history in the poetry of Seamus Heaney and Michael Longley and how it enabled them to write about the situation in Northern Ireland</p> <p>seminar and writing workshop</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Davies, <u>Modern Irish Poetry</u> 325-356</li> <li>• Paterson, "Heaney and Etymology", pp 163-66</li> <li>• Laird, "Listen Now Again", pp 167-9</li> <li>• O'Driscoll, <u>Stepping Stones</u> pp 1-61, 345-413</li> </ul>
<b>Week 6</b>	<p>Focus on writing: Creating and finding other voices to write from</p> <p><b>'Do not forget us'</b> A look at the many historical characters, inanimate objects and animate beings that find voice in the work of Derek Mahon</p> <p>seminar and writing workshop</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Davies, <u>Modern Irish Poetry</u>, 429-454</li> <li>• Mahon <u>Collected</u> pp7-44</li> <li>• Longley, "The Aesthetic and the Territorial" pp 63-85</li> </ul>
<b>Week 7</b>	<p>Focus on writing: Line and stanza break as breath and meaning</p> <p><b>'Not your muse'</b></p> <p>How did the magnetic poles of Irish poetry shift as poets Eavan Boland, Eiléan Ní Chuilleanáin and Paula Meehan began to publish in the 1970's and 80's?</p> <p>seminar and writing workshop</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Boland, <u>A Journey With Two Maps</u>, pp 3-98</li> <li>• Davies <u>Modern Irish Poetry</u> p470-493, 773-789</li> <li>• Paula Meehan <u>Dharmakaya</u>, pp44-51</li> <li>• Cullen Owens <u>Social History of Irish Women</u> pp 315-328</li> </ul>
<b>Week 8</b>	<p>Focus on writing: Ending a poem</p> <p><b>Counter Lyric</b> How poets such as Paul Muldoon Medbh McGuckian and Ciaran Carson continue to transform the English language poetic tradition.</p> <p>seminar and writing workshop</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Davies <u>Modern Irish Poetry</u> pp 556-73, 601 - 16, 630-657</li> <li>• Falci <u>Continuity and Change</u>, pp1-83</li> <li>• Muldoon <u>The End of the Poem</u>: pp 3-52</li> </ul>
<b>Week 9</b>	<p>Focus on writing: Translation</p> <p><b>'We Need to Talk about Ireland.'</b></p> <p>An exploration of the Irish language work of Nuala Ní Dhomhnaill and the Innti generation as translated into English</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• De Paor, <u>Leabhar na hÁthghabhála</u>, p13 -28 290-346</li> <li>• Ni Dhomhnaill, <u>The Poets Chair</u>, p140-166</li> <li>• Robinson, <u>Poetry &amp; Translation</u>, pp1-48</li> </ul>

	seminar and writing workshop	
<b>Week 10</b>	<p>Focus on writing: titling poems and sequencing a body of work</p> <p><b>Metre</b> A look at the work of poets Catriona O'Reilly, Justin Quinn, Conor O'Callaghan and others of the so called 'Metre generation'</p> <p>seminar and writing workshop</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Davies <u>Modern Irish Poetry</u> 872-907</li> <li>• O'Reilly <u>Geis</u>, pp 5-23</li> <li>• Oliver <u>Poetry Handbook</u>, pp 1-25, 109-123</li> </ul>
<b>Week 11</b>	<p>Focus on writing: image as inspiration</p> <p><b>Parallax</b> Alongside with a field trip to the National Gallery we will look at the work of Sinead Morrissey and Vona Groarke, both of whom draw inspiration and subject matter from visual material.</p> <p>Trip to the National Gallery of Ireland from where many poets have drawn their inspiration, and an on-site writing workshop</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Davies <u>Modern Irish Poetry</u>, pp 921-935, 827-843</li> <li>• Morrissey, <u>Parallax</u>, pp 1-25</li> <li>• Groarke, <u>Frames</u>, pp9-33</li> <li>• Carvalho Homem, "'Private Relations' in <u>Oxford Companion</u>, pp282-296</li> </ul>
<b>Week 12</b>	<p><b>The Spoken Word</b> The history and technique of poetry as a dramatic art form will be explored, followed by a field trip to an open mike evening</p> <p>Seminar, performance workshop and a field trip to an open mic evening of performance and poetry at the Irish Writers Centre</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Groarke, <u>The Rising Generation</u>, pp19 – 29</li> <li>• Smith, Kraynak, <u>Take the Mic</u>, pp 1-21, 49-108</li> </ul>

