

Assessment Findings and Curricular Improvements

Master's Program in Irish Studies

Assessment Measures

The Center for Irish Studies uses the following measures to assess student learning outcomes:

Direct Measures:

Selected papers

Pass rates on comprehensive examinations

Student publications or conference presentations

Completion of courses

Indirect Measures:

Grades

Course Evaluations

Further graduate school placement rates

Assessment Findings

Course Discussion

(Attachment A)

The Center for Irish Studies analyzed course grade and enrollment data in The Seminar in Contemporary Irish Society, IRST 570, for a five-year period (Fall 2003 through Fall 2007). During this period enrollment remained consistently at or near 7 students, with the exception of one year during the assessed period; and grades average consistently high, between 3.77 and 3.97).

(Attachment B)

Analysis of data pertaining to Introduction to Spoken Gaelic, IRST 535, indicated an average of 4 students per semester and consistently high grade levels, averaging near 3.50 with the exception of a single year.

These two courses were chosen for analysis because they are the required courses which must be taken on campus for completion of the degree. The analysis indicates that small class size, individual attention to students and a high level of faculty availability results in successful completion of these core courses.

Progression Data (Attachment C)

Enrollment during the period decreased – largely a factor of lack of scholarship funding on a par with 3 other competing programs. Enrollment reflected a higher proportion of candidates from the Washington DC catchment area, and more students took longer to complete the degree because many remained in full time positions while enrolled.

There has been thusfar a 100% passage rate on Comprehensive examinations. This trend reflects intensive preparation of candidates by faculty members, the provision of extensive interdisciplinary reading list from the point of entry into the degree program, and also the specialization required for the 2nd day of examination. Students take a general exam, given to all candidates registered for comprehensive examinations that semester on the 1st day; however on the 2nd day students write essays on a special subject which they have chosen far in advance and about which they have had various consultations with faculty members.

Many students undertake this degree part-time because they are local and continue in full time employment or because of lack of scholarship funding and the necessity to earn sufficient to underwrite both the cost of the degree and the additional expense of the semester internship abroad. These factors add to the average time to degree factor and also statistical information regarding graduation rates.

Curricular Improvements

Improvement procedures have consisted of the following:

Students are now required to take Irish Studies 570, the Seminar in Contemporary Irish Society before undertaking the semester abroad and the internship which is required of them.

Additional courses or course content has also been developed in order to provide a stronger foundation and a greater range of choice, including the development of –

--- IRST 599 Northern Ireland: Conflict and Culture, which includes political, media and literary elements.

----IRST 583, The Modern Irish Short Story, has been updated to include the work of a number of living writers, many under the age of 40 who have come to international prominence in recent years.

Similar updates have been incorporated into the reading and examination selections for –

--- IRST 586 Irish Literature After Yeats and IRST 588 Contemporary Irish Drama – to reflect and include the work of poets, novelists and playwrights of recent prominence including the work of Ciaran Carson, Paula Meehan, Claire Keegan, Colm Toibin, and Conor McPherson, among others. These contemporary updates are in keeping with the focus of the program and also co-ordinate with current issue and, course material encountered during the internship in Ireland.

