

UCD Clinton Institute *for* American Studies

Visit of President
Bill Clinton

Page 1

President Clinton
Addresses Institute
Students

Page 2

Fourth Annual Clinton
Institute Summer School

Page 3

Upcoming Conference
on History and
Foreign Policy

Page 4



President Bill Clinton visits the Institute



President Clinton in the drawing room of Belfield House, home of the Institute

At the end of September, the Institute was honoured with a visit from former US President Bill Clinton. Speaking of his long-held hope to visit the Institute which bears his name, President Clinton toured the facilities, and met with students, faculty and staff.

In May 2001, the Government of Ireland recommended that an Institute for American Studies should be established in Ireland. It also decided that it should be named for President Clinton, in recognition of his own crucial and personal role, as well as that of the United States Government, Congress and people, in the Irish Peace Process. During his visit, President Clinton was presented with the Ulysses medal by Dr. Hugh Brady, president of UCD, in recognition of his ongoing commitment and contribution to the peace and prosperity of this island and to the elimination of poverty, disease and suffering worldwide. He also took time to plant a loblolly pine, the state tree of his home state of Arkansas where he was

governor, in the grounds of the Institute. Incidentally, the spade used by President Clinton was that used by Éamon de Valera to “turn the sod” of the UCD Belfield campus in 1962. The tree now stands, with a commemorative plaque, outside the Clinton Institute.

President Clinton also added his name to the UCD visitors’ book, which guests to the university are invited to do. He signed the book in the Institute, and his signature now stands alongside those of other distinguished visitors to the university, including Archbishop Desmond Tutu, among other notable guests. Also, while in the Institute, President Clinton was asked to sign a copy of the Good Friday Agreement, a document in whose formulation he had played such a crucial and active role, and which laid the foundations for the lasting peace in Northern Ireland, considered to be among the president’s most significant achievements on the global political stage.

“The Vanishing History of the American Presidency”: A Talk by Prof. Russell Riley

On the 9th of November 2010, the Institute hosted a discussion entitled “the Vanishing History of the American Presidency,” led by Professor Russell Riley. Prof. Riley is the chair of the Miller Centre’s Presidential Oral History Program at the University of Virginia and leads the William J. Clinton Presidential History Project. The event was designed primarily for postgraduate students, both here at the Institute and the wider collegiate community.

Drawing upon his vast experience, Prof. Riley opened up discussion with important theoretical concerns for academics. In his description of his role in the project and the wider aims of the Oral History Program, Prof. Riley outlined the challenges facing practitioners of research in regards to sources. In drawing a trajectory through a series of American Presidencies, Riley communicated how perceptions of records have gone under a series of transformations. From his discussion on Watergate up to the introduction of the computer, Riley illustrated how the climate of U.S. administrations has been altered. He also positioned the role of oral history in relation to these developments, encouraging the audience of students to engage critically with their material, thus opening up important debates centred upon the veracity of sources available to researchers and the continuous challenging nature of that discussion.

Institute Students in the “Future Business,” says President Clinton

President Clinton made explicit his desire, ahead of his arrival, to meet with as many of the Institute student body as possible, and so spoke privately with a number of MA and PhD students, ahead of his formal address to students, University representatives and assorted dignitaries. In advance of his lecture, he met with young scholars of from the Institute’s M.A. class in American Studies, as well as those from the M.A. in Media and International Conflict, also offered at the Institute. These students hailed from across Ireland, the United States and Europe.



Institute Director Prof. Liam Kennedy introduces President Clinton to Ph.D. student Martin Russell.

In his speech later that afternoon, to an audience including many past and current students of the Institute, as well as those from other UCD departments, President Clinton struck a generally optimistic though realistic note, encouraging today’s young scholars to work within what he termed the “Future Business”. Drawing on his own political, legal and recent career, President Clinton pressed upon the students his belief that they should be motivated by a desire to leave the world in a better state than they entered it, to consider the outcomes of their actions and all possible alternatives, but to act decisively and honestly. He spoke of his investment in the historically positive role the United States has played in international politics and trans-national relations, but not without acknowledging its occasional failings; he wryly yet thoughtfully referenced Winston Churchill’s stated belief that

“(the) USA invariably (did) the right thing—after exhausting every other alternative.”

Following his speech, in a discussion moderated by Prof. Liam Kennedy, Director of the Clinton Institute, President Clinton dealt with questions put to him by the student body of the Institute, again at his request. These dealt with the current and historical situation in Northern Ireland, and asked for his perspective on the threat from dissident factions within republicanism and unionism to the contemporary peace. Also, President Clinton spoke of the historical and continuing diasporic ties between Ireland and the US, and indeed how the Irish diaspora operates globally; in particular, the exceptional willingness of Irish servicemen and women to engage in peace-keeping and medical missions under UN guidance throughout the world was cited by President Clinton as evidence of Ireland’s unique role within international affairs.

