

Course Last Updated 02/05/2024



Introduction to Irish Music

Section I: Course Overview

Course Code: ENG150/MUS150

Subject Area(s): Music, English Language & Literature

Prerequisites: None

Language of Instruction: English

Total Contact Hours: 45

Recommended Credits: 3

Course Fees: None

Course Description

The course will explore the history and culture of Ireland through the medium of music - its history and numerous genres: traditional, classical, folk, ballad, dance music, and contemporary Irish music. In addition to the academic study of music, Students will engage with and experience learning in a very “hands on” method through active engagement with all aspects of music and performance, including attendance and participation at recitals, céilí (traditional Irish dancing), gigs, and various musical events in the city throughout the term. This course will also include practical workshops that involves:

- The construction of traditional Irish drums (Bodhráns), followed by lessons provided under the tutelage of a renowned Bodhrán expert
- Instruction on the tin whistle, and the singing of traditional Irish songs, ballads, and airs

The overarching goals for the course will be to introduce how music, song, and dance are intertwined with key cultural and artistic pursuits through distinct phases in the development of Irish history and through the workshops to provide an opportunity to learn how to play and construct traditional Irish instruments. Previous musical training is not required for this course and students can both excel and enjoy without prior training in singing or playing an instrument.

Learning Objectives

Upon successful completion of this course, students are able to:

- Define the role and significance of Irish music to the historical, social, and contextual background of its development.
- Recognize the importance of the differences in world cultures and cultural heritage through music and the arts.
- Analyze the role that Irish music occupies in Irish culture.
- Design a creative project that conveys aspects of Irish Music.

Section II: Instructor & Course Details

Instructor Details

Name: TBC

Contact Information: TBC

Term: TBC

Course Day and Time: TBC

Office Hours: By appointment

Grading & Assessment

The instructor assesses students' mastery of course learning objectives by using the forms of assessment below. Each of these assessments is weighted toward the final grade. The Assessment Overview section provides further details for each.

Engagement - 20%

Class Quizzes - 10%

Oral Presentation - 10%

Workshop Performance - 10%

Written Papers - 25%

Final Creative Project - 25%

Assessment Overview

This section provides a brief description of each form of assessment listed above. Forms of assessment may be slightly modified in the term syllabus.

Engagement (20%): Students are expected to be engaged in class, to have read the [CEA CAPA](#)

[Engagement Policy](#), and to understand the [Class Engagement Rubric](#) that outlines how engagement is graded.

Class Quizzes (10%): There will be two short in class quizzes based on the readings, class materials, and discussions. You can expect one quiz to happen within the first 12 class sessions and the second one to be held in the last 13 class sessions. Quiz format will be written multiple-choice questions and a selection of more probing questions that require short, paragraph style answers.

Oral Presentation (10%): Either individually or with a partner, depending on class size, you will be asked to prepare an oral presentation. The topics and additional details of the presentation will be given at the beginning of the term and will pertain to the readings and/or class excursions.

Workshop Performance x2 (10%): To reward you for the effort made and the resulting output of our more “hands on” sessions, 5% will be awarded for your progress made at learning a selection of basic tunes in the tin whistle workshops and based on a final recital. 5% will be awarded for the construction of your Bodhrán and your ability to play it, again graded at a final recital on the last day of class.

Written Paper (25%): The instructor will assign you two creative essays of 2-3 pages over the course of the semester that will place you as a reviewer or critic of a musician(s) or musical event that you must critically evaluate. Additional information provided in class.

Final Creative Project (25%): Either individually or with a partner, depending on class size, you will be asked to make an 8-minute documentary video clip to the theme of “Reels, Rebels, Rock and Riverdance: an expression of Irish culture through song, music and dance”. The video, containing images, inserted video, voice-overs and the all-important backing track will explore your interpretation of Irish musical folklore. Your video will be screened to the class and will be accompanied by a 500-word written introduction.

Active Learning

Experiential learning is an essential component of education abroad, and participation in field studies is a required part of coursework. In this course, students explore the city in which they are studying using a variety of methods. This provides the opportunity to gain nuance and perspective on the host context and course content, as well as to collect information and resources for assigned papers, projects, and presentations.

- Bodhráns workshop
- Tin Whistle workshop

Readings and Resources

The below readings and resources are representative of what will be assigned as required in this course, but may vary slightly in the term syllabus.

