

# UCD Clinton Institute for American Studies



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## New research aims to create a greater understanding of diasporic networks

**The Clinton Institute is developing a number of new programmes and projects on foot of renewed interest in the diaspora in Ireland and abroad.**

More and more, states are seeking to understand the forms and functions of diasporas and engage them to provide new opportunities for knowledge transfer, tourism, conflict transformation, and many other matters. In the context of these emerging interests, Ireland has both a symbolic and practical role as a small nation with a diaspora of more than 70 million, over half of which are in the United States.

The Clinton Institute is develop-

ing several programmes and projects in response to this fresh scholarly and policy interest in diaspora matters in Ireland and beyond. In so doing, we aim to create fresh understanding of the dynamics at work in the creation and maintenance of diasporic cultures and networks, and their relations with hosts and homeland.

There are two core research areas already under way. The first is in the field of conflict transformation and peace diplomacy. This is fitting as the founding of the Clinton Institute is a productive example of diaspora politics in action, an institutional embodiment of the relationship between diplomacy and diaspora. We have developed a

research project on Diaspora, Conflict and Diplomacy, led by Prof Liam Kennedy and Dr Andrew Sanders. It examines varied ways in which diaspora actors influenced the conflict and the peace process in Northern Ireland and considers historical and international legacies of this approach. In October this year we will run a symposium on the impact of the American Civil Rights Movement on the eruption of civil rights politics in Northern Ireland in the late 1960s and some of the legacies of this development.

The second research project has been very recently inaugurated following successful application for funding from the Department of Foreign Affairs' Emigrant Support Programme. This project will scope the changing profile and needs of Irish emigrants in relation to the Government's strategic objectives in engaging the diaspora. The report will reflect an understanding of the dynamics and contexts that are reshaping the nature of the Irish diaspora and in particular the characteristics and needs of the 'next generation' of emigrants. It will include an examination of emergent patterns of migration, the impact of new and social media on diaspora networks and identities, and the shifting metrics of vulnerability within the Irish diaspora. Under the guidance of Prof Kennedy, two research assistants — Dr Martin Russell and Dr Madeleine Lyes — have been appointed to undertake this research.

Alongside these core projects we are also running a series of talks on Irish-US diaspora relations, in partnership with the US Embassy in Dublin, and leading a College of Arts and Celtic Studies initiative to develop a Masters programme in Diaspora Studies. We look forward to the work ahead on diaspora issues and welcome enquiries on this.



*Prof Liam Kennedy who will lead a research project on Diaspora, Conflict and Diplomacy with Dr Andrew Sanders.*

## The PhD Q&A: Ben Miller

### What age are you?

25.

### Where are you from?

I grew up in upstate New York in a small town located in the shadow of the Adirondack Mountains. At the age of nine my family embarked on the first of many travels around the world — Thailand, Michigan, United Arab Emirates, Missouri, North Carolina, Connecticut, and Ireland.

### Where did you begin your academic career?

I completed my BA in English and Psychology at the University of Connecticut in 2010.

### What brought you to Dublin and the Clinton Institute?

My parents lived in Ireland on expat assignment while I was an undergraduate, so I became intimately acquainted with Ireland through holiday visits. After a semester at UCD as an exchange student, I knew that this was where I wanted to study as a graduate student. After completing my MA in American Literature at UCD's School of English, Drama and Film in 2011 and taking the first steps toward establishing myself as an academic scholar, it was an easy choice to apply to the Clinton's PhD programme where my

research continues to flourish.

### What is the title of your thesis?

"Expatriate Literature in the Age of Globalisation: Transnational Dislocation in Contemporary American Culture."

### How did you come to focus on this topic?

The core motivations of my research into expatriate literature and discourses of dislocation have a logical parallel to my own expatriate identity. My love of travel infused with my fascination with narratives of socio-political dislocation informs this doctoral research. After confirming the interest and viability of this line of inquiry through the success of my MA thesis (entitled "From New York to Interzone: A Case Study of William S. Burroughs as American Expatriate Writer"), the parameters of my research have consolidated to a study of literature framed by an American Stud-



Ben Miller and friend.

ies approach thanks to the productive work done at the Clinton Institute.