President Clinton was also asked whether he still felt that the idea of “globalisation” was the central reality of our time. In response, he declared that his affinity for the term had dissipated somewhat, and that he now placed greater store in a notion of “interdependence”, in which national/international relations are structured in such a way so as to reduce the effects of what he had defined in his earlier address as the three main problems facing global security: inequality (within and between nations), instability (be it economic, political, religious or otherwise), and unsustainability (particularly in how it related to environmental and energy matters). Finally, in response to another student’s question about what advice the president might have for Democratic leaders and politicians in the US (his visit to the Clinton Institute occurring just weeks before the national mid-term elections), President Clinton spoke animatedly and passionately about the need for his party to define itself and its values in a manner which was convincing, immediate and coherent to the American public.

Upcoming Seminars at the Clinton Institute

7th February:

Prof. Jim Carroll (Notre Dame)

“A Digital Archive of One’s Own?”

In association with UCD Film Studies and the IADT Centre for Public Culture

15th February:

“Academic Freedom and Campus Dissent” (Panel)

Chair: Paddy Healy (former President, Teachers Union of Ireland)

Prof. Stephen Shapiro (University of Warwick)

Dr. Paula Gilligan (Centre for Public Cultures, IADT)

Aidan Rowe (NUI Maynooth)

6.30pm, William Jefferson Clinton Auditorium

In association with UCD Film Studies and the IADT Centre for Public Culture

21st February:

Dr. Hamilton Carroll (University of Leeds)

“Narrative Cinema and the ‘War on Terror’”

5.30pm, Seminar Room, Clinton Institute

4th April:

Prof John Dumbrell (Durham University)

“American Foreign Policy under the Clinton Administration”

5.30pm, Seminar Room, Clinton Institute

5th April:

Prof. Scott Lucas (University of Birmingham)

“Wikileaks, Old Diplomacy, and New Journalism”

5.30pm, Seminar Room, Clinton Institute

In association with UCD Film Studies and the IADT Centre for Public Culture

“Photography & International Conflict” Conference

As the Photography & International Conflict project enters its final five months, development is continuing on the website, with the regular addition of new practitioner interviews and resources. The website (www.photoconflict.org) will be maintained after the project's completion so its outputs can continue to be accessed by photographic practitioners, academics, students, NGOs and members of the public.

A final conference project and workshop will be held in Dublin in May 2011 to consider how the photographic genres of photojournalism and documentary photography are coping with significant changes in their production, distribution and consumption. In the last fifteen years, the digitization of photography and the exponential growth of all types of photography on the Internet have had profound effects on this medium in general. In the current period of flux, questions regarding the nature of the photograph and visual information more generally span questions of economics, cultural change, technological developments and stylistic innovation to name but a few areas. This two-day conference will begin to address photography in the digital era through a specific focus on documentary photography and photojournalistic representations of conflict. It aims to enhance dialogue across a spectrum of interested and involved parties including: creators and users of lens-based media such as photographers, NGO personnel, photo editors and others working in the visual media industry, academics and commentators. A one-day workshop will follow the conference and facilitate engagement between NGO personnel, students and some leading visual practitioners and industry leaders.



Fourth Annual Clinton Institute Summer School

July 2010 saw the fourth iteration of the UCD Clinton Institute Summer School, and the largest so far. Students from the United States, Europe, the United Kingdom, Ireland and elsewhere gathered at Belfield to engage and work closely with some of the foremost figures in contemporary American Studies. The week began with an opening plenary lecture from Prof. Robert Brigham of Vassar College, who spoke provocatively on the topic of “Bill Clinton in the World”. Other lectures delivered during the week came from various members of 2010’s visiting faculty, not to mention those offered by associates and “friends” of the Summer School. Prof. Werner Sollors (Harvard University), for example, has been involved closely with the event since its inception in 2007, and lectured on the rise of ethnic modernism in the US in the first half of the 20th century.

The structure of the Summer School has settled into one which incorporates evening lectures as outlined above, as well as students and junior faculty working closely with faculty in the form of morning workshops.



Two members of the Summer School Faculty: Prof. Donald Pease (Dartmouth) and Prof. Amy Kaplan (UPenn)

In 2010 those sessions covered such topics as “Racial Capitalism and the Current Crisis” (Prof. Ruth Gilmore), “Reading Moby Dick” (Prof. Amy Kaplan), “Old Media, New Media and International Conflict” (Prof. Liam Kennedy and Prof. Scott Lucas) and “Re-imagining American Studies’ Relation to the State” (Prof. Donald Pease). As well as discussing these disparate and wide-ranging themes, students were given the opportunity to present early or unformed versions of their own work to workshop leaders and fellow attendees, receiving unfailingly constructive contributions, and eventually presenting revised versions of said work at a symposium

at week’s end. This combination of giving students the opportunity to present their own scholarship to some of the foremost figures in American Studies, and to consider the most fundamental questions in the field, is among the Summer School’s greatest strengths.