#### COURSE-RELATED TRIPS:

- National Library of Ireland (Week 3)  
Visit to the award winning WB Yeats exhibition at the National Library of Ireland which will enable students to engage critically and analytically with the central figure of WB Yeats and place his work and legacy within a literary and cultural framework. A writing workshop on the sonnet to take place onsite.
- Grand Canal and Baggot Street (Week 4)  
Visit to the Rathmines and Baggot Street end of the Grand Canal (just beside IES Dublin), which provided the inspiration and setting for many of Patrick Kavanagh's most famous poems. The commemorative sculpture and bench onsite is one of Dublin's literary landmarks. The visit will enable students to value writing and literature as a means of engaging with and understanding the city of Dublin and Irish culture. The field trip will also enable them to continue to approach poetry writing in its various forms through a writing workshop to take place along the banks of the Grand Canal.
- National Gallery of Ireland (Week 11)  
Visit to the National Gallery of Ireland, a gallery from which many leading Irish poets have drawn inspiration. The visit will enable students to value writing and literature as a means of engaging with and understanding the city of Dublin and Irish culture. The field trip will also enable them to continue to approach poetry writing in its various forms through a writing workshop to take place in the National Gallery.

- Irish Writers Centre (Week 12)  
Visit to the Irish Writers Centre to an open mike performance poetry event at which students will have the opportunity to perform their poetry and engage with the contemporary poetry scene. This will enable them to continue to develop their skills to effectively critique draft work and provide constructive oral feedback as well as engaging with and understanding the city of Dublin and Irish culture through its writing and literature.

