COURSE DETAIL

KINGS AND HEROES OF EARLY IRELAND
Country Ireland
Host Institution University College Dublin
Program(s) University College Dublin
UCEAP Course Level Upper Division
UCEAP Subject Area(s) Celtic Studies
UCEAP Course Number 140
UCEAP Course Suffix
UCEAP Official Title KINGS AND HEROES OF EARLY IRELAND
UCEAP Transcript Title KINGS & HEROES
UCEAP Quarter Units 5.00
UCEAP Semester Units 3.30

Course Description
The ULSTER CYCLE tales are among the best-known narratives of Early Irish literature (c. 700-1200 AD). The tales depict the heroic society of pagan Ireland and the rivalry for supremacy between Ulster and Connacht. The course studies, in translation, not just the centerpiece of the cycle (The "Táin" or "Cattle Raid of Cooley"), but also other major and minor tales, which offer an introduction to the wide variety of themes, genres, and literary styles of one branch of this uniquely early literature. Among the most attractive and accessible of the Early Irish tales are those dealing with the lives of legendary or early historical kings and heroes, such as Cormac mac Airt, about whom many tales have survived. Students read these sagas in translation, to discover how legendary and historical kings are presented as admirable or otherwise, what the desirable characteristics of an ideal king were, and how the demands of kingship were reconciled with the king's human needs. More generally the course considers what were the pressing concerns of the social and political ruling elites of Early Ireland, and how they were encoded and explored in a memorable literature.

Language(s) of Instruction
English

Host Institution Course Number
CCIV20130

Host Institution Course Title
KINGS AND HEROES OF EARLY IRELAND

Host Institution Course Details
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Host Institution Campus

Host Institution Faculty
Irish, Celtic Studies & Folklore

Host Institution Degree

Host Institution Department

Course Last Reviewed
2025-2026

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