### What do you hope to achieve with this research?

Conceptually, I hope to articulate or at least gesture toward a theorisation of discourses of dislocation in contemporary American Studies, particularly the fluid usage of expatriate as it applies to transnational globalisation. Pragmatically, I hope to complete this research as a means to earn my PhD and begin an academic career.

### How is it going?

The research is going very well. I have just returned from New Hampshire where I attended The Futures of American Studies Institute at Dartmouth College. At this event I not only observed and participated in the conceptual and practical matters of the current state of American Studies, but received comprehensive theoretical and formal feedback on my ongoing research.

### What gets you through the night?

Maintaining a disciplined and accurate planner littered by copious sticky notes that comprise the personal and professional to-do lists of my next day.

### What makes you happy?

Spending non-academic time with my wonderful girlfriend, playing with my mischievous puppy, grabbing a pint or two (or three) with friends, and the relief after making a deadline.

## Tracing the US role in the Northern Ireland peace process

### Dr Andrew Sanders reveals some of the fruits of his research in recent months.

I have spent most of my time these past few weeks, and particularly since term ended, putting together the first draft of my book on the role of the United States in the Northern Ireland peace process. It is going to focus on the political and diplomatic side of the relevant relationships and, to this end, I have been focused recently on the years that Margaret Thatcher was British Prime Minister, 1979–1990. In this period she worked with three Presidents: Jimmy Carter, Ronald Reagan and George H.W. Bush.

I was fortunate enough to meet with Lord Powell, brother of Tony Blair's aide Jonathan, to discuss his time working with Margaret Thatcher as her Private Secretary. Lord Powell was present at all the major meetings Thatcher held during his time with her and spoke eloquently on the US–UK relationship, with particular focus on how it was impacted by Northern Ireland.

I also managed to secure interviews with the former UK Ambassador to the United States, Sir Nigel Sheinwald, and the former UK Ambassador to Afghanistan, Sir Sherard Cowper-Coles. Crucially, from the perspective of my research, the two, along with Jonathan Powell, filled the role of First Secretary in the UK Embassy in Washing-

ton during the 1980s: Sheinwald handing over to Cowper-Coles, who, in turn, handed over to Powell. Interviews with all three have provided important insight into this period of US-UK relations from the British perspective.

Finally, I have begun planning towards a conference that will take place on Saturday 5 October in the Institute. "The Ongoing Struggle for Civil Rights: The United States, Northern Ireland and worldwide" will seek to draw comparison between the respective campaigns and will involve key activists and academic specialists on each.

*Dr Sanders is John Moore Newman Research Fellow in Diaspora, Conflict and Diplomacy.*

