**MA Irish Studies**

**IRS7010**

**Dissertation Module**

**2017-18**

Coordinator: Professor Peter Gray

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The dissertation is the core element of the MA in Irish Studies. It is a double- weighted module counting for 1/3 of the final marks of the programme (60 CATS points).

Your dissertation should be a piece of independent research, with a maximum length of 15,000 words (including footnotes but excluding bibliography and appendices in word count). For full-time students it is due by 13 Sept. 2018; for part-time students by 30 April of your third year or the nearest working day thereafter (i.e. 30 April 2018 for students who registered in September 2015; 30 April 2019 for students who registered in September 2016).

We provide training for the dissertation through discussion with the convenor; research training modules taken in relevant discipline(s) and individual meetings with your dissertation supervisor(s).

As the MA in Irish Studies is an interdisciplinary programme, your supervisor may be drawn from any discipline recognised by the Institute of Irish Studies as participating in the MA programme. You may either approach a suitable supervisor directly, or consult the MA convenor to seek advice on supervision. Cross-supervision between disciplines (where appropriate) is possible and may be arranged via the convenor. The published list of Irish Studies Research Associates (see <https://www.qub.ac.uk/schools/IrishStudiesGateway/People/> ) may help you identify the member of staff whose academic interests best align with your own. NB some members of staff may not be available due to sabbaticals or other leave arrangements.

Full-time students and part-timers in their second year should discuss your dissertation topic with the MA convenor no later than the end of February 2018, and meet formally with a nominated research supervisor on around 4-6 occasions over semester two and the summer months (or over the period preceding the 30 April deadline for part-time students). Your supervisor will read and give you feedback on one draft (only) of each of your dissertation chapters.

The completion of the dissertation and adherence to the academic conventions and referencing systems employed by the Discipline/School of your lead supervisor are your responsibility.

Dissertations in Irish Studies will be submitted by the deadline advertised via TurnitinUK. Examination will be by members of the MA Irish Studies exam board, employing subject expertise from the relevant discipline(s).

If, after examination, your dissertation is deemed to have attained a high standard (distinction or high commendation), you will be invited to submit a corrected version to the University Library for public reference.

Guidelines and a timetable for the dissertation are set out below, followed by an updated version of the module rules.

**Guidelines**

Timetable and Training, 2017-18

**Semester 1:**

The convenor or other members of staff will provide advice on how to select a dissertation topic and possible sources that can be used to explore it.

 **Week 2, Semester 2**:

By **Friday 9 February 2018** all MA students due to submit their dissertation this academic year (May 2018 or September 2018) should have identified a draft MA topic and title, discussed it with the convenor (and proposed dissertation supervisor) and received the agreement of a member of staff to supervise the topic. Part-time students due to submit the following year (May 2019) are advised but not required to follow the same procedure.

If guidance is required in selecting a topic and supervisor, the convenor will be available for consultations on Thursday 8 February 10am to 1pm in 12UQ/0G/003.

**Week 3, Semester 2:**

All students due to submit this academic year must email a copy of their proposal form (at bottom of this document) to the MA Convenor, by **12 noon, Friday, 16 February 2018**. [NB: this proposal form should be agreed by your supervisor before submitting it. Please include your surname in the title of the form, viz: ‘Smith Dissertation form’.]

**Week 5-12, Semester 2:**

There will be a workshop for dissertation students on Thursday, 15 March (Irish Studies Seminar Room) 10am-12pm:

Your research planning should be well advanced by this state and you should be prepared to contribute to this workshop by discussing your research topic, sources, and research questions.

**June-September 2017:**

During this period you should have regular meetings with your supervisors. The School expects there to be 4-6 formal supervision sessions between supervisor and student in the course of the writing of their MA dissertation.

For part-time students, these meetings can be spaced out between June and April as appropriate.

**Friday 13 September 2018, 12 noon (full-time students); 30 April 2018, 12 noon (for part-time students reg. 2015); 30 April 2019 (for part-time students reg. 2016)**

Submission via Turnitin (see below)

[Note: Coversheet should be printed off and attached to dissertation before submission]

**Ethics:**

If your dissertation project involves work with HUMAN PARTICIPANTS (e.g. using surveys, interviews etc), you must get ethical approval from the School’s Research Ethics Committee BEFORE you start your research.

