Description: In this course, we will read, discuss, reflect upon, and write about Irish-American ethnicity in particular and the concept of ethnicity more generally. The starting point for this work will be an article published in the 24 October 2017 Newsweek, titled “Why are all the Conservative Loudmouths Irish-American?” First, we will analyze author Van Gosse’s argument, which claims that the current generation of Irish-American conservative commentators (e.g., Sean Hannity and Bill O’Reilly) are direct descendants of Senator Joe McCarthy’s reactionary populism. Then, we will use other texts to begin interrogating and refining many of Gosse’s foundational assumptions about Irish-American socio-economic and political history, including the fracturing of the Democratic party, the decline of organized labor, the effects of suburbanization, the relationship between Irish-American identity and Catholicism, and the relationship between Irish-American identity and whiteness. During the seminar, students will craft their own research questions related to Irish-American studies, and/or related to other American ethnic groups that might be fruitfully studied in comparison to Irish Americans. The culmination of each student’s research will be a sophisticated essay that explores an inquiry related to the complex relationship between ethnicity and/or class and/or race and/or gender to American politics, an exploration that will ultimately develop an idea of the student’s own.

Textbooks


Assignments:

Weekly Response Writing—each week you will post 1-2 paragraphs of reflective writing on NYU Classes in response to selected quotes from that week’s reading.

Representation and Reflection via Research # 1—in this 4 page paper you will represent a source (either Moynihan or Almeida) and reflect upon its claims and ideas through the lens of another source you find through database research.

Representation and Reflection via Research # 2—in this 4 page paper you will represent a source of your choice from the syllabus and reflect upon its claims and ideas through the lens of another source you find through database research.

1 The title of this seminar was suggested in part by my colleague in the EWP, Professor Gerard O’Donoghue.
Research Project [including an Annotated Bibliography and Research Essay]—during the semester you will craft a research question related to ethnicity; this sophisticated inquiry will spark independent research that you will use to craft an informed, coherent paper at least 12 pages in length.

Final Grade
The semester grade will be tabulated according to the following formula:
Weekly Response Writing = 15%
Representation and Reflection via Research # 1 = 20%
Representation and Reflection via Research # 2 = 20%
Research Project = 45%
[Annotated Bibliography = 10%
Research Essay = 35%]

Attendance, Preparation, Participation, and Decorum: A seminar is a space in which we develop knowledge collaboratively. Arrive on time, silence all cell phones and tablets when you enter class; do not text or use personal electronic devices in the classroom unless directed to do so (or unless there is a legitimate reason why you need this technology to enhance your learning). Complete the reading and writing for all daily assignments before class. Bring the right texts to class. Speak regularly and intelligently during class, striving to be thoughtful instead of right. Acting in the manner described above will help you attend class ready to listen, think, read, re-read and speak thoughtfully. All these learning activities make up a significant portion of your learning and will matter in your grade. If you miss more than two consecutive classes you might have difficulty meeting the course requirements. You may well fail the course if you have 4 un-excused absences. It is courteous to let me know in advance if you must miss class, and why. Family and medical emergencies and the observance of religious holidays are legitimate grounds for an excused absence. If there are other extenuating circumstances, please have your advisor contact me as soon as possible.

Respect and Self-Awareness in the Classroom: Please know in advance that the texts we read in this course may engage with provocative questions related to the concepts of race, ethnicity, nationality, religion, politics, and gender. I ask you to follow two simple but important rules my colleague Jameson Fitzpatrick demands of his students: (1.) Never assume that no one in the classroom has experienced anything we might be reading about; and (2.) Never assume that any experience—including your own—is the “normal” one. These rules help each of us to recognize the particularity of our own individual histories as well as the particularity of our classmates’ individual histories. If, at any point during the course, something we have read and/or discussed troubles, offends or confuses you, please feel free to inform me. You can and should voice such concerns during a class discussion and/or privately (i.e., in an email or in a one-on-one conversation after class).

Office Hours: In lieu of weekly, open office hours, each student will meet with me for two mandatory, one-on-one conferences, once before the first representation/response paper, and again before the final paper. Of course, if at any time during the semester you need to meet-with me, please do not hesitate to email me or talk with me after class to schedule an appointment.

