FAH 92: Early Irish Art

Spring 2013
JAXL 5
T/R 10:30-11:45

Prof. Karen Overbey

Office Hours:
T 1:00-2:30 pm and by appointment
11 Talbot Ave #202
karen.overbey@tufts.edu

Description and Goals
This course examines works of early Irish art in their cultural contexts: political, economic, artistic and religious. From pre-Christian passage-tombs to Hiberno-Norman castles, the focus of the course will be on meaning, reception and audience. We will discuss the ways in which the material culture of early Ireland reflected and impacted upon social attitudes and social hierarchies. Although an island on the geographic fringe of medieval Europe, Ireland in the Middle Ages was by no means isolated. One purpose of this course will be to consider early Ireland in its “global” context: the coming of Christianity, the travels of Irish monks to the Continent, the impact of Anglo-Norman colonization, the urbanization of the Hiberno-Norse period. How did these encounters with “the foreign” re-shape medieval Ireland, and especially medieval Irish art?

Learning Objectives
- Become familiar with the art and architecture of early Ireland
- Learn to analyze, interpret, and write about art
- Contextualize cultural and historical significance of artworks and buildings

Texts and Materials
There is no specific textbook for this course: the reading list will include books on reserve in Tisch Library, others on reserve in the Art History department, and some essays available as PDFs on Trunk. For a complete list of course readings, see Trunk.

For your projects you should plan to order additional titles through interlibrary loan.

If you would like a good and quite readable history of early Ireland, I suggest Dáibhí Ó Cróinín’s Early Medieval Ireland 400-1200 (Longman, 1995) or Sean Duffy’s Ireland in the Middle Ages (Palgrave, 1997). Each is available on Amazon for around $49, and both are also on the course reserve at Tisch.

This syllabus subject to change. See Trunk for updates
Course Requirements

Attendance & Participation: 10% of course grade
Attendance and engaged participation is expected at all class meetings. There will be occasional short posts to online forums as part of class participation.
More than two unexcused absences, or frequent lateness, will lower your course grade. Excused absences must be documented in writing by your Dean, your academic advisor, or Health Services. With six absences total you will fail the course.

Quizzes (2): 30% of course grade (15% each)
Identification of terms; comparisons and brief discussions of images. Not cumulative.

Manuscript Project: 20% of course grade
Short (3-page) paper and brief (10 minute) presentation, as part of a small-group project on Irish manuscripts. Project makes use of book facsimiles in Special Collections, Tisch Library; visits to Special Collections outside of class time are required for the project.

Descriptive Paper:
1-2 pages, describing a work of art using methods of art historical analysis. This paper will be a preparatory step for the Final Paper. Due date dependent on scheduling of paper conference.

Final Paper: 40% of course grade
7-8 pages, combining secondary-source research with analysis of objects. Topics will be developed in consultation with professor, with preliminary proposal approved by April 4.

Course Policies and Additional Information

ADA and Disabilities
Tufts University is committed to full inclusion of all students. Students who, by nature of a documented disability, require academic accommodations should contact the professor during office hours as soon as possible. Students may also speak with the Coordinator of Services for Students with Disabilities (x 75571) to discuss the process for requesting accommodations.

Deadlines and Assignments

- All work is due as noted on the course calendar and/or Trunk.
- No late work will be accepted for this course without prior written permission of the instructor. (Emailing me the night before an assignment is due does not constitute permission.)
- Any arrangements for extensions are at the instructor’s discretion, and may include a grade reduction.
- Computer and/or printer failure will not be considered a valid excuse for late or missing assignments.
- Keep a copy of all assignments until you receive your final grade for the course.
- Unless specifically requested, do not submit assignments as email attachments.
- If you are absent from class, for whatever reason, be prepared for the next class meeting by following the syllabus.

Especially in the work of the course that is collaborative, be respectful of the members of your team in organizing and planning your work.

Plagiarism

You will receive an F (zero) on any paper, exam or assignment (print or electronic) you turn in that is plagiarized in any way; plagiarism may result in a failing grade for the course and/or in disciplinary action by the University.

Plagiarism is intellectual theft, using someone else’s words and/or ideas as if they were your own; plagiarism is dishonorable, and a violation of Tufts’ policies on academic ethics and integrity. You are responsible for educating yourself about what constitutes plagiarism; please read the policies on Academic Integrity, and speak with me if you have any questions. Tufts’ Academic Integrity policy is available online here: http://uss.tufts.edu/studentaffairs/publicationsandwebsites/AcademicIntegrity.pdf
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<td>Introduction; Ireland in Prehistory</td>
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<td>Tue 01.22</td>
<td>Bronze Age and Celtic Ireland; resources for Early Ireland assignment due</td>
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<td>Thu 01.24</td>
<td>Celtic Ireland</td>
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<td>Tue 01.29</td>
<td>Early Monasteries</td>
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<td>Thu 01.31</td>
<td>Manuscripts in Early Medieval Ireland</td>
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<td>Tue 02.05</td>
<td>The Book of Kells: structure, function, illuminations</td>
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<td>Thu 02.07</td>
<td>visit to Special Collections: Manuscripts in Facsimile</td>
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<td>Tue 02.12</td>
<td>team work (Leinster + Munster: to Special Collections)</td>
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<td>Thu 02.14</td>
<td>team work (Connacht + Ulster to Special Collections)</td>
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<td>Tue 02.19</td>
<td>Devotional Objects</td>
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<td>no meeting (Monday schedule)</td>
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<td>team presentations: The Book of Kells</td>
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<td>Metalwork in the “Golden Age”</td>
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<td>Tue 03.19</td>
<td>no meeting: spring break</td>
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<td>Tue 03.26</td>
<td>Round Towers and Stone Crosses</td>
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<td>Tue 04.02</td>
<td>Architecture and Iconography</td>
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<td>Quiz 2</td>
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<td>Modern/Medieval</td>
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<td>Thu 04.25</td>
<td>Papers due; wrap-up</td>
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Tisch Library Reserve

Treasures of Early Irish Art, 1500 BC to 1500 AD. New York, 1977.

