San José State University

Humanities & Arts/English & Comparative Literature

**English 117B: Global Film, Literature and Cultures**

Summer 2016

**Instructor**: Dr. Julie Sparks

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**Professor Office:** Faculty Office Building 128

**Office Hours:** (6/13-6/23) M-F 1-2 pm. After 6/23 by arrangement

**Class meets**: at SJSU from 6/13 – 6/23, from 9:00-12:15 pm. After that: Dublin, Galway, and Cork, Ireland.

**Classroom:** Faculty Office Building (FOB) 104

**Prerequisites**: Completion of GE core; Satisfaction of Writing Skills Test;

Upper-division standing

**GE/SJSU Studies Category**: GE Area V: Culture, Civilization, and Global Understanding

**Course Description** Some say there are really only two basic plots in the history of storytelling: a young man goes on a journey, or a stranger comes into town. Others have pointed out that this is really the same story told from two different points of view—the ones who go on adventures and the ones they meet on the way. Of course, there are really more plots than that, but some of the best stories do follow those lines.

Therefore, the focusing theme of this course will be journeys, especially journeys by young people. We will watch films from all over the world and read stories that depict people leaving home to seek their fortune, to escape strife or chase adventure, to find their father or a seek a lover, or just to see the world beyond their little village. By experiencing these vicarious adventures, students will learn to appreciate and understand the narratives that create and define cultural identity, explore cultural interaction, and illustrate cultural preservation and cultural difference over time.

Also, since Ireland will be commemorating the 100 year anniversary of the Easter Rising that led to their independence from over 700 years of British rule, we will consider how cultural identity is related to both the heroes and villains it identifies and the stories it tells about them--the icons it either demonizes or holds up for veneration.

**General Ed. Description**: Using films and literary works, students will appreciate and understand the narratives that create and define cultural identity, explore cultural interaction, and illustrate cultural preservation and cultural difference over time. We also examine how the films utilize the approaches to story-telling differently from traditional fictional forms: especially plays and short stories. We will look at films and read texts that are written in, set in, or depict multiple time periods and world cultures, with an emphasis on Ireland and other former colonies of the British Empire, including the U.S. Some of the common themes we will explore across these widely different texts and cultures will include the ways in which national and cultural identities are formed and contested, particularly in the telling of stories and the recording of history.

The course is open to upper division students of any major and satisfies the Gen Ed requirement for Area V, global engagement.

**Course Goals and Student Learning Objectives**

1. Students shall be able to compare systematically the ideas, values, images, cultural artifacts, economic structures, technological developments, or attitudes of people from more than one culture outside the U.S. through the media of film and literature.
2. Students shall be able to identify the historical context of ideas and cultural traditions outside the U.S. and how they have influenced American culture.
3. Students shall be able to explain how a culture outside the U.S. has changed in response to internal and external pressures.

1. Students shall hone their reading, writing, researching, and critical thinking skills through the practice of intellectually challenging analyses.

Course objectives 1-3 will be accomplished through the readings, class discussions,

students’ research and presentations, while the various written assignments and the final oral presentation will allow us to accomplish objective 4 and to assess our level of accomplishment in objectives 1-3.

**Required Readings**

* Selected tales from Irish mythology (Deirdre of the Sorrows, Tír na nÓg, Cuchulainn)
* Selected essays from ***Being Irish*** + short passage by Bernard Shaw on Irish identity (posted on the course Web site)
* Excerpts from *Princes of Ireland* by Edward Rutherford
* ***Arms and the Man*** (a play) By George Bernard Shaw (any edition)
* Selected essays by Andrew Lam: “Lost Photos,” “Child of Two Worlds,” “Letter to a Young Refugee” (from *Perfume Dreams: Reflections on the Vietnamese Diaspora)*
* Stories by Roddy Doyle: “Home to Harlem” and “Guess Who’s Coming for the Dinner” (from *The Deportees and Other Stories*)
* A selection of Irish poetry (to be posted on the course Web site)
* Selected film reviews, context articles, and travel essays (these will be posted on the course Web site and/or handed out in class)

**Other Readings** Supplementary (mostly optional) reading material, in addition to the works listed above, will help give you historical background and cultural context for the main readings and films. Most of these will be posted on the course Web site. Shorter readings will be handed out on paper, as in days of yore.

