

San José State University  
Humanities & Arts/English & Comparative Literature  
**English 117B: Global Film, Literature and Cultures**  
**2018 Summer Study Abroad in Ireland**



**Instructor:** Dr. Julie Sparks

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**Professor Office:** Faculty Office Building (FOB) 128

**Office Hours:** TBA

**Class meets: Classes at SJSU:** June 18-21, 25-28, 9-noon

**Program in Ireland:** July 8-19

**Classroom:** FOB 104

**Prerequisites:** Completion of GE core; Satisfaction of Writing Skills Test;  
Upper-division standing

**GE/SJSU Studies Category:** GE Area V: Culture, Civilization, and Global Understanding

**Course Description:** What does it mean to be an American in the 21<sup>st</sup> century? How much is our identity as an individual shaped by the origins of our ancestors? How is American culture being shaped by cultures of other countries we share the planet with? This course is designed to help students answer these questions. This particular section will give students an opportunity to understand their own personal and national identities by examining a culture that has always been closely tied to America's—the Irish culture.

**General Ed. Description:** Using films and literary works, students will appreciate and understand the narratives that create and define cultural identity, explore cultural interaction, and illustrate cultural preservation and cultural difference over time. We also examine how the films utilize the approaches to story-telling differently from traditional fictional forms: especially plays and short stories. We will look at films and read texts that are written in, set in, or depict multiple time periods and world cultures, with an emphasis on Ireland and other former colonies of the British Empire, including the U.S. Some of the common themes we will explore across these widely different texts and cultures will include the ways in which national and cultural identities are formed and contested, particularly in the telling of stories and the recording of history.

The course is open to upper division students of any major and satisfies the Gen Ed requirement for Area V, global engagement.

### **Course Goals and Student Learning Objectives**

1. Students shall be able to compare systematically the ideas, values, images, cultural artifacts, economic structures, technological developments, or attitudes of people from more than one culture outside the U.S. through the media of film and literature.
2. Students shall be able to identify the historical context of ideas and cultural traditions outside the U.S. and how they have influenced American culture.
3. Students shall be able to explain how a culture outside the U.S. has changed in response to internal and external pressures.
4. Students shall hone their reading, writing, researching, and critical thinking skills through the practice of intellectually challenging analyses.

Course objectives 1-3 will be accomplished through the readings, class discussions, students' research and presentations, while the various written assignments and the final oral presentation will allow us to accomplish objective 4 and to assess our level of accomplishment in objectives 1-3.

### **Required Readings**

- Selected tales from Irish myth and legend, including modern updates of them by classic Irish writers and modern graphic artists.
- Selected essays from *Being Irish* + an essay by Bernard Shaw on Irish identity (posted on the course Web site)
- Short story by James Joyce from *Dubliners* + one modern "rejoinder"
- Short story by Roddy Doyle: "Guess Who's Coming for the Dinner" (from *The Deportees and Other Stories*)
- Selected film reviews, context articles, and travel essays related to our films and possibly a play we'll see in Ireland. (For the most part, these will be collected into a course reader. A few short ones might be handed out in class)

**Other Readings** Additional supplementary (optional) reading material, in addition to the works listed above, will help give you historical background and cultural context for the main readings and films. Most of these will be posted on the course Web site. Shorter readings will be handed out on paper, as in days of yore.

**Films:** Films on the list below are the ones we will watch in class before we leave for Ireland. We will watch them as a group and discuss them together, and often there will be brief in-class writings afterwards to catch your first impressions, as well as homework questions for deeper reflection. This is a significantly different experience from watching the films on your own, so please *do not* expect to skip class when the films are scheduled. Just to be clear: **Missing any scheduled events, either at home or in Ireland, will significantly affect your grade.**

**Required Films (tentative):** *The Story of Ireland (excerpts)*, *Michael Collins*, *Brooklyn*, *The Boxer*, and a selection of short films from Ireland and elsewhere. There will, of course, be a wealth of other films to see in Ireland, but the list of titles will not be available until late June.

**Academic Policies** You are responsible for reading the SJSU academic policies available online. <http://www.sjsu.edu/english/comp/policyforsyllabi.html>

**Campus Policy in Compliance with the American Disabilities Act:** If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability, or if you need to make special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please make an appointment with me as soon as possible, or see me during office hours. Presidential Directive 97-03 requires that students with disabilities requesting accommodations must register with the DRC (Disability Resource Center) to establish a record of their disability.

**Academic Integrity** The University's Academic Integrity policy, located at <http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/S07-2.htm>, requires you to be honest in all your academic course work. Cheating on exams or plagiarism (presenting the work of another as your own, or the use of another person's ideas without giving proper credit, **or submitting your own work that you wrote for another class**) will result in a failing grade and sanctions by the University. For this class, all assignments are to be completed by the individual student submitting them unless otherwise specified. **Turniti.com:** To receive credit, *all essays for this class must be submitted to Turnitin.com*. Late submissions to Turnitin could be penalized—if I have to keep asking. . .