All students are given access to the online library of the University of New Haven (UNH), accessible [here](#), and are expected to comply with [UNH Policies](#) regarding library usage.

Wherever possible, required readings are made accessible through the online library or Canvas. Students are responsible for obtaining all required readings.

Each course utilizes Canvas as its LMS. Students are expected to check Canvas regularly for updates and deadlines. Canvas is also the primary platform for contacting your instructor in case of questions or concerns about the course.

Required

Long, H. *Soundscapes: Irish Music and Aural Awareness*. Waltons Publishing, Dublin, 2006 (164pp)

Williams, S. *Focus: Traditional Irish Music*. Routledge, New York, 2010 (312pp)

Smyth, G. *Music in Irish Cultural History*. Irish Academic Press Dublin & Portland, OR, 2009 (196pp)

Recommended

Breathnach, B. *Folk Music and Dances of Ireland*. Mercier Press, Cork, 1997. Chapters 1-9. (152pp)

Carson, C. *Last Night's Fun: In and Out of Time with Irish Music*. North Point Press, Dublin 1996 (108pp)

Collins, M.E. *History in the Making: Ireland 1868-1966*. Educational Co. of Ireland, Dublin, 1993 (480pp)

O'Connor, N. *Bringing it all Back Home –The Influence of Irish Music 2nd Ed.* Merlin Publishing, Dublin, 2001

Vallely, F., ed. *The Companion to Traditional Irish Music*. Cork University Press, Cork, 2011 (780pp)

Course Calendar

Session 1	
Topics	<p>An Introduction to Irish Music</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Bardic tradition Characteristics of traditional Irish music - Carving the “cultural pie” – where music fits - A universal language - From mono-culture to multi-culture
Activity	<p>Introductions - Review Syllabus - Listening</p>
Readings & Assignments	<p>Review Course Syllabus thoroughly Ensure students have reader & tin whistle Required Reading: Williams, S. <i>Focus: Traditional Irish Music</i>. Routledge, New York, 2010. pp3-52 Recommended Reading: Smyth, G. <i>Music in Irish Cultural History</i>. Irish Academic Press Dublin & Portland, OR, 2009. Pp1-14. Practical: Tin whistle practice</p>

Session 2	
Topics	The Roots of Music - The culture of global/“world” music - Percussion instruments in Irish music - The role of the Bodhrán in Irish music
Activity	Lecture & Discussion
Readings & Assignments	Required Reading: Williams, S. <i>Focus: Traditional Irish Music</i> . Routledge, New York, 2010. pp79-102 Recommended Reading: Smyth, G. <i>Music in Irish Cultural History</i> . Irish Academic Press Dublin & Portland, OR, 2009. Pp84-101. Long, H. <i>Soundscapes: Irish Music and Aural Awareness</i> . Waltons Publishing, Dublin, 2006, pp52-54. Vallely, F., ed. <i>The Companion to Traditional Irish Music</i> . Cork University Press, Cork, 2011. pp70-74. Practical: Tin whistle practice

Session 3	
Topics	Traditional Instruments I - The harp Turlough O’Carolan - O’Stravaganza – Irish/Italian Baroque Connections - The Belfast Harp Festival (& intricacies of traditional/Celtic music given conflict in Northern Ireland) - The Collectors - Construction of Bodhráns - Tin whistle tunes
Activity	Lecture & Discussion
Readings & Assignments	Required Reading: Williams, S. <i>Focus: Traditional Irish Music</i> . Routledge, New York, 2010 pp 53-79, 129-156 Recommended Reading: Vallely, F., ed. <i>The Companion to Traditional Irish Music</i> . Cork University Press, Cork, 2011. pp 39-41, 53-79, 60-66, 70-74, 91-93, 108-110, 155-159 Long, H. <i>Soundscapes: Irish Music and Aural Awareness</i> . Waltons Publishing, Dublin, 2006. pp13-18, pp39-41, pp68-70 Practical: Tin whistle practice

Session 4	
Topics	Traditional Instruments II - Historical/political distinctions between Pipes: Uilleann (Irish/Nationalist) & Bagpipes (Scottish/Loyalist) - The fiddle, the tin whistle & low whistle, the Bodhrán, the accordion, the melodian, Concertina, the banjo, the mandolin, the bouzouki
Activity	Lecture & Discussion
Readings & Assignments	Required Reading: Long, H. <i>Soundscapes: Irish Music and Aural Awareness</i> . Waltons

