

HIS 411B The Great Hunger: Ireland, Empire, & Famine
Wednesdays, 3:30-6:20pm, MHRA 3204



PROFESSOR: Dr. Jill Bender

OFFICE: MHRA 2116

OFFICE HOURS: Mondays and Tuesdays, 2:30-3:30 p.m., and by appointment

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COURSE DESCRIPTION:

During the mid-nineteenth century, Ireland suffered a series of famines that nearly halved the island's population—in less than one decade, from 1846 to 1855, between 1.1 and 1.5 million people died at the hands of starvation or disease and another 2.1 million emigrated. The difficulties of these years were captured at the time and later recalled through art, literature, music, and more. Indeed, few (if any) events have had a larger impact on Irish history, politics, or national memory than “The Great Hunger.” This course is designed to introduce students to the history of the Irish Famine and its repercussions. Together, we will examine the broad political, social, and cultural impacts of the Famine. Individually, students will conceptualize, research, and write papers on a related topic of their own choosing.

Student Learning Objectives:

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Identify an appropriate research topic and pertinent primary and secondary sources.
2. Critically analyze various primary sources within their historical context.
3. Evaluate historiographical debates within the field of Irish history.
4. Conduct independent historical research and communicate the findings.
5. Develop and support an original written argument.

The following book is **required** and is available for purchase at the university bookstore.

Rampolla, Mary Lynn. *A Pocket Guide to Writing in History*, 8th ed. Bedford/St. Martin's, 2015.

Please note, the assigned readings for this course are designed to provide insight into historical studies of the Irish Famine. If you are interested in a narrative of these events, I am happy to recommend a number of texts available at Jackson Library. In addition, I have placed the following books on reserve for further reference.

Crowley, John, William J Smyth, Michael Murphy, Charlie Roche, Helen Bradley, and Tomás Kelly. *Atlas of the Great Irish Famine*. New York: New York University Press, 2012.

Ó Murchadha, Ciarán. *The Great Famine: Ireland's Agony, 1845-1852*. London: Continuum, 2011.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

Attendance and Participation: The basic format of this course will consist of five weeks of group meetings during which we will discuss assigned readings on the Irish Famine (most readings will be made available via Canvas). After these first several weeks, students will meet individually and collectively with the professor to discuss and assist their progress on independent research projects. Attendance at and participation in both class and individual meetings is mandatory. Five points will be deducted from your participation grade for each absence after the first. Students who consistently arrive late or leave early will be marked absent.

These early weeks will also include short, sourcing exercises designed to familiarize students with library resources.

- ◇ Sourcing Exercise #1
- ◇ Sourcing Exercise #2

Writing Assignments: The primary purpose of this course is to guide students as they write a 15-20 page, research paper. Writing a solid research paper takes time, planning, and rewriting (among other things). This is not a project that can be completed the night before it is due. In order to emphasize the importance of planning and editing, I have developed a number of short assignments that will walk you through the many steps involved in producing a research paper.

Below I have identified these steps and provided brief descriptions of each assignment. More information will be provided as the semester progresses.

Step 1: Identify a research question

Identifying a research topic often begins with a question. Not a question that can be answered with a short yes or no or even a simple sentence. Instead, you want to ask a question that will provide deeper insight into the past. As you read the assigned readings during the first weeks of the semester, think about the questions that historians are asking about the Irish Famine. How do they answer these questions? What sources do they use to answer these questions? What is their argument? What questions are left unanswered? This final question—what questions are left unanswered—will point you in the direction of your own research question.

Writing Assignment #1, 3-5 Research Questions: Please write 3-5 research questions. When developing your list of possible questions, remember to consider the following: can this question be answered in one sentence or does this topic have potential to provide insight into the past? Is this topic feasible, both in regards to length and to sources? (SLO 1)

Writing Assignment #2, Paragraph: Write a short paragraph (4-5 sentences) explaining your proposed topic and include a related research question. (SLO 1)

Step 2: Building a research topic

Once you have a question in mind, you will want to start to find answers. The first step is to identify possible sources. What have historians already written about this topic? What sources have they used? What sources would allow you to find answers to your own question and are these sources available at Jackson Library, through appropriate internet archives, or via Interlibrary Loan?

Writing Assignment #3, Research Proposal and Bibliography: Your research proposal should identify 1) your topic 2) the historiographical discussion with which you plan to engage and 3) a proposed bibliography. (SLO 1, 3)

Step 3: Conducting Research

Once you have identified possible primary sources, you need to read and analyze them.

