

## “Why We’re Still Wilde About Oscar”

Anyone who saw the 2019 exhibition *Camp: Notes on Fashion* at the Met Museum, which included works by and photographs of Oscar Wilde (1854–1900), knows that he is an ongoing inspiration to writers, filmmakers, social activists, and also to visual artists such as fashion designers. Queer communities, Irish American communities, Black communities, feminist communities, and many others continue to embrace him. Why is he a figure today of such—to use a favorite word of his—importance? Our course will address that question by looking at some key writings by and about him and will explore his appeal across the lines of gender, sexuality, nationality, and race. It will also highlight the role of the Rosenbach in preserving his legacy and the significance to Wilde’s career of Philadelphia, which he visited twice in 1882.

Reading Schedule:

- 1) **Oscar Wilde’s Legendary Life (Tuesday, March 23<sup>rd</sup>)**  
Kimberly J. Stern’s “Oscar Wilde: A Biography”  
Chapters One and Two of Wilde’s *The Picture of Dorian Gray*
- 2) **Wilde in the World of Fantasy (Tuesday, April 6<sup>th</sup>)**  
Wilde’s “The Happy Prince”  
Wilde’s *Salome*  
Stetz’s “Greater Than the Mystery of Death”
- 3) **Wilde in British Society (Tuesday, April 20<sup>th</sup>)**  
Wilde’s *Lady Windermere’s Fan*  
Act One of *The Importance of Being Earnest*
- 4) **Wilde in America (Tuesday, May 4<sup>th</sup>)**  
Louis Edwards’s novel, *Oscar Wilde Discovers America* (2003)

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