



# COMMON GROUND

## POSTGRADUATE CONFERENCE

**Common Ground Conference 2018**  
**Divided Selves and Societies in Irish and American Literature and Culture**  
**26 – 27 October 2018**

[commongroundsymposium.wordpress.com](http://commongroundsymposium.wordpress.com) / [@commongroundqub](https://twitter.com/commongroundqub)

Following the 20th anniversary of the Good Friday/Belfast Agreement, the topics of borders and division are once again at the forefront of the global political consciousness. The central protections of the agreement that brought 'The Troubles' to an end are now threatened by both the collapse of the power-sharing government in Northern Ireland and by Brexit negotiations, during which concerns relating to the current NI/RoI border and future EU/UK border have posed many obstacles. Borders and division are also a principal concern of the current administration in the United States of America, particularly with respect to the proposed 'border wall' with Mexico and the 'travel ban' from several Muslim-majority countries. Moreover, Ireland and America share a common interest in the Irish border: it was Senator George Mitchell, former United States Special Envoy for Northern Ireland, who chaired the all-party peace negotiation that led to the signing of the Good Friday Agreement. Two decades later, the existence of ongoing divisions in both Ireland and America is becoming increasingly evident.

Common Ground Conference 2018 invites postgraduate and early career researchers across the humanities to Queen's University Belfast, to explore the theme of divided selves and societies in 20th and 21st century Irish and American literature and culture. This conference will provide researchers with an opportunity to disseminate current research, as well as investigating, on an interdisciplinary basis, the racial, ethnic, political, religious, sex-gender, sexual, class and economic divides that dominate debates about American and Irish culture. Whilst the conference draws on contemporary formulations of division, it also welcomes papers that offer historical perspectives on disunity in Irish and American literature and culture.

This year, we are also delighted to welcome [Dr Sinéad Moynihan](#) of Exeter University, and [Dr Oona Frawley](#) of Maynooth University, as keynote speakers.

The organisers invite proposals of 250 words for twenty-minute papers, to be delivered as part of three-paper panels or discussion roundtables. Common Ground conferences range over many subject areas, and we wish to see this reflected in the diversity of disciplines represented. Possible topics include (but are not limited to):

- Selfhood and social solidarity
- The self as a social agent
- The public self vs the private self
- The fragmented self and metaphors of social disintegration
- Trauma, memory, and reconciliation
- The discriminated self and social marginalisation

- Identity politics
- Formulations of 'us' and 'them'
- Language of terror and conflict
- Otherness/Monstrosity
- Race and othering
- Gender and power
- LGBTQI relations
- Border crossings
- Immigration, emigration, and diaspora
- Citizenship
- Policing borders
- Globalisation
- The division of labour
- Incarceration, the state and the self
- Borders and the body
- (Dis)embodiment
- The body in protest
- Movements of resistance
- Counterculture and rebellion
- Civil disobedience, self and government
- The protest novel and the dissident voice
- Political and/or social (in)stability
- Post-conflict peace-building
- Justice and human rights
- Irish-American relations

Proposals for individual papers or full panels are welcomed. Submissions must be in the form of a Word document, and should include:

- A title
- A 250-word abstract for each paper submitted
- A 50-word biographical sketch and email address for each presenter

Please forward all proposals to: [commongroundqub@gmail.com](mailto:commongroundqub@gmail.com).

Deadline for submission: 27 July 2018.

**NOTE: All technical and/or accessibility requirements should be communicated to the organising committee at the time of proposal submission.**

The Organising Committee  
Kelsie Donnelly, Emma Kelly, Patrick Macfarlane and Lauren Moffat