

## Syllabus

ENGL 3998: Oscar Wilde, CRN 46970  
Fall 2015, TTh 2:40-4:10 pm, UH 3324

Professor: Molly Youngkin  
Office: University Hall 3852  
Office Hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays 4:20-6:20pm

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### Course Description and Objectives:

This course considers the literary career of Oscar Wilde in its various contexts--biographical, psychological, historical, and cultural, with particular emphasis on class, gender, and sexuality--in order to discern the importance of Wilde's work in the literary canon. We will begin with the paradox of spring 1895, the season in which one of Wilde's most popular plays today, *The Importance of Being Earnest*, closed as a result of three trials—one civil and two criminal—in which Wilde's also now very popular novel *The Picture of Dorian Gray* was used as evidence against him. We then will trace Wilde's work chronologically, covering the highlights of his career and focusing on the key concepts regarding the role of the artist found across the various genres in which he wrote: journalism, poetry, critical prose, fiction, and drama.

In thinking about Wilde's importance in the literary canon, we will consider pop culture representations of him, including his portrayal in film, interesting adaptations of his plays, and commercial products, such as the Oscar Wilde action figure. This course counts for an Information Literacy flag, which we will fulfill by completing a research exercise that involves locating a variety of sources about Wilde and by constructing a website highlighting Wilde's place in academic and popular discourse.

In keeping with the goals of the undergraduate program in English, we will take as our objectives:

- enhancing your critical reading skills, especially comprehension of complex texts
- enhancing your writing skills, especially the creation of logical arguments about these texts
- enhancing your ability to articulate verbally your ideas about the relationship between literary interpretation and larger issues of canonization, popular reception, etc.
- enhancing your ability to evaluate knowledge related to the various contexts for Wilde's work

### Required Course Materials:

Ellmann, Richard. *Oscar Wilde*. New York: Vintage, 1988. ISBN 0394759842  
Gibaldi, Joseph. *The MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*. 7th edition. New York: Modern Language Association, 2009. ISBN 9781603290241  
Wilde, Oscar. *Collins Complete Works of Oscar Wilde*. Glasgow: HarperCollins, 2003. ISBN 0007144369

Please purchase the editions I have specified here, so our class discussion will be most productive. It's very difficult to have a good discussion if each student has a different edition, with different page numbers.

### Recommended Course Materials:

An English handbook, such as *The Little, Brown Handbook* or *The Everyday Writer*.

**Grade Breakdown:**

Participation	20%
Research Exercise	15%
Final Project	20%
Midterm Exam	20%
Final Exam	25%

**Course Requirements:**

*Participation:* You are expected to have completed each reading assignment before the class for which it is assigned. You should bring your texts and writing materials to every class, and you should come prepared with notes on and questions about the readings for the day. Participation in class discussions is required and constitutes 20% of your course grade, so regular attendance is important.

If you miss a class, you are responsible for finding someone else in the class to catch you up; in other words, I will not repeat lecture material for you, but I will discuss what happened in class if it is evident that you've made an effort to get notes from another student first. I do not distinguish between excused and unexcused absences, except in very unusual circumstances, so you should save your absences for emergencies (death in family, illness, work commitments). Coming to class late or leaving early counts as a partial absence. Missing a required outside class activity also counts toward your absences. If you miss more than four classes (including required outside class activities), there will be a significant reduction in your participation grade.

*Film Screenings:* There will be four required film screenings, which are included to facilitate your understanding of the written texts we're reading this semester. See the class schedule for the dates and times of these screenings, and make arrangements now to be available to attend these screenings. At the screenings, you should take notes about the ways in which these particular productions interpret the text. If you do not attend these screenings, you will accrue absences and your participation grade will be affected as well.

*Research Exercise:* This research exercise, which will help you gather material for your final project, will involve investigating how Wilde has been received in both academic and popular circle and analyzing recent critical analysis of him and his work. I will give you more details about this assignment at mid-semester. The assignment is due at the beginning of class on Monday, October 20, and we will share the results of our research with each other in class.

*Final Projects:* For the final project, we will be using the material found for the research exercise as we design content-rich websites that use images and text to highlight the life and work of Wilde. In order to be considered content-rich, your website must include text that is the equivalent of a 5-7 page critical paper. You are required to use outside research for this project, which you will begin gathering when you do the research exercise, and you must follow MLA style in terms of formatting. The project is due at the beginning of class on Monday, Dec. 1; part of our class that day will be sharing our projects with each other.

*Exams:* There will be 2 exams: a mid-term and a final. There will be some short answer questions on the exam, but the majority of it will be essay. See class schedule for exam dates. No make-up exams, and no early exams.

