

Irish Society and Politics Course Outline

This course examines several aspects of Irish culture and how they impact Ireland today; focusing on Irish Society, Irish Politics, Irish Economy, and Ireland and the European Union.

The engaged nature of this course is directly related to each intern's placement in the Dail Eireann or the Seanad Eireann. Students are expected to interact at a high level while participating in their placement and have a strong knowledge of contemporary issues in Ireland. This course is designed to support students in their participation in the Oireachtas (Irish Parliament).

Section A: Irish Politics

Brief description of the section

The aim of this course is to introduce participants to the main features of the Irish Political System. By the end of the course participants should have adequate knowledge of the unique features and makeup of the different organs of the Irish state, namely: the legislative, the executive, and the judiciary as well as the electoral and party systems. Participants should not only understand the internal workings of the Irish political system but also the interplay between each of the respective organs. As well as this participants should understand the pervasive influence of political culture to every feature of the political system.

List of topics

1. Introduction to Irish Political Culture
2. The Constitution and the Judiciary
3. The Oireachtas
4. The Government and the Taoiseach
5. The Electoral System
6. Political Parties and Contemporary Issues in Irish Politics

Essential Reading

- Bunreacht na hEireann (Constitution of Ireland) *Available at <http://www.constitution.ie/reports/ConstitutionofIreland.pdf>
- Chubb, B. Chapters 2, 3, 4 in *The Politics of the Irish Constitution* (Dublin: IPA 1991)
- Coakley, J. & Gallagher, M. 'Politics in the Republic of Ireland', (New York: Routledge 2010)
- Coakley, J. "Reforming Political Institutions: Ireland in Comparative Perspective", IPA, 2012
- Collins, N and Cradden, T. *Political Issues in Ireland Today*, Manchester University Press, 2004
- Coughlan, T. "The Constitution and Social Policy" in Litton, F. (editor) *The Constitution of Ireland 1937-1987*, (Dublin: IPA 1988)
- Farrell, B. "The Constitution and the Institutions of Government: Constitutional Theory and Political Practice" in Litton, F. (editor) *The Constitution of Ireland 1937-1987* (Dublin: IPA 1988)
- Gallagher, M. 'Does Ireland need a new electoral system?' in Conor McGrath & Eoin O'Malley (eds.) *Irish Political Studies Reader* London: Routledge 2008.
- Laver, M. 'Discussing electoral reform' in Report of the *Constitution Review Group* Dublin: The Stationery Office 1996
- MacCarthaigh, M. "Government in Modern Ireland", IPA 2008
- MacCarthaigh, M. Part 11 (Chapters 2&3) in *Accountability in Irish Parliamentary Politics*. Dublin: IPA 2005.
- Mair, P. 'Explaining the absence of Class Politics in Ireland' in J.H. Goldthorpe and C.T. Whelan (eds.) *The development of Industrial Society in Ireland* Oxford: Oxford University Press 1992.
- McGraw, S. 'Adaptive Governance', in Niamh Hardiman (ed.), *Irish Governance in Crisis*, Manchester: Manchester University Press 2012.

Section B: Irish Society

Brief description of the section:

The purpose of this module is to describe the social, economic and cultural features of modern Irish society. It will highlight the recent changes in Irish society, and will provide a grounding in the issues and attitudes of modern Ireland. It will look at the issue of religion, in particular the declining role and influence of the Catholic Church and the shift towards more socially liberal attitudes as reflected in the recent yes vote in the same-sex referendum.

It will describe the change in demographics within Irish society in the past twenty years, the growing presence of non-nationals within Irish society and the effect this has had on the country. It will also look at the Irish Travelling community ("Irish

Travellers”), the tensions at play between the settled community and Irish Travellers, as well as the issue of racism within Irish society.

The culture of everyday life will also be discussed, before moving on to the topic of northern Ireland and the 30-yr conflict known as “The Troubles”. The legacy of that conflict is one of the features of Irish society, particularly in the political sphere and the rise of Sinn Féin as a party in the Southern State.

Finally, the module will discuss the 2008 financial crisis and the effect it had on Irish society, in terms of inequality and social justice.

By the end of the module, students should be able to describe the social, economic and political features of modern Irish society; critically appraise recent developments in Irish society, and present information about an aspect of Irish society in written form.

List of topics

Lectures

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| Lecture 1 | Religion in Irish Society |
| Lecture 2 | Immigration and Emigration |
| Lecture 3 | Women and Gender in Ireland |
| Lecture 4 | Minorities in Irish Society |
| Lecture 5 | Northern Ireland |
| Lecture 6 | Inequality, Social Justice and Social Policy |

Essential Reading

- CAIN Web Service. Conflict and Politics in Northern Ireland. <http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/>
- Perry Share, Mary P. Corcoran and Brian Conway. Sociology of Ireland. Gill and MacMillan, Dublin, 2012. Fourth edition.
- Social Justice Ireland. Towards a Just Society. Social Justice Ireland, Dublin, 2015.
- J. McGarry & B. O’Leary Explaining Northern Ireland: Broken Images, Blackwell, Oxford, 1995
- S. Healy, B. Reynolds & M. Collins, Social Policy in Ireland: Principles, Practice and Problems, Liffey Press 2007.
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- P. Fitzgerald & B. Lambkin Migration in Irish History, Palgrave 2008

Section C: Irish Economy and Ireland and the EU

Brief description of the section:

The purpose of this section is to introduce students to developments in the Irish economy over recent decades. It will look at the boom period from 1987-2007 and the subsequent recession.

The section will then consider the development of the EU. It will look at the major institutions and policies and will assess Ireland's experience of EU membership.

List of topics

1. Ireland's Economy: The Celtic Tiger
2. Irish Economic Problems and Policies
3. The origins and development of the EU
4. The principal institutions of the EU
5. The Single Market Programme 1985-92. Economic and Monetary Union
6. Major EU policies; the Common Foreign and Security Policy

Essential Reading

- "Ever Closer Union" by Desmond Dinan
- The Government and Policies of the European Union by Neil Nugent
- The Celtic Tiger by Paul Sweeney
- J. O'Hagan & c. Newman, The Economy of Ireland, Gill and MacMillan 2008

Assessment

Assessment Method	Percentage of Overall Mark
Midterm Exam	20%
Essay Assignment	40%
End of term Exam	40%