



The Department of English-Language Literatures and Cultures and the Institute of Literary Studies at UWM are pleased to invite you to an international interdisciplinary conference on

H.G. Wells and Modernity: Texts, Contexts, (Re)visions

22nd–24th Oct. 2026

University of Warmia and Mazury in Olsztyn, Poland

[...] the past is but the beginning of a beginning, and that all that is and has been is but the twilight of the dawn. [...] But it is out of our race and lineage that minds will spring, that will reach back to us in our littleness to know us better than we know ourselves, and that will reach forward fearlessly to comprehend this future that defeats our eyes.

[H.G. Wells, “The Discovery of the Future” 1902]

Second Circular

Celebrating H.G. Wells’s 160th/80th anniversaries of birth and death (1866–1946), this conference invites scholars from across literary studies, linguistics, film studies, political theory, sociology, history, philosophy, and other disciplines to examine modernity’s (con)texts through Wells, his contemporaries, and his followers. We aim to consider how their visions reshape understandings of the evolution and devolution of the human, humanity, and society.

In many of his literary and non-literary texts, Wells diagnosed the shortcomings of class structures and anticipated modernity’s ills, imaginatively prefiguring many current ways of conceptualising the human in relation to the nonhuman. He started as one of the most prolific and versatile short story writers of the late nineteenth century, and he ended as one of the most celebrated sociological and political writers of the first half of the twentieth century. His views, shaped by a complex and troubled faith in science and reason, helped crystallize the formulation of pivotal documents such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. He died disillusioned that the new world which he had envisioned had not arrived, or worse, frustrated to see his darkest predictions materialise. Undermined and still overlooked as a literary figure by the modernists, who could not see eye to eye with him despite initial friendships, who is H.G. Wells for posterity, that is, our times? In asking this question, we recognize that Wells’s legacy cannot be confined to Anglophone literary history alone, and it still speaks urgently to contemporary crises of technology, social fragmentation and political imagination.

We especially welcome approaches that could help us position Wells and other modernity/modernist writers within transnational literary networks and explore their influence on and dialogue with world literatures. These topics and others are most welcome, among the proposed conference focus points related to H.G. Wells:

- Author’s sources: from antiquity to Jonathan Swift, Charles Dickens, Edgar Allan Poe, and others.

- Modernity and the new ways of writing: short story, scientific romance, science fiction.
- Modern aesthetics and the fictional world: literary and linguistic patterns. Representations of the human and humanity: ecocritical, cognitive, postcolonial, and other postmodern and post-postmodern re-readings.
- Wells and international fantastic and science fiction: comparative perspectives across French (Jules Verne), German, and other contexts.
- Wells's legacy in Polish literature: Stanisław Lem and others.
- Dialogues and contentions with Joseph Conrad, E.M. Forster, Virginia Woolf, and Henry James.
- Literary and linguistic depictions of science, catastrophe, and war.
- Shifting cultural concepts: evolution and devolution, tensions of power, ambiguities of colonial appropriation.
- Intermedia reinterpretations: film, graphic novels, games, and other media.
- Wells in translation.
- Political thought and the concept of world state.
- Models of femininity and social change.
- Wells and his engagement with history and the future.
- Utopias and dystopias of Wells and other writers.

Proposals for a twenty-minute paper (about 200 words) and a bio note (100 words) should be sent to hgwellsconference@uwm.edu.pl by 10th September 2026. Notification of acceptance by 14th September 2026. Conference fee (non-refundable) payable by 20th September 2026. The account number will be provided upon acceptance.

Conference languages: English, French, and Polish

Standard fee: 180 Euro

Fee for PhD students, students and accompanying persons: 130 Euro

Conference Chair: dr hab. Halszka Lelen

Secretary: dr Michał Urbanowicz

Advisory Board:

prof. dr hab. Ewa Kujawska-Lis
 prof. dr hab. Iwona Ndiaye
 dr hab. Aneta Jachimowicz, prof. UWM
 dr hab. Sławomir Studniarz, prof. UWM

Organizing Committee:

dr Anna Kwiatkowska
 dr Dorota Gładkowska
 dr Eliza Gładkowska
 dr Dominika Kotuła
 mgr Trevor Hill

Student Research and Initiative Group “Anglo-Cooltura Juniors”

We look forward to seeing you in Olsztyn

TRANSPORT:

Olsztyn is easily accessible from four main airports:

- Closest Option: from the airport Olsztyn-Mazury (SZY), take the direct airport train (PolRegio) to Olsztyn Główny (1 hour). Taxi transport is also possible, see below.
- From Warsaw Modlin (WMI): book a direct Kondratowicz shuttle for the fastest 2-hour trip:
<https://kondratowicztransport.pl/en/timetable/>
- From Warsaw Chopin (WAW): take a direct Kondratowicz shuttle from the terminal to Olsztyn (approx. 3h), or an SKM train to Warsaw Central station and then an Intercity train to Olsztyn's main station, called Olsztyn Główny (approx. 2h20). There are trains every two hours.
- <https://kondratowicztransport.pl/en/timetable/>
- From Gdańsk (GDN): book a Wagner Transport shuttle (approx. 2.5h) or take a train to Olsztyn Główny via Gdańsk Główny (approx. 3h).
<https://wagnertransport.pl/>

Train connections: <https://rozklad-pkp.pl/en>

Long-distance bus services: FlixBus <https://global.flixbus.com/> , PKS Olsztyn <https://pks.olsztyn.pl/> , Sindbad <https://www.sindbad.pl/en/home> .

Public transport in Olsztyn: <https://www.olsztyn.com.pl/komunikacja.html>

Elf Taxi tel. 19622; Blue Taxi Olsztyn tel. 690 619 995; Bolt (book via app); Uber (also via app).

ACCOMMODATION

Hotel Park – located in a quiet area near the forest and university campus. Perfect for those seeking a peaceful stay, just a few minutes' walk from the Conference venue.

<https://hotelepark.pl/en/>

Hotel Wileński – a boutique hotel situated in the historic centre, close to the Old Town and main attractions. <https://hotelwilenski.com/en/>

Best Western Plus – a comfortable and centrally located 3-star hotel in the heart of Olsztyn, a 3-minute walk from the historic Old Town. Within easy reach of the University of Warmia and Mazury campus by city bus. <https://www.bwplushotelolsztynoldtown.pl/en/>

