Welcome to NYU Summer in Dublin, 2022: Contemporary Irish Politics & Society. This syllabus is your master document/ guide for the course, and contains essential information, including:

- Course Overview
- Course Requirements
- Assessment Details
- The Class Schedule & Assigned/Required Readings
- Contact details for Course Lecturer
Course Overview

This course provides a rich and comprehensive Sociological Analysis of Irish Politics and Society, focusing in particular on how Irish society evolved to the society it is today. Specifically, the course examines how Irish society was determined by its historical development and social processes, and how change impacted Ireland. The course illustrates how Ireland can be viewed as a ‘holistic entity’ in itself, where interconnecting processes co-exist in the present day. In other words, *The Past is Always Present*!

The course is divided into three time-frames: the Post-colonial (1920s -1950s), Modern (1960s-1980s), Twenty-First century Ireland (the Celtic Tiger period and its aftermath) (1990 - 2022), and locates for each of those periods, the dominant characteristic (essential structure), which determined all other aspects of Irish life to the present day. To achieve this aim, we will be critically engaging with conceptual frameworks that have been applied to Ireland from within sociology and other disciplines.

### Course Requirements:

Attendance, an open mind and two term papers

### Assessment, Dates & (%) Weighting:

- **Term Paper 1** (1,500 words) (40%) Due: Thurs 7th July
- **Final Term Paper** (2,500 – 3,000 words, including visual analysis) (60%) Due: 19th July

### Class Format and Expectations:

This is a reading course. Lectures serve as a broad introduction to the areas covered in the course which will introduce arguments raised in the readings. Crucially, lectures give you the necessary framework to interpret the readings. Readings will have to be done in order to gain a more complete understanding of lecture material. Readings for the lectures have been rated in order of their importance by star symbols, a *** denotes the most important readings for each lecture.

### Contact Details:

If you have any questions or queries about the course you can email me at: patricia.healykettle@mu.ie. Please ensure you provide the course name in the email subject box.

*I hope you will find course this a fruitful endeavour as I reveal to you, the complexity of Ireland as a modern society.*
WEEK 2 (Tue 21 & 23rd June) Make up classes for 14 16 June will be covered this week:

Introducing Ireland & its factual Identities

We begin the course by exploring how we are going to investigate modern Irish society, by suggesting that we need to examine how it has evolved over time into its present structure. The key insight that I want to introduce you to, is that Irish society is made up of interconnecting processes and that these are constantly changing, including our critical relationship with nature. In introducing the course, I will begin by suggesting that modern Ireland is unique among the nation states of the world, revealed through statistics and data of its contemporary structure. However, I want to suggest that its contemporary uniqueness is determined by its particular historical development. Specifically, we cannot understand the present without knowing its past.

The Colonization of Ireland as a dynamic social process

Prior to colonialism, nature was perceived to be inhabited, by spirits, but with colonialism nature begins to be interpreted as a thing-like entity. Consequently, the parklands of the landed estates were designed to look not just like pictures of nature but also like the landscape of England. In doing so, these ‘little England’ enclaves became politicised!

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**Required Readings & Viewings**


** Which country does the most good for the world? | Simon Anholt: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1X7fZoDs9KU
The Metabolic Rift.

Marx understood that the essential dynamic of colonialization operated through a political structure he entitled ‘the regime’. The colonializing regime tended to evolve over time, sometimes eliminating operating agencies and other times creating new ones, depending on the circumstances. In the Irish case, the colonializing regime dominated not only the economy but also the native ecology, which was a crucial precondition for the emergence of the Great Famine.

