



*Summer Seminar for College and
University Teachers
The Irish Sea Cultural Province:
Crossroads of Medieval Literature and
Languages
Douglas, Isle of Man and Glasgow,
Scotland
June 8-July 12, 2015*

Dear Colleague,

Thank you for expressing an interest in our summer seminar on **The Isle of Man: Crossroads of Medieval Literature and Languages**, sponsored by the National Endowment for the Humanities. We are very excited about this project and very much look forward to bringing together College and University teachers from across the United States and from diverse disciplines and subject areas to explore medieval language, literature, and culture via texts and artifacts on the Isle of Man and in Glasgow, Scotland.

The purpose of this five-week seminar is to provide participants with an enriched appreciation for the multicultural reality of the British Isles and Ireland (the Irish Sea cultural province) in the Middle Ages. While early British literature and culture is sometimes thought to be exclusively Anglo-Saxon, in fact, Britain was rich in cultural and linguistic diversity. In this seminar we will survey the extent and the significance of this linguistic, cultural, and physical multiplicity as we investigate the conflict and

resolution which characterized the relation between Briton, Saxon, Gaelic, Norse, and Latinate culture.

During the course of the seminar, we will focus on five distinct cultures: the Irish, the Scots (and Picts), the Welsh, the Anglo-Saxons, and the Norse. Situating ourselves at an important nexus of these cultures on the Isle of Man, we will focus on the Irish Sea as a means of cultural connection rather than as cultural barrier. We will spend the first week in Belfast and focus our discussion of Old Irish language/literature/and paleography, with a particular focus on the *Táin Bó Cúailnge*. We will have a special lecture by J.P. Mallory on the background for the TBC and tour Navan fort, the primary setting of the text and an important archaeological site in its own right.

After taking a ferry from Belfast to Douglas, we will spend the next two weeks on the Isle of Man, and we will visit the seats of these various cultures to explore their diversity through the study of their language, literature, and history. We will also explore ways in which the Irish Sea connected these communities and provided a means for the interaction of ideas, commerce, and the spread of Christianity. The Isle of Man is ideal for this enterprise, not only because it was such an important and rich link for all these cultures, but also because the island is small enough that the various settlements are in relative proximity. Man, which was a popular Victorian vacation site, has ample inexpensive accommodation; it also has a wonderfully functional, extensive, and charming railway system, which incorporates steam, electric, coal, and diesel power. Our excursions over the island will be both economical and enjoyable.

We will spend the final two weeks of the seminar in Glasgow, Scotland, where participants will research individual topics and projects in the facilities of the department of Celtic, the University Research Library, and various college libraries, as well as

museums in Glasgow and Edinburgh. While the Isle of Man is the ideal place for us to do our field research and to witness the coming together of various Medieval cultures, Glasgow, with its excellent libraries and museums, and its unique department of Celtic, is the ideal place for the seminar participants to be exposed to the latest research in the field and to utilize these resources for our own endeavors.

We have arranged the schedule so that it dovetails with the 15th International Celtic Congress which will be held at the University of Glasgow from July 13th to 17th and we encourage our seminarians to stay on and attend some or all of the Congress and even to give papers. We will arrange one round-table session for our NEH seminar, but participants may submit papers to other sessions at the Congress as well.

The ultimate goal of the seminar, then, is to explore some of the infinite variety, beauty, intellectual rigor, and diversity that were the Middle Ages. To this end, we will study a variety of texts and tap the accumulated resources of prominent scholars. We will select participants in the seminar based on the relevance of the seminar to their teaching duties and to their interests. We will not, however, require any special knowledge of the applicants. We are interested in applicants who teach medieval history or medieval literature and who are keen to learn more about the complexity and diversity of medieval British languages and cultures.

Application Procedure

Application materials, including the guidelines and application form, are available on-line at: <http://www.neh.gov/projects/si-school.html>. Once you have completed the application, please submit all application materials electronically to Charles MacQuarrie at cmacquarrie@csub.edu or Milissa Ackerley at

mackerley@csub.edu. This will be very helpful in expediting the selection process, and your cooperation will be much appreciated. If you are unable to submit your application electronically, your completed application should be postmarked no later than March 1, 2015, and should be addressed as follows:

Prof. Charles MacQuarrie
Dept of English
California State University, Bakersfield
9001 Stockdale Hwy
Bakersfield, CA 93311

Perhaps the most important part of the seminar application is the four-page application essay. This essay should include any personal and academic information that is relevant; reasons for applying to the seminar; your interest, both intellectual and personal, in the topic; qualifications to do the work of the seminar and make a contribution to it; what you hope to accomplish by participation; and the relevance of the seminar topics to your teaching. If you have any questions about the seminar or the application process, feel free to email Charles MacQuarrie (cmacquarrie@csub.edu) or Milissa Ackerley at (mackerley@csub.edu). Also, check out our web page, as we will be updating it regularly with relevant and useful information:
http://www.csub.edu/~cmacquarrie/isle_of_man/

Again, thank you for your interest in the upcoming NEH Summer Seminar; we look forward to learning more about your interests and background and look forward to the opportunity to engage and explore this subject with a group of educators next summer.

Yours sincerely,

Joseph F. Nagy, Charles W. MacQuarrie, and Milissa Ackerley



Humanities