Support @ The Moses Center: Academic accommodations are available for students with disabilities. The Moses Center website is www.nyu.edu/csd. Please contact the Moses Center
Support @ The Writing Center: The Writing Center provides one-on-one personalized support for student writers at NYU. This is a consulting service offered for free by the Expository Writing Program at NYU. The Center is located at 411 Lafayette Street, 4th Floor, the same place as my office. Please keep in mind that the Center is not a proofreading service; rather, you can expect the consultants there to help you with the form, evidence, and ideas of the essay you are developing. As such, the Writing Center is an invaluable place to get an informed, outside perspective on how to develop your writing. Writing Center consultants can provide a fresh, outside perspective on a draft, be a sounding board for you as you try to develop ideas, or help you better understand where you want to take an essay. All consultants are intelligent tutors, writers and thinkers, they understand our goals, and they will respect your work and effort. They are committed to helping you and you alone. Make use of them. You can book appointments in advance through the online scheduler, or walk in. For more information, and to book an appointment, see the Center’s website.

Support @ The Wellness Exchange: College life can be stressful and overwhelming. I encourage you to reach out if you need help. The NYU Wellness Exchange offers free, confidential counseling services. You can reach them 24/7 at the hotline 212 443 9999 or during walk in hours at 726 Broadway, Room 344. Find out more at http://www.nyu.edu/students/health-and-wellness/counseling-services.html

Additional Support for Students:
- Academic Resource Center
- Resources for Commuter and Off-Campus Students
- Residential International Student Engagement (R.I.S.E.)
- NYU Libraries
- Writing Affiliates
- MLA Style Center

Academic Integrity: In this seminar, students are expected—indeed, required—to build their work on that of other people, just as professional researchers and writers do. Giving credit to someone whose work has helped you is expected; in fact, not to give such credit is a crime. Plagiarism is the severest form of academic fraud. Plagiarism is theft. Please see the official CAS statement on academic integrity. https://cas.nyu.edu/content/nyu-as/cas/ewp/writing-resources/statement-on-academic-integrity.html

Course Schedule:

**Week 1 (January 30th): Introductions**

Read and discuss Gosse’s article together in class

[Homework: Read Meagher’s “The Irish as Immigrants and Ethnics” (CG 3-18)
and Doyle’s “The Irish in North America, 1776-1845 (MIA pgs 171-212)
and Moynihan’s “The Irish” (MIA pgs 475-525)
and Almeida’s “Irish America, 1940-2000” (MIA pgs 548-573)]

**Week 2 (February 6th): Overviews**

Discuss Meagher, Doyle, Moynihan and Almeida

[**Homework:** Read Whelan’s “Religious Rivalry…” (MIA pgs 271-285)
and Shelley’s “Twentieth-Century American Catholicism…” (MIA pgs 574-608)
and Greeley’s “The Church” (32 pg hand-out)]

**Week 3 (February 13th): Irish-Americans and Religion Pt. 1—Catholicism**

Discuss Whelan, Shelley and Greeley

[**Homework:** Read Meagher’s “The 1960s to the Present” (CG 149-170)
and Quinn’s “Confessions of a Bronx Irish-Catholic” (35 pg hand-out)
and Orsi’s “U.S. Catholics Between Memory and Modernity” (35 pg hand-out)]

**Week 4 (February 20th): Irish-Americans and Religion Pt. 2—Post-Catholicism?**

***Representation and Reflection via Research # 1 due***

Discuss Meagher, Quinn and Orsi

[**Homework:** Read Meagher’s “Irish Americans in Politics” (CG 182-197)
and Hamill “Once We Were Kings” (MIA pgs 526-534)
and Trillin’s “Democracy in Action” (MIA pgs 535-547)
and excerpts from Golway’s *Machine Made* (65 pg hand-out)]