Writing Assignment #4, Primary Source Analysis: Write a 1-2 page analysis of a primary source document related to your research paper. Please identify, contextualize, and analyze the source. In particular, explain how this source advances your argument. Include a copy of the primary source with your analysis. (SLO 2)

Step 4: Creating an argument

Once you begin your primary research, what answers do you find? What patterns can you detect in the sources? And what is the best way to present this argument? Often, this step involves significant outlining and writing as you think about and reconsider the best ways to organize your evidence so that it makes sense to a larger audience.

Writing Assignment #5, Outline: Your outline should include an introduction that 1) introduces the topic in an engaging manner 2) sets out the argument (including historiographical contribution) and 3) prepares the reader. Your full outline should then include detailed bullet points and section paragraphs that make the development of the argument clear. (SLO 1, 3, 4, and 5)

Writing Assignment #6, Presentation: During weeks 11 and 12, each student will be required to present their research to the entire class. Oral presentations provide an excellent opportunity to both synthesize and articulate your findings. More information will be provided during week 9. (SLO 1, 2, 3, and 4)

Step 5: Writing and writing and writing

Writing a research paper rarely (never?) occurs in one go. Rather, you will want to write a draft, receive peer reviews, and rewrite (editing in response to reviews). Furthermore, reviewing each other's work will strengthen your own writing by providing you with an opportunity to consider other arguments and how to present your questions and critiques in a helpful and constructive manner.

Writing Assignment #7, Polished Rough Draft: Your polished rough draft should be as close to a final draft as you can produce without formal feedback (10-12 pages, minimum), and should include endnotes/footnotes and a bibliography. (SLO 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5)

Writing Assignment #8, Peer Review: Please provide a one-page, typed review of your peers' papers (each student will review two papers) and provide copies to me as well. Be kind, but also offer constructive feedback—What are the paper's strengths? Where is there room for improvement? Can the argument be clearer or better supported in places?

Final Papers (SLO 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5): Students will produce a 15-20 page research paper based on primary and secondary sources. Although paper topics will vary according to individual student interests, all papers must relate to the course theme of the Irish Famine. The final paper with bibliography and notes will be **due by 5pm, Friday, November 30th**.

Due Dates: The assignments for this class are designed to build upon each other and guide students toward the production of an original research paper. As a result, it is essential that students turn in all assignments, on time. Any late assignments will not be accepted, and a 0 will be recorded.

Academic Integrity Policy: Please cite sources using footnotes or endnotes. Plagiarism is a breach of the university's academic integrity policy. For more information on this policy, see <https://osrr.uncg.edu/academic-integrity/violations-and-sanctions/plagiarism/>.

Final Grades will be calculated according to the following:

Participation and Attendance (both in class and during individual meetings):	10%
Sourcing Exercises #1 and #2	5%
Writing Assignments:	50% (total)
#1 3-5 Research Questions & #2 Paragraph	5%
#3 Research Proposal and Bibliography	5%
#4 Primary Source Analysis	5%
#5 Outline	5%
#6 Presentations	10%
#7 Polished Rough Draft	15%
#8 Peer Reviews	5%
Final Paper:	35%

Grading Scale

A: 93-100	B: 83-86	C: 73-76	D: 63-66
A-: 90-92	B-: 80-82	C-: 70-72	D-: 60-62
B+: 87-89	C+: 77-79	D+: 67-69	F: 0-59

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

UNCG seeks to adhere to the ADA and provide equal access to a college education. Students with any questions or needs related to academic accommodations for disabilities should contact the Office of Accessibility Resources and Services (OARS), located in the Elliot University Center, Suite 215. For more information, please see <https://ods.uncg.edu>.