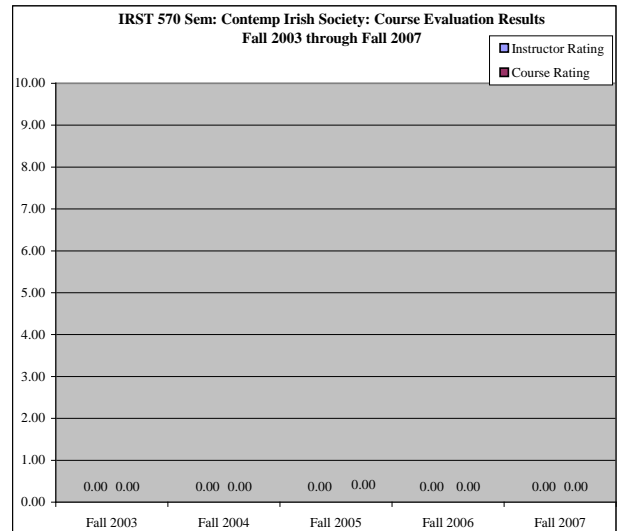
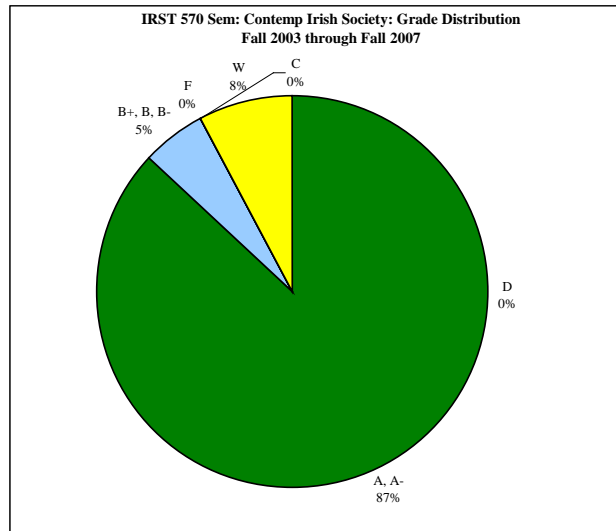
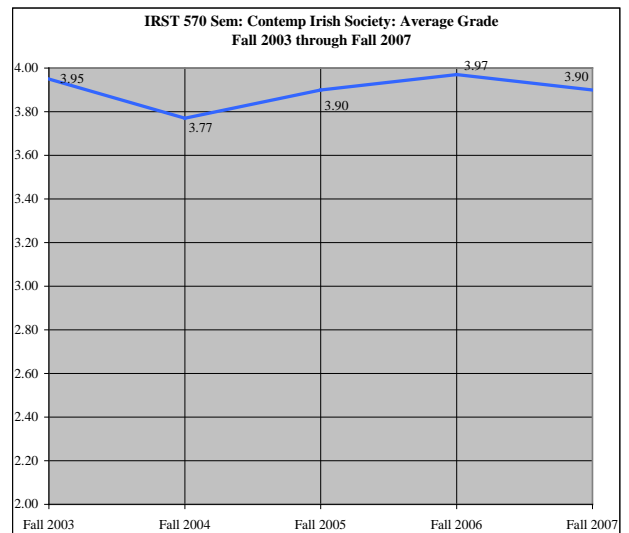
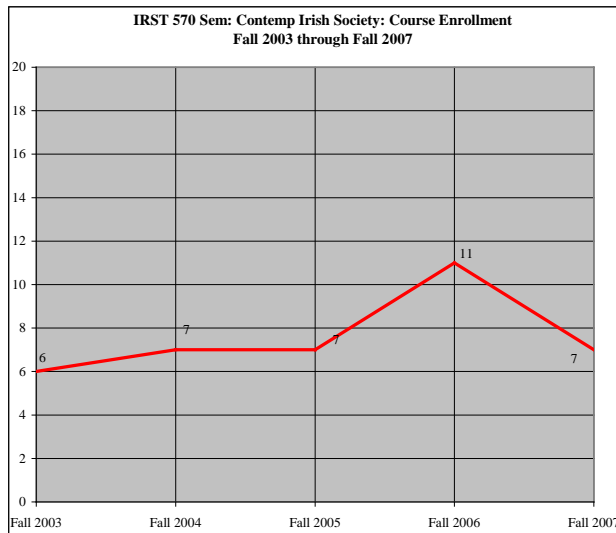
In addition Irish Studies has co-ordinated with other departments to hire lecturers on occasion to supplement the Irish Studies curriculum. During the period under analysis such was the case with the crosslisting of Irish Studies/Politics 429, taught in Fall 06 by an academically qualified Irish diplomat.