Marx clearly identified the presence of the metabolic rift in the context of nineteenth century Ireland. This ‘rift’ situation was itself caused by an extreme exploitative rental regime.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Required Readings &amp; Viewings</th>
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<tr>
<td>***Slater, E. and McDonough, T. 2008, Marx on 19th century colonialism of Ireland: Beyond Dependency theory, NIRSA working papers, no.35.</td>
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<td><strong>Record of a speech on the Irish Question by Karl Marx, 16. Dec. 1867</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Slater, E. 2013, ‘Uncovering the ‘metabolic rift’ in the context of Ireland’</strong></td>
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<td>*<strong>K.H. Connell. (1996), Catholicism and Marriage in the century after the famine</strong></td>
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The emergence of peasants as commodity producers’, ‘Peasant Fundamentalism’ & ‘Keeping the Name on the Land’

With the Irish peasantry winning the Land War, the British finally sacrifice its landlord class in Ireland by allowing the Irish tenants to buy their own holdings. Thus, the peasants became owners of their own land after eight hundred years of colonial rule. However, to achieve this, they became embedded in a form of Peasant Fundamentalism.
In the 1930’s two American Anthropologists, Arensberg and Kimball, claimed to have discovered in the West of Ireland an almost classic example of a stable ‘traditional’ society. Their work provided a benchmark against which subsequent changes in the whole of Ireland can be measured. From their work, we can uncover the traditional social processes that were determining that society as a traditional, ‘subsistent economic system’, strong communal institutions of the family and the community, and an oral culture which encouraged intense face-to-face interactions.

Man of Aran : Glimpses of the Ecology of Peasant Fundamentalism

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Cwmc05qW0xc

The commodification of farming is about how farmers become increasingly involved and dependent on markets, not just to sell what they produce, but also to obtain resources and inputs. The commoditisation of agriculture as a process has been going on for centuries through the sale of produce but input commoditisation has only developed in the period since the 1960s. Accordingly, the peasant farmer maintained traditional values while engaged in market production. The ‘Man of Aran’ provides a glimpse of the ecology of Peasant Fundamentalism.

Required Readings & Viewings


***K. H. Connell. (1996), Catholicism and Marriage in the century after the Famine

***P. Gibbon, 1973 ‘Arensberg and Kimball Revisited’


*C. Arensberg and S. Kimball, 2001, Family and Community in Ireland

***D. Hannon and P. Cummins, ‘The Significance of the Small-scale Landholders in Ireland’s socio-economic Transformation’ (extracts)
We finally arrive at the essential determining process of peasant fundamentalism in political enactments that were brought into being which attempted to support the peasant family farm by giving financial incentives, protecting the family, etc. In short, the state attempted to contain both market forces and Irish sexuality in order to sustain the peasant family farm. The consequences of these strategies has dramatically impacted on Irish women.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Pjscd-g7z6Q.

**Required Readings & Viewings**


***D. Hannon and P. Cummins, 1992 ‘The Significance of the Small-scale Landholders in Ireland’s socio-economic Transformation’***

* Eoin O’Sullivan and Ian O’Donnell, 2012* Coercive Confinement in Ireland, ch.24 ‘Conclusion: Explaining coercive confinement: Why was the past such a different place?’

**ESSAY #1 DUE, Thurs 7th July**
SECTION 3
TRANSITIONS AND TRANSFORMATIONS (1958-1980s)

WEEK 4: (5th & 7th July)

The Demise of the ‘Family Farm Economy’ & it’s Peasantry

According to Brody, the essential structures of the traditional family and community in rural Ireland were crucially changed with the introduction of urban values through the media and the cash nexus. In their demise, individualism began to emerge. However, what is crucial to us is how he attempts to combine the culturalism of values with a market economy to explain the apparent decline of the traditional family and community.

Required Readings & Viewings

**H. Brody, 1973, Inishkillane: Change and Decline in the West of Ireland

***D. Hannon, 1979, ‘Peasant Models and Irish Rural Communities’ ch.1 of Displacement and Development: Class, Kinship and Social Change in Irish Rural Communities.

Dependent Industrialisation and breaking the ‘vice-like’ grip: A rising tide, that did not lift all boats!

The Irish State played a pivotal role in the emergence of dependent industrialization. It attracted multi-national firms (MNFs) into Ireland by provides tax breaks and other incentives and as a result, Ireland, but especially rural Ireland industrialized. The workers in these MNF’s were dependent on decisions became dependent working class. The form of rural Industrialization broke the vice-like grip that the farm had on both men and women, and was the precondition not only for the demise of peasant Ireland but the emergence of consumer society. Accessing jobs beyond agriculture in newly established multi-national firms had major consequences for stabilizing the rural population, the impoverishment of community, and changing the gender relationships of rural Ireland.