## Classroom Protocol

**Professionalism and maturity:** Perhaps this should go without saying, but students will be expected to treat each other and their professor with courtesy and respect. This includes the little things, like getting to class and events in Ireland on time, turning your cell phones off in class, and refraining from toying with electronic devices and chatting with buddies in class. Professionalism also involves the more serious matter of avoiding rude or hostile remarks. We will be discussing some emotionally potent issues, so it will be important for us all to express ourselves carefully and try to keep our cool. In extreme cases, students who fail in this regard might be asked to leave the classroom.

Professionalism and maturity also mean you will take responsibility for **coming to class every time**, well prepared for class, and it means following directions and meeting deadlines. **Significant problems with this can and often does mean failure in the class.** More about this below.

**Attendance and Participation:** Note: Participation is worth 10% of your course grade. **It is very important that students come to class, every time, and come prepared to participate.** This means that reading assignments should be finished *before* the class period when they will be discussed, and that students should get to class on time to turn participate in the discussions, see the films, turn in homework, and/or take quizzes. There will likely be frequent, unannounced in-class writing of some sort, and these cannot be made up by students who miss class, even for illness or some other reason beyond your control. **Poor attendance and weak participation will significantly reduce your learning experience and your grade.**

**Absences:** Due to the unusual logistics of a study-abroad class, **absences will be a very serious problem, especially when we are abroad, as your absence could damage the experience for everyone in the group and can lead to your being dismissed and sent home.** Absences before we leave could affect your grade, as well.

**Late papers:** I realize everyone has emergencies now and then, but I have found that accepting late work opens the door to chaos. Therefore: **IN-CLASS WRITING CANNOT BE MADE UP. LATE HOMEWORK WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED.** And late homework is any homework that arrives after class begins. Grades for late essays will be reduced a grade step (e.g. from B- to C+) for every day they are late, and one week late is the limit. This policy provides incentive to meet deadlines, which are even more crucial in the workplace than in school. Upper-division students should already know this.

**Procedures for turning in work:**

**All assignments are to be submitted on paper** (not just electronically) **in class, at the beginning of class when they are due.** They are not to be slid under my office door or into my mailbox. **\*\*\*Please do not ask for exceptions to these policies** because you put me in an awkward position and provoke the ire of your classmates. One reduced grade on an essay or a couple of missed quizzes will not destroy your grade. Repeated lapses *will* damage your grade.

**Extra Credit:** During a regular semester I offer extra credit, but due to the unusual logistics of a class abroad, that is harder for this class. We might work something out if *minor* make-up work is needed.

**Assignments / grade percentage**

- 7 short homework responses: (350-500 words each) 15 %
- Interview project/Site Visit (film &/or written) (500-1000 words) 20 %
- Final essay: Reflection/reminiscence/analysis (1200 words) 20 %
- Portfolio of responses to performances 20 %
- Other (topic proposals, brief research project/presentation) 15 %
- Participation/professionalism 10 %

**Assignments** will include short responses to reading questions, a portfolio of short responses to performances, a brief research project/presentation, and a final essay reflecting on your experiences. There will also be a group project to put together a short film involving interviews with Irish people, something like the “One Question 50 People” videos you can see on You Tube. For example, here’s one from Galway:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YWbYuZW8L48> and one from Dublin:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZCYXhY63jBY>

**Participation/professionalism:** Active participation in all classes/events will be required and rewarded. Professionalism (as defined above) will also be expected, and will affect this grade.

**Grading Policy** The following statement has been adopted by the Department of English for inclusion in all syllabi:

In English Department Courses, instructors will comment on and grade the quality of student writing as well as the quality of ideas being conveyed. All student writing should be distinguished by correct grammar and punctuation, appropriate diction and syntax, and well-organized paragraphs.

The Department of English reaffirms its commitment to the differential grading scale as defined in the SJSU Catalog ("The Grading System"). Grades issued must represent a full range of student performance: A = excellent; B = above average; C = average; D = below average; F = failure.

In written assignments for English 117, this scale is based on the **following criteria**:

A [90-92=A-, 93-96=A, 97-100=A+] = Excellent: The "A" essay is articulate and well developed with fluid transitions and a clear and persuasive use of evidence, which is drawn from the literary text itself, lecture materials (when appropriate), and research materials. An "A" essay contains a fresh insight which teaches the reader something new about the subject matter.

B [80-82=B-, 83-86=B, 87-89=B+] Above average: The "B" essay demonstrates a good understanding of its subject, a clear and persuasive use of evidence, a certain level of ease of expression, and solid organization. However, it usually lacks the level of originality and creativity that characterizes the insight found in an "A" essay.

