HL2033
*Irish Writing: Romanticism to Modernism*

Course co-ordinator: Dr Richard Barlow, rbarlow@ntu.edu.sg
Irish Writing: Romanticism to Modernism surveys the remarkably rich and varied literary tradition of Ireland in the critical period from the Act of Union (1800) to the years following the establishment of the Irish Free State (1922). During this period Ireland experienced agrarian agitation, sectarian strife, Catholic Emancipation, the Great Famine, mass emigration, linguistic conversion, and cultural revival. The period also saw a movement in Irish writing from Romantic and Gothic modes towards Modernism. This course will study how Irish literature reflected the different tragedies, tensions, and transformations in Ireland during the period and also how culture eventually acted as a catalyst to political change. Key texts of Irish Romantic, Gothic, and Modernist writing will be examined.
Course Outline

Week One: Course introduction

Week Two: The ‘Big House’, Absenteeism, and rack-renting

*Castle Rackrent* (1800) by Maria Edgeworth (novel)

Week Three: The ‘National Tale’

*The Wild Irish Girl* (1806) by Sydney Owenson, Lady Morgan (novel)

Week Four: Irish Gothic

William Carleton’s short story *Wildgoose Lodge* (1833)

Week Five: Irish Gothic

Joseph Sheridan LeFanu’s short story *A Chapter in the History of a Tyrone Family* (1839)

Week Six: Famine and Exile


Week Seven: Malady of the Spirit

James Clarence Mangan, selected poetry

Week Eight: Stage Irishmen

Dion Boucicault’s play *Arrah-na-Pogue; Or, the Wicklow Wedding* (1864)

Week Nine: Revival

Yeats’ play *The Countess Cathleen* (1892), and selected poetry

Week Ten: Revival

John Millington Synge’s play *Playboy of the Western World* (1907)
Week Eleven: Irish Modernism

James Joyce’s short story ‘The Dead’ (1914)

Week Twelve: ‘The Big House’, Independence, War

Elizabeth Bowen’s novel *The Last September* (1929)

Week Thirteen: Revision
Assessment

Essay (35%): Students will defend an original thesis covering at least two of the works read in class. Essays should include close readings of relevant passages from the work, and should discuss the cultural/historical context of the work. Students must also use at least two secondary sources. Students will be assessed according to their knowledge/understanding of the material, and their ability to express themselves in a clear and organised fashion.

Exam (50%): Students will answer two examination questions. Question 1 will involve identifying short quotations and discussing them in relation to Irish literature of the period. Question 2 will ask them to write a short essay in response to one of a number of prompts on the subject of Irish literature.

Participation (15%): Students will be evaluated on their contribution to in-class discussion. In each case, students will be assessed according to their knowledge of the texts and their ability to understand contrasting perspectives on the material at hand.
Core texts (all other course texts will be made available online via Blackboard)


Suggested Secondary Reading


