

**SCHOOL OF CELTIC STUDIES
DEPARTMENT OF EARLY IRISH**

MEDIEVAL CELTIC STUDIES



THIRD YEAR STUDENTS' HANDBOOK 2023-24

Welcome

Welcome to Maynooth University and to the Department of Early Irish (Roinn na Sean-Ghaeilge). We are delighted that you will finish your degree in Medieval Celtic Studies, and we hope that you will enjoy the year as you deepen your knowledge and understanding of Medieval Irish history and archaeology, look in greater detail into various aspects of Irish literature, or advance in the study the Old Irish language, the medium in which the famous tales and poems have been preserved.

The Department of Early Irish (Sean-Ghaeilge) is part of the School of Celtic Studies (Scoil an Léinn Cheiltigh) in the Faculty of Arts, Celtic Studies and Philosophy of Maynooth University. The homepage of the department is at <https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/early-irish-sean-ghaeilge>. The Department can be contacted by email at earlyirish@mu.ie. The members of staff are listed below. Please contact them via email if you have any queries and they can arrange a one-on-one meeting if necessary. Staff endeavour to respond to all student emails as quickly as possible during work hours (9:00–17:00, Monday–Friday).

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Important dates

Semester 1

18 September 2023 – 22 December 2023

25 September 2023	Lectures commence
13 October 2023	Change of module deadline
30 October–3 November 2023	Study week
22 December 2023	Conclusion of first semester lectures
23 December 2023–5 January 2024	Christmas vacation
8–13 January 2024	Study period
12 January 2024	Examination period commences
29 January – 2 February 2024	Inter-semester break

Semester 2

6 February 2024 – 10 May 2024

6 February 2024	Lectures resume
16 February 2024	Deadline for change of 2 nd semester modules
25–28 March 2024	Study week
29 March 2024	Good Friday (no lectures)
1–5 April 2024	Easter vacation
6 May 2024	May bank holiday (no lectures)
7–10 May 2024	Conclusion of second semester lectures
13–16 May 2024	Study week
17 May 2024	Examination period commences

Third Year – General Information

Queries

General concerns, problems or issues which may arise should be addressed to your Third Year Co-ordinator, Dr. Elizabeth Boyle (elizabeth.boyle@mu.ie). Wherever possible, queries pertaining to specific modules are best addressed to the lecturer in question during the consultation hours or after their lectures.

Lectures

You are required to register for modules amounting to 30 credits in total. The modules typically merit 5 credits and entail 24 lectures (2 hours per week), delivered over the duration of the semester. You must attend all modules that you are registered for. Tutorials are offered for some modules; if one such module is your choice then you must sign up for a suitable tutorial time slot as your attendance and participation in relevant tutorials contributes to the overall module assessment. All modules contribute to the end-of-year mark.

It is your duty to attend all classes, lectures and tutorials. If you cannot attend a class for any reason, please contact the relevant lecturer beforehand and explain your case. If you are ill, provide us with a doctor's certificate stating the duration of your illness. The campus map allows you to locate all teaching venues: <https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/campus-life/campus-map#expanded>. Although most times and venues of lectures have been fixed before the start of the year, they may be subject to change at any time due to unforeseen circumstances. Therefore, it is important to check this information at the beginning of each semester.

Moodle

Each module has a particular account allocated on Maynooth University's academic support system Moodle at <https://moodle.maynoothuniversity.ie/>. Course material for each module and general information will be made available on the relevant Moodle pages. Familiarise yourself with this platform and get accustomed to using it regularly. It is a practical tool for communicating with your fellow students and lecturers about questions arising in the lectures.

Assessment

The modules will be examined through a combination of essays, examinations, and various kinds of continuous assessment; some modules are assessed by examination only. The exact details for their relative weighting differ from module to module, details of which can be found in the module descriptors. The university-scheduled examinations will take place at the end of the relevant semester, after the end of the lectures. It is possible that these exams will take the form of on-line examinations.

Other types of assessment (in-class exams, essays, etc.) fall within the semester; details will be provided by the lecturers. Maynooth University's Marks & Standards as detailed online at <https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/exams/information-students> apply. Please note that according to these under normal circumstances the highest attainable mark is 80.

Textbooks, Library

Relevant textbooks for each module will be recommended to you in the lectures. You can borrow these books from the John Paul II Library in the South Campus, or buy them in the University Bookshop, North Campus.