The university’s policy on research ethics can be found here:

<https://www.qub.ac.uk/Research/Governance-ethics-and-integrity/Ethics/>

**Presentation:**

General guidelines on the format etc, are in the ‘Submitting your Dissertation’ page located on the Student Records and Examinations website as follows:

<http://www.qub.ac.uk/directorates/sgc/srecords/Examinations/Postgraduate-Taught/>

On the front page of your dissertation, the Institute of Irish Studies favours the following wording:

*Title of dissertation*

Followed by the words ‘Submitted in part-fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Irish Studies, in the School of History, Anthropology, Philosophy and Politics of Queen’s University Belfast, (month and year).’

**Supervision:**

You will have a named supervisor (occasionally more than one) agreed between yourself, the MA convenor and the supervisor in question. The supervisor should be (under normal circumstances) the member of staff in the Discipline/School most expert in the field in which you intend to write your dissertation. Occasionally staff members will be on research leave and a substitute supervisor will be nominated.

The Supervisor’s role is to guide and advise, not to write your dissertation. This is an extended piece of individual study and must be your own personal product.

The School expects there to be 4-6 formal supervision sessions between supervisor and student in the course of the writing of the dissertation. There is of course no limit on informal meetings, but you need to be aware that your supervisor has other responsibilities.

Because supervision continues over the summer months, you will need to agree in advance with your supervisor (no later than June) a schedule of meetings when both of you will be available in Belfast, or a schedule of email/skype exchanges.

Supervisors may read and comment on only one draft of each chapter or section of a dissertation.

To maintain anonymity and equity in marking, your supervisor will normally be the second examiner of your dissertation; the first examiner will be a member of Irish Studies staff with knowledge of the area. All dissertations are referred to the Institute’s MA external examiner for review and comment.

**Content:**

Examiners of MA dissertations grade the work before them with a number of criteria in mind. These include:

**Research design**

Is the topic appropriately titled and matched to the constraints of a 15k word dissertation?

Is the topic coherently conceived and planned? Is the chapter structure and internal organisation of sections and paragraphs logical and coherent? Is the organisation of material effectively introduced and justified in the ‘Introduction’? If thematically structured, are the themes appropriate?

Has the candidate identified the primary sources (especially those available locally or electronically) most relevant to the topic, and utilised these effectively?

Does the ‘Conclusion’ effectively pull together and summarise the arguments and themes of the dissertation?

**Analysis**

Have appropriate and coherent research questions been identified and stated? Are these original in conception or application?

Has the candidate provided an appropriate and persuasive analytical argument?

Have they demonstrated awareness of the methodological skills necessary to analyse and interpret an appropriate range of primary source materials?

Is the candidate aware of the most relevant and recent scholarly literature available on the subject, and have they contextualised their argument in relation to the existing literature? Have they demonstrated critical awareness of interpretive debates and controversies, and the different methodological approaches underlying these?

Is there an awareness of relevant comparative cases and literatures? If relevant, is there awareness of interdisciplinary approaches to the topic?

Does the dissertation identify problems and themes that might contribute to an agenda for future research?

**Presentation and layou**t

Is there an appropriate scholarly apparatus of references and bibliography? Does the bibliography comply with the academic conventions for dissertations covered in the relevant ‘Research methods’ module? (if you are unsure about which disciplinary conventions to follow, consult the MA convenor).

Has the text been effectively proof-read for spelling and grammar, and properly edited? Is the text legible and comprehensible?

Have ‘facts’ been checked?

Are there (if appropriate) useful and effectively prepared supporting materials (e.g. appendices, reproductions of key sources, etc.)?

Have you avoided plagiarism, i.e. the intentional or non-intentional quotation of work by another person without clearly identifying it us as such (e.g. through quotation marks and proper referencing)?

SCHOOL OF HISTORY, ANTHROPOLOGY, PHILOSOPHY AND POLITICS

RULES FOR THE DISSERTATION MA IRISH STUDIES

2017-18

Students are responsible for familiarising themselves with the methods of assessment used in the modules they are taking, and for making themselves aware of these rules. The School cannot enter into any discussion of individual cases once the deadlines specified below have passed.

1 The dissertation is a double module and is worth 1/3 of final marks for the MA degree. Candidates who pass six taught modules but who do not submit a dissertation may be recommended for a Postgraduate Diploma.

