20th century war poems, short stories and extracts from war novels, whether autobiographical or fictional, will provide the corpus for this seminar. Going to and coming back from war implies physical as well as psychological movements, conflicts and confrontations with the other and the self. From the Flanders Fields or the Normandy Beaches to the Libyan desert or the jungle of Vietnam, British and American soldiers had to face a different geography, different languages, different cultures. They also had to live in promiscuous and difficult, dangerous conditions with “unknown mates”--fellow soldiers from different social backgrounds, speaking different dialects or languages, originating from neighbouring village or distant countries in the case of Commonwealth troops. The Irish, on the other hand, fought “brother enemies” and tended to turn to altogether foreign cultures.

In all cases war trauma demands new literary forms attempting to reconsider the individual’s place within society and to find other ways of textually representing complex shifts in landscapes and mindscapes.