WLC 715
Theory of Translation

Course Description

This course is designed for graduate students with advanced knowledge of one foreign language and/or literary criticism. It will cover readings from the most important texts in translation theory, from the early musings of Cicero and Horace to the modern ones of Jakobson and Derrida. The course will explore the changing attitudes to translation throughout time and will chart the classifications that have been proposed in different epochs. The theoretical part of the course will be complemented with a practicum on passages excerpted from a variety of texts, in several different languages. The common ground to all texts will be English, as TL or SL. The course is propaedeutic to the workshop on translation, FOL 716.

Objectives

This is a course designed for students of translation and literature. Its main objectives are:

1. To provide students with a thorough knowledge of the history of translation and of its issues.
2. To verify the validity and applicability of the theoretical paradigms through the analysis of a number of existing translations.
3. To identify and highlight the comparative differences in literary traditions through the linguistic and literary analysis of original and translated texts.

How Objectives Will Be Met

1. Students will be required to read and analyze a significant number of texts on translation theory, selected ad hoc for their historical relevance in the field of translation studies. Readings are arranged in historical progression. Nonetheless, the format of the course will allow for diachronic digressions, as deemed necessary. This format reflects directly the evolution of translation theory, which is not linear but follows a meandering pattern. Students will be able to systematize ideas on translation according to the literary period that generated them and to follow their development in the history of literature.

2. Students will be asked to verify the validity and applicability of the theories discussed by analyzing a limited number of translations of literary and non-literary works. This approach is derived from both theoretical and practical considerations. Translation theory in most cases derives from practice and is inseparable from it. Any history of translation devoid of its direct source or direct application would be incomplete. As translation scholars have repeatedly proven, the most effective procedure in this respect is to study various samples of translation from the same text. By limiting the analysis to a single source text with a number of target language texts, students will be able to infer the same basic process in operation that can be found in the analysis of several source texts.

3. Translation fosters critical thinking, and is a great aid in the practice of interdisciplinary research. By the end of this course, students will be able to identify with greater ease the differences in literary traditions, thanks to the reading and the comparative analysis of original and translated texts. In fact, the process of translation as reading has been described as a spiral that departing from the text develops externally. Through incremental “contexting,” translation students will be able to expand their range of search beyond the confines of genre and national literature, and will be able to see more clearly how originals and translations function within literature as a polysystem.

Plan of Work

August 26
- Introduction to the course
  - What is translation (theory)?
  - What is translation history?
September 2
- The main issues in translation theory
  Readings: J. Munday, *Introducing Translation Studies*, Ch. 1 [T]
             J. S. Holmes, *The Name and Nature of Translation Studies* [R]
             R. Jakobson, *On Linguistic Aspects of Translation* [R]
             S. Bassnett-McGuire, *Translation Studies*, Ch. 1 [LR]
             G. Steiner, *After Babel*, Ch. 4 - “The Claims of Theory” [LR]

September 9
- Translation theory before the 20th century
  Translation in the Ancient World and the Middle Ages
  Readings: J. Munday, *Introducing Translation Studies*, Ch. 2 [T]
             M. Baker, *History and Traditions* [LRef]
             S. Bassnett-McGuire, *Translation Studies*, Ch. 2 [LR]
             Cicero, *De Optimo Genere Oratorum* [DR]
             Horace, *De Arte Poetica* [DR]
             Quintilian, *Institutiones oratoriae* [DR]
             Jerome, *Ad Pammachium (Letter to Pammachius)* [DR/R]
             Augustine, *De doctrina Christiana* [DR]
             D. Alighieri, *Convivio* [DR]

September 16
- Bible translation and translation of religious texts
  Readings: Aelfric, *Catholic Homilies* [DR]
             Thomas Aquinas, *Contra errores Graecorum* [DR]
             Anonymous, *On Translating the Bible* [DR]
             T. More, *A Dialogue Concerning Heresies and Matters of Religion* [DR]
             Luther, *Sendbrief vom Dolmetschen* [DR]
             W. Fulke, *A defence of the Sincere and True Translations of the Holy Scriptures into the English Tongue* [DR]
             E. Nida, *Toward a Science of Translating*, Ch. 2 [LR]
             W. Schwarz, *Principles and Problems of Biblical Translation* [LR]
             T. Wilt, *Bible Translation: Frames of Reference* [LR]

September 23
- Literary translation from the Humanism to the age of Baroque
  Readings: Leonardo Bruni, *De Interpretatione Recta* [DR]
             I. Dolet, *La maniere de bien traduire d’une langue en autr* [DR]
             J. du Bellay, *The Defense and Illustration of the French Language* [DR]
             J. Florio, *Preface to Translation of Montaigne’s “Essays”* [DR]
             G. Chapman, *The Preface to the Reader* [DR]
             J. Denham, *Preface to “The Destruction of Troy”* [DR]
             N. Perrot, D’Ablancourt, *Adjusting Things to Accommodate the Subject* [DR]
             P. D. Huet, *De optimo genere interpretandi* [DR]
             J. Dryden, *On Translation* [DR] Ovid’s Epistles [R]
             S. Johnson, *The Art of Translation* [DR]

September 30
- Towards a theory of translation
Readings:  
A. F. Tytler, *Essay on the principles of translation* [DR]  
A.W. Schlegel, *Poetic translation and imperfect Approximation* [DR]  
J.W von Goethe, *West-Ostlicher Divan* [DR]  
F. Schleiermacher, *Über die verschiedenen Methoden des Uebersetzens* [DR]  
A. Schopenhauer, *Über Sprache und Worte* [DR]  
M. Arnold, *On Translating Homer* [DR]  
F. Nietzsche, *Translation as Conquest* [DR]  