Essays, academic sincerity and deadlines

You will be required to write essays (2,000–3,000 words approx.) for some modules. Recommended reading lists and essay titles will be communicated by the lecturers during each module involved. Essay cover sheets can be downloaded from the Department webpage at <https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/early-irish-sean-ghaeilge/our-courses>. They must be duly completed, signed and attached to all submissions. Students are required to provide two copies of essay assignments, one for retention by the Department, and one for retention by the student.

Is féidir leat na haistí a cheapadh as Gaeilge más mian leat.

These essays must be properly referenced. You are responsible for the quality of any information used from other sources. All material consulted for essays must be credited with a recognised form of academic referencing. Unacknowledged reproduction of another's work or plagiarism, including text generated by artificial intelligence, is considered a serious offence, for which a student will receive no marks and the matter will be reported to the Head of Subject, Dr. Deborah Hayden. You are obliged to adhere strictly to the Maynooth University policy on plagiarism as detailed online at https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/sites/default/files/filefield_paths/MU%20Policy%20on%20Plagiarism%20and%20Academic%20Integrity_Sept%202022.pdf. Any such offences will be prosecuted according to Maynooth University rules and regulations stated therein.

Essays must be submitted by the deadline dates outlined in the module descriptors below, or at the time specified by the lecturers during each module. Late essay submissions will incur a penalty of a reduction of 10 marks per day late of deadline. Assignments handed in more than 1 week after the due date will be awarded no more than 40% of the maximum mark possible. No essays will be accepted after the end of the lecture period of the relevant semester (22 December 2023 in semester 1; 10 May 2024 in semester 2).

Programme Advisory Office

The Programme Advisory Office is available to assist and advise undergraduate students with programme related decisions you may be unsure about during your time at Maynooth University. The Programme Advisory Office acts as a guide to students as you navigate your own way through your programme options. The Programme Advisory team can assist first year students with questions about subject combinations, changing subjects and progression options for second year. Continuing students may also avail of the service if you are unsure about your programme options, for example if you have any questions about the flexible degree pathways, or whether or not to choose to take an Elective.

Contact:

Room 1.17, ground floor Rowan House

website: www.maynoothuniversity.ie/programme-advisory-office

email: programme.choices@mu.ie

phone: 01 474 7428

Experiential Learning

Experience More During Your Time at MU

The routes available to Maynooth students to experience more from their degree programme are diverse, enabling the development of rich learning experiences that connect classroom content with real-world experience. The Experiential Learning Office connects Maynooth students to a range of opportunities in the following areas.

Community Based Service Learning

Community Based Service Learning presents a credit-bearing academic experience that empowers students to engage with their surrounding communities, which often results in enhancing student's academic, civic, social and personal development, whilst they contribute to the common good. The experiential learning office facilitates academic staff in offering community based service learning experiences with their students.

Further information and contact:

website: <https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/experiential-learning-office>

email: Aisling.Flynn@mu.ie

phone: + 353 1 4747760

Semester 1

SG226 Literature 2 – Between Mythology and History (5 credits)

What is history? What is mythology? How historical is the central tale of the Tuatha Dé Danann, *Cath Maige Tuired* ('The Battle of Moytura')? How mythological is Brian Boru's biography, *Cogadh Gáedhel re Gallaibh* ('The War of the Irish with the Foreigners')? To answer these and related questions, we will begin by exploring theories of history and mythology and survey writings from medieval Ireland and Wales that have been labelled 'historical' and 'mythological'. In exploring these sometimes nebulous concepts, we will look at features of the historical and mythological cycles of Irish tales, mythological interpretations of medieval Welsh tales, the Irish origin legend *Lebor Gabála Éirenn* ('The Book of the Taking of Ireland'), and annalistic writing in Ireland and Wales. Lectures will be supplemented by five tutorials, in which we will explore some of the major module themes further and discuss how to develop your research and essay-writing skills.

Teaching & Learning Methods: 24 lecture hours; 5 tutorial hours

Time and Venue: Tue 17:00 [EHCR] and Thurs 16:00 [PB2]

Lecturer: Dr Elizabeth Boyle

Assessment: 100% continuous assessment

SG253 History 1 – Early Ireland, from St Patrick to the Battle of Clontarf (5 credits)

This module offers an introduction to early Irish history, beginning with the life of St Patrick in the fifth century and ending with the death of King Brian Boru at the Battle of Clontarf in 1014. Key themes from the history of early medieval Ireland will be explored, including kingship, identity, social relations, and religion. This module provides a foundational overview of Ireland's early history and will introduce you to some of the most important primary sources from that period. An era of violence, political struggles and social inequality, it was also a time of great cultural sophistication, when Ireland had a reputation as the 'island of saints and scholars'. Both aspects of this fascinating period of history will be explored.

