American College Dublin

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LIB402 OSCAR WILDE AND HIS CIRCLE

Credits: 3 US credits / 6 ECTS credits
Credit level: Stage arward
Prerequisites: Anglo-Irish writers
Mandatory: Yes
Contact hours: 40
Academic Year: 2016/17
Semester: 2
Lecturer: Dr. Piotr Sadowski

INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES

At the end of this module learners should be able to:

1. appreciate the importance of Wilde's early domestic and social milieu in Dublin and Ireland for the writer's education and the formation of his artistic sensibility, wit, and political views;
2. evaluate the development of Wilde's artistic views in the context of the late nineteenth-century aesthetics of J-K. Huysmans, John Ruskin, and Walter Pater;
3. critically assess Wilde's novel *The Picture of Dorian Gray* in the context of the author's shaping aesthetic and moral philosophy;
4. examine the satirical elements of Wilde's plays, and in particular their exposure of Victorian hypocrisy, snobbery, and materialism;
5. discuss Victorian attitudes towards homosexuality and their influence on public perception of Oscar Wilde;
6. assess the legacy of Oscar Wilde in twentieth-century literary Modernism, modern social critique, the rise of Modernist theatre, and the changing attitudes towards homosexuality.

Learning outcomes 2 will be assessed by a research paper, 1, 5 by class presentation, and 3, 4, 6 by the final examination.

MODULE OBJECTIVES

The aim of the module is to study the social circle and literary works of Oscar Wilde, the most influential Anglo-Irish writer of the late Victorian era. A bohemian, wit, and conversationalist, Wilde inspired a culturally vibrant social environment in Dublin, London, and Paris, whose legacy has lasted until the present day. Wilde's artistic achievements in the realm of poetry, fiction, drama, the

art of conversation, and literary criticism will be considered in the context of late nineteenth-century aesthetic movement, Irish nationalism, Anglo-Irish colonial relations, the emerging celebrity culture, early Modernism, and Victorian attitudes towards homosexuality.

MODULE CURRICULUM
Learners will realise the module objectives by completing a number of curriculum tasks and activities. These are planned to include the following topics:

- The house in Merrion Square, Dublin, and its cultural influence on young Oscar;
- Oscar's formative years and the tradition of Protestant Ascendancy in Ireland;
- Oscar's classical education and his shaping aesthetics: from Trinity College to Oxford;
- Nothing to declare but his genius: Oscar in America;
- Aesthetics versus ethics: the scandal of *The Picture of Dorian Gray;*
- Lord Alfred Douglas: the Dorian Gray of Oscar's life;
- Wilde's dramatic success: his society comedies and social satire;
- Oscar contra Victorianism: the infamous trials;
- Oscar Wilde and Edward Carson at the Old Bailey Court: the Anglo-Irish dimension of the trials;
- Disgrace and exile: the public perception of Wilde's trials;
- The history of critical interpretation of Wilde's work;
- Wilde's legacy and literary Modernism.

REQUIRED TEXT
Complete Works of Oscar Wilde, London: Collins Classics, 1994;
The Collected Works of Oscar Wilde, London: Wordsworth Editions Limited, 2007;
Richard Ellmann, *Oscar Wilde*, London: Penguin Books, 1988;
Peter Raby, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Oscar Wilde*, Cambridge University Press, 1997;
Merlin Holland, Rupert Hart-Davis, *The Complete Letters of Oscar Wilde*, London: Fourth Estate, 2000.

SUPPLEMENTARY READING LIST
Davis Coakley, *Oscar Wilde: The Importance of Being Irish*, Dublin: Town House, 1994;
Merlin Holland, *Irish Peacock and Scarlet Marquess: The Trials of Oscar Wilde*, London: Fourth Estate, 2003;
Neil McKenna, *The Secret Life of Oscar Wilde*, London: Random House, 2003;
Merlin Holland, *Oscar Wilde: A Life in Letter*, London: Fourth Estate, 2003;
Gyles Brandreth, *Oscar Wilde and a Death of No Importance: A Mystery*, New York: Touchstone, 2007;
Tomas Wright, *Built of Books: How Reading Defined the Life of Oscar Wilde*, London: Chatto & Windus, 2008;

Matthew Hofer, Gary Scharnhorst, eds*., Oscar Wilde in America: The Interviews*, University of Illinois Press, 2010;
Joseph Pearce, *The Unmasking of Oscar Wilde*, London: HarperCollins, 2000.

