

IMAGINING THE IRISH

Narratives of Nationhood 1916-2020

Three Seminars led by **Professor Tim Mc Inerney (Université Paris 8)**
Rutgers Academic Building, West Wing, 6th Floor Rm 6051

Understanding Ireland's Ethno-Cultural divide | April 21 at 4:30pm

Despite common misconceptions, the political divide in Ireland is not about religion. Instead, the infamous labels of “Protestant” and “Catholic” function as a proxy for the complex ethno-cultural identities that have resulted from centuries of systemic segregation under colonial rule. In our first seminar, we will get to grips with the basics of identity on the island of Ireland. We will see how the Revolution of 1916-1922 transformed what the Irish nation represented in the world—and indeed, how this very transformation was seen as a profound threat to British global hegemony.

Reading: Extracts from John Mitchel, *The Land Conquest of Ireland (Perhaps)* (1861); Éamonn De Valera, “Ireland and India” speech (1920); Arthur Mee’s *Harmsworth’s Children’s Encyclopaedia* (1926).

The Troubles | April 25 at 4:30pm

In this session we examine the outbreak of civil conflict in Northern Ireland. We will see how the new entity of Northern Ireland was built on systematic discrimination in the areas of housing, employment, and voting, all in the aim of ensuring British dominance over the territory. Inescapable analogies with similar systems of discrimination around the world helped to fuel a massive civil rights movement in the 1960s, and shortly afterwards a violent uprising against Northern Ireland’s “Orange State” would plunge the island of Ireland into chaos. We will see how the conflict transformed from a peaceful civil rights movement to a guerrilla war, transforming quiet neighbourhoods into veritable battle zones in the space of a year.

Reading: Extracts from Bernadette Devlin, *The Price of My Soul* (1969) and Bobby Sands’ Diary.

Brexit and the Border | April 28 at 4:30pm

In our final session we will see how Britain’s dark history in Ireland came back to haunt it during the Brexit referendum of 2016. We will examine why the Irish border, though hardly mentioned during the campaign itself, rendered the greatest ambitions of Brexit all but impossible. Over the next four years, the territory became a pawn in a largely cynical and disingenuous media war, creating a new sense of alienation among Irish unionists and bringing the question of a United Ireland firmly onto the table. We’ll see how the awkward realities of Northern Ireland stymied Britain’s Brexit dreams, and how the EU-exit may have accelerated the dissolution of the United Kingdom.

Reading: Extracts from media articles by Fintan O’Toole and Susan McKay.