**Week 5 (February 27th): Irish-Americans and Politics Pt. 1—Democratic**

Discuss Meagher, Trillin and Golway

[**Homework:** Read Moloney’s “Rep. King and the IRA” (online)
and O’Hehir’s “How did my Fellow Irish-Americans Get So Disgusting?” (online),
and Kennedy’s “How Irish America Thinks Votes and Acts,” (online),
and Markey’s “What Happened to Irish America?” (online),
and Loomis’s “The Unions Betraying the Left” (online)
and Saffran’s “It’s Not Archie Bunker’s District Anymore” (online),
and Fintan O’Toole’s “Brett Kavanaugh…White Irish Catholic…Reactionary Politics” (online)]

Week 6 (March 6th): Irish-Americans and Politics Pt. 2—Post-Democratic
Discuss Moloney, O’Hehir, Kennedy, Markey, Loomis, Saffran and O’Toole

[Homework: Read Kenny’s “Labor and Labor Organizations” (MIA pgs 354-363)
and Quinn’s “Looking for Jimmy” (MIA pgs 663-679)
and excerpts from MacDonald’s All Souls (65 pg hand-out)]

SPRING BREAK: NO CLASS ON MARCH 13th (HAPPY ST. PATRICK’S DAY!!!)

Week 7 (March 20th): Irish-Americans and Class Pt. 1—Working Classes

***Representation and Reflection via Research # 2 due***
Discuss Kenny, Quinn, and MacDonald

[Homework: Read Casey’s “Refractive History…” (MIA pgs 302-331)
and Snyder’s “The Irish and Vaudeville” (MIA pgs 406-410)
and O’Brien’s “Upper Class Irish History” (65 pg handout)]

Week 8 (March 27th): Irish-Americans and Class Pt. 2—Elites
Discuss Casey, Snyder and O’Brien

[Homework: Read Meagher’s “Irish American Gender and Family” (CG 173-181)
and Lynch-Brennan’s “Ubiquitous Bridget (MIA pgs 332-353)
and Miller, Doyle and Kelleher’s “Irishwomen, Emigration and Domesticity” (25 page hand-out)
and Fitzgerald’s “Women Religious and the Care of Single Women” (15 page hand-out)
and Turbin’s “And We Are Nothing But Women” (20 pg hand-out)]

Week 9 (April 3rd): Irish-Americans and Gender Pt. 1—Femininity
Discuss Meagher, Lynch-Brennan, Miller et al., Fitzgerald and Turbin
[ Homework: Read Wilcox’s “Irish Americans in Sports: The Nineteenth Century” (MIA 443-456) and McCarthy’s “Irish Americans in Sports: The Twentieth Century” (MIA pgs 457-474) Burns’s “Obligations and Marriage Ideals in Irish-American New England” (21 pg hand-out) McDannell’s “Catholicism and the Irish-American Male” (20 pg hand-out) Kelleher’s “Class and Catholic Irish Masculinity in Antebellum America” (39 pg hand-out)]

Week 10 (April 10th): Irish-Americans and Gender Pt. 2—Masculinity
Discuss Wilcox, McCarthy, McDannell and Kelleher
[ Homework: Read Meagher’s “Irish-Americans and Race” (CG pgs 214-233) and Kenny’s “Race, Violence…” (MIA pgs 364-380) and excerpts from Roediger’s Wages of Whiteness (65 pg hand-out)]

Week 11 (April 17th): Irish-Americans and Race Pt. 1—Not Quite White?
Discuss Meagher, Kenny and Roediger
[ Homework: Read Eagan’s “The Racial Politics of Hibernophilia” (hand-out) and Negra’s “Irish, Innocence…” (hand-out) and Liam Hogan’s work on the “Irish slaves” meme (numerous articles linked online)]

Week 12 (April 24th): Irish-Americans and Race Pt. 2—Irish American Whiteness?
Discuss Eagan, Negra and Hogan
***Annotated Bibliography due***
[ Homework: Read Meagher’s “The Fireman on the Stairs” (MIA pgs 609-648)
and Quinn’s “The Future of Irish America” (*MIA* 680-686)
and excerpts from Byron’s *Irish America* (50 page handout)]

**Week 13 (May 1st): Irish-American History: A Usable Past?**

Discuss Meagher, Quinn and Byron

[Homework: Read the 100+ pages of independent research you have amassed]

**Week 14 (May 8th): Last Class**

Peer Review Workshop; Final Reflections and Evaluations

***Research Essay due on or before May 15th***