



News Release

Contact: Sandra Soliz  
713-906-7912  
solizs@stthom.edu

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**University of St. Thomas Hosts Joe Mac Donnacha  
speaking on “The Irish Language”**

**WHAT:** The Center for Irish Studies Cultural Outreach Forum, The Irish Society and the Irish American Cultural Institute host Joe Mac Donnacha who will present the lecture “The Irish Language: The Successes and Challenges of Language Planning in Ireland and the Future of Irish in a ‘Globalized World.’ ”

**WHEN:** 7:30 p.m. Thursday, April 26, 2007

**WHERE:** University of St. Thomas  
Cullen Hall, 4001 Mt. Vernon  
Parking: Moran Center, 3807 Graustark at West Alabama

**BACKGROUND:** With the establishment of the Irish Free State in 1922, the Irish language was accorded the status of the “national language.” By 1926, Irish speakers in the Irish Free State numbered 18 percent out of the total population. By 1936, a year before the enactment of the Irish Constitution, Bunreacht na hÉireann, the number of Irish-speakers had increased to 24 percent. This dichotomy between the constitutional status of Irish and its de facto position as the lesser-used language in the State is the focus of debate in Ireland and elsewhere.

The Irish government is investing in Irish language programs around the world, such as UST’s, in an effort to preserve it. The lecture will discuss the viewpoints in favor of and against preserving Irish as the official language of Ireland. Mac Donnacha will identify successes and failures of Irish language planning and the challenges that face the Irish language if it is to remain a spoken language in the “globalized world” of Ireland today. He will include a short summary of the history of the language, discussing attitudes among the populace in general towards the language, how effectively school children acquire Irish through the education system, the areas and domains in which Irish is used in society and the future of the last remaining “Gaeltachtaí” (Irish-speaking areas).

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Mac Donnacha is the academic coordinator with Acadamh na hOllscolaíochta Gaeilge (Academy for Irish-medium University Studies) at the National University of Ireland, Galway, where he also lectures on language planning.

**COST:** Free and open to the public. No RSVP or tickets sold. First-come; first-served.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION:** Contact Lori Gallagher at 713-525-3592.

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