Teaching & Learning Methods: 24 lecture hours

Time and Venue: Tues 15:00 [PB1] and Wed 12:00 [TSI045]

Lecturer: Dr Niamh Wycherley

Assessment:

(a) 50% Essay.

(b) 50% University scheduled written examination (60 min) in January 2024.

SG256 – Space, Place and Otherworlds in Medieval Irish Literature (5 credits)

This module will explore the large body of written sources surviving from medieval Ireland that centre on ideas about topography and travel. As inhabitants of an island at the edge of the known world, medieval Irish scholars were keenly interested in understanding the geographical relationship of their home to the wider ‘global’ sphere (understood as comprising Europe, Africa and Asia) and the place of their cultural inheritance within the broader frameworks of Biblical learning and Greco-Roman history. They produced a diverse topographical literature that includes origin-legends for population groups; poetry and prose constructing a history of placenames and landscapes; and entertaining narratives concerning the wanderings and adventures of heroes, kings and pilgrims. Alongside these works are tales that involve travel to a supernatural Otherworld or Christian visions of heaven and hell. Students will explore how the theme of real and imagined journeys, both physical and spiritual, could be used as a literary device to hold a critical mirror to human behaviour and to respond to various political, cultural, religious and economic changes in early medieval Ireland. They will also consider how ideas about voluntary and involuntary exile, migration and geography could – as they can still – shape a people and its culture. All texts will be read through English translation; no prior knowledge of the Irish language is required. This module will also include a field trip to the National Gallery to view archival maps and other documents relating to the topography of medieval Ireland.

Teaching & Learning Methods: 24 lecture hours

Time and Venue: Tues 14:00–16:00 [PB2]

Lecturer: Dr Deborah Hayden (module coordinator); Dr Elizabeth Boyle

Assessment:

(a) 50% Essay (2,000 – 2,500 words)

(b) 50% University scheduled written examination (60 min) in January 2024.

SG307 Language 3 – Old Irish 3 (5 credits)

This module refines the study of the Old Irish language from the so-called classical period of the 8th and 9th centuries. Advanced aspects of Old Irish grammar and syntax are introduced (moods and tenses, subordinate clauses).

Prerequisite: SG207 + SG208 or an equivalent knowledge of Old Irish

Teaching & Learning Methods: 24 lecture hours + 9 tutorial hours

Time and Venue: TBA

Lecturer: Francesco Felici

Text book: David Stifter, *Sengoídelc. Old Irish for Beginners*, New York: Syracuse University Press 2006.

Assessment: Marks are awarded up to a maximum of 80. 10% of these marks are awarded for attendance and tutorial work, 30% for a mid-term in-class written exam-

ination, and 60% for a university-scheduled written examination (60 min) in January 2023.

Tutorials: Arrangements for tutorials will be announced at the beginning of semester 1.

SG381 Palaeography for Undergraduates 1 (2.5 credits)

This module introduces the students to basic concepts of palaeography: the development of scripts and writing styles, common abbreviations and notae, and codicology. The students will gain practical experience in reading medieval Irish manuscripts.

Teaching & Learning Methods: 12 lecture hours

Time and Venue: TBA

Lecturer: Dr. Chantal Kobel

Assessment: 100% continuous assessment (reading and transcribing passages from medieval manuscripts for the class, in-class exam).

Special Options Semester 1

SG241 Intensive Old Irish 1 (10 credits)

The students are gradually familiarised with all aspects of Old Irish grammar. First, the phonology and orthography of Old Irish are introduced. After this, the inflectional classes of the nouns and adjectives, the present stem classes of the verbs, as well as central chapters of syntax, e.g. inflected prepositions and infixed pronouns, are the main focus of the attention.

Students who want to take this module have to contact the module coordinator first. Previous experience in the learning of languages is recommended.

This module has to be taken together with SG243.

Teaching & Learning Methods: 48 lecture hours

Time and Venue: TBA

Lecturer: Prof. David Stifter

Assessment:

- (a) 10% Tutorial attendance and assignments.
- (b) 90% Written examination (180 min) in January 2024.

SG271 Middle Welsh (5 credits)

This module provides an introduction to the grammar of Middle Welsh, exemplified by short pieces of Middle Welsh text where appropriate.

Teaching & Learning Methods: 12 lecture hours + 12 hours of independent student activities

Time and Venue: TBA

Lecturer: Prof. Barry Lewis

Assessment: 100% continuous assessment (in-class written exam)

SG350 Structured Reading (5 credits)

Guided structured reading of articles, chapters, and monographs from the historiography of Celtic Studies. Students who want to register for this module have to contact their year coordinator first. SG350 can only be taken once.

