

University of Wisconsin-Madison  
Department of History  
Semester II, 2007-2008

History 365      REVOLUTION AND NATIONALISM IN IRELAND      Prof. James Donnelly  
1780 TO THE PRESENT

COURSE DESCRIPTION

"Life springs from death," cried a famous Irish rebel in 1915, "and from the graves of patriot men and women spring living nations." The British, he continued, "have left us our Fenian dead, and while Ireland holds these graves, Ireland unfree shall never be at peace." Since the 1790s Irish revolutionary nationalism has drawn much of its strength from this cult of the dead celebrated by Patrick Pearse in 1915. The Irish revolutionary tradition, however, was long denied its goal. Time after time, revolutionary republicanism either failed to arouse mass support, as in 1848, 1867, and 1916, or having done so, as in 1798, was crushed nevertheless. One of our objectives in this course will be to understand the reasons for these repeated defeats. But it was a central aspect of Irish nationalism that even the so-called constitutional nationalists, who rejected violence as the means of overthrowing British rule, were not without sympathy for the revolutionary tradition. We shall therefore be concerned to examine the succession of constitutional nationalist movements not only in their own right but also with an eye to the influence which the revolutionary tradition exercised over them. Finally, we will explore why it was that southern Ireland owed the degree of independence which it achieved in 1921-22 not to the constitutional variety of nationalism, dominant as it usually was, but rather to the violent revolutionary tradition. No doubt the triumph of 1921-22 was incomplete, but it was still substantial. The lesson of this triumph after repeated defeat is one of the things that gave such desperate courage and determination to the Provisional I.R.A. from the late 1960s to the late 1990s, when at last the Belfast Agreement of 1998 fundamentally transformed the politics of Northern Ireland.

LECTURES

Lectures two days a week (TR, 11-12:15), supplemented by weekly discussion meetings and audio-visual presentations.

EXAMS

Besides a final exam, there will be either one or two hour exams, depending upon the decision of the students during the first week of class.

## GRADING SYSTEM

If the students decide to have only one hour exam plus the final, the grade for the course will be determined on the following basis: active interest and regular participation in discussion, 15 percent; hour exam, 35 percent; final exam, 50 percent. If, on the other hand, the students decide to have two hour exams, plus the final, a number of grading options will be offered, allowing students to determine, within broad limits, how they wish their grade for the course to be determined. How the options work will be explained on the first day of class.

## REQUIRED READINGS

Foster, Roy F., ed., The Oxford Illustrated History of Ireland (Oxford University Press paperback). This will be our textbook.

Donnelly, James S., Jr., The Great Potato Irish Famine (Sutton Publishing paperback).

Jackson, Alvin, Home Rule: An Irish History, 1800-2000 (Oxford University Press paperback).

Hart, Peter, The I.R.A. and Its Enemies: Violence and Community in Cork, 1916-1923 (Oxford University Press paperback).

Moloney, Ed, A Secret History of the IRA (W.W. Norton paperback).

## GENERAL COURSE OUTLINE

<u>Week</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Required Reading</u>
1/22-1/25	1. Seventeenth- and Eighteenth-Century Ireland	Foster
1/28-2/1	2. Protestant Nationalism and the United Irishmen	Foster
2/4-2/8	3. The Rebellion of 1798 and the Union	Foster; Donnelly
2/11-2/15	4. Catholic Emancipation, Repeal, and the Famine	Foster; Donnelly
2/18-2/22	5. Famine “Memory” and Fenianism	Donnelly; Jackson
2/25-2/29	6. The Home Rule Movement under Butt and Parnell	Jackson
3/3-3/7	7. The Land War, 1879-1903	Jackson
3/10-3/14	8. The “Irishing” of Ireland: Gaelic League, Gaelic Athletic Association, and Literary Revival	Jackson; Hart
3/24-3/28	9. The Home Rule Crisis: Ulster Blocks the Way, 1906-14	Hart; Jackson
3/31-4/4	10. The Easter Rising and the Sinn Féin Revolution, 1916-21	Hart; Jackson
4/7-4/11	11. From Free State to Republic: The Ascendancy of de Valera	Jackson
4/14-4/18	12. Northern Ireland under Home Rule	Jackson; Moloney
4/21-4/25	13. From Civil Rights to the “Supergrass” Trials	Moloney
4/28-5/2	14. From Hunger Strikes to the 1994 Cease-Fire	Moloney
5/5-5/9	15. The Making of the Belfast Agreement and Beyond	Moloney; Jackson