

Women in Ireland: Reforms, Movements and Revolutions (1840-1930)

Course No: M 44417

MA: Credits 4

MPhil: Credits 2

Mode of assessment: **2 tutorials and 1 end semester exam.**

Non Indian History Lecture Course (for MA and MPhil students at JNU, New Delhi)

Course Instructor: **Dr Jyoti Atwal**

This course is designed to familiarize students with some of the broad themes which discuss the Irish women's movements and Irish society. The Irish were under British rule between the 17th century till 1922. Understanding the Irish anticolonial movement can be particularly instructive as ideas and notions about nationalism that were advanced during the course of their struggles found resonance amongst similarly oppressed people in other parts of the British empire.

The course will introduce students to various writings by Irish historians on themes involving women, nation and reform. Irish women's history, in particular, is fairly novel and striking as it borrows not so much from international debates around feminism – but from its own internal reflections on the roles of the church, state and the individual.

The course begins with the Great Irish potato famine of 1845-49 (also referred to as the *Great Hunger*), which had a huge impact on Irish society and, in particular, women. The emergence of the Abbey Theatre and Gaelic League synergized the romantic visions of rural Ireland with their implied thrust on anti-colonialism. Secondly the course takes up the discourses around crimes against/by women. Chronologically the course will explore the divergent activism amongst women's groups in Ireland – reformist (philanthropic), nationalist, socialist and feminist. Despite the fact that Ireland was divided into Catholic and Protestant churches, Irish women showed remarkable unity of purpose. Constance Markievicz, Hanna Sheehy Skeffington, Louie Bennet, Helena Moloney and Helen Chenevix were involved with issues of class struggle, as much as with *suffragism* or nationalism (Republican movement/1916 Easter Rising).

Key Readings :

Alan Hayes and Diane Urqhart (eds), *The Irish Women's History Reader*, London: Routledge, 2001

Bernadette Whelan (ed), *Women and Paid Work in Ireland, 1500-1930*, Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2000

Mary Cullen and Maria Luddy (eds), *Women, Power and Consciousness in the 19th Century Ireland*, Dublin: Attic Press, 1995

Rosemary Cullen Owens, *Smashing Times: A History of the Irish Women's Suffrage Movement, 1889-1922*, Dublin: Attic Press, 1984.

Module 1 Women and the Socio Cultural Transformations

This module begins with the impact of the Act of Union in 1800 which established the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland. The Irish potato famine (1845-49) had major implications for all sections of the Irish women (migration, marriage and singlehood). The departure of a larger portion of younger men to work in North America or Australia; the passing on of the family land to the oldest son, rather than subdivision among members of the family reinforced expectations of high dowry from families which had sons. The number of single women in Ireland was 43 percent in 1861; by 1911 the proportion had increased to 48 percent. This module will include study of cultural representations of Irish women in daily life after the famine. The cult of Virgin endorsed not merely chastity and motherhood as womanly ideals, but also humility, obedience and passive suffering.

John Crowley, William J. Smyth and Mike Murphy (eds.), ***Atlas of the Great Irish Famine***, Cork: Cork University Press, 2012.

Margaret Kelleher, *The Feminization of Famine. Expressions of the Inexpressible*, Cork: Cork University Press, 1997.

Mary Cullen and Maria Luddy (eds), *Women, Power and Consciousness in the 19th Century Ireland*, Dublin: Attic Press, 1995.

J.J.Lee, 'Women and the Church since the Famine', (in Alan Hayes and Diane Urqhart (eds), *The Irish Women's History Reader* ,London: Routledge, 2001)

Women in Religious Transitions: Philanthropy, Women's Education and Profession (1 lecture)

This module will discuss the various strategies evolved by Irish women (both Protestant and Catholic) in laboriously creating institutions for philanthropy and education. In Ireland , evangelicalism in through the course of the 19th century suffused all branches of Christianity (Protestantism and Catholicism) with spiritual regeneration and 'moral' reform. The number of convents went up and women's religious orders proliferated. Main points of reference will be *Belfast Ladies Institute* (1867); M.L. Aylward(1810-1889); Margaret Byers (1832-1912).

Chapter : **Jacinta Prunty, *Margaret Louisa Aylward*, pp55-88** in Mary Cullen and Maria Luddy (eds), *Women, Power and Consciousness in the 19th Century Ireland*, Dublin: Attic Press, 1995.