2. Students who fail the Dissertation (i.e. attain a mark below 50%) will be permitted one resubmission attempt. Resubmission must be before the end of the following full semester (end January for full-time and part-time students). Resubmitted dissertations will be marked as normal for consideration at the next MA exam board (February), but capped at the pass mark of 50%. Candidates whose resubmitted dissertation is marked above 40% but below the pass mark at 50% may be recommended for a Postgraduate Diploma.

3. The word-length for the dissertation is a maximum of 15,000 words (including footnotes but excluding appendices and bibliography). The School’s expectation is that the dissertation should be word-processed and double-spaced in 12-point font, and with margins of at least 2.5 cm. [NB: The word length of your dissertation must be included on the title page.]

4. The submission date for the dissertation is Thursday 13 September 2018 by 12pm (full-time students). The submission date for part-time students in their third year of registration is 30 April or the nearest working day thereafter. Part-time students who wish to submit more than one week before the advertised deadline must consult their MA co-ordinator in advance.

5. All students are required to submit one soft-bound hard copy and one electronic copy of their assignment, which must be the same in content and format. The electronic copy of the dissertation must be submitted via TurnitinUK before the 12 noon on the day of the deadline. Submission of coursework is not complete until the hard copy of the coursework is also handed into the School Office no later than 12 noon on the day of the deadline. Students should ensure that their name does not appear on any part of their dissertation. The hard copy must have a completed Assessed Work Cover Sheet stapled to the front, and students will also be required to sign a submission list and declaration of academic integrity. The Assessed Work Cover Sheet is available on the School website.

The soft-bound paper copy of the dissertation should be submitted to the School Office (25 University Square), and must both be accompanied by completed Assessed Coursework forms, which must be signed and dated by a member of office staff. Students presenting their work late will have 5 marks deducted for each working day thereafter, up to a maximum of five working days. Under no circumstances will any full-time students’ work be accepted after 12pm on 20 September 2018 (for part-time students 12pm on 7 May 2018), and a mark of zero will be awarded in respect of any work not submitted by that date.

Students who feel that mitigating circumstances have prevented the presentation of their dissertation on time, but who still submit it before 12pm on 20 September, may seek remission of the penalties for late submission. Applications for the waiving of penalties must be made to the MA Exams Officer within three working days of the original deadline of 13 September, using the official form available from the HAPP Office, and should be accompanied by copies of supporting documentation. Whether remission of penalties is justified will be determined on the basis of regulations laid down by Academic Council. Students should note that the waiving of penalties for late submission will be the exception rather than the rule. Any requests for extensions of deadline beyond what is permitted under these regulations must be made in writing to the MA Exams Officer and supported by medical or other relevant documentation.

6. Because dissertations are marked anonymously, students must ensure that neither their name nor their student number appears on any part of it. A copy of every dissertation submitted for assessment is retained within the School; students are advised to keep an additional copy for their own use. Dissertations should first be submitted bound in soft covers. Hard-bound corrected copies of dissertations graded at distinction or high commendation level will be offered to the University Library.

7. All dissertations should contain an appropriate bibliography of works used (including electronic and manuscript sources), and should also have suitable references at the foot of the page or at the end of the text giving details of the source from which material has been quoted directly or from which a close paraphrase is being offered. Students taking the MA Irish Studies Dissertation may use the referencing system preferred by their lead discipline (e.g. for History this would be IHS rules: <http://www.irishhistoricalstudies.ie/rulesforcontribs.pdf> ). If in doubt, consult your supervisor and ask for a copy of the reference guide used in that discipline.

8. Dissertations must be the candidate’s own work. Students must not copy from the work of other students, and where they use material taken word for word from a source of any kind, they must explicitly acknowledge the source. Any breach of this rule will be regarded as plagiarism, which is defined as the presentation of the work of others as the writer’s own without appropriate acknowledgement. Plagiarism is an extremely serious offence under University regulations. In severe cases of plagiarism a mark of zero may be awarded.

9. Final exams boards for MA programmes will be held in November 2018 (for December graduation) and students will be informed of the results of their dissertation and any other outstanding modules thereafter. For part-time students the finals board will be in June (for July graduation).

Submitting Coursework

To submit your coursework, you must upload an electronic copy of your assignment onto the TurnitinUK website (www.turnitinuk.com) prior 12:00 noon on the stated deadline. A link to this website is also provided in the School sharepoint site.

All full-time and completing part-time MA students must email a copy of their proposal form to the module convenor 5pm on Friday, 16 February 2018.

The School uses a system of anonymous marking, so do not include your name on the assignment. Please include your student number, module code, and title of assignment, and the word count.