Art History Department Reserve (3rd floor hallway shelf; in-house use during building hours only)


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Readings & Assignments

PH = Peter Harbison, *Golden Age of Irish Art* (on Course Reserve in Library + on Department Reserve)  
**be sure to look at the related color plates associated with each section of reading**

DR = Department Reserve shelf (3rd floor at 11 Talbot Ave; shelves in hallway)  
LR = Library Reserve  
PDF = Readings folder on Trunk

Suggestions for further reading for each topic will be posted on Trunk

January 17-24 Prehistoric, Bronze Age, and Celtic Ireland

O’Sullivan, *Megalithic Art in Ireland* (DR, PDF)  
Kelly, *Celtic Art* (DR, PDF)

January 29 Early Monasteries: The Coming of Christianity

Manning, *Early Irish Monasteries* (DR, PDF)  
PH: 15-17 + 27 and 33-36  
Ó Floinn, “Clonmacnois: Art and Patronage” in *From the Isles of the North* (LR)

January 31 Manuscripts in Early Medieval Ireland

PH: 27-30, 33-41, 87-132  

February 5 The Book of Kells: structure, function, illumination

Farr, “History and Mnemonic in Insular Gospel Book Decoration” (PDF)

February 7 Manuscripts in Facsimile at Tisch Special Collections

Prep assignment on Trunk (videos)

February 12-14 Team Projects on the Book of Kells

See Trunk for readings and guidelines for each team

February 19 Devotional Objects: Shrines and Stones

PH: 41-57, 133-134  
Ó Floinn, *Irish Shrines and Reliquaries* (DR, PDF)  
Harbison, “Cross-Decorated Stones” in *Pilgrimage in Ireland*, pp. 191-204 (LR, DR)

February 21 no meeting (Monday schedule)

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February 28  Metalwork in the ‘Golden Age’

PH: 67-86, 133-149
Ryan, “Metalwork in Ireland from the Later Seventh to Ninth Century,” in *Insular and Anglo-Saxon Art and Thought* (LR)
*Work of Angels* catalog (LR): entries on the Derrynaflan Hoard, Ardagh Chalice, Tara Brooch, plus 1-2 other objects of your choice (be prepared to discuss in class – see Trunk for additional information)

March 5  Migrating Ideas: Early Irish Art and Europe

Whitfield, “The ‘Tara’ Brooch” in *From Ireland Coming*, pp. 211-247 (LR)
O Donoghue, “Insular Chrismals and House-Shaped Shrines,” in *Insular and Anglo-Saxon Art and Thought* (LR)
Selection of monastic poetry (see Trunk)

March 7  QUIZ 1

March 12-14  Viking Ireland

Ó Corráin, “The Vikings in Ireland” in *Viking Ireland* pp 17-27 (PDF)
Doherty, “The Viking Impact Upon Ireland” in *Viking Ireland* 29-35 (PDF)
Wallace, “Ireland’s Viking Towns” in *Viking Ireland* 37-50 (PDF)
Ó Cróinín, *Early Medieval Ireland*, 233-271 (LR)

March 26-28  Round Towers and Stone Crosses

PH: 150-189, 246-248
Stalley, *Irish High Crosses* (DR)
Stalley, “Sex, Symbol and Myth” in *From Ireland Coming*, pp. 27-48 (LR)

**schedule meetings to discuss topics for papers

April 2  Architecture and Iconography

PH: 300-348
O’Keefe, “The Romanesque Portal at Clonfert Cathedral” (PDF)
Stalley, “Design and Function: the construction and decoration of Cormac’s Chapel at Cashel” in *Ireland and Europe in the Twelfth Century* pp 162-175 (PDF)

April 4  Sheela-na-gigs

Kelly, *Sheela na gigs* (DR)
Borland, “Audience & Spatial Experience in the Nuns’ Church at Clonmacnoise” (link on Trunk)
Overbey, “Female Trouble: Ambivalence and Anxiety at the Nuns’ Church” (PDF)

**proposal for paper due

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April 9-11  Reliquaries and Pilgrimage

PH: 271-299
Ó Floinn, Irish Shrines and Reliquaries (DR, PDF)
Overbey, “Holy Ground: St Manchan’s Shrine,” pp 37-67 in Sacral Geographies: Saints, Shrines and Territory in Medieval Ireland (LR)
Harbison, Pilgrimage in Ireland, 51-136 (LR, DR)

April 16  Late Medieval Ireland

Readings TBA

April 18  QUIZ 2

April 23  Modern/Medieval

Williams, Icons of Irishness (pages TBA)

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