Attachment A

THE CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF AMERICA
Institutional Assessment

COURSE SUMMARY DATA: DEPARTMENT OF IRISH STUDIES
ENG/IRST 570 Sem: Contemp Irish Society

Term	Course Enrollment	Course Grade		Course Grades						Course Evaluation Results						
		Avg.	StDev.	A, A-	B+, B, B-	C	D	F	W	Course Eval. #	%	Instructor Rating Avg.	StDev.	Course Rating Avg.	StDev.	
Fall 2003	6	3.95	0.12	6								0.00%				
Fall 2004	7	3.77	0.37	6	1							0.00%				
Fall 2005	7	3.90	0.15	6					1			0.00%				
Fall 2006	11	3.97	0.10	9					2			0.00%				
Fall 2007	7	3.90	0.26	6	1							0.00%				

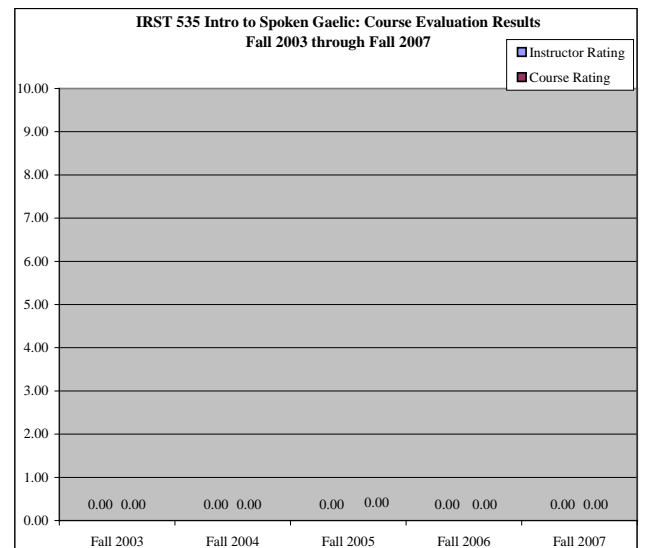
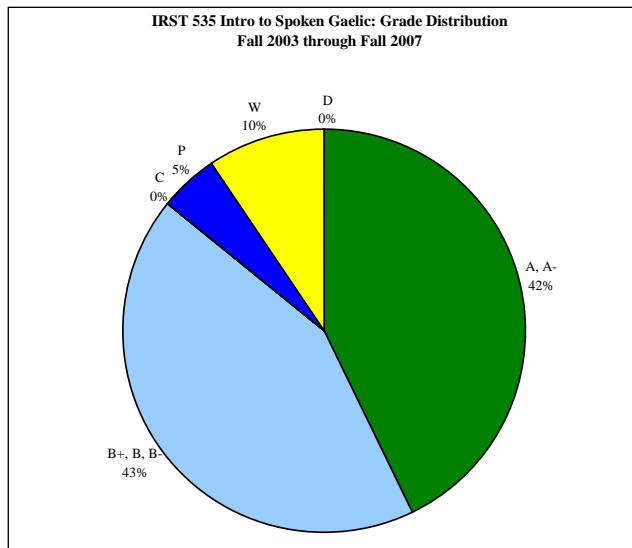
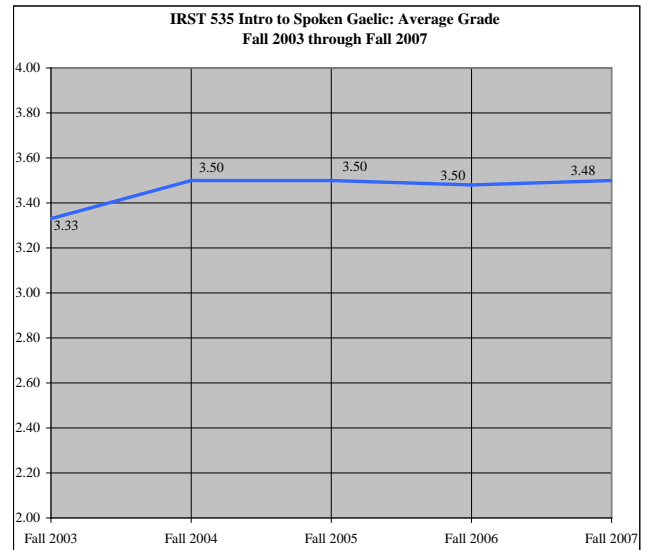
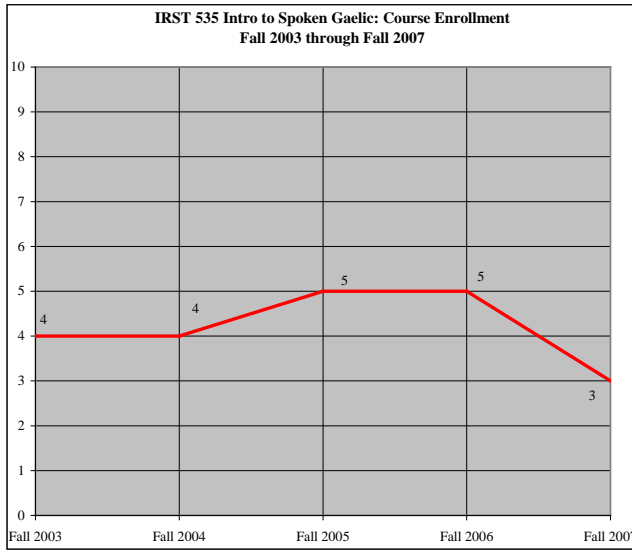