**Film Lists:** Films on the first list are the ones we will watch in class before we leave for Ireland. We will watch them as a group and discuss them together, and often there will be brief in-class writings afterwards to catch your first impressions. This is a significantly different experience from watching the films on your own, so please *do not* expect to skip class when the films are scheduled.

**Required Films (tentative)**: *Michael Collins* (Ireland), *Ondine* (Ireland)*, Jimmy’s Hall* (Ireland), *Brooklyn* (Ireland/US), *Testament of Youth* (England/France), *The Beautiful Country* (Vietnam /US), and *Desert Flower* (Somalia/UK). Plus a few short films from Ireland and elsewhere.

There will also be extra (optional) films shown in the evenings at the International House. We will arrive at a consensus of which to screen based on the wishes of those who will come that night. There will, of course, be a wealth of other films to see in Ireland, but the list of titles will not be available until late June.

**Academic Policies** You are responsible for reading the SJSU academic polices available online. <http://www.sjsu.edu/english/comp/policyforsyllabi.html>

**Campus Policy in Compliance with the American Disabilities Act:** If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability, or if you need to make special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please make an appointment with me as soon as possible, or see me during office hours. Presidential Directive 97-03 requires that students with disabilities requesting accommodations must register with the DRC (Disability Resource Center) to establish a record of their disability.

**Academic Integrity** The University’s Academic Integrity policy, located at <http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/S07-2.htm>, requires you to be honest in all your academic course work. Cheating on exams or plagiarism (presenting the work of another as your own, or the use of another person’s ideas without giving proper credit, **or submitting your own work that you wrote for another class**) will result in a failing grade and sanctions by the University. For this class, all assignments are to be completed by the individual student submitting them unless otherwise specified. **Turniti.com:** To receive credit, *all essays for this class must be submitted to Turnitin.com*. Late submissions to Turnitin could be penalized—if I have to keep asking. . .

**Classroom Protocol**

**Professionalism and maturity:** Perhaps this should go without saying, but students will be expected to treat each other and their professor with courtesy and respect. This includes the little things, like getting to class on time, turning your cell phones off in class, and refraining from toying with electronic devices and chatting with buddies in class. Professionalism also involves the more serious matter of avoiding rude or hostile remarks. We will be discussing some emotionally potent issues, so it will be important for us all to express ourselves carefully and try to keep our cool. Students who fail in this regard might be asked to leave the classroom.

Professionalism and maturity also mean you will take responsibility for coming to class every time, well prepared for class, and it means following directions and meeting deadlines. **Significant problems with this can and often does mean failure in the class**. More about this below.

**Attendance and Participation:**

**It is very important that students come to class, every time, and come prepared to participate.** This means that reading assignments should be finished *before* the class period when they will be discussed, and that students should get to class on time to turn participate in the discussions, see the films, turn in homework, and/or take quizzes. There will be frequent, unannounced in-class writing of some sort, and these cannot be made up by students who miss class, even for illness or some other reason beyond your control. **Poor attendance and weak participation will significantly reduce your learning experience and your grade.**

**Absences**: Due to the unusual logistics of a study-abroad class, **absences will be a very serious problem, especially when we are abroad, as your absence could damage the experience for everyone in the group and can lead to your being dismissed and sent home.** (You will hear more on this from Emilie Schmidt, FLP coordinator.) Absences before we leave could result in your being expelled from the class before we leave. Don’t risk it.

**Late papers**: I realize everyone has emergencies now and then, but I have found that accepting late work opens the door to chaos. Therefore: IN-CLASS WRITING CANNOT BE MADE UP. LATE HOMEWORK WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED. And late homework is any homework that arrives after class begins. Grades for late essays will be reduced a grade step (e.g. from B- to C+) for every day they are late, and one week late is the limit. This policy provides incentive to meet deadlines, which are even more crucial in the workplace than in school. Upper-division students should already know this.

