

**STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK  
COLLEGE OF TECHNOLOGY  
CANTON, NEW YORK**



**COURSE OUTLINE**

**ENGL 306 – IRISH PRISON LITERATURE**

**Prepared By: Sean O'Brien, PhD**

**SCHOOL OF BUSINESS AND LIBERAL ARTS**

**HUMANITIES DEPARTMENT**

**MAY 2015**

- A. **TITLE: Irish Prison Literature**
- B. **COURSE NUMBER: ENGL 306**
- C. **CREDIT HOURS: 3**
- D. **WRITING INTENSIVE COURSE: Yes**
- E. **COURSE LENGTH: 15 weeks**
- F. **SEMESTER(S) OFFERED: Fall or Spring**
- G. **HOURS OF LECTURE: 3 lecture hours per week**

H. **CATALOG DESCRIPTION:**

This course uses works of literature to assist students' understanding of Ireland, the British Empire and the history of modern imprisonment. Along with the church, the university and the army, the prison is one of the central institutions in Irish history, and literature has traditionally been a means by which prisoners protest, resist, and critique their harrowing experiences. This course examines work written by men and women during and after their incarceration.

I. **PRE-REQUISITES:**

ENGL 101 or 102; completion of 45 credit hours with a minimum 2.0 GPA

J. **GOALS (STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES):**

By the end of this course, the student will be able to:

<i>Course Objective</i>	<i>Institutional SLO</i>
a. <i>apply</i> critical thinking skills by <i>creating</i> and answering questions raised by the readings.	1. Communication 2. Crit. Thinking 4. Inter-Intrapersonal Skills
b. <i>understand</i> the history of the institutional prison through literature.	2. Crit. Thinking
c. <i>analyze</i> how Irish prison literature connects to historical and contemporary social, political, and cultural issues.	1. Communication 2. Crit. Thinking 4. Inter-Intrapersonal Skills
d. <i>demonstrate</i> knowledge of the conventions and methods of at least one of the humanities in addition to those encompassed by other knowledge areas required by the General Education program.	1. Communication 2. Crit. Thinking

K. **TEXTS:**

- Behan, Brendan. *Complete Plays*. London: Methuen, 2001.  
 Clarke, Kathleen. *Kathleen Clarke: Revolutionary Woman*. Dublin: O'Brien Press Ltd; 2008  
 Sands, Bobby. *Writings From Prison*. Cork: Mercier, 1997.  
 Stoker, Bram. *Dracula*. New York: Penguin 2003.

Wilde, Oscar. *De Profundis & Other Writings*. New York: Penguin, 1976.

**L. REFERENCES:**

Deane, Seamus. *The Field Day Anthology of Irish Writing*. Derry: Field Day, 1991.

Feldman, Alan. *Formations of Violence: The Narrative of the Body and Political Terror in Northern Ireland*. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1991.

Foucault, Michel. *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. Trans. Alan Sheridan. New York: Random House, 1995.

Goffman, Erving. *Asylums: Essays on the Social Situation of Mental Patients and Other Inmates*. New York: Doubleday, 1961.

Johnston, Norman Bruce. *Forms of Constraint: a History of Prison Architecture*. Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2000.

Morris, Norval and David J. Rothman eds. *The Oxford History of the Prison: the Practice of Punishment in Western Society*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1995.

Radzinowicz, Leon and Roger Hood. *The Emergence of Penal Policy in Victorian and Edwardian England*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1990.

**M. EQUIPMENT: Technology Enhanced Classroom with Xtron desk.**

**N. GRADING METHOD: A-F**

**O. MEASUREMENT CRITERIA/METHODS:**

- Written Reports
- Written Exercises
- Critical Research Project
- Participation

**P. DETAILED COURSE OUTLINE: (must use the outline format listed below)**

- I. Introduction
  - A. Why Humanities?
  - B. Why Prison?
  - C. Why Literature?
- II. Irish History: An Overview
- III. The Idea of the Prison
- IV. The Prison in Eighteenth-Century Ireland
  - A. Penal Laws
  - B. Wolfe Tone
  - C. Robert Emmet
- V. Transporting Young Ireland
  - A. Thomas Davis' *The Nation*
  - B. John Mitchel's *Jail Journal*
- VI. Fenians in Convict Prisons

- A. Jeremiah O'Donovan Rossa's *Recollections*
- B. Michael Davitt's *Leaves from a Prison Diary*
- C. Tom Clarke's *Glimpses of an Irish Felon's Prison Life*
- VII. Oscar Wilde
  - A. Letters to the *Daily Chronicle*
  - B. *The Ballad of Reading Gaol*
  - C. *De Profundis*
- VIII. Easter 1916 and the War of Independence
  - A. Kathleen Clarke's *Autobiography*
  - B. Con. Markievicz's *Prison Letters*
  - C. Maud Gonne's *Servant of the Queen*
- IX. Partition and Aftermath: Brendan Behan
  - A. *Borstal Boy*
  - B. *Quare Fellow*
- X. The Cage, the Kesh and the Troubles
  - A. Overview of the Troubles
  - B. The Hunger Strikes
  - C. Prisoners, Ex-Prisoners and the Good Friday Agreement
- XI. Literary Confinement: Comparison with Bram Stoker's *Dracula*