Sunday, October 1 MINNEAPOLIS-ST. PAUL DEPARTURE
Leave for Dublin via Atlanta on Delta Air Lines flight departing mid-afternoon.

Monday, October 2 DUBLIN ARRIVAL
Morning arrival in Dublin. Welcome from awaiting Irish tour manager and a private motorcoach. Drive to North County Dublin for tea or coffee and homemade scones followed by a relaxing visit to Malahide Castle & Gardens, one of the oldest castles in Ireland. Enjoy a brief introduction to Ireland’s capital and a break for lunch on own en route to Ashling Hotel, for check-in and time to get settled for a three-night stay. Group dinner at hotel. (D)

Tuesday, October 3 DUBLIN
After breakfast, Dr. Byrne lectures on “Dublin: At the Heart of Ireland’s History.” After lecture, enjoy a motorcoach tour of this historic city including Georgian Dublin, passing by Parliament buildings, St. Stephens Green, Dawson Street, and the Mansion House. Walk the grounds of Trinity College featuring a visit to the Old Library to view the Book of Kells. Break for lunch on own. End the tour exploring the exhibits at the National Museum of Ireland - Archaeology. Free time on own until group dinner at a local pub or restaurant. (B,D)

Wednesday, October 4 DUBLIN/BRU NA BOINNE VISIT
Departure this morning to County Meath, about a one-hour drive. Arrive at Bru Na Boinne Visitor Centre for the interpretations of the Neolithic monuments of Newgrange, Knowth and Dowth, all older than Stonehenge and the Great Pyramid. Afterward visit either Knowth or Newgrange Neolithic Tomb, entrance subject to availability. Upon return to Dublin in the early afternoon, our coach will stop in the Trinity College area for those wanting to explore additional sites in the city centre, and then at the hotel for others preferring to relax. Lunch and dinner on own in Dublin. (B)
Thursday, October 5 DUBLIN/GLENDALOUGH/KILKENNY
Today is a memorable day as we travel south into the stunning Wicklow Mountains to explore early Christian Ireland at Glendalough, a 6th century monastic settlement situated in the heart of the mountains. Discover how St. Kevin established this hermitage, which remained a monastery for 1100 years. Free time for lunch on own. Continue to Kilkenny arriving at Kilkenney River Court Hotel, to check-in for a two-night stay. Dr. Byrne lectures on “Resistance, Rebellions, Revolutions” before dinner at hotel. (B,D)

Friday, October 6 KILKENNY
This morning explore the 12th-century Kilkenny Castle, a strategically important site that symbolized Anglo-Norman supremacy over the native Irish population. The castle, which possesses a rich and complex architecture, became a stronghold for the powerful Butler family and played a significant role during Cromwell’s tumultuous subjugation of Ireland. Some free time for lunch on own followed by a guided visit of Smithwicks Experience, a ninth generation family-owned brewery in the heart of Kilkenny in operation since 1710. Group dinner at local pub or restaurant. (B,D)

Saturday, October 7 KILKENNY/DINGLE
Leave Kilkenny for Cashel (meaning castle or fortress) to visit one of Ireland’s great historical sites, the Rock of Cashel, a spectacular geographical and archeological site from the 12th century. For a thousand years Cashel was the symbol of power and the base of kings and churchmen who ruled over the region. Continue through the picturesque countryside of County Kerry to Dingle Peninsula with a stop for lunch on own en route. Arrive at Dingle Skellig Hotel, for check-in to begin a two-night stay. Group dinner at hotel. (B,D)

Sunday, October 8 DINGLE
This morning discover the natural beauty of the Dingle Peninsula, famous for its rolling hills, sandy beaches, magnificent waterfalls and unique rock formations. Stop at Slea Head Lookup for photos. Visit the 6th century beehive huts and the Gallarus Oratory, believed to be an early Christian church built between the 6th and 9th centuries. Time for a late afternoon lunch on own with the evening free to explore Dingle Town and enjoy a local pub or restaurant on own for dinner, many with live music. (B)