Attachment B

THE CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF AMERICA
Institutional Assessment

COURSE SUMMARY DATA: DEPARTMENT OF IRISH STUDIES
IRST 535 Intro to Spoken Gaelic

Term	Course Enrollment	Course Grade		Course Grades						Course Evaluation Results						
		Avg.	StDev.	A, A-	B+, B, B-	C	D	P	W	Course Eval. #	Course Eval. %	Instructor Rating Avg.	Instructor Rating StDev.	Course Rating Avg.	Course Rating StDev.	
Fall 2003	4	3.33	0.58	1	2					1		0.00%				
Fall 2004	4	3.50	0.58	2	2							0.00%				
Fall 2005	5	3.50	0.58	2	2					1		0.00%				
Fall 2006	5	3.48	0.50	3	2							0.00%				
Fall 2007	3	3.50	0.71	1	1					1		0.00%				



Attachment C

**Graduate Student Retention & Graduation Data Summary
Irish Studies Program (Cohort 2000-2007)**

Master's Program

Cohort	Number of entering master's students	Number of students who have not received a degree and did not maintain continuous enrollment	Number of students who enrolled in PhD program after receiving a master's degree	Number of students who passed comps	Graduated in 1st year	Graduated in 2nd year	Graduated in 3rd year	Graduated in 4th year	Graduated in 5th year	Graduated in 6th year	Graduated in 7th year	Graduated in 8th year
2000	4	2	0	2	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0
2001	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2002	3	1	1	2	0	2	0	0	0	0		
2003	5	0	2	5	0	3	1	1				
2004	2	1	1	1	0	1	0	0				
2005	4	2	0	2	0	2	0					
2006	3	1	0	2	0	2						
2007	2											

PhD Program

Cohort	Number of entering doctoral students	Number of students who have not received a degree and did not maintain continuous enrollment	Number of students who left the program after receiving a master's degree	Number of students who passed comps	Graduated in less than 2 years	Graduated in 3rd year	Graduated in 4th year	Graduated in 5th year	Graduated in 6th year	Graduated in 7th year	Graduated in 8th year
2000											
2001											
2002											
2003											
2004											
2005											
2006											
2007											

Note: A particular cohort is defined as the combination of the students first enrolled in consecutive sessions of one year: the summer session, the fall semester, or the spring semester the following year. For example, Cohort 2000 consists of the students first enrolled in Summer 2000, Fall 2000, or Spring 2001.