## From surfing to the JFK assassination

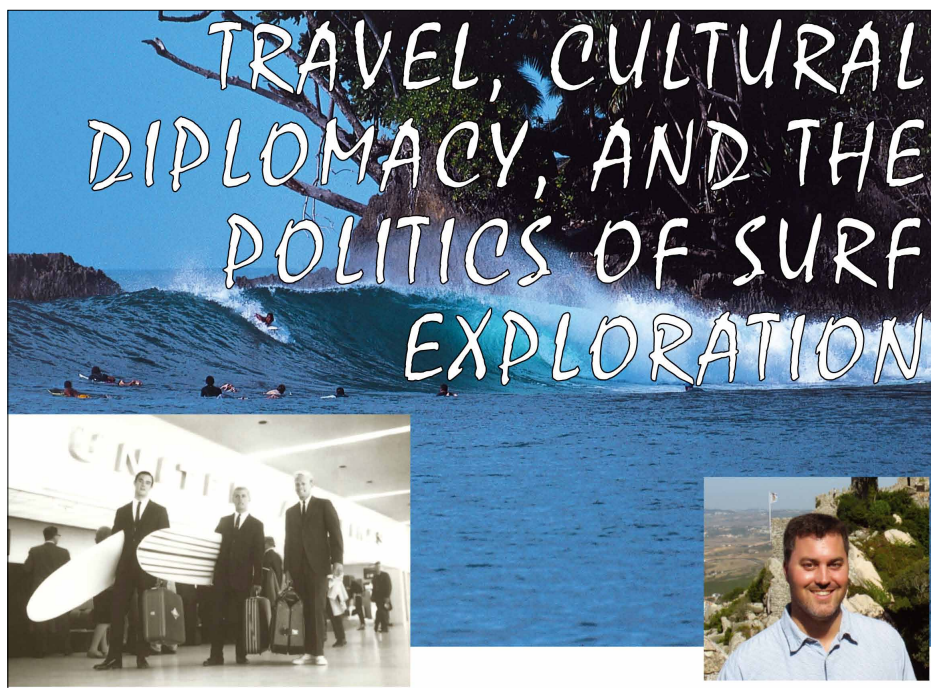
**Dr Jack Thompson highlights some of the key events during the last semester.**

The Clinton Institute hosted events this semester on a variety of topics related to American politics, culture and foreign policy.

On February 20, in a fascinating presentation that included film clips and archival materials, local political activist Vincent Lavery discussed the assassination of President John F. Kennedy with an audience of students and members of the public. Lavery also shared his personal memories of Bobby Kennedy, whose Presidential campaign in California in 1968 he helped to organise.

On April 8, in an event that was organised in co-operation with UCD Film Studies, Scott Laderman, Associate Professor of History at the University of Minnesota, Duluth, gave a talk entitled “The Globalization of Surfing”. In a discussion that covered an incredibly diverse set of themes, including foreign policy, film, culture and politics, Prof Laderman explored how surfing spread from Hawaii to the United States and from the mainland US to the rest of the world.

A week later, Dr. John A. Thompson, Reader Emeritus at the University of



A section of the poster for Professor Scott Laderman's lecture.

Cambridge, discussed US foreign policy in a paper entitled “Why Did America Assume a Global Role?” In his talk, Dr Thompson previewed the argument that he makes in a forthcoming book in which he challenges long-standing assumptions about America's rise to world leadership and argues that the country's foreign policy in the 20th century can be traced to its newfound

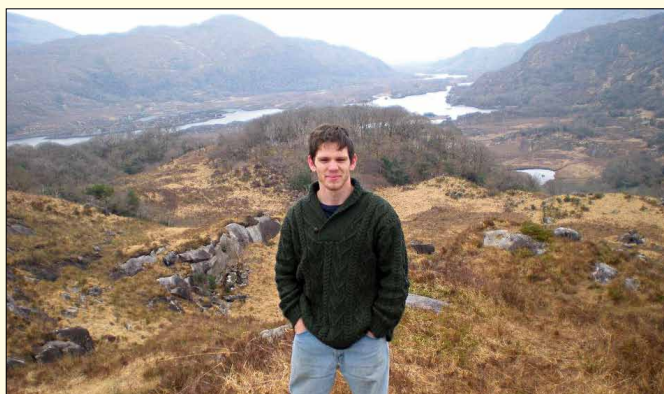
“sense of power”.

Finally, on April 24, Rob Kroes, Professor Emeritus at the University of Amsterdam, discussed the export of American mass culture to Europe at the turn of the 20th century. Kroes's talk summarised a lifetime of research into the ways in which Europeans have embraced and reconfigured American mass culture to fit local tastes and needs.

## Home truths from abroad

**A student abroad: Griffin Canfield finds travel broadens his mind.**

The decision to spend a semester abroad at the Clinton Institute for American Studies was one of the best of my college career. It enabled me to get an outside perspective on American culture and policy. The small class sizes made it possible to have in-depth discussions surrounding the



Griffin Canfield who spent the last semester at the institute under the Clinton Semester Ireland (CSI) program.

issues of the day. An added benefit was I was not only hearing perspectives of students from throughout the US, but from around the world.

