

**SCREENING IRELAND  
COM FT 415**

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**Class Times & Venues:** See Calendar

**Course Overview**

Ireland has a rich history of media production, stretching back to the early twentieth century and more recently has become a hub of animation, digital games and other 'new media'. However, Ireland's peripheral position geographically and culturally between Europe, the UK and the US means that screen media from those countries has had a disproportionate effect on its development of a mediated 'Irish' identity. This course provides a developmental and thematic overview of media in Ireland, we will discuss film, television, animation, digital games and Web 2.0. Different theoretical approaches are incorporated, including socio-historical perspectives, industrial contexts, globalization and cultural studies. Students will be actively encouraged to research and develop critical perspectives on areas of particular interest to them, while developing their own media praxis. Whether these perspectives are informed by theories of colonialism, race or gender, students will learn how to create media texts that both educate and innovate. The intention is that the combination of critical theory and media practice will provide not only an introduction to screen media in Ireland but to train students to be the next generation of influential media producers that shape public discourse.

**(HUB) Learning Outcomes**

Aesthetic Exploration (one unit)

- Students will demonstrate knowledge and appreciation of Irish media texts from animation, television and film. They will gain a critically-informed understanding of the social and cultural contexts in which those works were created, and be able to identify their significance and relevance
- Students will develop the critical vocabulary to perform extensive formal-textual analyses of a cross-section of media texts (film, digital games, animation, etc.)
- Students will produce evaluative and analytical written work that will be developed and built upon through assignment feedback and in-class discussion of assignment 'genre' writing. They will also gain experience writing and developing creative 'pitches' under instructor supervision, that demonstrate an awareness of the stylistic, narrative and generic qualities associated with Irish media, as well as the broader global context that these media exist in

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- Through their independent research and lectures, students will learn about the historical development of Irish film and screen media, both thematically and industrially. They will learn to critically interpret representations of “Irishness” in a variety of visual texts

### Writing Intensive (one unit)

- Students will learn three types of writing during this course: writing for lay-audiences, writing for screen, critical academic writing. These assignment ‘genres’ and their conventions will be taught within writing seminars and assignment workshops, embedded throughout the course, that will prepare the students for each style of writing assessed in their assignments
- Through sustained independent research under supervision of the instructor, students will develop the skills to author well-structured and original arguments, that will be expressed in both written work, presentations and audio-visual formats
- Students will be able to engage in their readings with understanding, appreciation, and critical judgment, which will be supported through in-class discussion of core texts and recommended sources.

### Teamwork and Collaboration (Intellectual Toolkit - one unit)

- Through guided group work within the three practice-based classes and through regular group activities in-class (integrating teamwork-skills tutorials), students will be able to identify the characteristics of a well-functioning team as well as the skills needed to improve and maintain team dynamics
- Using regular structured discussions students will learn about group dynamics and team-problem solving strategies, these will be taught formally in the practice-based component of the course, by a creative-industries professional
- Students will demonstrate an ability to use the tools and strategies of working successfully within a diverse group, particularly within the media project assignment that will require the assigning of key roles and responsibilities (editor, videographer, writer).
- Students will gain valuable experience of giving and receiving structured feedback, and engaging in meaningful group reflection that will support the development of teamwork skills

### Class Time

The classes are principally taught through 3-hour lecture-seminars, with each focussing on a particular area of screen media in the Irish context. The format is semi-structured around a topic or theme, with a strong emphasis on interaction. Students are required to engage with class discussions. While there will be several film screenings during the semester, short clips will be used throughout the course.

The course will begin with a broad historical overview of the development of film and television production in Ireland, before broadening out into specific thematic and genre analysis.

Students are assigned preparatory readings each week, all of which are available on the Loop site. The readings provide background and context for each lecture, but the lectures may not address these readings directly. Other readings will be suggested and prescribed during the semester. Students are also expected to familiarise

themselves with the recommended further reading as these are invaluable resources for essays and exams.

**Readings will be assigned on a weekly basis, and will be a mixture of journal articles in PDF format, and sections from the books available in the BU library room.**

**Important: You will be expected to use your own laptops and mobile devices to author the media project. You will be using free software (*VideoPad*) to make your films, you should try not to be overly ambitious in the authoring of your screen media projects. The focus of this course is on the writing process and not the visual prowess of your final project.**

Students should familiarize themselves with as much Irish film and television drama as possible, through visits to the cinema, borrowing DVDs from the DCU (St. Patrick's) library and BU library room, and watching television. There are also a number of Irish films and tv programmes on streaming sites like Netflix, Amazon Prime and Hulu, although these vary throughout the year.

