

RELIGION 250/16480
Religion in Ireland: Neolithic to Early Medieval
Professor – Dr. Barry F. Vaughan
Study Abroad Ireland, Summer 2024

Required Texts:

Title: A History of the Irish Church: 400-700ad. (Dublin: The Columba Press, 1991)

Author: John R. Walsh, and Thomas Bradley

Title: Druids: A Very Short Introduction. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010)

Author: Barry Cunliffe

Title: The Tain: From the Irish Epic “Tain Bo Cuailnge. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000)

Author/Translator: Thomas Kinsella

Recommended Texts:

Title: How the Irish Saved Civilization. Updated 2nd Edition. (New York: Doubleday Press, 1995.)

Author: Thomas Cahill

Title: A Dictionary of Celtic Mythology. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998.)

Author: James MacKillop

Course Goals:

This course is designed as a *survey* of the religious traditions in Ireland from 3000 BCE – 800 CE. Besides learning about the divinities and ritual practices of the Irish people from the Neolithic to the early Modern Period, we will focus on the historical and cultural development that provides the necessary background to understanding the complex religious history of Ireland. At the end of the course students should be able to:

- 1) Identify the major religious themes of Neolithic Irish culture;
- 2) Explain the difficulties associated with identifying the Celtic Culture;
- 3) Identify the major deities and ritual practices of Celtic religion in Ireland;
- 4) Identify the origins of Christianity in Ireland
- 5) Explain the role of monasticism in the conversion Ireland to Christianity
- 4) Describe and critically evaluate the role of Irish Christianity in early Medieval Europe;
- 5) Explain the role of mythology in the “Celtic Revival”;
- 6) Identify examples of religious transformation and syncretism in Ireland.

Course Requirements:

Attendance - students are **required to attend class** as scheduled. Absences are excused in the case of illness (standard proof of illness is required). Attendance for all group excursions is also **mandatory**. Failure to attend is grounds for removal from the program.

Tardiness – I am not particularly offended by tardiness (after all, you are paying for this course). I understand that sometimes factors beyond our control conspire to make us late. If you are late to class, come on in and find a place to sit. However, please be courteous to your classmates and do not make a disturbance if you are late. Finally, please do not allow tardiness to become a habit.

Grades - will be figured on the following basis:

1. Exams: Midterm and Final, each worth 100 points.
2. Pop Quizzes: 10 points each
3. Museum Scavenger hunt: 50 points.

Grade Tracker: use the grade tracker below to record your grades as we go through the semester.

Quiz 1 _____
Quiz 2 _____
Quiz 3 _____
Quiz 4 _____
Quiz 5 _____

Quiz 6 _____
Quiz 7 _____
Quiz 8 _____
Quiz 9 _____
Quiz 10 _____

Exam 1 _____
Exam 2 _____

Pre-Survey _____
Post-Survey _____

Museum Scavenger Hunt _____

Grade Scale and Symbols: based on five hundred total points, below is the percentage scale used to determine your final course grade and an explanation of the grade symbols used.

315-350 (90%-100%)	A <i>Excellent</i>
280-314 (80%-89%)	B <i>Above Average</i>
245-279 (70%-79%)	C <i>Average</i>
210-244 (60%-69%)	D <i>Minimal Passing</i>
0-209	F <i>Failure</i>
	Y <i>Withdraw Failing</i>
	W <i>Withdraw Passing</i>
	I <i>Incomplete</i>

IMPORTANT NOTE ON THE CAVAS GRADEBOOK

If you are in the habit of checking the gradebook in Canvas, please note that it does **NOT** distinguish between **required** and **bonus** assignments. DO NOT FREAK OUT if you look in Canvas and it suggests that you have a failing percentage. As noted above, your final grade is based on the *total number of points* you accumulate over the course of the semester, **not** the percentage of points out of the total possible. **IGNORE THE PERCENTAGES IN CAVAS!** It is extremely difficult to fail this course if you do all of the assignments.

Statement on Plagiarism/Academic Misconduct:

Due to the proliferation of academic material available on the internet, **plagiarism** is on the rise in American academic institutions. Plagiarism is the use of two or more consecutive words from someone else's published/written work without proper citation, or passing off someone else's words as your own. Plagiarism includes paraphrasing someone else's work without giving proper citation of the source material. Plagiarism is **theft** of intellectual property and WILL NOT BE TOLLERATED.

Academic misconduct in more general terms means cheating *in any form*. Obviously, the assignments you turn in and the examinations you take should reflect YOUR OWN work, and any attempt to circumvent this process is harmful. Therefore, any plagiarized, or otherwise academically inappropriate assignment, will receive an automatic 0, and the assignment cannot be made up or replaced. If two or more assignments are plagiarized or the product of academic misconduct in the course of a semester, the offending student *may* receive an automatic F for the course.

Academic Misconduct on Canvas: It is essential that you understand that it is **INAPPROPRIATE** on a quiz or exam in Canvas to look up answers in another browser window and then copy/paste, or rewrite what you looked up. A quiz or exam is designed to test what you **know** (*i.e., the understanding in your mind*), **not** your skills searching the internet.

The use of Chat GPT, or *any* AI interface, for the purposes of this course, would be considered academic misconduct. **DO YOUR OWN WORK.**

Student Responsibilities:

Students with Disabilities – It is the policy of Mesa Community College, in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, to offer reasonable accommodations to students with disabilities. If you are disabled and need accommodation you should contact the MCC Student Disabilities Office (*MCC Disabilities Resources and Services Office at 480-461-7447 or email drsfrontdesk@mesacc.edu*) before any assignments are due. It is the student's responsibility to contact the Student Disabilities Office with any request for special services. Students experiencing difficulty accessing course materials because of a disability should contact the course instructor so that a solution can be found that provides all students equal access to course materials and technology. The DRS Office now also handles pregnancy related absences. If you have a need for pregnancy related accommodations, please contact the DRS Office immediately.