INTERNET WEBSITES

http://www.literaturepage.com/authors/Oscar-Wilde.html
http://onlinebooks.library.upenn.edu/webbin/book/search?amode=start&author=Wilde%2C%20Oscar
http://www.bookrags.com/criticisms/Oscar_Wilde
http://www4.ipl.org/div/litcrit/bin/litcrit.out.pl?au=wil-33
http://www.literaryhistory.com/19thC/WILDE.htm
http://www.iasil.org/
http://www.wilde-online.info/oscar-wilde-biography.htm
http://www.online-literature.com/wilde/
http://www.cmgww.com/historic/wilde/
http://www.law.umkc.edu/faculty/projects/ftrials/wilde/wildelinksandbiblio.html
http://www.literaryhistory.com/19thC/WILDE.htm
http://www.oscarwilde.com/links.html

MODULE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

The physical structures of the module learning environment include lecturing classrooms supplied with integrated chairs and desks and a whiteboard, a Powerpoint system, overhead projector, television and DVD/video player. The learners also have access to an up-to-date computer laboratory (all computers are connected to the College's network; they are equipped with the Microsoft XP Office suite of software, Microsoft Frontpage and are networked for printing and internet access).

The module learning environment also includes the College's library (the Rooney Library). In co-operation with the teaching staff and in association with Lynn University, Boca Raton, Florida, the Library is able to supply reading and research materials on all aspects of the proposed Liberal Arts degree (as well as a range of materials on history, sociology, literature, languages, art, international relations and environmental studies). There are networked computers (five) and printers, with Internet access and power points for portable computers. The library management system, Voyager, provides an online catalogue. Learners are able to search the catalogue, extend their loans, and place holds on titles from home. An inter-library loan service is available for staff and learners.

MODULE TEACHING AND LEARNING STRATEGY

The module intended learning outcomes are achieved through a range of teaching and learning strategies. These include three hours per week of class time which combines elements of a seminar and tutorial. Learners are expected to take detailed notes in class and to do practical exercises and other classroom activities prescribed by the lecturer. Learners are also expected to

dedicate at least two hours per week to self-directed study which includes reading, elementary research, home assignments, group assignment preparation, individual projects, and revision of material for tests and final examinations. Self-study can be conducted in the College Library or at home. Learners can also contact their lecturer during office hours for further academic support. All these types of teaching provide a versatile opportunity to support and develop learner engagement with the programme.

MODULE ASSESSMENT STRATEGY

The extent to which learners have achieved the module intended learning outcomes is established by different kinds of assessment strategies. These include various forms of continuous assessment and the final exam. The forms of assessment used in the module, together with their weighting, include the following:

- Research paper (c. 2500 words), in which learners will present results of their original research on a selected topic relating to Oscar Wilde (30%);
- Class presentation (10 minutes) on a selected topic relating to Oscar Wilde (10%);
- Final examination (60%).

As class attendance is necessary for the achievement of intended learning outcomes, only learners who have attended at least 75% of the classes can sit the final examination.

The grading scale used by the American College Dublin is the following: A (80-100%), B+ (70-79%), B (60-69%), B- (55-59%), C+ (50-54%), C (40-49%), D (35-39%), F (below 35%). Class presentations are assessed using a class presentation rubric (see Section 5.4.6) to ensure transparency, fairness, and consistency of assessment process.

Learners will be instructed in academic techniques of source referencing to avoid plagiarism, that is, unacknowledged appropriation of someone else's ideas, words, and research results. Plagiarism is regarded by the College as a serious offence punishable by downgrading, failure in the course work, and possible dismissal from the College. The College's detailed Plagiarism Statement is included in the Quality Assurance Manual, sections 3.8.1-3.