### **Assignments and grading**

The grading for this course is based on five components. These components and their percentage of the total course grade are as follows:

**1. Attendance and participation (10%):** Attendance and participation in class discussion is essential to get the most out of the course. Students are encouraged to ask questions and are required to actively engage in discussion during presentations.

**2. Critical reviews (20%):** Following a writing workshop in week 2, students will learn how to write a *critical review* and learn how to evaluate and communicate their appraisal an Irish film, animation or TV/streamed series of their choice. This 600-word review must be submitted to the lecturer online before the start of class in **Week 3**. Students should provide context and cite academic sources, as this assignment is intended as a way for students to demonstrate their engagement with the critical discourses discussed in the first lecture.

**3. Essay (20%):** A selection of essay questions will be assigned at the beginning of term. Students are required to complete one, but are also encouraged to propose their own topic. Students will have an opportunity to discuss their essay outlines in the seminar for Week 9, here the instructor will provide guidelines on planning and executing a research essay the discusses media texts. A typed-version of the essay outline can be submitted to the lecturer for direct feedback, with an Introduction and conclusion in draft-form. This should be submitted no later then the beginning of class on Week 10.

The required length is 2,000 words (+/- 10%). Excessively long quotations should be avoided and all quotations clearly designated by quotation marks and duly acknowledged. All papers must be typed at 1.5-line spacing with a bibliography attached.

The Harvard referencing system is preferred, but students may use the referencing style of their home institution, *provided it is specified in advance*. Further details on the Harvard referencing system can be found here: <http://www.library.dcu.ie/LibraryGuides/Citing&ReferencingGuide/player.html>

**Note:** Essays must be submitted to the lecturer online before the start of class in **Week**

11.

**4. In-class presentation (20%):** Students will give a 12-15-minute group presentation which will sum-up their preparation of their media projects. Having learned about Ireland's place within a global media context, the groups should develop a 'pitch' for a screen media project (short-film, documentary, podcast or stream) and provide an account of how they will develop this project, its intended audiences and potential to affect social change. This presentation is intended to act as a 'practice run' for application to national funding bodies, as such students will have to pick a funding body to be their intended audience (a list of these organisations will be discussed in class). As such, this presentation should demonstrate an awareness of Irish screen media industries, current social issues and 'globalisation'. **It should integrate points made in both the Critical Review and Essay assignments.**

**5. Screening/Media Project (30%):** Students are required to produce a 5-10-minute-long screen media project that evidences an understanding of the broader critical areas of discussion within the course. The project will involve the writing of a 1500 word script, workflow and time-line documents, and finally a self-reflective journal detailing teamwork dynamics under headings of 'project', 'processes' and 'personal development'.

Grading will take into account the preparation that has gone into the media project – the writing process, collaboration and group work and formal-textual merits of the final work. Students will present their work and be available to field questions from teaching staff and other students.

### **Plagiarism**

It is every student's responsibility to read the Boston University statement on plagiarism, which is available in the Academic Conduct Code. Students are advised that the penalty against students on a Boston University program for cheating on examinations or for plagiarism may be "...expulsion from the program or the University or such other penalty as may be recommended by the Committee on Student Academic Conduct, subject to approval by the Dean."

## Reading list

Key readings are assigned each week. However, students are expected to read additional material. A further comprehensive list of useful books may be found on [The Irish Film and Television Network](#). You may also want to check out [Film Ireland](#), an online magazine dedicated to the Irish film industry.

Core texts for this course include:

- Pettitt, Lance (2000), *Screening Ireland: Film and Television representation*, Manchester University Press: Manchester, UK
- Hodkinson, P. (2016) *Media, Culture and Society: An Introduction* SECOND EDITION, Sage Publishing: London, UK

Additional Readings: Media Theory

- Branston, G. and Stafford, R. (2010) *The Media Student's Book, 5<sup>th</sup> Edition*, Routledge: London, UK
- Curran, J. (2010) *Media and society*, 6th edn, Bloomsbury Academic, London, UK
- Horgan, John (2001), *Irish Media, A Critical History Since 1922*, Routledge: London, UK
- Horgan, John (et al) (eds.) (2007), *Mapping Irish Media*, Routledge: London, UK
- Jones, A. (2010) *Globalization: key thinkers*, Polity: Cambridge, UK
- McLoone, Martin, et al (1991), *Cultural Identity and Broadcasting in Ireland*, Institute of Irish: Dublin Ireland