	<p>Publishing, Dublin, 2006. pp18-52</p> <p>Recommended Reading: Vallely, F., ed. <i>The Companion to Traditional Irish Music</i>. Cork University Press, Cork, 2011. pp219-20, 246-48, 256-64 Williams, S. <i>Focus: Traditional Irish Music</i>. Routledge, New York, 2010 pp129-156.</p> <p>Practical: Listening pieces (as assigned) & tin whistle practice</p>
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Session 5	
Topics	<p>Irish Music in the 19th Century</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A classical inheritance & early historical influences - Thomas Moore's Irish Melodies - Charles Villiers Stanford - M.W. Balfe - Court Music and influences of the emerging European greats
Activity	Lecture & Discussion
Readings & Assignments	<p>Required Reading Long, H. <i>Soundscapes: Irish Music and Aural Awareness</i>. Waltons Publishing, Dublin, 2006. pp32-52.</p> <p>Recommended Reading Williams, S. <i>Focus: Traditional Irish Music</i>. Routledge, New York, 2010, pp129-156.</p> <p>Practical: Listening pieces (as assigned) & Tin whistle practice</p>

Session 6	
Topics	<p>The Irish Dance Tradition</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A history of Irish Dance Types of dance - Legislation re dancing - Riverdance – a global phenomenon
Activity	Lecture & Discussion – Screening of Riverdance – Guest dancers
Readings & Assignments	<p>Required Reading Long, H. <i>Soundscapes: Irish Music and Aural Awareness</i>. Waltons Publishing, Dublin, 2006, pp55-68, pp106-108 Vallely, F., ed. <i>The Companion to Traditional Irish Music</i>. Cork University Press, Cork, 2011. pp106-108, pp180-202, 413-414, 577-79.</p> <p>Recommended Reading Vallely, F., ed. <i>The Companion to Traditional Irish Music</i>. Cork University Press, Cork pp180-202, 413-414, 577-79</p> <p>Practical: Listening pieces (as assigned) Tin whistle practice: (Moore's melodies)</p> <p>*Creative Project Written Proposals Due</p>

Session 7	
Topics	Oral Presentations
Activity	Student Presentations
Readings & Assignments	Paper 1 Deadline

Session 8	
Topics	Irish Song Tradition - Sean-nós - Songs in Gaeilge (Irish language) The ballad tradition - Song & ballad themes - The folk revival and Contemporary folk songs
Activity	Lecture & Listening - Bodhrán lesson - Tin whistle tunes, Singing
Readings & Assignments	Required Reading Williams, S. <i>Focus: Traditional Irish Music</i> . Routledge, New York, 2010, pp159-212 Long, H. <i>Soundscapes: Irish Music and Aural Awareness</i> . Waltons Publishing, Dublin, 2006, pp103-122 Recommended Reading Long, H. <i>Soundscapes: Irish Music and Aural Awareness</i> . Waltons Publishing, Dublin, 2006, pp79-96 Smyth, G. <i>Music in Irish Cultural History</i> . Irish Academic Press Dublin & Portland, OR, 2009. pp124-140, 141-157 Practical: Listening pieces (as assigned) & Tin whistle practice & Bodhrán technique with assigned song(s)

Session 9	
Topics	A Diasporic Legacy - Recording Irish music - The contribution of Irish music to other traditions: Newfoundland, Nova Scotia, Appalachia - 'Inter-Celtique' the link between Irish music and culture with that of Cornwall, Brittany - Impact of internet sources & publishing on distribution and promotion of Irish music - Irish music in international films/movies - The influence of Irish music on the world stage
Activity	Lecture & Discussion - Bodhrán lesson
Readings & Assignments	Paper 2 Deadline Required Reading Williams, S. <i>Focus: Traditional Irish Music</i> . Routledge, New York, 2010, pp81-128 Long, H. <i>Soundscapes: Irish Music and Aural Awareness</i> . Waltons Publishing, Dublin, 2006, pp122-130 Practical: Listening pieces (as assigned) & Tin whistle practice & Bodhrán technique with assigned song(s)