THE BAR

Here, we will explore how the impoverishment of communities impacted men, and how they became marginalized, isolated and consequently, engaged in what Brody refers to as ‘remorseless (and seasonal) heavy drinking’. 
CHANGING ROLES OF WOMEN

As Brody suggests, in the late 1960s and 70s most of the communities in the west of Ireland were unsustainable. Change had a major impact on all aspects of life in Ireland. We will document this by exploring the changing roles of women, how they gained financial independence, engaged in consumerism, and status, which was achieved rather than ascribed. Crucially, we see unravel how the authority of parents becomes undermined by their diminished importance in the household economy.

Required Readings & Viewings

H. Brody, 1973, Inishkilling: Change and Decline in the West of Ireland,

***D. Hannon, 1979, ‘Peasant Models and Irish Rural Communities’ ch.1 of Displacement and Development: Class, Kinship and Social Change in Irish Rural Communities. (extracts)


*E. Slater, ‘Restructuring the rural – rural transformation


The Ballroom of Romance Film  (Make-up Class from week 1)

The Ballroom of Romance (1982) was a film adaptation of a William Trevor short story. This moving drama is set in the late 1950s West of Ireland and gives audiences the opportunity to explore the bleak reality of rural life through the medium of the local ballrooms. For many of the inhabitants of the rural countryside, the ballrooms represented a temporary escape from the monotony and isolation of everyday life. However, the actual reality behind the glamour facades of the ballrooms was one of despair and frustration experienced by those who attended such communal events. Reading the film ‘The Ballroom of Romance’ sociologically from our unfolding framework allows us to identify a diverse range of processes which manifest themselves as moments, often fleetingly but conditioning the immediate interaction of the Ballroom participants.

Required Readings & Viewings

Ballroom of Romance: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4I_j0KGZEao

** William Trevor, ‘The Ballroom of Romance’

* Jim Smith, 1993, ‘Dancing, Depravity and all that Jazz’, History Ireland.
SECTION 4
GLOBAL IRELAND: THE CULTURAL ANIMATION OF IRELAND

WEEK 5 - 6: (12 & 14 July, )

Global Representations of Romantic Ireland: ‘Cultural Globalization’

Here, we will examine the way in which Ireland is represented globally through various forms of media, especially rural Ireland. However, in representing the physical reality of Ireland, they have tended to idealize it by emphasizing the aesthetic. We will examine the way in which Ireland is represented globally through various forms of media, especially rural Ireland. However, in representing the physical reality of Ireland, they have tended to idealize it by emphasizing the aesthetic. This aesthetic in its various forms has inherently attempted to ‘transcend the mundane’ (Van Morrison), constructing Ireland as an exotic other.

**Required Reading & Viewings**

*Justin Carville 2009, ‘A Sympathetic Look’: Documentary Humanism and Irish Identity in Dorothea Lange’s Irish Country People’

**Romanticism, Realism and Irish Cinema**

**The Quiet Man Film**

Irish-American films of Ireland produce a particular view of Ireland: a perspective that constructs a visual mythology of what Ireland ought to be according to this particular outsider’s view of Ireland, in this case the Irish-American dream.

**Required Reading & Viewings**

***Viewing: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WcVd8NXufM](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WcVd8NXufM)***
Rock Music & its influences: Introducing Irishness in the gift of a song

In recent times forms of Irish culture and sporting activities have become globalized and in doing so they have created new forms of identity for Ireland and its population, both home and abroad. Here, we will examine the evolution and structure of Irish Rock Music, as a form of cultural animation for the construction of identities in two forms: an identity for the Irish people, (particularly young people) and an identity that could be consumed by a global audience. In order to achieve this, Irish rock music hybronzized, combined and fused with traditional Irish music or ways of expression with rock music in order to transcend the mundane.

Required Reading & Viewings

**The Irish Rock Story: A Tale of Two Cities (2015)
https://www.dailymotion.com/video/x2jjiai**

**Mc. Loughlin, Noel & Martin Mc Loone. Hybrid and National Musics: The case of Irish rock music.**

***Barbara O’Connor, 1998. ‘Riverdance’, in Encounters with Modern Ireland, edited by M. Peillon and E. Slater***

Theme-Parking Ireland as an Exotic ‘Other’!

