SS122 Negotiating Identity in Irish Traditional Music and Dance

6 ECTS/ 3 US Semester Credits

COURSE OBJECTIVE:

This module will examine current and historical performance and transmission of Irish traditional dance, instrumental music and song, with specific reference to the traditions of the West of Ireland. Utilizing anthropological and cultural history frameworks, students will explore the place of traditional performance arts in Irish culture, and the central roles these traditions play in formation of local, national and transnational identities.

Core elements include an examination of music in the post-famine period in Ireland; music among the Diaspora; the development of Irish dance practices; revivals of dance and music; sean-nós song; style and the uilleann piping tradition. Conceptual issues of authenticity and tradition will underscore much of the discussions and central questions such as what constitutes traditional performance and the transformative potential of dance and music will be explored and exemplified through a variety of performance platforms. Students will also have the opportunity to meet with performers and take sean-nós song and dance workshops, in addition to having an instrumental traditional music showcase as part of the programme.

COURSE OUTLINE:

Week 1    Introduction to Irish music and dance
Identity and definition
Tune types, instruments and contexts

Week 2    Uilleann piping
Sean-nós song and style
Irish dance

Week 3    Emigration and music
Traditional arts in the post-Famine period
Development of ensemble

Week 4    Performing identities
Revivals of Irish music and dance 1960
Festival and festivity
Seán Ó Riada

Week 5    Contemporary practice in music, song and dance

Selected readings (all readings are available through Blackboard, the on-line learning platform)


**REQUIREMENTS FOR CREDITS:**

1. Attendance at lectures, workshops/performances and participation in seminars.
2. One mid-term written examination.
3. One essay of 1,500 words assigned by instructor.

**COURSE PROFESSOR:**

Méabh Ní Fhuartháin (Course Director) MA, PhD.

Director of Irish Music Studies at the Centre for Irish Studies, NUI Galway and Lecturer in Irish Music Studies, Méabh is particularly interested in the institutionalization of musical revival in Ireland during the twentieth century and popular music studies. Formerly an IRCHSS scholar, she has contributed articles and reviews to a variety of journals and is also Popular Music subject editor of the landmark *Encyclopedia of Music in Ireland* (UCD Press, 2013). Co-editor with Dr David Doyle of *Ordinary Life and Popular Culture in Ireland* (IAP, 2013), she is centrally involved in the development of the research network Comhrá Ceoil: Irish Music Studies at NUI Galway and has published in numerous international journals and collections.

Malachy Egan

Malachy has a B.A. in History and Geography from NUI Galway and also holds an M.Phil in Modern Irish History from Trinity College Dublin in which his final thesis examined aspects of the revival of Irish traditional music in the twentieth century. Malachy has previously taught at the International Summer School, as well as teaching as part of the B.A. (Irish Studies) and the Irish Life and Culture programmes. He is currently completing his PhD in Irish Music Studies at the Centre for Irish Studies, N.U.I. Galway. His research interests include Irish music and identity; cultural revivalism; the social history of twentieth century Ireland; and social geography.