SPRING 2019

English 622.001     Seminar in Irish Literature: Irish Women Writers

M 3:30 - 6:10 PM, Curtin 468

Course Description
For a small nation that only achieved independence in 1922, Ireland has produced more than its share of world-class writers: we may immediately think of James Joyce, as well as the four Nobel laureates, G.B. Shaw, W.B. Yeats, Samuel Beckett, and Seamus Heaney. Irish women writers have gained less visibility: until recently, for example, a poster featuring ‘Irish Writers’ popular with visitors to Ireland included the images of twelve men and not a single woman. For much of the twentieth century, women writers faced an uphill battle to have their work published, their plays produced, and their artistic efforts publicly recognized. The position of women in Ireland in general was circumscribed by the 1937 Constitution, which notoriously defined the role of women as mothers and their place as ‘in the home’, and by the dominance in everyday life of the Catholic church, which was granted a privileged position in the same Constitution. In this class, we will read prose fiction, poetry, and drama by female Irish writers, written between the early 20th century and the present day, in which themes and subjects that are of particular concern to women are addressed.

Assessment
Midterm paper, final paper, class participation and attendance.

Reading List
Elizabeth Bowen, The Last September, Anchor Books, ISBN 0385720149
Patricia Burke Brogan, Eclipsed, Wordsonthestreet (2008), ISBN 0955260442
Marina Carr, By the Bog of Cats, Dramatists Play Service, ISBN 9780822218562
Edna O’Brien, A Pagan Place, Mariner, ISBN 0618126902
Emilie Pine, Notes to Self, Tramp Press, ISBN 9781999700843
Additional materials in a course reader and on D2L.