

here/there:

(a fence here, a wall there, a line drawn here, a line crossed there)

Walls are back in fashion. Walls and fences. While walls and fences are certainly physical things - imposing ones at that - a good deal of their power comes from elsewhere. They are things of the mind. Walls and fences are entities that inhabit our thinking and shape cultures. What a wall satisfies is not so much a material need as a mental one. Walls protect people not from barbarians, but from anxieties and fears, which can often be more terrible than the worst vandals. They are built not for those who live outside them, threatening as they may be, but for those who live within. What is built is not a wall, but a state of mind. In a world of uncertainty and confusion, a wall is something to rely on: something standing right there, in front of you - massive, firm, reassuring. With walls come mental comfort, peace of mind and even a vague promise of happiness. Their presence tells that, after all, there is order and discipline in the world. A wall signifies the victory of geometrical reason of anarchic impulses. What can be greater than a straight line?

In this seminar we will closely study the symbol of the wall in literature, poetry, film, music and art - looking at both sides of the line, people's hopes and fears; hopefully intensively discussing if - rather than sitting on the fence, being undecided - tearing down those walls might be a realistic option. The course language will be English.

12.1 WHY DO WE BUILD THE WALL, MY CHILDREN?

(course requirements: analytical essay)

12.2 WHEN YOUR WALLS COME DOWN

(course requirements: presentation, outline of coursework)

13.1 WRITING ON THE WALLS

(course requirements: coursework, presentation)

