



## Academic Event Report

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**Event:** College of Arts, Celtic Studies & Social Sciences (CACSSS)

Postgraduate Research Conference 2025

**Venue:** CACSSS Seminar Room, O' Rahilly Building, University College Cork

**Dates:** 19<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> February 2025

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The annual Postgraduate Research Conference of the College of Arts, Celtic Studies & Social Sciences (CACSSS) at University College Cork (UCC) highlights the diverse and innovative research of CACSSS postgraduate students. This conference welcomes presentations from all research areas, giving students the opportunity to share their work with peers and academic staff from across the college's various departments. For many CACSSS students this postgraduate research conference is their introduction into the academic community and often marks their first encounter in presenting and defending their research in front of their peers. As an interdisciplinary research event, CACSSS students benefit from receiving invaluable and constructive feedback from students and staff outside of their own academic discipline, which in turn elevates their own research. Beyond the scope of their own research project, participants develop an understanding of how their research relates to other disciplines, which allows them to ask further questions of themselves and push the boundaries of their own work.

To demonstrate the interconnectedness of CACSSS research, the conference is divided into thirteen thematic panels. This allows students to recognise how their research relates to other postgraduate work being conducted in other departments and fields and to foster further connections outside of their own department. At the crux of this event, the CACSSS

postgraduate research conference highlights the diverse research being undertaken by postgraduate students and affords PhD candidates the opportunity to become further immersed in the CACSSS scholarly community. Following each panel, presenters took part in a question-and-answer session, allowing for rich discussions and facilitating interdisciplinary connections.

### **Day One**

The conference began with opening remarks from Professor Cathal O’Connell (Interim Head of CACSSS, 2024–2025), followed by the first of seven panels for the day. This opening panel, “Environmental Creativity”, was chaired by Dr Aoife Granville (Department of Folklore and Ethnology). It commenced with Shelley Etkin’s (Department of Sociology & Criminology) paper, titled ‘Herbologies of Repair: Medicinal Plants, Land Stewardship, and Pedagogies of Solidarity in Palestine-Israel’, followed by Luca Gambirasio’s (Department of Music) presentation, ‘Diverse Music and Sound-Mediated Environmentalisms in Contemporary Tuscany: Mapping Ecomusicology Frameworks in Central Italy’, and Jessica O’Hara’s (School of Education) ‘What’s Stalling the Green Transition in Irish Higher Education?’. The panel concluded with Joshua Wagner’s (Department of Drama and Theatre Studies) paper, ‘The Transformative Potential of Ongoing Forest-Based Affective and Aesthetic Practices’.

Dr Ciara Chambers (Department of Film and Screen Media) chaired the second panel, “Time, Space and Memory”. The panel opened with Daniel Fraser’s (Department of German and Department of French) paper ‘Resistant Temporalities: History and Geological Time in Paul Celan and Marguerite Duras’. This was followed by Kane Geary O’Keefe’s (Department of Film and Screen Media) presentation on ‘Hunting for Lost Time: Folkloric Institutions and the Erasure of Pandemic Years in Tony Devlin’s *The Glenarma Tapes* (2024)’. David Mackey (Department of Film and Screen Media) continued this engaging panel with his paper, ‘Manufactured memory: Analysing the Relationship between Time, Film and Memory through *La Jetée* and *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind*’, after which Philip Maguire (Department of Music) presented ‘Time and Space in a Piece for an Indeterminate Number of Speakers and Listeners’.

This panel concluded with Tomasso Verga's (Department of Italian and Department of Film and Screen Media) paper, titled 'Towards an Intertextual and Intermedial Reading of Akira Kurosawa's *Rashomon* (1950)'.

Following a short break, the third panel, "Care and Wellbeing", chaired by Dr Siobhan O'Sullivan (School of Applied Social Science). The panel began with Maureen Considine's (Department of History of Art) presentation, 'Official State Commemorations of the Residential Institutions 2009 to the Present'. This was followed by Imelda Fitzgerald's (School of Nursing and Midwifery) paper, 'The Role of Obstetricians and Midwives in Co-ordinating and Providing Person-centred Compassion Care during the Birthing Experience'. Bob Grumiau (Department of Sociology & Criminology) then presented a paper titled 'An Investigation of the Use of Art-Based Practices in the Humanities and Social Sciences', which was followed by Fiona Kelly's (Department of Music) presentation 'The Attitudes of Caregivers and Residents of Residential Care for Older Individuals on Implementing a Caregiver-Led Music Programme'.

After lunch, the conference recommenced with the fourth panel, "Gender Identity and Authority", chaired by Dr Alan Gibbs (Department of English). Gabrielle Dufrene (Department of English) opened with her presentation, titled 'Mammy Gets Behind the Wheel: Form Enabling Freedom in Claire Keegan's *Men and Women*', followed by Jow Huber's (Department of Film & Screen Media) paper, 'Queer Cinema of the Weimar Republic'. Elodie Martin (Department of Philosophy) then directed the discussion to gender in Japan with a presentation titled 'Fukuzawa Yukichi and Gender Equality in Japanese Society'. This dynamic panel concluded with Charlotte Troy's (Department of English) paper, "'I'm not gonna bite you" – The Ultimate Girl's Girl Eats Boys in *Jennifer's Body* (2009)'.

