

HIS 411B The Great Hunger: Ireland, Empire, & Famine
Mondays and Wednesday, 3:30-4:45, Bryan 121



PROFESSOR: Dr. Jill Bender

OFFICE: MHRA 2111

STUDENT OFFICE HOURS: Mondays, 1:00-2:00pm (If this day/time does not work for you, please email me to make an appointment for a different time.)

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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 original research by investigating and interpreting primary and secondary sources. [Historical Research]
5. Use evidence-based reasoning to interpret the past coherently while developing and presenting an original argument, orally and in writing. [Historical Interpretation]

Reading & Technology Requirements:

The following book is **recommended** as a good reference book, but it is not required. It 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 or online. In addition, I have placed the following on reserve for further reference:

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

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

Safety permitting, all meetings will take place face-to-face. I reserve the right to move meetings online, if necessary. As a result, please ensure that you have access to a strong internet connection, a computer or tablet with audio and microphone capabilities, and the latest Chrome browser (Canvas works the best with Chrome). Should you need technical assistance at any point, please contact the university's Information Technology Services (ITS) at 336/256-8324 or 6-TECH@uncg.edu. See the ITS website, <https://its.uncg.edu/help/>, for more information and hours of service.

COURSE FORMAT & REQUIREMENTS:

Attendance and Participation: The basic format of this course will consist of six weeks of group meetings during which we will discuss assigned readings on the Irish Famine (most readings will be made available via Canvas). After the first several weeks, students will meet individually or

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.

The 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. These presentations provide an excellent opportunity to both synthesize and articulate your findings. More information will be provided in advance. (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 11:59pm, Friday, December 3rd**.

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. Should you anticipate any difficulty meeting these deadlines, please contact the professor as soon as possible.

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	10%
#4 Primary Source Analysis	5%
#5 Outline	5%
#6 Presentations	10%
#7 Polished Rough Draft	10%
#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 comply fully with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Students requesting accommodations based on a disability must be registered with the Office of Accessibility Resources and Services (OARS). If you wish to request accommodations, please start the process by contacting OARS at 215 Elliott University Center, 336-334-5440, oars@uncg.edu.

UNCG Covid-19 Policies

As we return for fall 2021, the campus community must recognize and address continuing concerns about physical and emotional safety, especially as we will have many more students, faculty, and staff on campus than in the last academic year. As such, all students, faculty, and staff are required to uphold UNCG's culture of care by actively engaging in behaviors that limit the spread of COVID-19. Such actions include, but are not limited to, the following:

- [Following face-covering guidelines](#)
- Engaging in proper hand-washing hygiene when possible
- Self-monitoring for symptoms of COVID-19
- Staying home if you are ill
- Complying with directions from health care providers or public health officials to quarantine or isolate if ill or exposed to someone who is ill.

Instructors will have seating charts for their classes. These are important for facilitating contact tracing should there be a confirmed case of COVID-19. Students must sit in their assigned seats at every class meeting and must not move furniture. Students should not eat or drink during class time.

To make it easier for students to hear their instructor and/or read lips and if conditions permit, instructors who are fully vaccinated and who can maintain at least six feet of distance from students may remove their masks while actively teaching if they choose, but will wear a mask at all other times while in the classroom, including during the periods before and after class

A limited number of disposable masks will be available in classrooms for students who have forgotten theirs. Face coverings will also be available for purchase in the UNCG Campus Bookstore. Students who do not follow masking requirements will be asked to put on a face covering or leave the classroom to retrieve one and only return when they follow the basic requirements to uphold standards of safety and care for the UNCG community. Once students have a face covering, they are permitted to re-enter a class already in progress. Repeated issues may result in conduct action. The course policies regarding attendance and academics remain in effect for partial or full absence from class due to lack of adherence with face covering and other requirements.

For instances where the Office of Accessibility Resources and Services (OARS) has granted accommodations regarding wearing face coverings, students should contact their instructors to

develop appropriate alternatives to class participation and/or activities as needed. Instructors or the student may also contact [OARS](#) (336.334.5440) who, in consultation with Student Health Services, will review requests for accommodations.

