



Navigating the Betweens of Irish Studies

Villanova University's Center for Irish Studies will host the 2018 Mid-Atlantic American Conference for Irish Studies on November 8-10, 2018 at Villanova University, outside Philadelphia. We welcome paper and panel proposals on areas spanning the field but encourage attention to the conference theme.

The field of Irish Studies has been described as interdisciplinary, transdisciplinary, and multidisciplinary. This conference explores how Irish Studies, like many area studies, is lodged between larger disciplines, ideologies, and methodologies. Betweenness differs from liminality—often seen as fluid, transitional, or temporary—and suggests a long-standing relationship to others. If states of betweenness differ from hybrid states that suggest something new born of divergent sources, it may be that betweens are formed by external pressures, and are recognized only secondarily.

For four decades, Irish Studies conferences have featured overlapping studies, as different disciplines have informed one another, challenging methodologies, boundaries, and theories. Irish Studies, like Ireland's geography, also occupies in-between spaces, between continents, cultures, disciplines, and professions. Northern Irish leaders regularly negotiate between the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland. Irish ministers negotiate between North America and Europe.

The condition of Irish culture "being between"—to borrow from the thinking of Irish philosopher William Desmond, a keynote speaker of the conference—holds philosophical implications as well as historical, performative, and political ones. The Irish diaspora negotiates between times, places, and worldviews. Irish literature emerged between Irish, Latin, and the dominant latecomer, English. Likewise, in universities, Irish Studies negotiates between departments and disciplines as minors, programs, and centers.

This conference will consider the varied meanings, approaches and uses of betweens to probe the possibilities and limits in critical and scholarly inquiry. We welcome papers that consider aspects of Irish Studies from the perspectives of being or thinking between. Studies that forge new methodologies that go between disciplines, opening new spaces of inquiry, are particularly welcome. Papers might also explore how "being between" is advantageous or disadvantageous, something desirable or something in need of resolution.

Potential Themes and Topics:

Conditions of Betweenness

Between postcolonial theory and gender studies

Between gender identities in Irish cultures

Migration, Diaspora, and movement

Between racism and nationalism

Irish Theatre: between performing and devising

Researching between history and literature, between archive and memory

Between theology and practice in Ireland and its diaspora

Please send 150-200 word abstracts or 3-4 person panels through the online submission form by Aug. 20, 2018. <https://acisweb.org/regionals/mid-atlantic/submissions/>