

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

**POSTGRADUATE MODULES
IN MEDIEVAL IRISH STUDIES**



POSTGRADUATE STUDENTS' HANDBOOK 2023-24

Welcome

Welcome to Maynooth University and its Department of Early Irish (Roinn na Sean-Ghaeilge). We are delighted that you have chosen to pursue a postgraduate degree in Medieval Irish Studies, and we hope that you will enjoy the year as you expand your knowledge and understanding of Medieval Irish literature, language and history.

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:

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Important dates

Semester 1

18 September 2023 – 22 December 2023

25 September 2023	Lectures commence
20 October 2023	Change of subject deadline for 1 st -year students
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

Taught MA – General Information

Queries

General concerns, problems or issues which may arise should be addressed to your Postgraduate Co-ordinator, Dr. Deborah Hayden (deborah.hayden@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

Taught MA students are required to register for modules amounting to 60 credits in total. The thesis you will be writing during this year amounts to another 30 credits. MLitt students are required to take 5 credits in generic skills modules and 5 credits in subject-specific/advanced-specialist modules. PhD students are required to take 15 credits in generic skills modules and 15 credits in subject-specific, advanced-specialist modules.

Modules typically merit either 10 credits for 24 lectures (on average 2 hours per week) or 5 credits for 12 lectures (on average 1 hour per week), delivered over the duration of the semester, but different ratios between credits and number of lectures may occur. Modules may also be delivered not in weekly, but in blocked form. The higher creditation per module, as compared to the undergraduate programme, is due to the fact that postgraduate students are expected to contribute a larger and more advanced workload to the modules.

Students with no sufficient prior knowledge of Old Irish are required to register for the language modules SG601 and SG604. Students with a sufficient prior knowledge of Old Irish, i.e. students who passed SG242 or SG308 in their Maynooth undergraduate programme or who did an equivalent language course before the Taught MA, have to register for the Old Irish reading classes (SG341 and SG342) instead.

You must attend all classes, lectures and tutorials that you are registered for. If you cannot attend lectures for any reason, please contact the relevant lecturer and explain your case. We are very approachable and understanding. If you are ill, please provide us with a doctor's certificate stating the duration of your illness.

Times and venues of most lectures will usually be decided at the beginning of the semester. Please note that even in the case of lectures that have already been assigned timetable slots before the start of the year, these may be subject to change at any time due to unforeseen circumstances. Therefore it is important to check this information regularly. The campus map allows you to locate all teaching venues: <https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/campus-life/campus-map#expanded>.

Each module has a particular account allocated on Maynooth University's academic support system Moodle at <https://moodle.maynoothuniversity.ie/>.

Assessment

The modules are examined through a combination of essays, continuous assessment and examinations; some modules are assessed by examination only. The exact details for their relative weighting differ from module to module, details of which are 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. Other types of assessment (in-class exams, essays, etc.) fall within the semester; details will be provided by the lecturers. The Maynooth University Marks & Standards as detailed at <https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/exams/information-students> apply. Please note that according to these under normal circumstances the highest attainable mark is 80.

Essays, academic sincerity and deadlines

You will be required to write essays 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).

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 Bookshop, North Campus. Visit the library early on in the semester and familiarise yourself with it, e.g. where you may find the relevant books and journals.

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

SG601 Old Irish Language 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.

Teaching & Learning Methods: 48 lecture hours + 12 tutorial 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.

SG613 Learned Literature of Medieval Ireland (10 credits)

A considerable part of the extant literature of medieval Ireland is dedicated to learned matter, that is, to subjects that could be termed academic or scientific in modern understanding. These subjects include grammar and the philosophy of language, biblical exegesis, geography, astronomy, history, law and legal commentary, and poetic composition. In this module, select examples of texts treating these topics will be read, critically analysed and evaluated in their literary and historical context.

Teaching & Learning Methods: 24 lecture hours

Time and Venue: Thurs 14:00–16:00 [EHCR]

Lecturer: Dr. Deborah Hayden *et al.*

Assessment: 50% classwork (essays, presentations), 50% written examination in January 2024.

SG616 Developing Research Skills in Medieval Irish Studies 1 (5 credits)

In a series of seminars, the students will develop their familiarity with the main research tools of medieval Irish studies, such as the use of handbooks, lexicons, dictionaries and electronic databases.

Teaching & Learning Methods: 12 lecture hours

Time and Venue: TBA

Lecturer: Dr. Elizabeth Boyle

Assessment: 100% continuous assessment (active participation in class, essays, presentation)

SG618 Introduction to Palaeography (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).

SG625 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

Generic skills modules

Students can visit the Graduate Studies Office website for a list of transferable skills modules available for credit, as well as information on how to register for modules external to the department or university:

<https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/graduate-studies/modules-research-students>

Semester 2

SG604 Old Irish Language 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.

Teaching & Learning Methods: 48 lecture hours + 12 tutorial hours

Time and Venue: TBA

Lecturer: Prof. David Stifter

Assessment:

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

SG614 Medieval Irish Sagas and Mythology (10 Credits)

Using the celebrated narrative tradition of medieval Ireland only as a quarry for heroic, mythological or pagan motifs, or as an entertaining window on the past, is turning a blind eye on the contemporary intellectual, literary and historical fabric into which those tales were woven by their composers. In this module, the students will read selected pieces of the Irish saga tradition and subject them to a full textual analysis and interpretation.

Teaching & Learning Methods: 24 lecture hours

Time and Venue: TBA

Lecturer: Dr. Elizabeth Boyle

Assessment: 50% classwork (essays, presentations), 50% a university-scheduled written examination in May 2024.

SG615 Palaeography and Manuscript Culture (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).

SG626 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

After Semester 2

SG606 MA Thesis (30 credits)

Taught MA students produce a thesis of c. 15.000 words in independent work on a research topic that they have developed in consultation with the supervisor. This is done through private study of a literary, linguistic or historical topic deemed suitable by the Head of Department and regular consultation with a designated supervisor.

The students should be able to demonstrate that they are able to

- Engage proficiently in reading and writing on topics related to Early Medieval Ireland.
- Critically appraise primary and secondary literature relating to Early Medieval Ireland.
- Demonstrate effective and efficient research, writing and study skills.

Assessment: 100% on the basis of the form and contents of the thesis to be presented at the beginning of July after semester 2.