

History 200

Historical Studies

Irish Migrations to North America & Other Destinations

This section of Historical Studies 200 fulfills Part B of the General Education Communication Requirement for graduation. Part B courses focus on enhancing the students' skills in research, writing, and oral communications as a primary part of the pedagogical mission of the course, and they must include a sequence of at least eight information-gathering and writing assignments that lead to the production of a total of 30 to 35 pages of prose. They must also provide regular opportunities for individual consultation with the instructor, for receiving feedback on assignments, and for revising work. The workload is not trivial, but it is also not overwhelming; for example, the revision of a written assignment doubles the number of pages contributed by it to the ultimate total.

The focus of the seminar is emigration from Ireland to various destinations. Among the nations of the world, Ireland has experienced the highest level of emigration sustained over the longest period of time. Today, the island of Ireland has a population roughly half the size it was in the middle of the nineteenth century. Most of those who departed the island over the last 400 years went to England's colonies North America or to the United States. Many, however, went – and are going – to other lands around the globe.

During the first half of the term, students will read three books that will introduce the subject. Those are: Patrick Griffin's, *The People with No Name: Ireland's Ulster Scots, America's Scots Irish, and the Creation of a British Atlantic World*; Kevin Kenny's *The American Irish*; and Ray O'Hanlon's *The New Irish Americans*. Students will write brief reports on parts of the books, and will take turns leading discussions of their contents. They will likewise receive an introduction to basic historical research. In particular, they will learn to identify topics and to build bibliographies for the examination of them.

During the second half of the term, students will produce a ten-page paper on some topic relating to Irish emigration. They will also report their findings to the seminar. The topics will focus on events in Ireland, such as the Famine of the 1840s, or on the experiences of the Irish in a country of destination. I shall provide students with a list of potential topics and readings, including a number that will treat the Irish experience not only in the United States but also in Canada, in England and Scotland, and Australia and New Zealand. Students, however, will also have the option to develop topics of their own choosing, including ones that treat the experiences of Scots, another important Celtic emigrant group from the British Isles.

Students will submit their written assignments, by email, in the format of computer files. I intend to give careful criticism to every writing assignment and to return the edited document by email. Students will then have the opportunity to make revisions.

Tentative breakdown of assignments:

A short essay on each of the three readings. (With revisions, a total of 12 to 18 pages).

Two oral presentations related to the three readings.

Definition of a research topic and creation of a bibliography to study it.

A ten-page final paper. (With revisions, a total of 20 pages).

Presentation related to the final paper.