

Bettina Jansen**Ü
PS****Reading Gone Wilde:
Oscar Wilde – Writer and Myth****Mon (5)****tba**

Oscar Wilde's famous aphorism "I have nothing to declare but my genius" is an excellent example of both his inimitable eloquence and his biting wit. These two qualities, amongst others, have ensured that Wilde's versatile oeuvre has remained popular with contemporary audiences. His aphorisms enjoy wide currency, his fairy tales are still popular, his plays are regularly put on stage, his short story "The Canterville Ghost" has even entered German school curricula and can currently be watched as a stage play at Staatsschauspiel Dresden, his only novel has inspired multiple screen adaptations, and even his life has been the source of numerous films.

This seminar, first of all, wishes to provide you with a comprehensive overview both of Wilde's works and the literary and sociocultural context in which they were created. Therefore, we will discuss select poems and short prose, the novel *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1891), his most successful play, *The Importance of Being Earnest* (1895), and a number of Wilde's critical essays.

Secondly, we want to explore the 'Wilde myth' that began to develop shortly after his death, asking questions such as the following: Why do his works continue to fascinate contemporary audiences? Which aspects render his writings (post-)modern rather than typically Victorian? Why is he rarely perceived as an Irish writer outside Ireland? Can his texts be read through the lens of postcolonial theory? What is dandyism? Which role does Wilde play in Queer Studies?

This seminar is also aimed at students who have not yet attended the introductory course to Literary Studies. Throughout the seminar, we will apply categories and methods necessary for the analysis and interpretation of poetry, prose and drama.

Please buy and read:

1. Oscar Wilde. *The Picture of Dorian Gray*. London: Penguin, 1994.
[ISBN: 0140620338]
2. ———. *The Importance of Being Earnest*. London: Penguin, 1994.
[ISBN: 0140621725]

All additional primary and secondary literature will be made available via OPAL.

Please note: You are not required to enrol for this seminar in advance. If you would like to join this course, simply turn up at the first session and sign up then.