Dr Mastoureh Fathi (Department of Sociology) chaired the fifth panel of the day, 'Interpreting Historical Voices and Sounds'. The panel began with Rosemary Kelly's (Department of English) paper, titled "'Hit that sinful man, that enemy of the people" – Pluralised Masculinities in the Old English *Andreas*' which was followed by Vassileios Varelas's presentation (Department of Music), titled 'Vocables and Rhetoric of Music: Medieval Semiotics in the Relation of Rhetoric with Music in Byzantium'. Jessica

White (Department of English) concluded this panel with ““Can I invent?”: Education and Gender in Maria Edgeworth’s *Harry and Lucy*”.

After another brief break, the penultimate panel of the day, “Mapping the Mind”, commenced, moderated by Dr Mastoureth Fathi. This insightful panel started with Tadhg Connery’s (School of Applied Psychology) paper, titled ‘A Study of Sensory Processing Sensitivity’. Next, John Gilroy (Department of Sociology & Criminology) presented ‘The Annual Reports of the Inspector of Lunatic Asylums/Inspector of Mental Hospitals 1847 to the Present’, and Katie Marah (Department of Applied Social Studies) gave her paper ‘An Exploration of the Enablers and Barriers to Autistic Children’s Participation in Decision-Making in Irish Primary Schools’. Nello Maruca (Department of Philosophy) continued proceedings with a presentation titled ‘Challenging the Understanding of Anhedonia in Schizophrenia Spectrum Disorder’. The panel concluded with Brónagh Murphy’s (Department of Archaeology) paper ‘The “Archaeology of the Contemporary” in Assessing Trauma and Injury Patterns from 20<sup>th</sup> Century Wars’.

The final panel of the first day, “Programming Counselling and Coaching”, was chaired by Dr Mark Prendergast (School of Education), bringing together postgraduate researchers from the School of Education and the School of Nursing and Midwifery. The panel commenced with Graham-Gill Emerson’s (Department of Sociology & Criminology and School of Nursing and Midwifery) paper, ‘Outlining a Plan for Examining Core Programmatic Underpinnings of Irish Counselling Training Programmes’. This was followed by Eoghan Long’s (School of Education) presentation of his paper, ‘A Critical Analysis of a Recent Teacher National Professional Development Programme’ and Cornelius David Moynihan’s (School of Education) paper, ‘Cultivating the Creativity of Neurodivergent Thinking – A New Educational Approach’. Coran Swayne’s (School of Education) presentation, titled ‘Cultivating Coaching Cultures in Primary Schools: The Role of Leadership, Teachers and Policy across Ireland, England, and New Zealand’, brought the first day of the conference to a close.

## Day Two

The second day began with the engaging “Student Experience and Activism” panel, chaired by Dr Kate Hodgson (Department of French). To begin, Aoibhinn Callaghan (Department of Asian Studies) presented her paper, ‘The Role of University Students during the Independence Movements in Korea (1919) and Ireland (1916)’, which was shortly followed by Jordan Carolan (School of Languages, Literatures & Cultures), who delivered a presentation titled, ‘An Investigation of the English Language Learning Experiences of Chinese and Korean Studies in Ireland’. In addition to these presentations, Breda Connell (School of Education) offered ‘A Scoping Review of Library-Based Academic Writing Groups for Academic Identity Development in PhD Students’. The panel closed with Yu Wang (Department of Asian Studies), whose presentation was titled, ‘Boarding Schools in Chinese Female Fiction of the Republican China (1912–1949): Gendered Space and Female Identity’.

The ninth panel of the conference, “Devotions and Obsessions: Personal and Political”, was moderated by Dr Sharon Lambert (School of Applied Psychology). This session began with Beth Aherne’s (Department of English) paper, ‘Devotion, Obsession, and the Family in Octavia E. Butler’s *Dawn* (1987) and *Fledgling* (2005)’. Following this presentation, James Dineen (Department of English) delivered his paper, ‘Simone Weil’s individuated Christianity’, and Gabriella Fattibene (Department of Criminology and Sociology) concluded the panel with ‘The Far-Right Playbook in Ireland’.