**Grading Scale and Criteria:**

The grading scale is based on the grading system approved by LMU. I will assign numerical grades for all assignments, and I will use the final grade sheet attached to this syllabus to figure final grades. The numerical/letter grade correlation is as follows: 94-100=A, 90-93=A-, 87-89=B+, 84-86=B, 80-83=B-, 77-79=C+, 74-76=C, 70-73=C-, 60-69=D, and 0-59=F. My primary grading criterion is this: for all major assignments, I am looking for what I call “academic writing,” writing that expresses a complex argument with specific examples as evidence and does so in an engaging, sophisticated manner. See attached handout for more about this.

**Late Assignments:**

Expect deductions for late assignments. Typically, I deduct 10 points per 24 hours; for example, an assignment that earns 90 points and is a day late will drop to an 80. No assignments will be accepted via email, and no double submissions (same project submitted for another class) allowed.

**Electronic Equipment and Visitors in the Classroom:**

No cell phones, pagers, CD players, tape recorders, or other electronic equipment in the classroom. If you want to bring a laptop to class, record lectures, or bring a guest to class, you must get my approval first.

**Plagiarism:**

Plagiarism is the act of presenting someone else’s ideas or words as your own. It is a serious academic offence and may result in a failing grade for the assignment, a failing grade for the course, and/or university disciplinary action. For more details about the university’s policy on this issue and other forms of academic dishonesty, see the Undergraduate Bulletin. If you are unsure about how to integrate others’ ideas or words into your work without plagiarizing, consult your English handbook and/or come talk to me. I’ll be glad to help you avoid plagiarism!

**Drop policy:**

If you do not want a “W” on your record and want a full tuition refund, you must drop the course before the end of the first week of classes. From week 2-10, you may drop, but you will receive a “W” and will not receive a full tuition refund.

**Resources for Students:**

**Tutoring Center:** The Tutoring Center is located in the Academic Resource Center, on the second floor of Daum Hall. Experienced tutors are available to help students who wish to improve their writing. For an appointment, call 338-2847.

**Advising:** For questions about the undergraduate English curriculum, see your adviser in the English department. If you are an English major and you haven’t talked to your adviser yet, you should do so as soon as possible.

**Disabled Support Services:** Persons with disabilities are welcome in this classroom. If you have a disability and need specific accommodations, please register with DSS and then come talk to me. DSS is located in the Academic Resource Center, Room 224 in Daum Hall. The phone number is 338-4535.

### Class Schedule

The workload expectations for this course follow LMU's credit-hour policy. In a four-credit course, students are expected to spend at least 180 hours on this class, which is comprised of class instruction, preparation for class, time spent on major assignments, and other class activities (including required outside activities). The dates and activities listed below are subject to change, but I will do all I can to keep us on schedule. You are responsible for noting any changes in the syllabus.

Except for the readings from Ellmann and Whistler, all reading assignments are in *Collins Complete Works of Oscar Wilde*.

Week 1:

T, 9/1: Introduction to the course

Th, 9/3: The Paradox of Spring 1895: Witty Wilde

Ellmann, xv-xvii, 421-31

Wilde, *The Importance of Being Earnest* (357-419)

Week 2:

T, 9/8: The Paradox of Spring 1895 continued: The Trials and *Picture of Dorian Gray*

Wilde, *Picture of Dorian Gray* (3-123)

Th, 9/10: The Paradox of Spring 1895 continued: The Trials and *Picture of Dorian Gray*

Wilde, *Picture of Dorian Gray* (124-84)

Ellmann, 435-78

Week 3:

T, 9/15: Retracing Wilde's Early Career: Familial Contexts, Life at Oxford, and Early Poems

Ellmann, 3-36

Kiberd, "The Poems" (739-43)

Wilde, "Requiescat" (748-49), "The Grave of Keats" (770- 71), "Garden of Eros" (844-51), "Burden of Itys" (786-95), "Helas!" (864)

Th, 9/17: Retracing Wilde's Early Career: 1882 Lecture Tour in America

Ellmann, 157-98

Holland, "Essays, Selected Journalism, Lectures and Letters" (907-12)

Wilde, "House Beautiful" (913-25), "The Decorative Arts" (926-37), "Personal Impressions of America" (938-41)

Week 4:

T, 9/22: Retracing Wilde's Early Career: Journalism

Ellmann, 270-80  
 Whistler, Ten O'Clock Lecture, access online at  
<http://www.whistler.arts.gla.ac.uk/miscellany/tenoclock/>  
 Wilde, "Mr Whistler's Ten O'Clock" (948-49), "Hamlet at the Lyceum" (952-54),  
 "Balzac in English" (959-61), and "Two Biographies of Keats" (967-69)

Th, 9/24: No reading. Do activity that will be helpful for research exercise and discuss research exercise in class.

Week 5:

T, 9/29: Building a Reputation: The Fairy Tales

Edwards, "The Stories of Oscar Wilde" (13-15)  
 Wilde, "The Happy Prince" (271-77), "The Nightingale and the Rose" (278-82),  
 "The Selfish Giant" (283-85), "The Devoted Friend" (286-93)

Th, 10/1: Building a Reputation: Essays

Wilde, "The Soul of Man Under Socialism" (1174-97) and "Decay of Lying"  
 (1071-92)

Week 6:

T, 10/6: We will be attending the President's Inauguration together. I will announce our meeting location and planned activities closer to the date of the inauguration.