Catriona Clear, 'Walls Within Walls: Nuns in the Nineteenth Century Ireland', (in Alan Hayes and Diane Urqhart (eds), *The Irish Women's History Reader* ,London: Routledge, 2001)

Maryann Valiulis, 'Neither Feminist nor Flapper: The Ecclesiastical Construction of the Ideal Irish Woman'. (in Alan Hayes and Diane Urqhart (eds), *The Irish Women's History Reader* ,London: Routledge, 2001)

Eibhlinn Breathnach, ' Women and Higher Education (1879-1914)', (in Alan Hayes and Diane Urqhart (eds), *The Irish Women's History Reader* ,London: Routledge, 2001)

Irene Finn, 'Women in the Medical Profession in Ireland, 1876-1919' (in Bernadette Whelan (ed), *Women and Paid Work in Ireland, 1500-1930*, Dubin: Four Courts Press, 2000)

Margaret O' hO'gartaigh, "Flower Power and 'mental grooviness': nurses and midwives in Ireland in the early twentieth century" (in Bernadette Whelan (ed), *Women and Paid Work in Ireland, 1500-1930*, Dubin: Four Courts Press, 2000)

Rena Lohan, *Matrons in Mountjoy Female Convict Prisons, 1858 -83*, (in Bernadette Whelan (ed), *Women and Paid Work in Ireland, 1500-1930*, Dubin: Four Courts Press, 2000)

Module 2

Gendered Aspects of Singlehood: Abandonment and Crime (2 lectures)

This module will look into the germination of legal conflicts related to infanticide, concealment of pregnancy by women and tension between unmarried pregnant women and their families. Through 1895 case study of the murder of a twenty six year old Bridget Cleary, this module explores the interface between law, crime and the politics of traditional myth making around fairies in 19th century Irish society.

Besides this, 19th century discourses reproduced romantic notions of the rural Catholic Ireland on the 'evils' of contraception and abortion.

Angela Bourke, *The Burning of Bridget Cleary: A True Story*, London: Pimlico, 1999.

Andrew Sneddon, 'Witchcraft Beliefs and Trials in Early Modern Ireland', *Irish Economic and Social History*, Volume 39 (2012) Published by Manchester University Press.

Andrew Sneddon, Medicine, belief, witchcraft and demonic possession in late seventeenth-century Ulster, *Med Humanit* 2016;0:1–6. doi:10.1136/medhum-2015-010830

Leanne McCormick (2016): The Dangers and Temptations of the Street: managing female behaviour in Belfast during the First World War, *Women's History Review*, DOI: 10.1080/09612025.2016.1221289

Maria Luddy (2011): Unmarried Mothers in Ireland, 1880–1973, *Women's History Review*, 20:1, 109-126

Module 3

Women, 'Revival' and Cultural Nationalism (2 lectures)

This module explores the representation of Irish women in the late 19th century revival literature, particularly through the formation of the Gaelic League, Anglo Irish literary revival (William Butler Yeats; Lady Gregory and John Millington Synge). The Irish Revival can be understood as a progressive period that witnessed the co operation of various self help movements – The Abbey Theatre, the Gaelic League and the Irish Agricultural Organization Society- to encourage local modes of material and cultural development. These groups helped open up a rival sphere of influence to parliamentary politics. This module will explore some of the controversial plays by Yeats and Synge: *The Countess Cathleen* ; *The Shadow of the Glen* and *Playboy of the Western World*.

Joep Leerssen, *Remembrance and Imagination: Patterns in the Historical and Literary Representation of Ireland in the Nineteenth Century*, Cork: Cork University Press, 2006

P.J. Mathews, *Revival: The Abbey Theatre, Sinn Fein, The Gaelic League and the Co-operative Movement*, Cork: Cork and Field Day, 2004.

Chapters on "Gael, Catholic, Celt or Comrade? The Countess Cathleen and the Battle for Irish Identity", pp35-65; "Sinn Fein, The Abbey Theatre and the Shadow of the Glen", pp117-143.

Tom Inglis (ed), *Are the Irish Different?*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2014.

Chapter by Sinisa Malesevic, 'Irishness and Nationalisms', pp10-21

Women and Political Activism: Agendas for Feminism, Freedom and Revolution

Module 4

The Parnellite and Sinn Fein Politics (1 lecture)

The module will focus on Charles Stewart Parnell's sisters Anna (1852-1911) and Fanny Parnell (1848-1882). It will discuss women's Fenian connections. The Ladies' Land League was founded in New York in 1880 for Ireland. Their role in anti-eviction agitation was particularly important. This League raised funds; oversaw the housing of evicted tenants; and played a visible role in Irish political life. The Ladies' Land League was, of course, key to this period, but impoverished rural women were also a significant force at this time. The 1880s also saw introduction of the idea of the Home Rule in the British parliament. On the other hand formation of the Sinn Fein (1905) by Arthur Griffith first put forward his proposal for the abstention of Irish members of parliament from the Westminster parliament at the 1902 Cumann na nGaedheal convention. A second organisation, the National Council, was formed in 1903 by Maud Gonne and others, including Griffith. This module discusses Irish women's first brush with politics.