Session 10	
Topics	The Living Tradition - Irish music after the famine - Developments since the '60s - From mono-culture to multi-culture and the emergence of fusion: Afro-Celt/Trad-rock /Trad-reggae etc.
Activity	Lecture - Listening - Bodhrán lesson

Readings & Assignments	<p>Required Reading Long, H. <i>Soundscapes: Irish Music and Aural Awareness</i>. Waltons Publishing, Dublin, 2006, pp113-122</p> <p>Recommended Reading Smyth, G. <i>Music in Irish Cultural History</i>. Irish Academic Press Dublin & Portland, OR, 2009. pp84-101</p> <p>Practical: Listening pieces (as assigned) incl. 'The Gloaming' (Martin Hayes, Denis Cahill et al.) & Tin whistle practice & Bodhrán technique with assigned song(s)</p>
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Session 11	
Topics	<p>History in Music – Early & Modern History</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Seán Ó Riada & Mise Éire Marches, Tattoos and Battle Cries - "O Donnell Abú" discussion and portrayal of the 1798 Rebellion in music - A call to Arms – the anti-British genre - Domestic protest - Wolfe Tones, Blanket Men & Hunger Strikes, 1916, 1921 and Ireland's struggle for Independence - Social issues through music - Recording modern history through song
Activity	Class Quiz – Lecture & Discussion
Readings & Assignments	<p>Required Reading: Collins, M.E. <i>History in the Making: Ireland 1868-1966</i>. Educational Co. of Ireland, Dublin, 1993, pp 7-35, 72-92, 153-169, 170-183 Smyth, G. <i>Music in Irish Cultural History</i>. Irish Academic Press Dublin & Portland, OR, 2009. pp65-83, 124-140, 141-157</p> <p>Practical: Listening pieces (as assigned) Tin whistle practice & Bodhrán technique with assigned song(s) Research lyrics to "Endless Art" by A House</p>

Session 12	
Topics	<p>The Literary Muse – Poem & Literature in Music</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Aisling format - An examination of Yeats, Joyce and the literary greats influence on music - Poetry and pentameter in music and song - Irish love songs from Irish love poems - Love of your country vs. the love of eros
Activity	Lecture & Listening
Readings & Assignments	<p>Required Reading Poetry: Padraig Pearse, Patrick Kavanagh 'The Stolen Child', 'September 1913' and 'Easter 1916' (W.B. Yeats) 'The Dead' (James Joyce)</p> <p>Recommended Reading Smyth, G. <i>Music in Irish Cultural History</i>. Irish Academic Press Dublin & Portland, OR, 2009. pp32-50 Collins, M.E. <i>History in the Making: Ireland 1868-1966</i>. Educational Co. of Ireland, Dublin, 1993, pp216-232</p> <p>Practical: Listening pieces (as assigned) Tin whistle practice & Bodhrán technique with assigned song(s)</p>

Session 13	
Topics	New Irish Music & Final Presentations - Emerging Music, Dance & Song - The 'Celtic' festival scene in Ireland & abroad
Activity	Lecture & Listening – Final Presentations
Readings & Assignments	Required Reading Williams, S. <i>Focus: Traditional Irish Music</i> . Routledge, New York, 2010, pp213-233 Recommended Reading Smyth, G. <i>Music in Irish Cultural History</i> . Irish Academic Press Dublin & Portland, OR, 2009. pp158-171 Practical: Listening pieces (as assigned) & Tin whistle practice & Bodhrán technique with assigned song(s)

Section III: Academic Policies and Standards

Academic Policies

Students are expected to review and understand all CEA CAPA student policies, including our [Academic Policies](#) and [Engagement Policy](#). CEA CAPA reserves the right to change, update, revise, or amend existing policies and/or procedures at any time. Additional requirements that may be associated with a specific course or program are addressed in the term syllabus.

Student Learning & Development Objectives

CEA CAPA has identified [Student Learning and Development Objectives \(SLDOs\)](#) for all programs in all locations: content in context, navigating differences, power and equity, critical thinking and intellectual curiosity, career and professional development, and sustainability and migration. These are meta-level learning objectives that transcend coursework and are infused across all elements of program delivery, beyond specifics of course offerings, addressing student learning holistically and framing it a larger learning context.