

LT289 The Neoliberal God: Ireland in Eight Novels

Seminar Leader: Catherine Toal

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Office Hours: 1-2pm Monday or by appointment

The last decade has witnessed a new “renaissance” in Irish literature, characterized by a revived experimentalism in the novel, and the emergence of high-quality forums for the publication of fiction, poetry and criticism. For the first time, there is no gender disparity in literary culture. These developments have been linked to a rediscovery of the value of the arts in the aftermath of the economic boom of the 1990s and early 2000s, and to the putative “liberalization” of Irish society, represented by the outcomes of two landmark referendums, on marriage equality in 2015, and on abortion rights in 2018. The official resolution of the conflict in Northern Ireland in 1998 prepared the basis for exchanges between writers of different backgrounds from both sides of the border. Familiar themes from the past still surface in the present, such as the impact of religion and of political conflict arising from the legacy of imperialism. New motifs emerge with historical echoes: migration, in a country depleted by large-scale population decline; race and racialization, in a former colony that benefits from its identification as “European.” In stylistic terms, contemporary Irish writers continue to grapple with the influence of the groundbreaking Modernist icons in their tradition of literature in English, and to transfigure the varieties of social realism developed since independence. This course explores what is new and old in the forms and subject-matter of contemporary Irish literature, focusing on the most significant works from recent years by, among others, Anna Burns, Eimear McBride, Donal Ryan, Kevin Barry, and Jan Carson.

Books to be purchased for the course

Kevin Barry, *City of Bohane* (2011)

Anna Burns, *Milkman* (2018)

Jan Carson, *The Raptures* (2022)

Claire Keegan, *Small Things Like These* (2022)

Eimear McBride, *A Girl is a Half-formed Thing* (2013)

Danielle McLaughlin, *The Art of Falling* (2021)

Sally Rooney, *Normal People* (2018)

Donal Ryan, *The Spinning Heart* (2012)

Requirements

Assignments are two papers, each of 3500, due at mid (Friday 17 March) and end (Friday 19 May) of term, short responses to a question circulated at the beginning of each class, and two short in-class presentations (10 minutes).

Academic Integrity

Bard College Berlin maintains the highest standards of academic integrity and expects students to adhere to these standards at all times. Instances in which students fail to meet the expected standards of academic integrity will be dealt with under the Code of Student Conduct, Section 14.3 (Academic Misconduct) in the Student Handbook.

Attendance

Attendance at all classes is a crucial part of the education offered by Bard College Berlin. To account for minor circumstances, two absences from twice-per-week courses or the equivalent (e.g. one absence from a once-per-week course) should not affect the participation grade or require documentation.

Bard College Berlin does not offer credit for any course in which a student has missed more than 30% of classes, regardless of the reasons for the absences. The full Bard College Berlin attendance policy can be found in the Student Handbook, Section 2.8.

Policy on Late Submission of Papers

Essays that are up to 24 hours late can be downgraded up to one full grade (from B+ to C+, for example). Where a late essay is accepted, it must be submitted within four weeks of the deadline. Thereafter, the student will receive a failing grade for the assignment. Grades and comments will be returned to students in a timely fashion. Students are also entitled to make an appointment to discuss essay assignments and feedback during instructors' office hours.

Students receive mid- and end-of-semester grades for their seminar work. Students are entitled to make an appointment to discuss seminar participation, or may be asked to meet at any stage in the semester regarding class progress.

Grade Breakdown

Participation: 30%, First Paper: 20%, In-class questions: 10% Presentations: 10%, Final Paper: 30%

Schedule

Wednesday February 2
Anna Burns, *Milkman* (2018)

Wednesday February 9
Anna Burns, *Milkman* (2018)

Wednesday February 15
Anna Burns, *Milkman* (2018)

Wednesday February 22
Sally Rooney, *Normal People* (2018)

Wednesday March 1
Sally Rooney, *Normal People* (2018)

Wednesday March 8
Donal Ryan, *The Spinning Heart* (2012)

Wednesday March 15
Donal Ryan, *The Spinning Heart* (2012)

Mid-term essay due Friday March 17

Wednesday March 22

Eimear McBride, *A Girl is a half-formed Thing* (2013)

Wednesday March 29

Danielle McLaughlin, *The Art of Falling* (2021)

Monday April 3 to Tuesday April 11: Spring Break

Wednesday April 12

Kevin Barry, *City of Bohane* (2011)

Wednesday April 19

Kevin Barry, *City of Bohane* (2011)

Wednesday April 26

Jan Carson, *The Raptures* (2022)

Wednesday May 3

Jan Carson, *The Raptures* (2022)

Wednesday May 10

Claire Keegan, *Small Things Like These* (2022)

Final Essay due Friday May 19