Theming is about representing our Irishness as an ‘exotic other’ as a way of creating an identity which is different from other global societies.

Theme parking is physically realizing these themes on the spatial plane, which consequently symbolically embellishes our immediate environment, both built & natural.
Irish Global Lifestyles: Hyper-automobility & the reconfiguration of space & time

The auto (automobile) suburban sprawl became the dominant form of habitation for the majority of the Irish population during the Celtic Tiger period. It unfolds as the essential process which ‘bathes’ all the other features of Irish suburbia. It determines not only the pace of everyday life but also the spaces of that life, both built and ‘natural’.

Contemporary society promotes a new level of highly individualized and intensified consumption – *hyper-consumption* (*Freund and Martin*). In transport, mass automobilization fosters overdriving and suburban sprawl. In cuisine, the growth of fast food outlets and super-sized meals promotes overeating. These and other types of consumption and new work practices have caused a reconfiguration of time and space in modern Ireland.

**SECTION 5:**
**21ST CENTURY IRELAND**

**Required Readings & Viewings**

***P. Freund and G. Martin, 1993 ‘Auto Space’ in their *The Ecology of Automobility*

***J. Wickham, 2006, ‘Car dependency and the quality of urban life’, Ch. 6, in his *Gridlock: Dublin’s transport crisis and the future of the city*


Ireland’s Suburban Metabolic Rift, & Re-embedding Social Processes

Suburbia is thus an ecological contradiction, where it extols the virtues of plant greenery as its defining spatial characteristic but only on the ornamental level, while in the reality of its subterranean ‘pores’ it is creating an ecological wasteland. In its patterns of consumption and excretion of waste and water, suburbia is an extension to the urban patterns, especially in the way it, and its accumulated waste is physically removed without any attempt to integrate into a productive agroecosystem. Thus, of central importance is an analysis of Global Food Production, its implications on the soil and human health.

We will examine the politics of contemporary food production and how science has entered into the ‘field’, not to create a more ecologically sustainable agriculture but a more profitable one! Whilst scientists are concerned with the impact of global food production, consumption and its impact on human health, here we will explore the need to tackle the modern form of the metabolic rift and its contemporary modern form – the suburban metabolic rift - and how it effects the health of its consumers.
We will complete our analysis with an exploration of some of the *dis-embedding* social processes associated with late and post-modernity, and on some of the ways social actors are attempting to engender ‘re-embedding social processes’ and in particular, what is likely to be the next terrifying ecological problems of the next generation. Finally, we will engage in some reflections about what we have learned about Ireland: how Irish society evolved, its historical development and identity and what the future holds!

### Required Readings & Viewings

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Authors</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Slater, E.</td>
<td>'Rustic' Suburbia: where the tyranny of ornamental ecology evades the increasing demise of productive ecology, (working paper)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>George, R.</td>
<td>The Big Necessity: The Unmentionable world of human waste and why it matters</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kettle, P.</td>
<td>Motivations for investing in Allotment Gardening: A Sociological Analysis</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kettle, P., M. Corcoran</td>
<td>Green Shoots in Vacant Plots: Urban Agriculture and Austerity in Post-Crash Ireland</td>
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<tr>
<td>Amaranthus, M. and B. Allyn</td>
<td>'Healthy Soil Microbes, Healthy People’, <em>The Atlantic</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>Frazer, Ian</td>
<td>Paving Paradise – the peril of impervious surfaces</td>
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<tr>
<td>Carbon Farming</td>
<td>A Solution under our feet:</td>
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Fantastic Fungi (Netflix)
Preview available on: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bxABOiay6oA](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bxABOiay6oA)

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rvHJKqU-mZo](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rvHJKqU-mZo)
“Well, I’m telling you there is hope. I have seen it. But, it does not come from the government or corporations. It comes from the people who have been unaware but are now starting to wake up. And, once we become aware, we change. People change. People are ready for change”

(Greta Thunberg’s address to the UN Climate Conferences, Madrid, Dec 6. 2019)