

## **“Consuming a Nation”: May 6 on IPR**

Twelve students in Lauren Onkey’s seminar at the Virginia Ball Center for Creative Inquiry are studying the roles tourism and travel writing play in constructing and marketing Ireland’s national identity. The seminar traveled throughout Ireland conducting their research and audio taping interviews. Now that they’re back, the students have created and produced an hour-long program for Indiana Public Radio entitled “Consuming a Nation” that will illustrate the significance of tourism in contemporary culture. (A series of shorter programs aired last month.) The seminar will also publish its findings in an academic journal devoted to Irish Studies.



Professor Lauren Onkey and her seminar students from the Virginia Ball Center.

As the seminar’s community sponsor, Indiana Public Radio has been involved in “Consuming a Nation” from its inception. The one-hour special which will air May 6 at 3pm was written, edited and produced by the students with the aid of Marcus Jackman. Jackman, who hosts *Indiana ArtsDesk* as well as the NPR newsmagazine *All Things Considered*<sup>TM</sup> for IPR, assisted the class before and after their trip to Ireland, and helped them ready their raw material (the audio taped interviews they recorded in Ireland) for broadcast.

The students were asked how they felt about using radio as the medium for their seminar. Krista Quesenberry, a member of the seminar, offered these thoughts:

“For most current BSU students, it would be easier to name 3 MTV VJs than 3 IPR hosts. We’ve grown up in a culture of video games and 24-hour television, a culture that emphasizes the visual over all other senses. To our generation, the radio is just a place to get music when the CD player is broken and, with iPods and MP3s, we’re not even doing that anymore. We read Internet newspapers and get our entertainment from DVDs. We’ve become reliant on our eyes to teach us everything, while our mouths and ears and imaginations lay nearly dormant.

“So, for those of us in the Virginia Ball Center’s ‘Consuming a Nation’ course, we’ve been treading new waters this semester. To be honest, most of us didn’t habitually listen to public radio before the course began. Now, having worked with the medium for a while, we know which shows are our favorites and we can tell when we’re hearing good radio; we talk to each other about the stories we love and we play them over and over again; we understand the value of radio and we’re tuning in.

“We’ve begun to see how the mouth, the ear and the brain can work together to tell stories the eyes can’t. We’ve begun to understand the mode of storytelling used in public radio, and to hear more than just news and classical music when our radios flip to the lower end of the dial. We’ve begun to understand the art of voiceover as well as the potency of the sound when the man down the street tells his own story. We’ve begun to see the radio as a place to listen and to feel with all our senses, beyond the limitations of the visual.”

*Krista Quesenberry is a senior from Ft. Wayne*