Additional Readings: Irish Film, Animation & Television

- Barton, Ruth (2004), *Irish National Cinema*, Routledge: London, UK
- Barton, Ruth and O'Brien, Harvey (eds.) (2004), *Keeping it Real: Issues and Directions in Irish film and television*, Columbia University Press: New York, USA
- Corcoran, Farrel (2004), *RTE and the Globalisation of Irish Television*, Intellect Books: London, UK
- Coulouma, Flore (ed.) (2016), *New Perspectives on Irish TV Series*, Peter Lang AG: Bern, Switzerland
- Ging, Debbie (2012), *Men and Masculinities in Irish Cinema*, Palgrave: London, UK
- Hill, John (ed) (1994), *Border Crossing: Film in Ireland, Britain and Europe*, BFI: London, UK
- Mellamphy, D. (2015). 'IRELAND' In Iwatani, T. & Wolf, M. (Eds.), *Video Games Around the World* (pp. 293-304). Cambridge, Massachusetts; London, England: The MIT Press
- McLoone, Martin and MacMahon, John (eds.) (1984) *Television and Irish Society: 21 Years of Irish Television*, Radio Telefís Éireann: Dublin, Ireland
- Rockett, Kevin, et al (1987), *Cinema and Ireland*, IFI: Dublin, Ireland
- Walsh, T. (2018) 'Re-animating the Past: An Irish Animation History.' *Nordic Irish Studies*, 17(2), 133-150

# Lecture Schedule

**Note:** This schedule may be adjusted to accommodate guest lecturers or changes in cinema release dates. Week numbers are synchronised to correspond with the program calendar. **All “Required Readings” are available on Moodle as PDF files.**

<b>Part 1</b>	<b>Irish Media: History and Context</b>
<b>Date</b>	<b>Lecture Title/Activity</b>
<b>Week 1</b>	<p><b><i>Introductory Lecture</i></b>                      This lecture introduces film and screen studies through the analysis of various samples of Irish screen media. This class will also include an overview of the aims and scope of the course.</p> <p><i>Readings</i>                      ‘Introduction’ in <i>Screening Ireland</i> (2000) and ‘Chapter 1: Media Culture and Society’ in <i>Media, Culture and Society</i> (2016)</p>
<b>Week 2</b>	<p><b><i>Irish Film and Media Industries</i></b></p> <p>This lecture examines the origins of Irish film from early British travelogue productions and the pioneering work of the Kalem brothers, through post-independence productions and early representations of Ireland and the Irish in the context of media from Britain and the United States. It traces the development of the infrastructure of film and television production. It begins with the opening of the first custom built film studio and the launch of Ireland’s first television channel, and ends with the fate of the first Irish Film Board. This continues to the Irish Film Board in 1993, which precedes one of unprecedented activity for the Irish film industry. This was partially helped by the economic boom that occurred during the period.</p> <p><i>Readings</i>                      ‘Chapter 2: A Century of Cinema in Ireland’ in <i>Screening Ireland</i> (2000) and ‘Chapter 3: Media Industries’ in <i>Media, Culture and Society</i> (2016)</p>
	<p><b><i>Seminar: Writing for a localised audience</i></b>                      In this seminar, students will learn how to write a Media Review that is intended for a national audience. They will read example articles as a group and discuss how to address an Irish audience.</p>
<p><b>Week 3</b>                      600 word                      Review due                      before class</p>	<p><b><i>Field Trip: Windmill Lane Studios and the Irish Film Institute</i></b></p>
<b>Week 4</b>	<p><b><i>Practice 1: Planning a Media Project</i></b>                      With guest lecturer Dr Thomas McGrath-Lewis</p>

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	<p>To begin their practice-based work, this session will teach the basics of filming and recording content, as well as an introduction to pitching and planning a media project. Here students will be organized into groups to begin work on their final project. They will be required to keep a journal of their group interactions and project work.</p> <p>Students will be introduced to the free-to-use editing software they will be using, and given a target for what they need to prepare for the next practical session (concept for media project, plan, team role allocation).</p>
<b>Week 5</b>	<p><b><i>The Global Audience: Globalisation and Transnational Media</i></b></p> <p>This week explores concepts of ‘globalisation’ and ‘transnational’ media industries, exploring the international considerations of screen media producers. This class will draw on examples of cross-national collaboration, as well as examining what makes media texts legible for ‘global’ audiences.</p> <p><i>Readings</i>  ‘Chapter 6: Between Heritage and Hollywood’ in <i>Screening Ireland</i> (2000) and ‘Chapter 2: Media Technologies’ in <i>Media, Culture and Society</i> (2016) and ‘Chapter 5: Digital Television’ in <i>RTÉ and the Globalisation of Irish Television</i> (2004)</p>
	<p><b><i>Seminar – Writing for the screen</i></b></p> <p>In this seminar, students will learn how to write dialogue for their media projects, working closely with a professional ‘screen-doctor’. They will develop plans for their scripts that they will have to show in-class in <b>Week 8 - Practice 2: Making it work!</b></p>

