

Part II, Paper 8

Advanced medieval Irish language and literature

CO-ORDINATOR: DR MÁIRE NÍ MHAONAIGH

This course continues Anglo-Saxon, Norse, and Celtic Tripos Part I, Paper 8. It is intended to give students a deeper understanding of the language and literature of Medieval Ireland from their beginnings to the end of the Middle Ages. Teaching is conducted in a series of 36 text classes (classes are twice-weekly in the Michaelmas and Lent terms, and weekly in the Easter term) where a chronologically and thematically varied selection of set texts will be studied for both their literary and linguistic content. Students will be expected to prepare designated textual passages in advance and to give a number of short presentations on specific topics pertaining to the texts. Classes in the third term will also provide practice in the translation of unseen passages. University text classes will be supplemented by College teaching in the form of a series of bi-weekly seminars on particular aspects of medieval Irish literature in either the Michaelmas or Lent terms. Students will be required to read for the seminars in advance and to give a short presentation on one aspect of their choice. They are encouraged to submit all presentations in writing for more detailed comment and to submit essays on particular topics for comment throughout the year.

By the end of the course, students should have advanced their reading knowledge of Old and Middle Irish, acquired a basic reading knowledge of Early Modern Irish and gained a deeper understanding of the language of Medieval Ireland in all its stages. In addition, they should have analysed in detail a representative sample of Medieval Irish literary texts drawn from various time periods and genres, and advanced their knowledge of the rich and varied corpus of Medieval Irish literature as a whole.

The course is examined at the end of the academic year in a single three-hour Tripos examination paper. Students will be required to translate an unseen passage (20%), and to answer three questions (from a total of about five) on specific set texts (each question is worth 15%). The fourth question (35%) will be a general essay question on a specific aspect of Medieval Irish literature.