After a break, the conference continued with its tenth panel, “Migrations and Borders”, which was moderated by Dr Órla O’Donovan (School of Applied Social Studies). Opening this panel, Cian Lynch (School of History) presented ‘An Investigation into the Role of Naval Trawlers and Drifters in Protecting Ireland’s Coastal Waters during the Great War’. Pivoting the discussion, Grainne-Kate Mulcahy (School of Applied Social Studies) delivered ‘Hierarchies of Belonging and Racialisation in Europe: Experiences of Irish Women Living in Scandinavia in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century’, which was followed by Pooja Priya’s (Department of Sociology & Criminology) ‘Intersectional Placemaking in Delhi: Experiences of Belonging and Exclusion Among Nigerian and Congolese Migrants’. Subsequently, in her paper, Nataliya Ryzhova (School of Languages,

Literatures & Cultures) analysed linguistic and narrative practices amongst displaced Ukrainians who were temporary relocated to Ireland. To conclude the panel, Joy Uwanziga (Department of French), examined the migration effect on social and cultural developments in the Great Lakes Region through her case studies of Rwanda and Uganda.

After lunch, members of *Aigne*'s editorial board delivered a brief presentation, highlighting their continued success publishing the work of UCC postgraduate students and announced a call for papers related to the CACSSS Research Conference.

Dr Niall Duggan (Department of Government & Politics) oversaw the eleventh panel, "Public and Political Systems and Structures". The panel was begun by Michał Biedowicz's (Department of Government & Politics) 'A Conceptual Analysis of Anarchy/ism and Democracy', the aim of which is to assess the compatibility between the two concepts. Tobias Heyduk (Department of Government & Politics) delivered 'The Autonomy of Public Administration: A Systematic Literature Review', which was followed by Sara Meghar's (Department of Government & Politics) 'The Dialectical Relation of Financial Capitalism and US Defence Industries since the 2000s'. The panel ended with Benita Wolf (Department of Sociology & Criminology), whose paper offered a deconstruction of the criminal courthouse.

The twelfth panel, entitled 'Periods of Transition', was moderated by Dr Sarah Foley (School of Applied Psychology) and featured papers from the Departments of Film and Screen Media, English, and Government & Politics. Tadgh Dennehy (Department of Film and Screen Media) commenced the panel with his paper, '*Hush-a-Bye-Baby* and "Myths of Modernity" in 1980s' Ireland', which was followed by Hanke Kelber (Department of English), who interrogated apocalyptic misanthropy and the collapse of modernity in mid-twentieth century American post-apocalyptic fiction. The panel reached its conclusion with Rojin Mukrihan's (Department of Government & Politics) 'Founding a Post-Islamic Republic Iran: Social Contract versus Modus Vivendi'.

The two-day conference concluded with its thirteenth panel, "Language Acquisition and Literary Canons", chaired by Dr Katharina Becker (Department of Archaeology). Julia Coughlan (School of Education) opened the panel with 'Enhancing Teacher Knowledge and Plurilingual

Competencies and in the Primary School Classroom’. Sustaining the focus on education, Aoife Hill (School of Education) presented on teachers’ approaches to grammatical accuracies in Irish immersion settings. Rachel McCarthy (Department of Digital Humanities) then pivoted the discussion to how word utilisation and meaning has evolved in Irish literature throughout the decades. Jincal Yang (School of Education) concluded the panel by delivering ‘A Systematic Review of Existing Research on Using Electroencephalography (EEG) in Classroom Settings to Analyse How Children Acquire Languages’.

Closing remarks were offered by Dr Barry Monahan, the Vice-Head of College (Graduate Studies), who affirmed the importance of this conference.

### **Conclusion**

The 2025 College of Arts, Celtic Studies & Social Sciences Postgraduate Conference once again proved to be an invaluable setting for scholars to exchange and refine ideas and engage in interdisciplinary dialogue. The event showcased the depth and breadth of postgraduate research at UCC, with papers exploring topics from environmental humanities, film studies, psychology, education, literature, migration studies and beyond.

Events like the CACSSS Postgraduate Conference are key to helping early-stage researchers develop confidence. In addition to the conference serving as a fruitful setting for presenting papers, the question-and-answers sessions that followed each panel offered participants the opportunity to receive constructive feedback, defend their ideas, and engage in the kind of interrogative exchange that is essential to academic growth. Notably, this engagement also extends beyond the conclusion of the conference itself through the conference’s association with *Aigne*. By devoting a dedicated section to these conference papers, *Aigne* boosts the visibility of postgraduate student research, further reiterating the importance of this platform for UCC’s research community. The success of the 2025 conference speaks to the value of creating such spaces for postgraduate researchers and suggests promise for CACSSS conferences in years ahead.

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during the Korean colonial period (1910–1945). She is a recipient of the Korea Foundation’s Scholarship for Graduate Studies.

**GABRIELLE DUFRENE** is a second-year PhD student in the Department of English at University College Cork. Gabrielle is a recipient of the CACSSS Excellence Scholarship, through which her doctoral research project, “An Island on a Sea of Grief: Irish Women Writers and Trauma”, is funded.

**CHARLOTTE TROY** is a third year PhD student in the Department of English at University College Cork. Charlotte is a recipient of the Government of Ireland Postgraduate Scholarship, which funds her research project titled “EcoGothic Gardens and the Collapse of Social Binaries”.