

SEMINARIUM MAGISTERSKIE
ROK AKADEMICKI 2025/2026
FILOLOGIA ANGIELSKA
AMERYKANISTYKA

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American Culture and the Environment

The seminar invites students interested in reading American texts of culture from the perspective of various theoretical and methodological approaches collectively referred to as the environmental humanities. At the heart of this perspective lie the questions of the Anthropocene, global warming and our relationship to the sphere of the nonhuman. The seminar will offer a survey of possible interpretative frameworks which take the entanglement of the natural and the social/ cultural/ political as their focus and question the binary divisions that shaped modernity. This will be done with reference to American historical and critical contexts. At the same time, the seminar will give specific examples of how various theoretical slants may yield different results when it comes to the interpretation of American texts of culture (literature, film, TV, photography) of various genres and modes concerned directly or indirectly with the environment, with special emphasis on ecohorror and ecogothic, speculative fiction and dystopian/ utopian perspectives. The topics and readings for the seminar will include, but are not limited to, the following:

- the historical post-Enlightenment approaches to nature and the environment
- theories concerned with the Anthropocene and its cognates (Capitalocene, Plantationocene, Urbanocene, Novacene, Neganthropocene, etc.);
- various trends within ecocriticism (feminist eco-criticism, elemental ecocriticism)
- animal studies
- plant studies
- energy humanities (fuels, petroculture, resources)
- blue humanities (ocean studies, pluviality)
- biopoetics and enlivenment theory

- cultures of toxicity
- theories of global weirding and dark ecology
- technology and the environment

In this sense, the seminar will offer strong methodological tools to foster individual MA projects and research skills. The first semester will be focused predominately on the exploration of the theoretical framework.

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Explorations in the American Zeitgeist

Even as the United States is undergoing a period of unprecedented turmoil and rapid change before our very eyes, this seminar is open to students eager to think critically and creatively about the cultural narratives that define the country today—narratives through which it understands itself and is understood by others. I invite students interested in exploring the intersections of American popular culture and literature with broader social, cultural, and political discourses, and in examining how cultural texts—myths, stories, and images—reflect, shape, and challenge the current American zeitgeist. Students are welcome to take on projects about race and racism; feminism and intersectionality; queer studies; "[Trump fiction](#)" and other fictionalizations of U.S. politics; cultural representations of American history, foreign policy, and imperialism; American mythologies and ideologies; [capitalist realism](#); representations of celebrity, wealth, and poverty; and cultural nostalgia and other phenomena of the current zeitgeist. I particularly encourage theses that will analyze texts of popular and [everyday](#) culture, contemporary American literature (especially written by women, queer authors, and writers of color), genre fiction (especially romance and horror), and true crime.

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NATIONAL, MINORITY AND INDIGENOUS CULTURES IN LITERATURE, FILM, VISUAL ARTS AND THEATRE

The seminar will focus on various manifestations of the mainstream, minority and Indigenous topics in select literary, dramatic/theatrical, cinematic and visual arts discourses, with a primary concentration on Canada. Other national/cultural perspectives can also be explored. We will discuss the role of contemporary writers, artists, filmmakers, and critics not only in the construction but also decolonization and indigenization of dominant cultures, including the reclamation and validation of Indigenous thought, values, traditions, languages and holistic philosophies. Students will be encouraged to employ decolonial/ postcolonial and Indigenous research methodologies in their projects (to be introduced and/or systematized in class).

Prospective M.A. theses may explore but are not limited to the topics from the list below. These broad themes/ categories will be narrowed down, depending on students' interests and the selection of "texts" to be examined in their theses.

- Cultural, ethnic, Indigenous and other minorities and their representation in literature, film, theatre, visual arts and new media
- Re-reading of Canadian history from an Indigenous, Black or immigrant perspective
- Canadian and American Indigenous literature, film, drama/theatre/ performance and visual arts
- Comparative Canadian and American perspectives: national myths, relation to the past and nature, a sense of place, changing notions of gender, ethnicity, race and class as inscribed in literature, culture, film and visual arts
- Literature, visual arts, theatre and film as an expression of trauma (fear, shame, guilt)
- Polish reception of Canadian culture – film and drama/ theatre/ performance
- Polish diaspora in Canada and its contribution to Canadian literature, arts, film and theatre/ performance

- Canadian and/or American popular culture and identity construction
- Canadian and American popular culture – comparative perspectives
- Ecocritical readings of literature, visual arts and film
- Racism and sexism in literature, visual arts and film
- Feminist re-writings of cultural texts
- Representation of First Nations, Inuit and Métis people in the works/ texts by non-Indigenous cultures
- Importance of Indigenous/Aboriginal knowledges and philosophies in the contemporary world plunged in the environmental and spiritual crisis
- Transfer of Indigenous knowledges and contemporary artistic practices
- Indigenous and Western pedagogy – comparative perspectives
- Indigenous drama, theatre and performance in the context of traditional knowledge, alternative methodologies and techniques of representation
- Indigenization processes in literature, film, photography, visual arts, theatre/drama and public spaces