

## Irish Society & Culture

### Assessments:

Final Examination	50%
Continuous Assessment Assignment	50%

### Course Objectives:

1. Identify and discuss the reasons for Ireland's economic boom – "The Celtic Tiger" – and the two phases in its recent economic growth.
2. Examine the serious economic challenges facing Ireland and future prospects for Irish economy & society.
3. Explore the social impact of the Celtic Tiger and – has the rising economic tide lifted all boats?
4. Discuss the competing demands of economic growth versus environmental and cultural heritage.
5. Explore how contemporary Irish cinema reflects recent cultural, economic and social changes.

### Course Content:

1. Introduction to the Irish Economy and Reasons for Previous Poor Economic Performance
  - A profile of the Irish economy will be presented – key current Irish economic indicators and how they compare internationally.
  - Ireland's historically poor economic performance will be discussed: Why did Ireland remain so poor for so long?
  - The economic turning point in the late 1950s will be explored: Laying the early foundations of the Celtic Tiger.
2. The Celtic Tiger: Explaining Ireland's Economic Boom
  - Changes in key economic indicators over time will be presented.
  - The background to the transformation in Ireland's economic fortunes will be reviewed, including the important turning point in government macroeconomic policy in the late 1980s.
  - The main reasons for the emergence of the Celtic Tiger will then be discussed in detail.
  - The two phases in recent Irish economic growth will be discussed as background to the section 3 of the course.
3. Challenges and Future Prospects for the Irish Economy
  - Key challenges facing the Irish economy today and into the future will be discussed in the form of a SWOT analysis.
  - How can the government and the private sector respond to these challenges?
  - What are the forecasts for the Irish economy?
4. The Social & Cultural Impact of the Celtic Tiger
  - The social impact and consequences of the Celtic Tiger will be discussed, including topics such as
    - Quality of life: Economic growth leads to happiness?
    - Trends in income inequality and poverty during the boom

- Quality of employment: opportunities for everyone?
- Negotiating a work–life balance
- Impact of the Celtic Tiger on health and education
- Housing boom and suburbanisation: family-friendly communities?
- Demographics: Changing family structure
- Immigration: Opportunities and challenges
- Crime and its consequences

#### 5. Economic Progress versus Environmental Protection

- A discussion of recent high-profile case studies — *Shell To Sea* and *Save Tara* — that illustrate the potential negative trade-off between economic growth and environment and heritage protection
- Conclusion — Celtic Tiger: The best of times?

#### 6. The Celtic Tiger Onscreen

- A brief discussion on
  - How Ireland and the Irish have traditionally been portrayed in films directed by foreigners
  - The legacy of history in the themes of films made by Irish directors
- Explore how contemporary Irish film directors are attempting to reflect recent economic and social changes in Ireland

#### Reading List:

Fahey, T et al., *Best of Times? The Social Impact of the Celtic Tiger*, IPA, Dublin, 2007

O'Hagan, J.W. (editor), *The Economy of Ireland*, Gill and Macmillan, Dublin, 2005

Clinch, P et al. *After the Celtic Tiger*, O'Brien Press, Dublin, 2002

Mac Sharry, P., *The Making of the Celtic Tiger: The Inside Story of Ireland's Boom Economy*, Mercier, Cork, 2000.

Allen, K., *The Celtic Tiger – the Myth of Social Partnership in Ireland*, Manchester University Press, Manchester, 2000

Sweeney, P., *The Celtic Tiger*, Oaktree Press, Dublin, 1999

O'Hearn, D., *Inside the Celtic Tiger: The Irish Economy and the Asian Model*, Pluto Press, London, 1998

Kennedy, Giblin and McHugh, *The Economic Development of Ireland in the Twentieth Century*, Routledge, 1988.

Corcoran, M et al., *Irish Sociological Chronicles*, vols. 1 to 5, IPA, Dublin. 1998 – 2006.

#### Useful Internet Sites

[www.esri.ie](http://www.esri.ie)

[www.cso.ie](http://www.cso.ie)

[www.ireland.com](http://www.ireland.com)

[www.economist.com](http://www.economist.com)

[www.finfacts.ie/irecon.htm](http://www.finfacts.ie/irecon.htm)

[www.forfas.ie](http://www.forfas.ie)

[www.idaireland.com](http://www.idaireland.com)

[www.nesc.ie/publications.asp](http://www.nesc.ie/publications.asp)