Please keep an electronic receipt for all Submissions. All assignments are retained by the School for scrutiny by internal and external examiners.

Registering for TurnItInUK

You will be pre-enrolled for all your modules on TurnItInUK, but you will need to complete your Turnitin registration the first time that you use it.

You will receive a welcome email with temporary password. Log in to www.turnitinuk.com using your @qub.ac.uk email address and this password, and change the password as you prefer. You do not need to create a new account. Any queries should be directed to the main School office.

Word Count Penalty

Students must ensure that they adhere to the word limit set by the Module Convener for any piece of assessed work and should indicate word length of the title page. The word count in assignments is inclusive of ALL in-text references (meaning any footnote or endnote) but NOT the bibliography or any material included in appendix or appendices.

If students breach the upper limit specified, they may gain an unfair advantage and markers are not required to read beyond the stated word limit. Moreover, meeting the stipulated requirements is one of the skills that is being assessed and achieving the stipulated length is directly related to other assessment criteria (such as a concise argument, clear focus, etc).

Work that exceeds the stated maximum, beyond a tolerance of 10%, faces a penalty of 3%.

Extensions and Exceptional Circumstances

As part of the Exceptional Circumstances procedures, students who believe they will miss an assignment deadline because of illness, etc., must request an extension via the ‘Request for an Extension to an Assignment Deadline’ form, either electronically to happ@qub.ac.uk or to the Main Office at 25 University Square. The form should be submitted in advance of the deadline or, in exceptional circumstances, within three days following the stated deadline. Students should ALSO email their Module Convener directly to discuss the reasons for the request and agree a new deadline. Extensions will not normally be longer than five working days.

ALL requests MUST be accompanied by supporting evidence (usually medical documentation as detailed in the guidance on the Request form. Requests without supporting evidence will be rejected.

Students are strongly encouraged to speak to their Personal Tutor or Advisor of Study, as well as their Module Convener, for support and guidance should any circumstances arise that affect their attendance or assessment in their modules.

Plagiarism

The School takes a very severe line on students who plagiarise work. Students who attempt to pass off another’s work as their own will receive a mark of ZERO. In some cases, acts of plagiarism can result in the student failing the entire degree. Remember, plagiarism includes information from books, newspapers, journals and the Internet. All suspected cases of plagiarism will be investigated in line with University procedures.

Marks cannot be awarded twice for the same piece of work, which includes exam answers. Any answer reproducing work previously submitted for assessment will be awarded a mark of ZERO, and any assignment repeating work from another module will be awarded a mark of ZERO. The module convenor will be happy to clarify what constitutes unacceptable repetition of module material.

For details of University Regulations on Academic Offences, see: <http://www.qub.ac.uk/directorates/AcademicStudentAffairs/AcademicAffairs/ExaminationsandAssessment/AcademicOffences/>

The page also provides a link to guidance on how to identify and avoid plagiarism. Please also refer to the School’s Student Handbook Guide for more information about referencing and plagiarism, and advice on essay-writing.

For further help with research, essay writing, referencing, avoiding plagiarism and other similar issues with your studies, please see your module convenor or personal tutor. The Learning Development Service, which is an excellent resource for your continued learning, academic support, and the enhancement of the university experience: <http://www.qub.ac.uk/directorates/sgc/learning/>

Professor Peter Gray . 23 November 2017

Appendix: Dissertation Form To be Submitted by 16 February 2018

**IRS7010 ׀ MA Dissertation in Irish Studies ׀ 2017–2018**

**Please complete this form and email it to p.h.gray@qub.ac.uk. Please include your surname in the saved title of the form, viz: ‘Smith Dissertation form’**.

**Your draft dissertation title should be approved by an agreed supervisor before returning this form.**

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| --- | --- |
| Name:  | Student number: |
| Email:  |  |
| Submission deadline: *[13 Sept 2018 (FT) OR 30 April 2018 (PT)]* |
| Proposed dissertation title: |
| Proposed supervisor(s) and their discipline(s): |
| Key Research questions to be addressed: |
| Outline of source materials or methodology for your dissertation: |
| If the proposed dissertation involves human participants, material or data, please describe any ethical issues potentially raised by it: |
| If the proposed dissertation involves human participants, material, or data and poses ethical issues, has the *Ethics Review Application Form* been completed?  Yes/No |
| Date: |
| Signature of proposed supervisor: |
| Signature of MA Convenor: |