<b>Part 2</b>	<b>Screening Genre</b>
<b>Week 6</b>	<b><i>Practice 2: Making it work!</i></b> <b>With guest lecturer Dr Thomas McGrath-Lewis</b>

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	<p>In this session, students will work with the facilitator to develop their media project pitches and put them into practice:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. They will work with the instructor to put together a workflow and timeline document: this will set goals and parameters for what content they will require, and develop a workable timeline with the facilitator.</li> <li>2. The facilitator will check in with the students regarding their group dynamics in the context of the three Ps: project, processes and personal, and instruct them on team-based problem-solving strategies.</li> <li>3. Students will learn how to edit using free software, and how to record and integrate basic audio.</li> </ol> <p>The students will be given targets to work towards for the final practice-based session (narrative, script, shooting schedule) which will form part of the workflow and timeline document.</p>
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**MID-SEMESTER BREAK**

<p><b>Week 8</b></p> <p><b>Presentations will take place in the first half of this class</b></p>	<p><b>“Make ‘em laugh!”: The curious history of Irish comedy.</b></p> <p>Of all the genres that Irish media producers have attempted to master, comedy has proven to be most difficult. We will examine comedy across social media, film and television and consider the reasons for this, and why Irish feature-films has often found it easier to master the formula.</p> <p><i>Readings</i>  ‘Chapter 8 and 9’ in <i>Screening Ireland</i> (2000)</p>
<p><b>Week 9</b></p>	<p><b><i>Changeling Times: Irish Horrors and Audiences</i></b></p> <p>Irish myth and folklore are full of uncanny and threatening apparitions. This thread of Irish storytelling continues into contemporary Irish film-making, with independent Irish filmmakers trying their hands at writing for the horror genre, with varying degrees of success... This class introduces discussions of film and television audiences, both mainstream and ‘cult’.</p> <p><i>Readings</i>  ‘Chapter 6: Between Heritage and Hollywood’ in <i>Screening Ireland</i> (2000) and ‘Chapter 2: Media Technologies’ in <i>Media, Culture and Society</i> (2016) and ‘Chapter 5: Digital Television’ in <i>RTÉ and the Globalisation of Irish Television</i> (2004)</p>
	<p><i>Seminar – research and reporting on media texts</i></p> <p>In preparation for their essay submission in week 11, students will discuss the parameters of research-based essay writing within the</p>



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	<p>context of media studies. In this workshop-style session, students will prepare drafts of the essay outlines under guidance from the instructor, and work together in groups to provide peer-feedback on each other's essay outlines.</p>
<b>Week 10</b>	<p><b><i>Animation Nation: Contemporary Media Industries</i></b></p> <p>The Irish animation industry has gained international recognition in recent years with Cartoon Saloon's critically acclaimed <i>Song of the Sea</i> (2014) and <i>Wolfwalkers</i> (2020). This week we look at animation within the context of national media industries, the international dominance of The Walt Disney Company and the formal-textual qualities associated with independent national animation.</p> <p><i>Readings:</i>  Ward (2000) 'Defining animation' (PROVIDED)  Walsh (2018) 'Re-animating the Past: An Irish Animation History.' (PROVIDED)</p>
<b>Part 3</b>	<b>Media Users and Futures</b>
<b>Week 11</b>	<p><b><i>Practice 3: Final touches...</i></b>  <b>With guest lecturer Dr Thomas McGrath-Lewis</b></p> <p>Here the facilitator will work closely with students on their media projects. Students will discuss their work and their group processes in class, and will have the opportunity to provide a test screening to show what stage their projects are at and what barriers are in the way of their completion. They will be given final feedback and objectives to work on before submission.</p>
<b>Week 12</b>	<p><b><i>Web 2.0: Social Media and the Anglophone world</i></b></p> <p>Contemporary media consumption has gone from a private or personal act, to something far more public and collaborative. This lecture discusses the advent of social media, and the consequences for the producers and consumers of media, with case studies from film, television and digital games studios in Ireland.</p> <p>'Chapter 8: 'New Media in a New World?' in <i>Media Students Book</i> (2010) and 'Chapter 11 Media, Community And Difference: From Mass Stigmatisation To Grassroots Identity Groups' in <i>Media, Culture and Society</i></p>
	<p><b><i>Seminar: Presenting, distributing and curating film</i></b></p> <p>The students will do a workshop to plan the screening of their films – how they will be introduced, discussed and analysed. The screening will be planned as if it were a small 'film festival', and the students will have the opportunity to look for their common stylistic and thematic threads.</p>

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<b>Week 13</b>	<b><i>Screenings and Summing Up.</i></b> Students will present their media projects in a screening with a discussion and Q&A from the audience. This class also offers a chance to review the course, and to revisit and clarify some key points.