Before our meeting time, please complete the scheduled reading for today and bring a 250-word written response to the question I provide you on 10/1 to turn in at our meeting.

Wilde, "Portrait of Mr. W. H." (302-50)  
 Ellmann, 291-304

Th, 10/8: Follow up on President's Inauguration and reading for 10/6. We also will review for the midterm.

Week 7:

T, 10/13: Midterm

Th, 10/15: No class—extra office hours. Feel free to come in and see me if you have last-minute questions about the research exercise.

Week 8:

T, 10/20: Research exercise due. We will share the results with each other in class, so it is important to be on time. There will be a grade deduction if you are not present on time to share your results.

Th, 10/22: Discuss the final project assignment in class. We will have a demonstration about constructing websites, which will not be repeated, so it is important to attend class today.

**Required outside class activity. You are required to attend and take notes about a screening of the film *Lady Windermere's Fan* at one of the following times: Th, 10/22, 4:20-6:20pm or T, 10/27, 10:45am-12:45pm. Locations to be announced.**

Week 9:

- T, 10/27: Wilde's Theatre: Objects of Desire  
 Wilde, *Lady Windermere's Fan*, Acts 1 and 2 (420-44)
- Th, 10/29: Wilde's Theatre: Objects of Desire  
 Wilde, *Lady Windermere's Fan*, Acts 3 and 4 (444-64)  
 Ellmann, 362-76

**Required outside class activity. You are required to attend and take notes about a screening of the film *Salomé* at one of the following times: Th, 10/29, 4:20-6:20pm or T, 11/3, 10:45am-12:45pm. Locations to be announced.**

Week 10:

- T, 11/3: Wilde's Theatre: People We Desire  
 Wilde, *Salomé* (583-606)
- Th, 11/5: Wilde's Theatre: People We Desire  
 Discussion of *Salomé* continued.

**Required outside class activity. You are required to attend and take notes about a screening of the film *An Ideal Husband* at one of the following times: Th, 11/5, 4:20-6:20pm or T, 11/10, 10:45am-12:45pm. Locations to be announced.**

Week 11:

- T, 11/10: Draft of website due. In order to get credit for the final website project, you must be present to share your draft with others in the class. In class work on website development.
- Th, 11/12: Wilde's Theatre: Dramatic Star  
*An Ideal Husband*, Acts 1 and 2 (515-53)

Week 12:

- T, 11/17: Wilde's Theatre: Dramatic Star  
*An Ideal Husband*, Acts 3 and 4 (553-82)  
 Ellmann, 397-431
- Th, 11/19: The Later Poetry

Wilde, "The Sphinx" (874-82) and "Ballad of Reading Gaol" (883-99)

**Required outside class activity. You are required to attend and take notes about a screening of the film *Wilde* at one of the following times: Th, 11/19, 4:20-6:20pm or T, 11/24, 10:45am-12:45pm. Locations to be announced.**

Week 13:

T, 11/24: After the Fall: Prison Writing

Ellmann, 479-524  
Wilde, *De Profundis* (980-1018)

Th, 11/26: NO CLASS--Thanksgiving

Week 14:

T, 12/1: After the Fall: Prison Writing

Wilde, *De Profundis* (1018-59) and "Two Letters to the Daily Chronicle" (1060-70)

Th, 12/3: No class—extra office hours to discuss any last-minute questions about the final project.

Week 15:

T, 12/8: Final Projects Due. Be prepared to share your results in class. There will be a grade deduction if you are not present to share your results.

Th, 12/10: Review for Final.

The final exam will be held on Tuesday, December 15, 2:00-4:00 pm. If you normally work or have other commitments at this time, please make arrangements now to be available for the full two hours on this day.

**Molly Youngkin  
Grade Calculation Sheet  
English 3998**

Student \_\_\_\_\_

	Numerical Value		Percentage Weight	=	Total Weight
Research Exercise	_____	x	____.15____	=	_____
Midterm Exam	_____	x	____.20____	=	_____
Final Exam	_____	x	____.25____	=	_____
Final Project	_____	x	____.20____	=	_____
Participation	_____	x	____.20____	=	_____
			Numerical Total		_____
			Final Grade		_____

Final Grade Scale

94-100	A
90-93	A-
87-89	B+
84-86	B
80-83	B-
77-79	C+
74-76	C
70-73	C-
60-69	D
0-59	F

Directions

1) Fill in the appropriate numerical value for each assignment; 2) Multiply that value by the percentage weight in the second column; 3) Add the amounts in the "total" column; 4) Use the "final grade scale" to calculate your final letter grade.