Teaching & Learning Methods: 12 lecture hours + 12 hours of independent work

Time and Venue: TBA

Lecturer: Dr Deborah Hayden; Dr Elizabeth Boyle

Assessment: 100% continuous assessment.

HY387 Towns in Medieval Ireland (5 credits)

Ireland has a very significant urban tradition stretching back well over a millennium. The earliest stages of town development can be traced at a few of the larger early medieval monastic sites such as Armagh and Kildare. A new wave of urban growth was instigated by Scandinavian settlers – five of Ireland’s largest cities were founded primarily as trading ports at strategic locations by the Vikings in the ninth and tenth centuries. The arrival of the Anglo-Normans in the second half of the twelfth century initiated another crucial phase of urban generation, with more than fifty towns being founded. A further stage of town creation was the plantation era of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. Through archaeological, documentary and other sources, this module will trace the development of urban Ireland from the early medieval period through to the seventeenth century.

Attention: only a limited number of places available!

Teaching & Learning Methods: 24 lecture hours

Time and Venue: Wed 11:00 [TSI035] and Wed 13:00 [SE235]

Lecturer: Dr. Michael Potterton

Assessment: 100% continuous assessment (5,000-word essay or shorter essay combined with class assignments/tests. Essay to be submitted by Monday prior to commencement of end-of-semester examinations).

Semester 2

SG223 History 3 – The Archaeology of Early Medieval Ireland (5 credits)

Archaeological evidence for secular settlement and social systems, the development of the early Church and monastic sites, the emergence of late ‘Celtic’ artistic traditions and the wider European, including Anglo-Saxon, Carolingian and Viking, influences that contributed to this rich period of Irish society is introduced and examined in detail. The contribution of new archaeological discoveries are assessed in the wider context of interdisciplinary studies, including history and environmental research.

Teaching & Learning Methods: 24 lecture hours

Time and Venue: Tue 12:00 [JHT2] and Thurs 12:00 [JHT10]

Lecturer: Dr. Eoin Grogan

Assessment: 50% each for two essays from set topics

SG228 Literature 7 – King Arthur’s Britain: Medieval Welsh Literature (5 credits)

This module offers the student a first introduction to select topics of medieval Welsh literature. In the first half of the semester, students will examine key manuscript sources and texts that provide insight into the beginnings of Arthurian tradition and will consider the ways in which the writing of history intertwined with that of narrative fiction to create a compelling origin legend for the British people. They will then read and analyse examples from the collection of medieval Welsh tales known as the Mabinogion with a view to understanding how the medium of narrative literature could be used for both entertainment and instruction, particularly as a means to comment on ideas about marriage, gender relations, friendship, loyalty and contemporary political developments. In the second half of the semester, students will further advance their knowledge of these themes by exploring the Welsh contribution to European chivalric literature centring around the court of King Arthur, as well as legends concerning the magician Merlin and the genre of heroic poetry. At key points in the module, they will be encouraged to consider the resonances of Irish literary sources in medieval Welsh tradition and the significance of modern cinematic reworkings of the Arthurian legend. All texts will be read through English translation; no prior knowledge of the Welsh language is required.

Teaching & Learning Methods: 24 lecture hours

Time and Venue: Wed 12:00 [RW.121], Thu 12:00 [EHCR]

Lecturer: Dr. Deborah Hayden

Assessment:

- (a) 50% Continuous Assessment, an essay details and deadlines of which will be announced in class.
- (b) 50% University scheduled written examination in May 2024.

SG254 History 2 – Law, Society and the Learned Classes in Early Ireland (5 credits)

This module focuses on the large surviving body of early Irish law, often popularly known as ‘Brehon law’, which was unique in medieval Europe for the volume and sophistication of the texts produced. The range and types of legal texts which survive from medieval Ireland will be explored, and a series of early Irish law tracts will be read (in English translations). These laws cover the regulation of violence; marriage, divorce, paternity, and sexual offences; social status and hierarchies; church-state relations; and much more besides. We will analyse how the law functioned and operated, and examine the status of the legal specialists who administered justice. The relationship between legal theory and historical reality will be considered and we will explore how legal texts can be used as a source of evidence for the workings of medieval Irish society.

Teaching & Learning Methods: 24 lecture hours

Time and Venue: Thurs 16:00 [JHT4] and Fri 13:00 [JHT7]

Lecturer: Dr. Elizabeth Boyle

Assessment:

- (a) 50% Essay (2,000–2,500 words)
- (b) 50% Written examination (60 min) in May 2024.