CLASS MEETINGS

*This schedule is subject to change at the professor's discretion

Week 1: Aug 15 Introduction

UNIT I: EXAMPLES

- Week 2:** **Aug 22** **Getting our Bearings: The Great Irish Famine**
Readings:
Boylan, Ciara. "Famine." In *The Princeton History of Modern Ireland*,
edited by Richard Bourke and Ian McBride, 403-424.
Princeton University Press, 2016.
Rampolla, *A Pocket Guide to Writing in History*, ch. 1.
- Week 3:** **Aug 29** **Who is to blame for the Hungry Years?**
Readings:
Gray, Peter. "Ideology and the Famine." In *The Great Irish Famine*,
edited by Cathal Póirtéir, 86-103. Dublin: Mercier Press,
1995.
_____. "National Humiliation and the Great Hunger: Fast and
Famines in 1847." *Irish Historical Studies*, vol. 32, no. 126
(Nov., 2000): 193-216.
Haines, Robin. "Introduction: Charles Trevelyan and his critics." In
Charles Trevelyan and the Great Irish Famine. Dublin: Four
Courts Press, 2004.
Nally, David P. "Introduction: Colonial biopolitics and the
functions of famine." In *Human Encumbrances: Political
Violence and the Great Irish Famine*. South Bend, IN: Notre
Dame Press, 2011.
Rampolla, *A Pocket Guide to Writing in History*, ch. 2 and pgs. 24-31.
- Aug 29 **Due:** Sourcing Exercise #1
- Week 4:** **Sept 5** **Young Ireland and the Famine**
Reading:
Davis, Richard P. "Introduction: The Historical Context of Young
Ireland." In *The Young Ireland Movement*. Dublin: Gill and
Macmillan; Totowa, New Jersey: Barnes & Noble Books,
1987.
Kinealy, Christine. "Invisible Nationalists: Women and the 1848
Rising in Ireland." In *1848, the year the world turned?*, edited
by Kay Boardman and Christine Kinealy, 130-145.
Newcastle, UK: Cambridge Scholars Pub., 2007.
_____. "Introduction." In *Repeal and revolution: 1848 in Ireland*.
Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2009.
Rampolla, *A Pocket Guide to Writing in History*, pgs. 31-40.
- Sept 5 **Due:** Sourcing Exercise #2

- Week 5:** **Sept 12** **Famine, Migration, and Diaspora**
Reading:
Fitzpatrick, David. "Flight From Famine." In *The Great Irish Famine*, edited by Cathal Póirtéir. Dublin: Mercier Press, 1995.
Kenny, Kevin. "Irish Emigration, c. 1845-1900." In *The Cambridge History of Ireland*. Vol. III, 1730-1880, edited by James Kelly, 666-687. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018.
Miller, Kerby A. "Introduction." In *Emigrants and Exiles: Ireland and the Irish Exodus to North America*. New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985.
Rampolla, *A Pocket Guide to Writing in History*, pgs. 82-89.
- Sept 12 **Due:** Assignment # 1, 3-5 Research Questions. Please type your questions and bring them to class.
- Sept 17 **Due:** Assignment #2, Paragraph. Please upload to our course Canvas site by 5pm on Monday, September 17.

UNIT II: RESEARCHING, ORGANIZING, AND WRITING

- Week 6:** **Sept 19** **Library Workshop 1: Primary Sources & Library Workshop 2: Archival Sources**
- Week 7:** **Sept 26** **Individual Meetings**
Reading:
Rampolla, *A Pocket Guide to Writing in History*, pgs. 89-102 and ch. 6.
- Sept 28 **Due:** Assignment #3, Research Proposal and Bibliography. Please upload to course Canvas site by 5pm on Friday, September 28th.
- Week 8:** **Oct 3** **Class Meetings: Discuss Research Proposals**
- Oct 5 **Due:** Assignment #4, Primary Source Analysis. Please upload to course Canvas site by 5pm on Friday, October 5th.
- Week 9:** **Oct 10** **Class Meeting**
Oct 15 **Due:** Assignment #5, Outline. Please upload to Canvas by 5 pm, Monday, Oct. 15th.

Week 10: Oct 17 Individual Meetings
Reading:
Rampolla, *A Pocket Guide to Writing in History*, 69-81 and ch. 7.

UNIT III: WRITING, REVISING, AND POLISHING

Week 11: Oct 24 Presentations (Group 1)

Week 12: Oct 31 Presentations (Group 2)

Week 13: Nov 7 Rough Drafts Due!!

Nov 7 **Due:** Assignment #7, Polished Rough Draft (complete with notes and bibliography). Please upload your draft to the course Canvas site by 3:20pm and bring **two** hardcopies with you to class.

Week 14: Nov 14 Discussions of Rough Drafts

Nov 14 **Due:** Assignment #8 Peer Review. Please bring **two** copies of your peer review to class.

Week 15: Nov 21 *No Class*

Week 16: Nov 28 Final Comments and Conclusion

Nov 30 **Due: **FINAL PAPERS ***** Please upload a copy to Canvas by 5pm on Friday, November 30.