Monday, October 9 DINGLE/GALWAY
Leave Dingle traveling north along the coast to Tarbert. Travel by ferry to Killimer across the Shannon estuary. Rising up to 700 feet with a western seaboard expanse of five miles is the impressive Cliffs of Moher. In the visitor centre, view the Atlantic Experience presentation explaining the history of the cliffs. Lunch on own during a stop en route. Journey through the Burren, an area of split and weathered limestone and home to dozens of megalithic tombs, cairns and holy wells. In the process, consider reasons why the west of Ireland was a source of significant emigration to other lands. Arrive into Galway for check-in at Galway Bay Hotel to get settled in for three-night stay. This evening Dr. Byrne lectures on “Crisis and Emigration: the Irish Diaspora.” Group dinner at hotel. (B,D)

Tuesday, October 10 VISIT TO ARAN ISLANDS
Full day excursion to the Aran Islands where the Irish (Gaelic) language is still spoken by native islanders along with English. Discover the landscape, traditions and culture of these harsh but stunningly beautiful Atlantic isles. Take the ferry (subject to weather conditions) from Rossaveal to Kilronan on Inishmore. Travel in small groups on local mini-buses around the island to the ancient fort, Dun Aengus. Explore the visitor centre and then walk to the top of the hill to take in the panoramic views overlooking the Atlantic and the Burren in the distance. Return to Kilronan for lunch on own and time to visit the Heritage Centre including a viewing of the 1934 film “Man of Aran,” a romantic depiction of life on these rugged islands. Return to Galway area for evening at leisure with dinner on own. (B)
Wednesday, October 11 GALWAY CITY
After breakfast, Dr. Byrne lectures on “Making All Things Irish.” Morning walking tour of Galway’s historic town centre including Eyre Square, the Spanish Arch, and the Claddagh, birthplace of the celebrated Claddagh ring. These sites will help us appreciate Galway’s crucial historic role in Irish social, economic and political history. Afternoon is free for lunch on own, leisure time and individual exploration. Farewell dinner at a Galway restaurant. (B,D)

Thursday, October 12 SHANNON DEPARTURE
Leave Galway early this morning for the drive to Shannon airport for a Delta Air Lines flight to New York/JFK, connecting flight to Minneapolis-St. Paul arriving early evening. (B-boxed)

Included meals: B=Breakfast, D=Dinner
Flights based on 2016 schedule and may change in 2017. Itinerary subject to adjustments when finalized.
Use website links in blue for more information.

Cost and Registration
Registration for this travel opportunity will open late fall 2016. The flights and airfare for travel dates in October 2017 are not available until November 2016. This is the reason the tour cost is currently estimated at $4,700 to $4,800 for sharing a hotel room. The supplement for single hotel accommodations is $625.

Registration information will be available by early December and to include enrollment instructions and the due date for a $600 per person deposit. The registration information will detail the tour cost, inclusions, registration conditions and travel insurance. Group size limited to approximately 35.

Flight departures from other U.S. cities available. Early flight departures are not permitted.

Air ticket extensions are available for a $100 service fee plus any additional airfare and may be requested on the enrollment form. Land only registration is also an option.

Travelers are required to walk significant distances including on uneven surfaces, steps and inclines during parts of the itinerary. Walking tours in historic city centers and archeological sites are usually a distance of two to four miles and up to four hours in length. Elevators are not always available. Consult with tour leadership if you have concerns or questions about the amount and level of walking required to fully participate.

To be included on a list to receive tour updates and the registration information, when available in late fall, please contact Tom Emmert, Gustavus Adolphus coordinator for alumni travel at tomo@gustavus.edu.

Kevin Byrne may be reached at kbyrne@gustavus.edu.

For more destination and travel information, click these website links:
Tourism Ireland
Heritage Ireland
Ireland information U.S. Department of State

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