

Comparative Literature 201W: Section 2

Reading Wilde, the "Critic as Artist"

Instructor: Amir Hussain

Class: MWF 3:00-3:50, Callaway C203

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Office Hours: by appointment, Woodruff Goizueta Business Library

Course Description

This course will introduce students to comparative and critical reading through a close engagement with the nineteenth century modern writer Oscar Wilde. While he is typically remembered as the figurehead of "art for art's sake," buried throughout Wilde's texts is the problem of the relationship between literature and criticism. We will closely read a diversity of his writings—short stories, selections from his gothic novella *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, his play *Lady Windermere's Fan*, his essay "The Critic as Artist," and selections from his prison writings. We will also read criticism on the idea of "art for art's sake" by Friedrich Nietzsche, Walter Benjamin, and others. This material will provide a way to inquire into the ways in which literature, philosophy, and criticism merge and intermix. Through readings, discussions, and paper assignments, students will learn how to critically interpret modern texts and how to analyze the pliability of language that is, as Wilde remarked of art, "at once surface and symbol."

Required Books and Course Readings

You are required to obtain the following two books, available at the campus bookstore:

Oscar Wilde, *De Profundis and Other Prison Writings* (Penguin Classics)

Oscar Wilde, *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (Oxford World's Classics)

All other required course readings will be available as digital links on Course Reserves.

Course Policies

Attendance and Participation

Attendance is essential to success in this class. Bring your readings and a notebook to class each day. Complete the reading so you can participate in class. It is your responsibility to complete the readings as scheduled and ask for a peer's notes, if you miss class.

Canvas

All assignments will need to be typed and submitted through Canvas. All submissions

must be double-spaced, 12-point font. Late work will receive a 5% deduction for each late day (weekends count). I will post assignment sheets, as well as submit feedback and grades on your written assignments on Canvas.

A Word (or Two) on Technology

Computer use is a privilege in my classroom. For the roughly three hours we meet in class each week, I ask that you observe the following technology policy. Physical copies of the books listed above are required. Laptops may only be open to the readings when we discuss the readings that are posted on Course Reserves. If laptops are being used for purposes besides the course readings during class time, I will amend the policy and everyone will be required to bring printed copies of the readings. It is in the interest of the class that everyone follows the technology policy. Please also bring a pen and notebook with you to class for note-taking or occasional in-class writing.

Contact

Email or coming to my office hours are the best ways to contact me if you have questions or concerns. Generally, I will respond to email within 24 hours (although on weekends and holidays, it can take longer). I expect email communication to be professional.

Cooling-off Period

If you wish to speak me about a grade you received on a graded assignment, please wait 24 hours before contacting me.

Academic Integrity

The Honor Code (<http://catalog.college.emory.edu/academic/policies-regulations/honor-code.html>) is in effect throughout the semester. By taking this course, you affirm that it is a violation of the code to plagiarize, to deviate from the teacher's instructions about collaboration on work that is submitted for grades, and to undertake any other form of academic misconduct. I take plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty seriously. Should I suspect that you engage in academic dishonesty in this course, I will refer the case to Emory's Honor Council. You may also receive an F on the assignment.

Inclement Weather Make-up Class Policy

Emory has a policy for inclement weather make-up classes. For longer closures (three or more days), specific days are set-aside to make-up classes. Those dates are:

Saturday 23 & Sunday 24, March 2019

Saturday 6 & Sunday 7, April 2019

Course Assessment

Attendance and Participation: 20%

Students are expected to come to class having read assigned materials. Regular participation in class discussions is expected. You may miss up to three classes without

incident. For every class you miss after three, I'll lower your participation grade by 15%. If you have more than five absences, I'll also lower your overall grade by a letter grade. Distractions and disruptions during class time and coming late to class will negatively affect your grade.

Two Essays: 45% (22.5% each)

In two essays (five pages each), you will respond to a specific prompt based on the readings we have done thus far. The prompt will be on Canvas in advance of due dates.

