

English 325, Spring 2021  
The Art of Fiction: The Irish Short Story  
Taught by Associate Professor, Andrew Kincaid

Stated briefly, the goal of this class is to read and interpret some poignant and enjoyable short stories from Ireland over the last two centuries.

The longer description of the class: "The Irish Short Story" has two primary goals. The first is geographically general: to think through and to define the genre of the short story. How is a short story different from a novel? How do short stories differ from anecdotes, fairy tales, parables or legends? When did short story writing become popular? What worldview can and can't they express? The second goal of our course is more geographically specific: to think about the short story as it pertains to Ireland, a country known for the short story. Many Irish writers (James Joyce, Oscar Wilde, William Trevor, Frank O'Connor, Mary Lavin and Elizabeth Bowen) are considered masters and pioneers of the genre. Is there something about Irish culture, or the culture of small nations, that favors the short story form over the novel? Is there a connection between vestiges of an oral society and a briefer form of prose? Are short story writers related to the oral storyteller of old?

**Some authors and texts include:**

- Maria Edgeworth
- Sheridan Le Fanu
- Oscar Wilde
- James Joyce
- Samuel Beckett
- Liam O'Flaherty
- Frank O'Connor
- Edna O'Brien
- Mary Lavin
- Elizabeth Bowen
- William Trevor
- Roddy Doyle

Theoretical essays include, but are not limited, to pieces by:

- Walter Benjamin ("The Storyteller")
- Frank O'Connor ("The Lonely Voice")
- David Lloyd ("Nationalisms Against the State")
- Liz Curtis ("From The Cause of Ireland")

- W. J. McCormack ("The Irish Gothic")