

<b>Field</b>	Literature
<b>Lecturer</b>	Dr Jacek Olesiejko
<b>Topic</b>	Otherness: themes of solitude, travel and transformation across English literary landscapes
<b>Seminar aims and description</b>	<p>The method of reading literary texts in which the present seminar engages is reading cultures through their constructions of otherness. All cultures are defined and delineated along boundaries between the centre of a society and its margin. In this seminar, both the mainstream and the other are going to be read as bifurcations of the same cultural and political constructs. Accordingly, the monsters of the Old English epic poem <i>Beowulf</i> may be understood not as an inversion of heroic culture but as a dehumanised embodiment of those who exist outside the privileged aristocratic warrior-class. The representation of monsters may thus reflect the dominant class's assumptions on class, gender and social inequality. The other is abject, or alien, to society. According to Judith Butler, "The abject designates here precisely those 'unliveable' and 'uninhabitable' zones of social life which are nevertheless densely populated by those who do not enjoy the status of the subject, but whose living under the sign of the 'unliveable' is required to circumscribe the domain of the subject (Butler 1993: 3). Slaves, vampires, monsters, criminals, and monastic recluses are part and parcel of each culture's definition. During the seminar we are going to discuss texts that are sensitive to such issues as class, gender, sexuality and race. These texts represent British literature and are going to range from Old English poetry to contemporary novel. Anglo-Saxon religious and heroic verse, medieval Arthurian romance, Gothic novel as well as its Victorian and contemporary developments, among others, presuppose a perspective from which the world is viewed from its margins. The topic of otherness is highly relevant for us not only regarding literary history, but also helpful to understand the contemporary globalised world, each other and ourselves.</p>
<b>Sample bibliography</b>	Butler, Judith. 1993. <i>Bodies that matter: On the discursive limits of 'sex'</i> . New and London: Routledge.

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- Pearsall, Derek. *Arthurian Romance: A Short Introduction*. Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2003.
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