

SYLLABUS

Senior Seminar: Culture and Translation

What is translation? Is it simply substituting one word for another in a different language? Or is just capturing the sense of a phrase enough? This course will demonstrate that the complex process of moving from "original" to "copy" involves traveling between cultures as well. While working on translation projects of their own, students will be introduced to translation theory and the various ways in which literary translations have been responsible for much of the communication between cultures.

REQUIRED TEXTS:

All our readings are available through electronic reserve (ER). You will find them by searching for the titles, which are listed on the syllabus.

Optional textbook, available at the Bookstore:

Robinson, Douglas. *Becoming a Translator: An Introduction to the Theory and Practice of Translation*. 2nd ed. London: Routledge, 2003.

We may use some of the activities in this book, and I highly recommend it to those who are interested in translation as a career.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

During the course of the semester you will learn about a) translation theory and practice, b) academic research skills, and c) editing and the publishing process. This is a collaborative and interdisciplinary course; for the class project, you will self-publish an annotated anthology of your own translations and critical essays. Of course, we'll do this in stages. Here's how:

You are required to have done your reading for each class meeting, in full. This ensures that, as a class, we can have a lively and informed discussion on the works assigned. Our discussions about the assigned readings will serve not only to explore the nature of translation, but even more importantly will generate ideas for our project. 500 is primarily a discussion-based, workshop style class. You are responsible for participating actively.

Class grade/Participation: You will essentially receive two participation grades: one as a member of the entire class, and one as an individual (see grading table below). This is a seminar/workshop, not a lecture course. You are expected to have read the texts and to be prepared to discuss them. You are also expected to prepare the periodic homework assignments you receive. Speak up, and respect others' rights to do so as well! It not only affects your grade, but makes the class much more productive and enjoyable. I am

confident that we, as a group, can create an environment where everyone will feel comfortable contributing. Finally, you must show your willingness to pull your weight on the final anthology project. I measure the individual participation grade by your level of preparedness, your thoughtful contributions, and the commitment you bring to the group. The class grade will be my assessment of how you performed as a group, with input from each of you: did you work well together? Were you there for each other? Did you get the work done? Needless to say, regular **attendance** is key to everyone's success in this course. We're involved in a collaborative project! If you're not here, you miss out, and you let your classmates down as well. **You are allowed one unexcused absence.** *Each* unexcused absence after that will result in one percentage point taken off your individual participation grade; it will also in some way affect the class grade.

Bibliography/proposal: This involves (1) handing in to me a typed up project proposal and annotated bibliography of your translation tools/secondary resources. The proposal should be about 2 pages long, and may be in outline form. The bibliography must include at least 5 sources, 4 of which are NOT from the Internet. (2) You will present your proposal to the class by introducing your topic and justifying its inclusion in the anthology. Your presentation should be 10 minutes long and to the point. Your classmates will give you their feedback.

Roundtable Presentation: Think of this as a mini-conference. Usually, before academics publish something, they run it by their colleagues. You will do the same. You must supply a copy of your translation/paper to your classmates at least 2 days before your presentation (see schedule; we'll decide who goes on what day). On the day, you will present your project in speech form (which *doesn't* mean you just read the paper everyone has already read). In your talk, you will discuss the goals of the paper, what you hoped to accomplish, etc. Your classmates will give you detailed feedback on how to improve your project, as well as give suggestions on how to better integrate your work with everyone else's. What links your projects? Here's where you'll work it out. I'll also start thinking about how to write the introduction to our volume. Each of you will have roughly 15 minutes to present *and* receive feedback, which is much like the limited amount of time allowed at scholarly conferences. Use it well!

Translation or paper: This is complicated! Some of you have knowledge of a second language you'd like to exploit; some of you will take on a research project. Those of you who choose to do a *translation* must 1) select a text that fits with the theme of the anthology: Translation and Culture. In other words, the text you translate should have something to do with the issues of translation/culture itself. There are any number of works that could fit this bill; we'll explore that in more detail later. 2) Unless otherwise decided, you should choose a text that has already been translated. This may seem odd, but I promise you, it makes your job easier only marginally. 3) Choose a length you can handle. I would say that any more than 5 pages in English translation is probably too much at this point, but use your judgment. 4) You will write a 3-page introduction to the text, contextualizing it and explaining its place in the anthology; you will also include a bibliography of translation tools and any other sources you may have consulted. Details later. Those of you who choose to do a *paper* have a little more leeway, but you too must

choose a topic that fits with the theme. Again, we'll discuss what such topics may be. The research papers should be about 15 pages long, including bibliography and notes. Like the translation projects, they must explain their relationship to our theme. Be creative, and do use the discussions of theory and practice we'll have in class as your inspiration! **Note: Late papers are not acceptable.** It's not just a matter of turning them in to me, after all. We've got a book to publish! If you're having trouble of any kind, come to me *early*. Don't leave it until it's too late to do anything about it!