Mary Cullen and Maria Luddy (eds), *Women, Power and Consciousness in the 19th Century Ireland*, Dublin: Attic Press, 1995. (Chapter on Anna Parnell)

R.F. Foster, *Modern Ireland 1600-1972*, London: Penguin, 1990. (chapter on Parnellism)

Module 5

Nationalist, Republican and the Unionist Movements (2 lectures)

This module looks at how nationalisms were 'invented, performed and consumed' in colonial Ireland. It explores the history of Irish feminism, gender and the Irish Free State, nationalism and unionism and the Northern Ireland Women's Coalition. Main themes include: The Easter Rising (1916); War of Independence (1919-21); Civil War (1922-23); Cumann na mBan (women's wing of the Irish Republican Army); Personalities of Maud Gonne MacBride (1866-1953) and Countess de Markievicz (1868-1927). Online resources from *National Library of Ireland* and *Military Archives* (interviews of women in the various political movements) will also be used in this module.

Karen Steele, 'Constance Markievicz and the Politics of memory', in Louise Ryan and Margaret Ward (eds), *Irish Women and Nationalism: Soldiers, New Women and Wicked Hags*, Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2004, pp62-79.

Margaret Ward, 'Marginality and Militancy: Cumann Na Mban, 1914-36' (in Alan Hayes and Diane Urqhart (eds), *The Irish Women's History Reader*, London: Routledge, 2001)

Lucy McDiarmid, *At Home in the Revolution : What women said and did in 1916*, Royal Irish Academy, 2015

Sinéad McCoole, *Easter Widows, Seven Irish Women who lived in the shadow of the 1916 Rising*, Dublin: Doubleday, 2014 (selected biographies)

Joan Kelly, *Theory and History: The Essays of Joan Kelly*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984

Keith Jeffery, *The GPO and the Easter Rising, Dublin, Irish Academic Press, 2006.* (Chapter called 'The Wife's Tale' on Arthur Norway's wife's account of the 1916 Rising)

Module 6
The Suffragist Campaigns (2 lectures)

This section will look at the formation of the Irish Women's Franchise League in Dublin in 1908. In particular the focus will be on the 1913 suffragists 'militant' campaigns to fill jails and conduct hunger strikes. Isabella Todd and Anna Haslam; Hanna Sheehy Skeffington and Margaret Cousins ; Jail experiences, press and politics mostly in Tullamore and their London experiences.

June Purvis, *Emmeline Pankhurst : A Biography*, London: Routledge,2002. (selected sections)

Rosemary Cullen Owens, *Smashing Times: A History Of the Irish Suffrage Movement 1889-1922*, Dublin: Attic Press, 1984.

Karen Offen, *European Feminisms, 1700-1950: A Political History*, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2000.

Yvon Scannell, The Constitution and the Role of Women, (in Alan Hayes and Diane Urqhart (eds), *The Irish Women's History Reader* ,London: Routledge, 2001)

Module 7
Organization of domestic work and Paid Work (2 lectures)

To address the question of work and women in 1911 Irish Women Workers' Union (IWWU) was formed by Jim Larkin (the union's first president) with his sister, Delia Larkin. In 1900, 54% of the Irish born women were house servants; another 6.5% were laundress; Irish women composed a majority of all servants in New England. The main focus will be on 1913 lockout (for nine months there were hunger strikes and violence) and the debate on debarring mothers from working. This was a defining year for Irish women as women leaders such as Constance Markievicz, Hanna Sheehy Skeffington, Louie Bennet, Helena Moloney and Helen Chenevix were involved with the class struggle, as much as with suffragism or nationalism.

Mary E Daly, 'Women in the Irish Workforce from Pre Industrial to the Modern Times', (in Alan Hayes and Diane Urqhart (eds), *The Irish Women's History Reader* ,London: Routledge, 2001)

Joanna Burke, "The Best of All Home Rulers': The Economic Power of Women in Ireland, 1880-1914' (in Alan Hayes and Diane Urqhart (eds), *The Irish Women's History Reader* ,London: Routledge, 2001)

Catriona Clear, *Women of the House: Women's Household Work in Ireland 1922-1961*, Dublin, Irish Academic Press, 2000. (Chapter on **A Specialised Vocation? Perceptions of Women , Domesticity and Public Life 1923-43)**

Mona Hearn, 'Life for Domestic Servants in Dublin: 1880-1920', in Maria Luddy and Cliona Murphy (eds), *Women Surviving: Studies in Irish Women's History in the 19th and 20th Centuries*, Dublin: Poolbeg Press, 1990, pp148-79. (in Alan Hayes and Diane Urqhart (eds), *The Irish Women's History Reader* ,London: Routledge, 2001)

Other sources for teaching this course:

- 1) Online resources from *National Library of Ireland* and *Military Archives* (interviews of women in the various political movements as per the modules)
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2) Documentaries on Irish Famine and Immigration to America; Easter Rising and War of Independence.