While there was a lot to be learned in the classroom, there was just as much to be learned from travelling. With the assistance of the International Student's Society, I can honestly say I visited all the top spots in Ireland. However, I was a little partial to Kinsale, not only because it is a beautiful coastal town, but also because it's where my great-grandfather, the original Griffin, hails from.

During spring break and at the conclusion of the academic semester I travelled throughout mainland Europe. The list of places I visited includes London, Warsaw, Krakow, Vienna, Prague, Sicily, Rome, Venice, Paris, and the Beaches of Normandy. With each place I visited came a new lesson in culture and history. I walked through Auschwitz and was struck with an utter sense of disbelief; I witnessed a verbal boxing match while sitting through Question Time at the House of Commons; and I was humbled as I entered the American Cemetery overlooking Utah Beach.

My time abroad was an amazing experience. Looking ahead I know the insights I gained during my time at the Institute and my travels throughout Europe will be of great value. Whether it is in my pursuit of a bachelor's degree in Political Science from St. Mary's College of Maryland or an eventual career in government service I will have a much broader perspective of America's role in the world.

## Upcoming Events

Civil Rights Symposium  
October 5th

Diaspora Talks - Professor  
AnnaLee Saxenian Date TBC

Progressing Reconciliation:  
The Role of Peace Agreements  
in Societal Reconciliation  
November 1st & 2nd

Progressivism in America  
November 8th & 9th

From the Frontline: A series  
of talks by leading war  
reporters  
Dates tbc

## Board Members of the Clinton Institute

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# It's the business



*Sarah Hale: from Salt Lake City to Paris via the Institute.*

## Alumni reflections: Sarah Hale recalls a year in Dublin that made a difference.

I can still conjure that rush of adrenaline felt on opening the acceptance letter from UCD Clinton Institute's MA in Media and International Conflict. It was May 2009. I was sipping a chai latte in sunny Salt Lake City, Utah, on a road trip after college. As a newly-minted American Studies major with an eye on an editorial career, the Clinton Institute's "MAMIC" program was the object of my desire — it sewed interdisciplinary interests into a one-year European adventure. Immediately, I emailed Catherine Carey to accept and, in August, I moved to Dublin.

Now it's 2013. I'm writing from Paris, on the 11th floor of the Europe, Middle East & African headquarters of a multinational business software company. It's 10 pm at the end of a financial quarter, and I am evaluating one of 2,000 deal approvals assessed since January's field kick-off in Barcelona. Thanks to the Clinton Institute, I have found work editing for an Irish political website; selling business software to UK & Ireland large enterprises; and managing projects for that company's European regional president. My current role includes travel to places like Milan, Amsterdam and London; first-line control over commercial workflows; and even a hand in drafting presidential

keynotes and letters to CEOs. I never dreamt I'd have the chance to do this at the age of 26.

Without a doubt, these opportunities can be directly linked to the MA in Media and International Conflict. The program introduced me to bright, ambitious minds — a great network of friends four years on. The degree indicates strong communications skills instrumental in securing journalism and sales roles. In-depth research on pertinent topics has directly transferred to the deep, intense analysis required of my current position. Classes in reporting, diplomacy, conflict, globalisation, foreign policy, international politics — these modules explicitly prepared me for a career in international business, where I must persuade and analyse fast-paced, current events every day.

What's great about this degree? It is what you make of it. The MA in Media and International Conflict is a fascinating intellectual and social experience that you can shape to suit your desires. My 2009–10 peers are solicitors, salespeople, journalists, techies, consultants, HR-gurus and reality TV producers. This is a degree for bright, exciting, ambitious and funny people, and I can gratefully say that enrolling was one of the best decisions I've had the chance to make. Thanks Liam and Catherine, thanks peers, and I'll see you soon in Dublin.

*Sarah Hale was a member of the 2009/10 class in Media and International Conflict.*