Journal: This is where I expect you to write your responses to the periodic homework assignments, as well as your own thoughts on how the project is developing. You will of course use what you write to contribute to class discussion, but I'd like you to hand in this informal record of your work as well. You may *handwrite* your responses in a leather-bound notebook; you may write everything on your computer and then put the pages in a folder to hand them in – whatever you like. The journal is due at the book signing party.

GRADING:

Class grade	10%
Participation	10%
Bibliography/proposal	10%
Roundtable presentation	15%
Translation or paper	40%
Journal	15%

SCHEDULE (subject to change):

<i>Week 1</i>	
August 31	Introduction to course project
September 2	What is translation? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> George Steiner, "Understanding as Translation" (ER) Homework: What are your thoughts on translation? Write these down before you do the reading, and then add some notes on how your thinking may have changed afterward.
<i>Week 2</i>	
September 7	The translator's identity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Norma Alarcón, "Traddutora, Traditora" (ER)
September 9	Discussion of potential translation/paper topics Librarian visit: Kristin Strohmeier
<i>Week 3</i>	
September 14	The translator's identity, cont'd <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lawrence Venuti, "Invisibility" (ER) Homework: What gets translated?
September 16	A case study on the politics of translation: <i>The Arabian Nights</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Daniel Beaumont, "<i>Alf Laylah wa Laylah</i> or <i>The Thousand and One Nights</i>" (ER)

<i>Week 4</i>	
September 21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Colette Colligan, "'Esoteric Pornography': Sir Richard Burton's <i>Arabian Nights</i> and the Origins of Pornography" (ER)
September 23	<p>What makes a "good" translation?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Comparing two translations: Thomas Mann's <i>Tod in Venedig</i>" (ER) <p>Homework: Look up a term in the <i>RETS</i> and determine where this writer could have incorporated more theoretical terms into his/her discussion.</p>
<i>Week 5</i>	
September 28	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comparing translations part II: "One Hundred Frogs" (ER) <p>Homework: pick two or three versions and see if you can describe the approach the translators took. Try your own version. (What do you need to know about haiku to make this judgment, do you think? Is that enough?)</p>
September 30	<p>Proposal/bibliography due Present proposals to class</p>
<i>Week 6</i>	
October 5	<i>Fall recess - no class meeting</i>
October 7	Present proposals to class (cont'd)
<i>Week 7</i>	
October 12	Faculty panel on translation
October 14	<p>Translation workshop: poetry into prose</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Archibald MacLeish, "Ars Poetica" <p>Homework: Do a translation of the poem into prose. Write down what resources you used to do your translation, if any. Also try to describe your own approach to the translation.</p>
<i>Week 8</i>	
October 19	<p>The translating self</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • William Weaver, "The Process of Translation" (ER) <p>Homework: describe the process you/the author you're studying has gone through to "translate," using Weaver as an example</p>
October 21	<i>No class meeting</i>
<i>Week 9</i>	
October 26	<p>Approaches to translation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Umberto Eco, "Source vs. Target" (ER) <p>Homework: What's Eco's argument? His tips for the translator? Summarize his main points. Did you think of any of these yourself when you did your own translation of the poem?</p>
October 28	<p>Difficulties in translation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • André Lefevere, <i>Translating Literature</i>, Chapter 2 (ER) <p>Homework: research assignment based on article</p>

<i>Week 10</i>	
November 2	Homework: What difficulties/issues are you encountering in your own projects? (based on Lefevere)
November 4	<i>No class meeting</i> Meet at 4:30 p.m. in Saunders 105 for a talk on "Japonisme and Impressionism." Reception to follow in Emerson Gallery. <i>Attendance required.</i> Translation/Paper draft due (bring 2 copies)
<i>Week 11</i>	
November 9	Peer review; sign up for conferences Homework: 1) In what ways did European and American artists "translate" Japanese woodblock printing? 2) Read and comment on your classmate's paper and hand it back
November 10	Individual conferences
November 11	<i>No class meeting</i> Individual conferences
<i>Week 12</i>	
November 16	Roundtable Workshop 1
November 18	Roundtable Workshop 2
<i>Week 13</i>	
November 23	Roundtable Workshop 3
November 25	<i>Thanksgiving – no class meeting</i>
<i>Week 14</i>	
November 30	Style sheet meeting
December 2	Visiting speaker: Marta Folio, Dept. of German and Russian "Eugene Jolas and <i>transition</i> : Translating the Modern Myth" • Reading TBA Final drafts due! (incorporate issues from style sheet)
<i>Week 15</i>	
December 7	• Walter Benjamin, "The Task of the Translator" (ER) Abstract due; Cover/title design due; Campus posters due
December 9	Final proofing, evaluations, peer/self grading
December 10	Manuscript due at Printshop
December 17 (Friday)	Book Signing Party! Journals due at party. Happy Holidays!