Further information about summer schools past, as well as the event planned for July 2011, can be found at www.ucdclinton.ie

Institute Student attends new “Innovation Academy”: Report by Julieann Galloway

I attended the inaugural Innovation Academy module ‘Creative Thinking and Innovation’ last November in Dublin. The Academy is a collaborative joint venture in PhD education between University College Dublin and Trinity College Dublin that builds on existing resources and synergies between the two institutions and recognises the need for Higher Education to be a catalyst for innovation in Ireland.

The module spanned over three weeks, primarily focusing on the use of creative thinking in a number of problem-solving situations. We were broken into teams to tackle problems on an interdisciplinary level; our team consisted of two engineers, a microbiologist, a business student and an Americanist (myself).

Every challenge presented to us required focused attention and relied heavily on teamwork for project completion. As well, it was a chance for us to interact with other PhD students and expand our professional networks as young scholars.

The highlight of my experience was the ‘Seed Funding Challenge’, where we were given €5 seed-funding and were asked to produce as much profit as possible in two hours. By utilising social networks, we raised almost €800. We were ecstatic about our result as a team, especially as 100% of the money went to an Irish charity.

The Innovation Academy is open to all registered PhD students from UCD and TCD. For more information about the Academy, visit www.innovationacademy.ie

Upcoming Conference: Memory & American Foreign Relations

On 8–10 April, the Clinton Institute for American Studies at UCD will play host to a major international conference entitled 'History, Memory and American Foreign Relations'. Organized by Dr. David Fitzgerald, the Institute's postdoctoral fellow in American Studies, the conference will bring together interdisciplinary scholars from across Europe and the United States and consider the confluence of memory and US foreign relations, broadly defined. Key issues include how people, cultures and societies remember, forget and distort the past, how those memories affect present thoughts and actions, and how policymakers use memory in their decision-making.

Plenary speakers will include Professor Jay Winter, Charles J. Stille Professor of History, Yale University and Dr. David Ryan, Senior Lecturer, School of History, University College Cork. Panels will consider themes such as: the sites and locations of collective memory, agents of cultural production and memory, constructed narratives, forgotten and silenced memories, memory and decision-making and organizational lessons learned processes and memory. The conference has attracted a large number of high-quality submissions and should prove to be a fascinating and informative event. For further details, including the conference programme, see the Institute's website at www.ucdclinton.ie

History, Memory and American
Foreign Relations
8-10 April 2011
Clinton Institute for American Studies,
University College Dublin

Plenary Speakers:
Professor Jay Winter (Yale University)
Dr. David Ryan (University College Cork)



Deadline for submission of abstracts: 14 January 2011

For more information or the detailed call for papers, see
http://ucdclinton.ie/events_conferences_2011_historymemoryandusforignrelations.htm

Institute Manager Participates in US State Department Leadership Project

During much of last November, Institute Manager Catherine Carey travelled throughout the United States as part of a US State Department-sponsored International Visitor Leadership Project. She was invited to participate in the programme, titled "Insights on America: an Overview of U.S. Politics, Society, Culture and History," by the US Embassy in Dublin. The programme is administered by the Meridian Centre in Washington, and provides participants with exposure to American politics and economics,



IVLP delegates with Ms. Minnie Jean Brown Trickey, one of the "Little Rock Nine".

as well as social and cultural issues. Catherine travelled with seven other European delegates from Russia, the Czech Republic, Spain, Portugal, Norway, Hungary and Latvia. During the visit, meetings and presentations were arranged with a number of economists, political advisors, activists, environmentalists, journalists and civil rights leaders around the US.

The delegates visited Philadelphia, the nation's first capital, where they observed the recent mid-term elections; then travelled to Washington to hold meetings with the Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs and the Director of the Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee. It also included a visit to the All Dulles Area Muslim Society just outside Washington DC. While in Harrison, Arkansas, the delegates got to engage, up close, with the important role played by volunteerism in American communities, to discuss the challenges of small business owners, and to meet with

students at a local Community College, ending with an evening among local Republican Party members. They also visited Little Rock, forever associated with former-President Bill Clinton, and were introduced to US governance and politics at the state level. Further, the sojourn in Arkansas included a visit to Central High, the site of the 1957 desegregation battle.

In San Francisco, California, the visit concentrated on environmental issues and on the importance of US trade with Asia, subjects discussed with the President of the Bay Area Economic Forum. The 3-week visit ended in New York where a meeting with a member of the Federal Reserve Bank led to a discussion on bank governance and the international economic crisis, and concluded with a visit to the Harlem Community Development corporation.

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