Northern Ireland from Partition to Devolution (1920-2007):
History and Visual Representations

DESCRIPTION OF THE COURSE

Course taught in English
Assessment: 2-hour written exam or 20-minute oral exam (commentary of a visual document).

This course has two primary aims. The first one is to provide students with a precise understanding of the conflict in Northern Ireland, from the time of the Partition in 1920 up to devolution and the reestablishment of the Stormont assembly in 2007. In keeping with new developments within cultural history, this course also aims at introducing students to the history of representations, as well as to the analysis of pictures both as a historical source and as a vehicle for political expression. A wide range of pictures will be considered, from stamps, posters and murals to press photographs, cartoons and films.

The course will start with a quick overview of English-Irish relations from the Middle Ages to the First World War, concentrating on the factors that explain sectarian tensions between Protestants and Catholics and the social and religious specificities of Ulster (the Norman conquest of Ireland in 1169, Henry VIII’s re-conquest of Ireland after 1536, the plantation policy which ensued, the Protestant Ascendency of the late 17th and 18th centuries, the Great Irish Famine of 1845-1849, etc.).

It will then proceed chronologically by identifying four major periods. From 1914 to 1922, the First World War and then the War of Independence saw the end of the parliamentary struggle for Home Rule. The Partition of Ireland into two autonomous territories was introduced by the Government of Ireland Act in 1920 and de facto confirmed by the Anglo-Irish Treaty of December 1921. This was one of the main reasons why the Irish civil war broke out in 1922, dividing the population for two years. A comparison between extracts from Michael Collins by Neil Jordan and The Wind that Shakes the Barley by Ken Loach will trigger a reflection on the relations between cinema, history and remembrance.

From the 1920s to the late 1960s, Northern Ireland was governed as a Protestant and Unionist state, the triumphalism of which was expressed both in the architecture of the Parliament Houses in Stormont and in the murals which adorned the gable walls of loyalist districts. At the same time, the southern part of Ireland (first labelled “Free State”, and later “republic” after 1948) largely identified itself as a Catholic state and was still officially committed to the reunification of the island, as is clearly shown by Irish stamps from the 1950s.

Bloody Sunday and the early 1970s represented a watershed: the peaceful fight for civil rights, mainly conducted by the Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association, gave way to armed struggle between nationalist and loyalist paramilitaries, a transition that is powerfully illustrated in the film Bloody Sunday by Paul Greengrass.

Starting in the 1970s, the Troubles had a decisive impact upon Northern Irish, and indeed British, visual culture. As violence settled in the province, political posters and later murals invaded the walls of Catholic and Protestant districts alike, glorifying combatants and rallying both sections of the population through references to history and recent events. At the same time, press photographs published in Irish, Northern Irish and British newspapers reflected diverging attitudes to the conflict.

Finally, the Good Friday Agreement of 1998 was a decisive step in the peace process, with the recognition of the principle of consent by all the major political actors involved. However, new outbursts of violence postponed the establishment of devolved institutions in Belfast. Cartoons
published in the Republic of Ireland, in Northern Ireland and in the rest of the United Kingdom in the years 2000 pinpoint the prevarications of politicians such as Sinn Fein leader Gerry Adams and Unionist Ian Paisley, while press photographs insist on visual testimonies of the changes underway.

OUTLINE OF THE COURSE

Lesson 1: The Historical Roots of the Troubles.
1. The Conquest of Ireland (12th c. – Tudor age)
2. From Plantation to Penal Laws: Building the Protestant Ascendancy (17th-18th century)
3. Ireland in the 19th Century: The Struggle for Home Rule and the Growth of Ulster Unionism

Lesson 2: Times of War: The Irish War of Independence and the Irish Civil War (1914-1923).
1. Nationalists and Unionists during the Great War
   1.1. Fighting alongside Britain – or not
   1.2. The ‘Easter Rising’
      - *Michael Collins*, extract one (01’34’’-06’23’’)
2. The Advent of Republicanism
   2.1. Sinn Fein’s victory in the 1918 election
   2.2. The establishment of the Irish Republic
   2.3. The Anglo-Irish War (1919-1921)
      - *Michael Collins*, extract two (49’00’’-50’55’’)
      - *The Wind*, extract one (00’30’’-09’00’’)
3. Partitioning Ireland
   3.1. The Government of Ireland Act, 1920
   3.2. The Anglo-Irish Treaty (6 Dec. 1921)
      - *Michael Collins*, extract three (01:21’00’’-01:24’00’’ and 01:25’15’’-01:30’40’’)
      - *The Wind*, extract two (01:21’30’’-01:30’10’’)
4. The Irish Civil War, 1922-1923

1. Stormont: 50 Years of Unionist Rule
   1.1. Home Rule in Northern Ireland
   1.2. Political Stagnation
2. An Insecure Statelet
   2.1. Constitutional Uncertainties
   2.2. The Threat from the South
   2.3. The Threat from Within
3. A Segregated and Discriminatory State
4. Visual Displays of Triumphant Unionism: Murals in Northern Ireland (1920s-1950s)

1. The O’Neill Years (1963-1969)
   1.1. Terence O’Neill’s Reformist Agenda
   1.2. The Civil Rights Campaign
   1.3. Tensions Build Up
   2.1. The Battle of the Bogside
   2.2. The Arrival of the British Army
2.3. The IRA: Split and Rebirth
2.4. The Growth of Loyalist Paramilitary Groups

3. The End of an Era (1971-1972)
   3.1. Internment and the Escalation of Violence
   3.2. Bloody Sunday
   3.3. The Abolition of Stormont


1. From Failed Political Solutions to Security Measures (1972-1979)
   1.1. Failed Political Solutions: Power Sharing and the ‘Irish Dimension’
   1.2. Security Measures: Criminalisation and Ulsterisation

2. The Early Thatcher Years (1979-late 1980s)
   2.1. The Hunger Strikes and the Emergence of Republican Mural Painting
   2.2. The Anglo-Irish Agreement and the Revival of Loyalist Mural Painting

   3.1. Changes in Republicanism?
   3.2. The Loyalist Agenda and Paramilitary Activity
   3.3. Loyalist and Republican Iconography

   4.1. The Downing Street Declaration (1993)
   4.2. Ceasefires and Ceasefire Murals
   4.3. Stagnation, Violence and Negotiations

Lesson 6: Peace at last? The Good Friday Agreement and Devolution (1998-2007)

3. Post-Agreement Murals: Peace Iconography?

BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. Books, articles and websites

Reference
Conflict Archive on the Internet: http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/index.html

History of Ireland and Northern Ireland


**History and Politics of the Northern Ireland Conflict**


**Visual Representations of (Northern) Ireland**

**Cinema:**


**Murals:**


**Posters:**


Methodology of Visual Analysis

Picture Analysis:

Film Analysis:
http://www.dartmouth.edu/~writing/materials/student/humanities/film.shtml#glossary

2. Filmography
----. Michael Collins. Ireland, United Kingdom, United States, 1996.
----. The Wind That Shakes the Barley. Ireland, 2005.
SHERIDAN, Jim. In the Name of the Father. Ireland, United Kingdom, 1994.
----. The Boxer. Ireland, United Kingdom, 1997.