THE SUPREME ART

We meet some of the exceptional international faculty at UCD

DR THOMAS GRUND
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AS AN ACADEMIC ONE LIVES A
VERY INTERNATIONAL LIFE. I have
lived in seven different countries in
the last twelve years and engage
with colleagues all over the world.
Dublin seemed like an interesting
and well-connected place to be.
And once you are in Ireland and
see how beautiful it is and how
friendly the people are, you are
likely to stay. I ALWAYS WANTED
TO TEACH. Maybe as a five-year-
old I wanted to become a mechanic
to fix my mom’s car but after a
brief flirtation with becoming an
astronaut, I was quite certain about
a career as a university instructor.
I do love the research part too,
but teaching and having a chance
to inspire others is extremely
stimulating and rewarding to me.
MY TIME AT OXFORD as a PhD
student had the greatest impact
on me. I was extremely privileged
to be surrounded by some of the
sharpest minds in the world. And
even more so to notice that they were all
normal people. This is something I try to tell
my students: excellence is achieved by sitting
down and working hard. TO BE A SERIOUS
ACADEMIC THESE DAYS, you must have
an international outlook. We live in a highly
connected world and are part of a worldwide
academic community. In my teaching, I draw
on my own experiences abroad. Being a
sociologist is about noticing the things you
do not see any more because you are part of
society. Travel and international experience
help with that. I connect my students with
research groups all over the world and, in my
opinion, every student should study abroad
for a time. IT IS INCREDIBLY REWARDING
WHEN my students understand complicated
issues and get excited about the social world.

Seeing that spark in their eyes is extremely
motivating. I challenge my students every day,
but they challenge me too, keep me on my
toes and make me a better version of myself.
IT’S A SIMPLE FACT that we are most
inspiring when we talk about something
that we are excited about ourselves. As a
university instructor, it is my job to provide
the best education a student can possibly get.
Humour is one way of getting my students
to engage with the course material and
study hard. I START MY LECTURES WITH
FUNNY TRAILERS. I use vivid imagery in
my presentations and sometimes explicit
language as well. Cognitively, shock tactics

“To be a serious ACADEMIC these days,
you must have an INTERNATIONAL outlook.”

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