**Irish Film Syllabus (Fall 2023)**

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Ireland, like every other country except possibly the United States, explicitly uses its national cinema as an expression of, exploration of, and advertisement for its national identity. Establishing a coherent national identity has not been an easy process for Ireland. We will discuss what it takes to make a film “Irish.” We will look at a selection of Irish films with the aim of discovering what issues the Irish see as central, as worthy of display, and as problematic. We will look at the relationship between these film representations and actual political ideas and social practices, as well as the Republic of Ireland’s relationship to Northern Ireland and Britain. We will also see how the Irish film industry negotiates its economic and industrial relationship to the 800-pound gorilla of the film world: Hollywood.

**Unit I: Nostalgia and the Traditional Irish Ideal**

Week 1 Introduction to Irish film; Hollywood’s Ireland

**Screening:** *The Dead* (John Huston, 1987; 83 mins)

James Joyce and the Irish modernist revival

Week 2 **Screening:** *The Last September* (Deborah Warner, 1999; 103 mins)

the Ascendancy; Big House films and the ‘national romance’

**Unit II: The Church’s Ireland; Ireland’s Church**

Week 3 **Screening:** *Jimmy’s Hall* (Ken Loach, 2014; 109 mins)

the Catholic Church in Ireland; Ken Loach; revisiting the past

Week 4 **Screening:** *Calvary* (John Michael McDonagh, 2014; 102 mins)

the Church and Ireland now

**Unit III: The (Second) Troubles: Northern Ireland**

Week 5 **Screening:** *Bloody Sunday* (Paul Greengrass, 2002; 107 mins)

history of sectarian violence; semi-documentary style

Week 6 **Screening:** *Five Minutes of Heaven* (Oliver Hirschbiegel, 2009; 90 mins)

cycles of violence and revenge; PTSD; truth and reconciliation; the peace process

**Unit IV: An Allegory of Modern Ireland**

Week 7 **Screening:** *The Butcher Boy* (Neil Jordan, 1993, 110 mins)

social class, small-town life, social realism, a “summary” of Ireland

**Unit V: The Irish in Diaspora**

Week 8 **Screening:** *In America* (Jim Sheridan, 2002; 105 mins)

Sheridan as auteur; the Irish in Diaspora; Irish-American influence