#### REQUIRED READINGS:

- Boland, Eavan. A Journey with Two Maps: Becoming a Woman Poet, Manchester: Carcanet, 2011, pp 3-98.
- Brearton, Fran and Alan Gillis. Oxford Companion to Irish Poetry. Oxford: Oxford University Press 2012.
- Carvalho Homem, Rui. "Private Relations': Selves, Poems and Paintings, Durcan to Morrissey" Brearton Fran, Gillis Alan. Oxford Companion to Irish Poetry. Oxford: Oxford University Press pp282-296.
- Cullen Owens, Rosemary. A Social History of Women in Ireland: 1870-1970. Dublin: Gill & Macmillan, 2004.
- Davies, Wes (ed). An Anthology of Modern Irish Poetry: Harvard, Harvard University Press, 2013.
- De Paor, Louis. Leabhar na hÁthghabhála: Poems of Re Possession: Newcastle, Bloodaxe, 2016.
- Durcan, Paul; Montague, John; Ni Dhomhnaill Nuala. The Poets Chair, The First Nine Years of the Ireland Chair of Poetry. Dublin: Lilliput Press 2008.
- Falci, Eric. Continuity and Change in Irish poetry 1966-2010. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012.
- Foster, Roy. The Apprentice Mage, 1865-1914 (WB Yeats; A Life Vol. 1) Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998.
- Fryatt, Kit "Patrick Kavanagh's Potentialities" in Brearton Fran, Gillis Alan. Oxford Companion to Irish Poetry. Oxford: Oxford University Press pp181-195.
- Groarke, Vona. Frames. Loughcrew: Gallery Press, 2016.
- Groarke, Vona(ed). Poetry Ireland Review Issue 116 A WB Yeats Special Issue Dublin Poetry Ireland 2015.
- Groarke, Vona(ed). Poetry Ireland Review Issue 118 The Rising Generation, Dublin, Poetry Ireland 2016.
- Heaney, Seamus. New Selected Poems 1988-2013.: Faber & Faber: 2014.
- Heaney, Seamus (ed). WB Yeats Selected Poems. London: Faber & Faber, 2004.
- Heaney, Seamus. Finders Keepers: Selected Prose 1971-2001: New York, NY: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 2002
- Kavanagh Patrick. Selected Poems London Penguin Modern Classics 2004.
- Kiberd, Declan. Inventing Ireland: The Literature of the Modern Nation. Harvard: Harvard University Press, 1997.
- Kiberd, Declan. Irish Classics London: Granta 2000.
- Kinsella, Thomas. The Táin: Translated from the Irish Epic, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002.
- Laird, Nick. "Listen Now Again" in Groarke Vona (ed). Poetry Ireland Review Issue 113 Seamus Heaney Special Issue Dublin: Poetry Ireland, 2015. ", pp 167-9.
- Longley, Edna "The Aesthetic and the Territorial" in Andrews Elmer Contemporary Irish Poetry: A Collection of Critical Essays. Palgrave & Macmillan, 1992 pp63-85.
- Mahon, Derek. Collected Poems. Loughcrew: Gallery Press, 1999.
- Meehan, Paula. Dharmakaya. Manchester: Carcanet 2000.
- Morrissey, Sinead, Parallax. Manchester: Carcanet, 2013.
- Muldoon, Paul. The End of the Poem: Oxford Lectures in Poetry. Oxford; Oxford University Press, 2006.
- Oliver, Mary. Rules for the Dance; A Handbook for Writing and Reading Metrical Verse. Wilmington, MA: Mariner, 1998.
- Oliver, Mary. A Poetry Handbook A Prose Guide to Understanding and Writing Poetry. Wilmington, MA: Mariner, 2001.
- O'Reilly, Catriona. Geis. Newcastle: Bloodaxe, 2015.
- O'Driscoll, Dennis. Stepping Stones, Interviews with Seamus Heaney: London, Faber & Faber, 2009.
- Paterson, Don. "Heaney and Etymology" in Groarke Vona(ed). Poetry Ireland Review Issue 113 Seamus Heaney Special Issue Dublin: Poetry Ireland, 2015. ", 163-66.
- Riordan, Maurice (ed). The Finest Music: An Anthology of Early Irish Lyrics. London: Faber & Faber, 2014.
- Robinson, Peter. Poetry & Translation: The Art of the Impossible. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2009.

#### RECOMMENDED READINGS:

- Allen Randolph, Jody. Close to the Next Moment: Interviews from a Changing Ireland. Manchester: Carcanet, 2010.
- Boran, Pat and Gerard Smyth (eds). If Ever Go: A Map of Dublin in Poetry and Song Town. Dublin: Dedalus Press, 2014.
- Brown, Terence. Ireland: A Social and Cultural History, 1992 – 2002. London, Harper Perennial, 2004.



- Crotty, Patrick. The Penguin Book of Irish Poetry. London: Penguin Classics 2012.
- Ferriter, Diarmaid. The Transformation of Ireland, 1900-2000. London: Profile Books, 2004.
- Heaney, Seamus. Crediting Poetry. Nobel Acceptance Speech, 1996.
- Mac Monagle, Niall. Windharp: Poems of Ireland Since 1916. London: Penguin, 2016.
- Meehan, Paula. Imaginary bonnets with Real Bees in Them, The Poets Chair: Writings from the Ireland Chair of Poetry Dublin: UCD Press 2016.
- Wakeforest Anthology of Irish Women Poets: Wakeforest, Wakeforest University Press, 2011 edition.

**RECOMMENDED ONLINE, ARCHIVE, AND EXHIBITION RESOURCES:**

- Chester Beatty Library
- National Archives of Ireland
- National Library of Ireland
- Poetry Ireland
- Poetry Foundation
- 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