SG308 Language 4 – Old Irish 4 (5 Credits)

This module rounds off the study of the Old Irish language from the so-called classical period of the 8th and 9th centuries. Advanced aspects of Old Irish grammar and syntax are introduced (remaining moods and tenses).

Prerequisite: SG307 or an equivalent knowledge of Old Irish

Teaching & Learning Methods: 24 lecture hours + 10 tutorial hours

Time and Venue: TBA

Lecturer: Francesco Felici

Text books: David Stifter, *Sengóidélc. Old Irish for Beginners*, New York: Syracuse University Press 2006.

Assessment: Marks are awarded up to a maximum of 80. 10% of these marks are awarded for attendance and tutorial work, 30% for a mid-term in-class written examination, and 60% for a written examination in May 2024.

Tutorials: Arrangements for tutorials will be announced at the beginning of semester 2.

SG354 History 5 – The Viking World II: Ireland (5 credits)

Vikings occupy an important place in the modern cultural imagination, but who exactly were they and what impact did they have in Ireland? This module explores representations of the Vikings in medieval sources and popular culture, shedding light on their origins, their first raids on Ireland from the late eighth century and their later settlements on the island. This module will explore questions of ethnic identity, immigration, gender, urbanisation and the cultural legacy of Vikings in Ireland and the wider medieval world. The historical reality of the Vikings will be contrasted with their representation in films and TV shows in the modern era.

Teaching & Learning Methods: 24 lecture hours

Time and Venue: Thu 11:00 [SE013] and Thu 14:00 [JHT10]

Lecturers: Dr Niamh Wycherley

Assessment:

(a) 50% Essay.

(b) 50% University scheduled written examination (60 min) in May 2024.

SG382 Palaeography for Undergraduates (2.5 credits)

The students are introduced to the Irish manuscript tradition, especially those manuscripts that are relevant for medieval literature of Ireland. The students will learn how to read and transcribe medieval Irish manuscripts.

Teaching & Learning Methods: 12 lecture hours

Time and Venue: TBA

Lecturer: Dr. Chantal Kobel

Assessment: 100% continuous assessment (practice in reading and transcribing medieval Irish manuscripts).

SG330 Dissertation (5 credits)

Students will have the opportunity to engage in independent research on an approved topic. Students will be expected to produce a dissertation of c. 8,000 words.

Prerequisite: 65 or higher in the subject mark.

Teaching & Learning Methods: 12 lecture hours, 12 hours of student activities

Time, Venue: TBA

Lecturer: Dr. Elizabeth Boyle, Dr Deborah Hayden and TBA

Assessment: 100% of the marks will be awarded on the basis of the written dissertation (c. 8,000 words).

Special Options Semester 2

SG272 Middle Welsh Reading (5 credits)

Reading of select Middle Welsh texts, prose and/or poetry.

Teaching & Learning Methods: 12 lecture hours + 12 hours of independent student activities

Time and Venue: TBA

Lecturer: Prof. Barry Lewis

Assessment: 100% continuous assessment (weekly preparations, in-class written exam)

SG242 Intensive Old Irish 2 (10 credits)

This module introduces the students to advanced aspects of Old Irish grammar, esp. the formation of non-present tenses and moods, and advanced aspects of syntax, esp. dependent clauses.

This module has to be taken together with SG244.

Teaching & Learning Methods: 48 lecture hours

Time and Venue: TBA

Lecturer: Prof. David Stifter

Assessment:

- (a) 10% Tutorial attendance and assignments.
- (b) 90% Written examination (180 min) in May 2023.

Timetable (2023/24): Medieval Irish and Celtic Studies, 3rd Year
Semester 1

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
09:00					
10:00					
11:00			HY387 [TSI035]		
12:00			SG253 [TSI045]		
13:00			HY387 [SE235]		
14:00		SG256 [PB2]			
15:00		SG253 [PB1] SG256 [PB2]			
16:00				SG226 [PB2]	
17:00			SG226 [EHCR]		

Timetable (2023/24): Medieval Irish and Celtic Studies, 3rd Year
Semester 2

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
09:00					
10:00					
11:00				SG354 [SE013]	
12:00		SG223 [JHT2]	SG228 [RW.121]	SG223 [JHT10] SG228 [EHCR]	
13:00					SG254 [JHT7]
14:00				SG354 [JHT10]	
15:00					
16:00				SG254 [JHT4]	
17:00					