Final Essay Project: 35%

Your final project will be an essay (eight pages) that is a *deep* revision and an expansion, along with a reflection (two pages) on your revision and writing process.

Course Schedule

UNIT 1: Literary Wilde

Week 1	Wed Jan 16	First day of Class
	Fri Jan 18	“The Fisherman and His Soul”
Week 2	Mon Jan 21	MLK Day – No Class
	Wed Jan 23	“The Fisherman and His Soul”
	Fri Jan 25	<i>The Picture of Dorian Gray</i> (Preface, Chapter 1)
Week 3	Mon Jan 28	<i>The Picture of Dorian Gray</i> (Chapters 2 - 4)
	Wed Jan 30	<i>The Picture of Dorian Gray</i> (Chapters 5 - 9)
	Fri Feb 1	<i>The Picture of Dorian Gray</i> (Chapters 10 - 14)
Week 4	Mon Feb 4	<i>The Picture of Dorian Gray</i> (Chapters 15 - 18)
	Wed Feb 6	<i>The Picture of Dorian Gray</i> (Chapters 19 - 20)
	Fri Feb 8	Kwame Anthony Appiah lecture “Art & Identity,” 3pm at Carlos Museum Ackerman Hall
Week 5	Mon Feb 11	peer review
	Wed Feb 13	<u>Essay One Due: Close Reading</u>

UNIT 2: Aesthetics

	Fri Feb 15	Williams, “The Romantic Artist” (Pages 33-42)
Week 6	Mon Feb 18	“The Romantic Artist” (Pages 43-52)
	Wed Feb 20	Wilde, “The Critic as Artist” (Pages 1-18)
	Fri Feb 22	“The Critic as Artist” (Pages 19-32)

Week 7	Mon Feb 25	“The Critic as Artist” (Pages 33-42)
	Wed Feb 27	Nietzsche, “On Truth and Lying...” (Section 1)
	Fri Mar 1	“On Truth and Lying...” (Section 2)
Week 8	Mon Mar 4	Benjamin, “The Work of Art...” (Intro, Sections 1-5)
	Wed Mar 6	Benjamin, “The Work of Art...” (Sections 6-10)
	Fri Mar 8	Benjamin, “The Work of Art...” (Sections 11-15, Epilogue)
Week 9	Mar 11 - 15	SPRING BREAK – No Class this Week
Week 10	Mon Mar 18	Marcuse, “Art as a Form of Reality” (Pages 51-54)
	Wed Mar 20	“Art as a Form of Reality” (Pages 55-58)
	Fri Mar 22	peer review
Week 11	Mon Mar 25	Susan Sontag, “The Aesthetics of Silence” (Sections 1-10)
	Wed Mar 27	“The Aesthetics of Silence” (Sections 11-20)
	Fri Mar 29	<u>Essay Two Due: Comparative</u>

UNIT 3: Late Wilde

Week 12	Mon Apr 1	<i>De Profundis</i> (Pages 45-65)
	Wed Apr 3	<i>De Profundis</i> (Pages 66-86)
	Fri Apr 5	<i>De Profundis</i> (Pages 87-106)
Week 13	Mon Apr 8	<i>De Profundis</i> (Pages 107-130)
	Wed Apr 10	<i>De Profundis</i> (Pages 131-161)
	Fri Apr 12	“The Ballad of Reading Gaol” (Sections 1-3)
Week 14	Mon Apr 15	“The Ballad of Reading Gaol” (Sections 4-6)
	Wed Apr 17	“The Ballad of Reading Gaol”
	Fri Apr 19	No Class – <u>Individual Conferences: outline due</u>
Week 15	Mon Apr 22	No Class – <u>Individual Conferences: outline due</u>
	Wed Apr 24	In-class screening of Film/Documentary
	Fri Apr 26	In-class screening of Film/Documentary
Week 16	Mon Apr 29	peer review
Exam Period		<u>Final Essay Due</u>

* schedule is subject to minor changes as course progresses