

‘Myth, Memory and Meaning: Commemorating the 1916 Easter Rising in Ireland’

Dr. Roisín Higgins (Teesside University, UK)

Monday, 13 May, 15.15-16.45, F-139

The 1916 Easter Rising is an iconic event in Ireland. It has come to signify not just a battle against the English for independence but a battle over what it means to be Irish. Debates around it expose the extremes of both the nation’s self-satisfaction and its self-loathing. Roisín Higgins will look at why Easter week 1916 has become such a charged event in Ireland and what meanings it was used to convey during the centenary commemorations in 2016. By looking at the centenary programme, including plays, exhibitions and concerts, she will explore the political potential of a moment when past and present are believed to touch. The history of women was one of the most important stories to be given prominence during the centenary, and Roisín will reflect upon the relationship between history and politics and what the commemoration of the Rising revealed about twenty-first century Ireland.

- Roisín Higgins is a Reader in Modern History at Teesside University. Her research is focused on historical memory and she has written extensively on commemorations of the Easter Rising, including her award-winning book *Transforming 1916: meaning memory of the fiftieth anniversary of the Easter Rising* (Cork, 2012). As a result of this work Roisín was invited to give talks in the United States, Australia, Europe and across Ireland during the centenary in 2016. She was historical adviser on the Commemoration zone of the ‘GPO Witness History’ permanent exhibition and wrote the expert essay ‘Remembering the Rising’ for the *Inspiring Ireland* exhibition for the Digital Repository of Ireland. Roisín was also one of the curators for the public history project, *National Treasures*, a collaboration between RTÉ (the Irish national broadcaster), the National Museum of Ireland and the Broadcasting Authority of Ireland. The television series to accompany the project was broadcast on RTÉ on Sundays throughout April 2018.