Recording Lectures – The content of course lectures, including, but not limited to, verbal, printed, powerpoint and other electronic communications are the copyrighted property of the professor. Recording class lectures is **prohibited** *without express written consent*. If you wish to record lectures, you must see me during office hours and sign a Proprietary Information Agreement.

Dropping/Withdrawal – SAI requires all students to be enrolled in two courses. Dropping below the required number of courses on an MCC Study Abroad Program will result in termination of program participation and expulsion from the program. The student will have to return home *at their own expense*.

Cell Phones/Pagers – All phones should be placed in the “off” or “standby” position, or your ringer should be **silenced** in class. Do not send or answer text messages or other online media while in class. Failure to adhere to this policy may result in punitive action.

Instructional Grievance– Students have the right to due-process if they feel they have been treated unfairly by their professor in regard to academic procedures (i.e., grading). Please refer to the process articulated in the [Student Handbook](#) § 2.3.5.

Responsibility for Information - Students are responsible for knowing and understanding all information contained in this syllabus. If you do not understand some portion of this document, please contact the professor for clarification. All student rights and responsibilities are governed through the MCC [Student Handbook](#); students should be aware of all policies contained therein.

Contact Information:

Phone: 087.166.9924 (IE cell)

Email: barry.vaughan@mesacc.edu (the most reliable and fastest way to get in touch with me)

Website: <http://www.barryfvaughan.org>. On the course website you will find a large amount of useful information including a complete set of course notes, study guides, an electronic library of classic texts in Philosophy, an interactive dictionary, syllabi (just in case you lose this one), a forum area for your class, as well as links to other philosophy web sites. We will discuss and demonstrate how to access this material in class for those of you not already familiar with the World Wide Web.

Alternation of Syllabus Information:

The information contained in this syllabus is subject to change. Students will be notified in class of any alteration of schedule, assignment, or grading policy.

Tentative Course Outline

TOPIC	Assignment
Unit 1 – Ancient Irish Religion	
Monday (10/6) Group Excursion to Dunamase and Emo Court	
Tuesday (11/6) Basic Concepts in Religious Studies	
Wednesday (12/6) Ancient Ireland, Neolithic Religion	<i>C. 1-49</i>
Thursday (13/6) Bronze Age Ireland/Religion	<i>C. 50-99, K. 1-50</i>
Friday (14/6) Burren Excursion	Galway
Saturday (15/6) Inis Mor	Galway
Unit 2 – Hiberno-Celtic Religion: <u>Táin Bó Cúailnge</u>	
Monday (17/6) Cause of the raid, Boyhood Deeds of Cúchulainn	<i>K. 52-92</i>
Tuesday (18/6) The Deeds of Cuchulainn	<i>K. 92-156</i>
Wednesday (19/6) Combat: The Rising of the Ulstermen	<i>K 156-205</i>
Thursday (20/6) The Final Conflict	<i>K 206-253</i>
Friday (21/6) Loughcrew Excursion – Neolithic burial mounds	Loughcrew
MIDTERM	
Unit 3 - Early Christianity and Ireland:	
Monday (24/6) Early Christianity, Theological Diversity	<i>W 9-53</i>
Tuesday (25/6) Christianity in Ireland: St. Patrick	<i>W 69-93</i>
Wednesday (26/6) Irish Monasticism and the Conversion of Ireland	<i>W. 94-105</i>
Thursday (27/6) Colum Cille, Brendan, and Irish Missionaries	<i>W. 118-138</i>
Friday (28/6) Uisneach/Clonmacnoise Excursion	Athlone
Saturday (29/6) Dublin National Museum Excursion	Dublin City
Unit 4 - Early Medieval Christian Ireland:	
Monday (1/7) The end of the Irish Church	<i>W. 156-179</i>
Tuesday (2/7) The end of the Irish Church	<i>cont.</i>
Wednesday (3/7) Irish Folklore/Religious syncretism	<i>C. 100-123</i>
Thursday (4/7) Irish Folklore/Religious syncretism	<i>“The Fairy Faith”</i>
Friday (5/7) Anglo/Norman Castle Excursion	Trim Castle

FINAL Exam

COVENANT ON CLASS DECORUM

1. I shall refrain from making personal attacks upon fellow interlocutors; likewise, I will not mistake an attack *upon an argument* I present as a personal attack.
2. I reserve the right to disagree with *any* argument on *any* subject regardless of whether or not it reflects my own, or the majority opinion. In like manner, I will *not assume* that an argument presented by a classmate or the professor necessarily represents their personal opinion.
3. I hereby agree to disagree *agreeably* so as to avoid personal injury or vendettas.
4. I reserve the right to participate in class discussions and arguments, and I shall endeavor to engage ideas and opinions that differ from my own thus enhancing my academic pilgrimage.
5. I hereby agree not to pout about or refrain from engaging arguments that seem weak or problematic. I accept as part of *my* academic responsibility the obligation to speak up whether I agree or disagree.
6. I reserve the right to take all classroom grievances to the person with whom I have the grievance, regardless of whether it is a student *or the professor* (if we cannot work out the problem there is an official grievance process which we can follow – details are in your student handbook).
7. I shall attempt to be open to, and respect all persons in the classroom even when we disagree.
8. I shall, to the best of my ability, respect and incorporate the maxims of this covenant and endeavor to uphold my end of all agreements made herein.

If you do not feel that you can live up to the terms of this agreement, you should drop this course immediately!