**Procedures for turning in work**:

**All assignments are to be submitted on** **paper** (not just electronically) **in class**, **at the beginning of class when they are due.** They are not to be slid under my office door or into my mailbox. \*\*\*\***Please do not ask for exceptions to these policies** because you put me in an awkward position and provoke the ire of your classmates. One reduced grade on an essay or a couple of missed quizzes will not destroy your grade. Repeated lapses *will* damage your grade.

**Extra Credit**: During a regular semester I offer extra credit, but due to the unusual logistics of a class abroad, that is harder for this class. We might work something out if *minor* make-up work is needed.

**Assignments**

* 8 short homework responses: (250-350 words each) 200 points
* Critical Film Analysis, informed by research (1200 words) 250 points
* Small Assignments
  + Profile/Site Description (1000 words) 150 points
  + Oral Report on critical film analysis 50 points
  + 3 Journal entries + photos (250 words) 100 points
* Final essay: Reflection/reminiscence/analysis (1200 words) 250 points

**Small assignments** will include journal entries (once we’re in Ireland) reflecting on the day’s excursions, an informal interview with a person you meet on the road, responses to performances, an informal presentation on your research and analysis, short responses to reading questions, and (optional) fictional riffs on the readings. These assignments will have enough variety and flexibility to encourage students to capitalize on their talents, whether in writing fiction, analyzing historical documents, or writing travel essays. Mixed media projects (such as photo essays with commentary or podcasts including interviews of local people) will also be strongly encouraged.

For the **critical** **film analysis/research project**, students will choose an extra global (e.g. not American) film to research and present to the class, along with a written critical analysis. This will include analysis and evaluation, as well as background information to provide context.

Most of the major writing projects (final versions) will be submitted in a portfolio a couple of weeks after we get back. The oral reports will happen on the same day the portfolios are turned in. We will select a date that works for everyone and meet at SJSU.

**Grading Policy** The following statement has been adopted by the Department of English for inclusion in all syllabi:

In English Department Courses, instructors will comment on and grade the quality of student writing as well as the quality of ideas being conveyed. All student writing should be distinguished by correct grammar and punctuation, appropriate diction and syntax, and well-organized paragraphs.

The Department of English reaffirms its commitment to the differential grading scale as defined in the SJSU Catalog ("The Grading System"). Grades issued must represent a full range of student performance: A = excellent; B = above average; C = average; D = below average; F = failure.

In written assignments for English 117, this scale is based on the **following criteria**:

A [90-92=A-, 93-96=A, 97-100=A+] = Excellent: The "A" essay is articulate and well developed with fluid transitions and a clear and persuasive use of evidence, which is drawn from the literary text itself, lecture materials (when appropriate), and research materials. An "A" essay contains a fresh insight which teaches the reader something new about the subject matter.

B [80-82=B-, 83-86=B, 87-89=B+] Above average: The "B" essay demonstrates a good understanding of its subject, a clear and persuasive use of evidence, a certain level of ease of expression, and solid organization. However, it usually lacks the level of originality and creativity that characterizes the insight found in an "A" essay.

C [70-72=C-, 73-76=C, 77-79=C+] = Average: The "C" essay makes a good attempt at all the assignment's requirements. It has a reasonable understanding of its subject matter but its ideas are frequently simplistic or over-generalized. The writing style is also more bland and repetitive than the style shown by "A" and "B" essays and it often contains flaws in grammar, punctuation, spelling and/or word choice. It may also use textual evidence out of context.

D [60-62=D-, 63-66=D, 67-69=D+] = Below average: The "D" essay is poorly organized and generally unclear. It has inappropriate or inadequate examples, is noticeably superficial or simplistic, and/or contains some serious mechanical and grammatical problems. A "D" essay may also reveal some misunderstanding of the assignment requirements.

F = Failure: An "F" essay has not addressed the requirements of the assignment and is unacceptable work in terms of both form and content.

**Tentative Schedule** Please note: Any schedule adjustments we might need will be announced in class and by email. Homework questions are not specified below, but will be due most days.

**Schedule of Classes—at SJSU and in Ireland** (forthcoming)