CLASS MEETINGS

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

Week 1

Aug 18: Introduction: Hunger and Famine

Read:

- Malthus, Thomas. *An Essay on the Principle of Population*. London: Printed for J. Johnson, 1798. Excerpt from chap. 7, ebook.
 - Sen, Amartya. *Poverty and Famines: An Essay on Entitlement and Deprivation*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981. Excerpts from chap. 1.
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UNIT I: EXAMPLES

Week 2

Aug 23: Pre-Famine Ireland

Read:

- Ó Murchadha, Ciarán. "An Emerging People: The Pre-Famine Irish." In *The Great Famine: Ireland's Agony, 1845-1852*. London; New York; New Delhi; Sydney: Bloomsbury, 2011. 1-26.

Aug 25: Getting our Bearings: The Great Irish Famine

Read:

- Gray, Peter. "The Great Famine, 1845-1850." In *The Cambridge History of Ireland*, vol. III, 1730-1880. Edited by James Kelly, 639-665. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018.

Week 3

Aug 30: Who is to blame for the Hungry Years?

Read:

- 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.

Sept 1: Blame and Historiography

Read:

- Individually selected readings

Recommended Reading:

- Rampolla, *A Pocket Guide to Writing in History*, ch. 2 and pgs. 24-31.

Due: Sourcing Exercise #1

Week 4

Sept 6: *No Class*

Sept 8: Young Ireland and the Famine

Read:

- 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.
- Select Primary Source Documents

Week 5

Sept 13: Famine, Migration, and Diaspora I: Emigrants and Immigrants

Read:

- Kinealy, Christine. "Their Sorrowful Pilgrimage: Emigration, 1847-1855." *This Great Calamity: The Irish Famine, 1845-52*. Dublin: Gill & Macmillan, 1994.
- McMahon, Cian T. *The Coffin Ship: Life and Death at Sea during the Great Irish Famine*. New York: New York University Press, 2021: 1-14.

Sept 15: Famine, Migration, and Diaspora II: Identifying Primary Sources

Read:

- [Documents on the Grey Nuns](#)
- [Irish Emigration Database](#)
- Newspaper articles on the Irish Orphans: [Australia](#), [Ireland](#), or [Britain](#)
- **Due:** Sourcing Exercise #2

UNIT II: RESEARCHING, ORGANIZING, AND WRITING

Week 6

Sept 20: Library Workshop I

Recommended Reading:

- Rampolla, *A Pocket Guide to Writing in History*, pgs. 82-97

Due: Writing Assignment # 1, 3-5 Research Questions. Please type your questions and bring them to class.

Sept 22: Library Workshop II

Week 7

Sept 27: Individual Meetings

Due: Assignment #2, Paragraph. Please upload to our course Canvas site by 11:59pm.

Sept 29: Individual Meetings

Recommended Reading:

Rampolla, *A Pocket Guide to Writing in History* pgs. 98-102 and ch. 6.

Week 8

Oct 4: Proposing a topic

Due: Assignment #3, Research Proposal and Bibliography. Please upload to course Canvas site by 11:59pm.

Oct 6: Discuss Research Proposals

Week 9

Oct 11: ***No Class Meeting—Enjoy your break!***

Oct 13: Outlining your research

Due: Assignment #4, Primary Source Analysis. Please upload to course Canvas site in advance of class (by 3:30pm).

Week 10

Oct 18: *No Class Meeting*

Oct 20: *No Class Meeting*

Due: Assignment #5, Outline. Please upload to Canvas by 11:59pm.

UNIT III: WRITING, REVISING, AND POLISHING

Week 11

Oct 25: Individual Meetings

Recommended Reading:

Rampolla, *A Pocket Guide to Writing in History*, 69-81 and ch. 7.

Oct 27: Presentations (Group 1)

Week 12

Nov 1: Presentations (Group 2)

Nov 3: Presentations (Group 3)

Week 13

Nov 8: Class Meeting

Nov 10: *No Class Meeting* **Rough Drafts Due!!**

Due: Assignment #7, Polished Rough Draft (complete with notes and bibliography). Upload your draft to the course Canvas site by 11:59pm.

Week 14

Nov 15: *No Class Meeting* We will not meet as a class on Monday, November 13th. Instead, please take this time to read the rough drafts which have been assigned to you.

Nov 17: Discuss Rough Drafts

Due: Assignment #8 Peer Review. Please upload your peer review to Canvas in advance of our class meeting (by 3:30pm).

Week 15

Nov 22: *No Class Meeting* (I will be available for individual meetings)

Nov. 24: ***No Class Meeting—Enjoy your break!***

Week 16

Nov 29: Class Meeting

Dec 1: Final Comments and Conclusions

****FINAL PAPERS DUE**** Please upload a copy to Canvas by 11:59pm on Friday, December 3, 2021.