C [70-72=C-, 73-76=C, 77-79=C+] = Average: The "C" essay makes a good attempt at all the assignment's requirements. It has a reasonable understanding of its subject matter but its ideas are frequently simplistic or over-generalized. The writing style is also more bland and repetitive than the style shown by "A" and "B" essays and it often contains flaws in grammar, punctuation, spelling and/or word choice. It may also use textual evidence out of context.

D [60-62=D-, 63-66=D, 67-69=D+] = Below average: The "D" essay is poorly organized and generally unclear. It has inappropriate or inadequate examples, is noticeably superficial or simplistic, and/or contains some serious mechanical and grammatical problems. A "D" essay may also reveal some misunderstanding of the assignment requirements.

F = Failure: An "F" essay has not addressed the requirements of the assignment and is unacceptable work in terms of both form and content.

***Tentative Schedule*** Please note: The schedule below should be considered stable, while the itinerary in Ireland must remain somewhat tentative primarily because the scheduling of the class time in Ireland will depend on when the Galway International Film Fleadh will be set, and it is not usually announced until mid-June. Any other schedule adjustments we might need will be announced in class and/or by email. In-class writing such as quizzes might be added on any given day. See below.

## Schedule of Classes—at SJSU (Tentative)

Classes at SJSU: 9:00-12:00, M-Th, June 18-21, 25-28

Date	Topics, Readings, due dates
M 6/18	<p>***** <u>Read before class</u>: Essays from <i>Being Irish</i></p> <p><u>Due</u>: Response questions (TWO) to <i>Being Irish</i> essays</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduction to course themes: identity--personal and national.</li> <li>• Watch short films: “<a href="#">Yu Ming is Ainm Dom</a>,” “<a href="#">New Boy</a>,” “<a href="#">Alia</a>,”</li> <li>• Discuss the readings, films</li> </ul> <p><u>Read for next time</u>: Readings on Irish myths and legends #1: epic, romantic, and tragic</p>
T 6/19	<p><u>Due</u>: Response questions to the readings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discuss the readings</li> <li>• Brief Lecture: Background on Irish myth &amp; folklore, modern updates (Yeats, Synge, Joyce, Shaw)</li> </ul> <p>Watch film clips: <a href="#">Irish Myth and Legend</a></p> <p><u>Read for next time</u>: Readings on Irish myths and legends #2: comic and scary</p>
W 6/20	<p><u>Due</u>: Response questions to the readings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discuss the readings</li> <li>• Brief Lecture: Perspectives on Irish History</li> <li>• Watch film clips: Fergal Keane on <a href="#">The Story of Ireland</a>, <a href="#">The Hanging Gale</a></li> <li>• For <i>Michael Collins</i>: Background on the Easter Rising, Irish Rebellion and Civil War</li> </ul> <p><u>Read for next time</u>: Readings related to <i>Michael Collins</i> film</p>
Th 6/21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Watch film: <a href="#">Michael Collins (2 hrs 13 min)</a></li> <li>• Discuss key themes of <i>Michael Collins</i>: Irish/British power struggles, ethics in war &amp; peace, and patriots, interpreting history, creating icons</li> </ul> <p><u>Read for next time</u>: Stories from <i>Dubliners</i>, old and new stories</p>

M 6/25	<p><u>Due:</u> Response questions to the readings, <i>Dubliners</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Brief lecture on Joyce—writer and Irish icon (film clip from <i>Nora</i>)</li> <li>• Discuss the original <i>Dubliners</i> stories</li> <li>• Brief lecture on the Irish diaspora in history and modern times</li> </ul> <p>Watch film: <i>Brooklyn</i> (1 hr 51 min)</p> <p><u>Read for next time:</u> background material on The Troubles</p>
T 6/26	<p><u>Due:</u> Response questions to <i>Brooklyn</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discuss <i>Brooklyn</i></li> <li>• Brief lecture on The Troubles, Jim Sheridan, Daniel Day Lewis</li> </ul> <p>Watch film: <i>The Boxer</i> (1 hr 53 min)</p> <p><u>Read for next time:</u> short story “Guess Who’s Coming for the Dinner” by Roddy Doyle</p>
W 6/27	<p><u>Due:</u> Response questions for “Guess Who’s Coming for the Dinner”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discuss <i>The Boxer</i></li> <li>• Brief lecture on The Celtic Tiger era, Roddy Doyle</li> <li>• Discuss “Guess Who’s Coming for the Dinner”</li> </ul> <p>Watch short film “New Boy,” and clips from <i>Guess Who’s Coming to Dinner, Get Out</i></p> <p><u>Read for next time:</u> Readings on Galway, Rick Steves’ “Travel as a Political Act”</p>
Th 6/28	<p><u>Due:</u> Response questions to the readings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Field trip to Filoli Gardens! House &amp; grounds tour, picnic. Photography lesson included. We’ll carpool. Those who want to linger in one car, those who must get back to SJSU by noon in another car(s).</li> </ul>

For (tentative) class times in Ireland, see Itinerary.