

THE SUPREME ART

We meet some of the exceptional international faculty at UCD



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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

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

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can be used to raise awareness. Of course, you do not want to overdo it. It is like most things in life, finding the right mix. **IRISH STUDENTS TEND TO UNDERSSELL THEMSELVES.** It breaks my heart when students think they cannot achieve something, or when excellent students are afraid of standing out. I talk to my students about believing in themselves, developing goals and working towards them, and let them know that nobody should ever tell them that they can't achieve something, not just at university, but in life. **I HAVE 500 STUDENTS IN MY INTRODUCTION COURSE,** the biggest social science programme in Ireland. Some of these students will have a lasting impact on Irish society, perhaps even change the world. My small contribution is to change the way my students look at the world. The role of a professor is much more outward-facing these days. Rightly so. We can no longer sit in our ivory towers. As a sociologist, I need to be where society is. Only then can I be good at what I do.

“It is the supreme art of the teacher to awaken joy in creative expression and knowledge," said genius Albert Einstein. UCD has a strong national and international reputation in this area, celebrating those lecturers and professors who go the extra mile to make the learning experience engaging and inspiring with annual Teaching and Learning Awards. UCD's global outlook is also reflected in the quality and diversity of its international faculty, well-travelled individuals who bring an enlightened perspective to the 33,000-strong student community. A number of these international Teaching and Learning awardees tell us what brought them to Ireland, and what they bring to UCD.

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.