October 6  
- Equivalence and equivalent effect  
  Main readings: J. Munday, *Introducing Translation Studies*, Ch. 3 [T]  
  E. Nida, *Principles of correspondence* [R1]  
  *Toward a science of translating*, Ch. 5 [LR]  
  G. Steiner, *After Babel*, Ch. 2 – “Language and gnosis”[LR]

October 13  
- The “translation shift” approach  
  Main readings: J. Munday, *Introducing Translation Studies*, Ch. 4 [T]  
  J. C. Catford, *Translation Shifts* [R1]  
  J.P.Vinay and J.Darbelnet, *A Methodology for Translation* [R]

October 20  
- Functional theories of translation  
  J. Munday, *Introducing Translation Studies*, Ch. 5 [T]  
  K. Reiss, *Type, Kind and Individuality of Text Decision-Making in Translation* [R]  
  H. Vermeer, *Skopos and Commission in Translational Action* [R]

October 27  
- Discourse and register analysis approaches  
  Main readings: J. Munday, *Introducing Translation Studies*, Ch. 6 [T]  
  S. Blum-Kulka, *Shifts of Cohesion and Coherence in Translation* [R]  
  M. Baker, *In Other Words: a Coursebook on Translation* [O]

November 4  
- System theories  
  Main readings: J. Munday, *Introducing Translation Studies*, Ch. 7 [T]  
  I. Even-Zohar, *The Position of Translated Literature Within the Literary Polysystem* [R]  
  G. Toury, *The Nature and Role of Norms in Literary Translation* [R]

November 11  
- Cultural studies  
  Main readings: J. Munday, *Introducing Translation Studies*, Ch. 8 [T]  
  A. Lefevere, *Mother Courage’s Cucumbers* [R]  
  S. Bassnett-A.Lefevere, *Translation, History and Culture*
November 18

- Translating the foreign
  Main readings: J. Munday, *Introducing Translation Studies*, Ch. 9 [T]
  A. Berman, *Translation and the Trials of the Foreign* [R1]
  S. J. Levine, *The Subversive Scribe* [LR]
  L. Venuti, *The Translator’s Invisibility* [O]
  *The Scandals of Translation* [O]
  G. Steiner, *After Babel*, Ch. 6 – “Topologies of culture” [LR]

November 25

- Philosophical theories of translation
  Main readings: J. Munday, *Introducing Translation Studies*, Ch. 10[T]
  W. Benjamin, *The Task of the Translator* [R]
  J. Derrida, *What Is a Relevant Translation?* [R]
  E. Pound, *Guido’s Relations* [R1]
  G. Steiner, *After Babel*, Ch. 5 - “The hermeneutic motion” [LR]

December 2

- New directions
  Main readings: J. Munday, *Introducing Translation Studies*, Ch. 11[T]
  K. Harvey, *Translating Camp Talk* [R]
  - Discussion of students’ research papers and final conclusions

December 9

- Final paper due

**Textbooks and Course Material**


Additional material will be provided in handouts or made available through library reserves.


**Evaluation Methods and Grading Distribution**

The final grade will be based on oral presentations, final paper and class participation. The final grade will be distributed as follows:

- Oral presentations 30%
- Final paper 50%
- Attendance/Class participation 20%
Grading Scale

A  = 100-93  A- = 92-90  B+ = 89-88  B  = 87-84
B- = 83-80  C+ = 79-78  C  = 77-74  C- = 73-70
D+= 69-68  D  = 67-64  D- = 63-60  F  = 59-0

General Guidelines

Class presentations. During the course, students will be assigned a number of readings on translation theory and will be asked to present them in class. All readings will be in English or in English translation.

Final paper. Students will be required to select a well-known literary work from their elected foreign language, for which a significant number of translations into English already exist, and to provide a comparative analysis of ST and TTs. The final paper can cover any aspects of translation theory discussed during the course. As an alternative, students can substitute their theoretical paper with a specific translation analysis project. Details of the project must be arranged with the instructor.

Attendance. Attendance is mandatory. Students are expected to come to class regularly, and to participate in all class activities.

WLC 715

Select Bibliography


Websites

www.logos.net         Translation course
www.catranslation.org Center for art in Translation
http://www.lai.com/companion.html The Translator’s Home Companion
http://www.mcelhearn.com/lit/html Literary Translation Resources
http://fuzzy.arts.kuleuven.ac.be/cetra/people.htm Center for Translation and Communication
http://www.erudit.org/erudit/meta/ Meta
http://www.translatum.gr/trjournal.htm Translation Journals

UNLV Policies and Statements

- Academic Misconduct – “Academic integrity is a legitimate concern for every member of the campus community; all share in upholding the fundamental values of honesty, trust, respect, fairness, responsibility and professionalism. By choosing to join the UNLV community, students accept the expectations of the Academic Misconduct Policy and are encouraged when faced with choices to always take the ethical path. Students enrolling in UNLV assume the obligation to conduct themselves in a manner compatible with UNLV’s function as an educational institution.” An example of academic misconduct is plagiarism: “Using the words or ideas of another, from the internet or any source, without proper citation of the sources.” See the “Student Academic Misconduct Policy” (approved December 9, 2005, located at http://studentlife.unlv.edu/judicial/misconductPolicy.html).

- Consensual Relationships – UNLV prohibits romantic or sexual relationships between members of the university community when one of the individuals involved has direct professional influence or direct authority over the other. For further information, see: http://hr.unlv.edu/Policy/consensual.html

- Copyright Policy – The University requires all members of the University Community to familiarize themselves and to follow copyright and fair use requirements. YOU ARE INDIVIDUALLY AND SOLELY RESPONSIBLE FOR VIOLATIONS OF COPYRIGHT AND FAIR USE LAWS. THE UNIVERSITY WILL NEITHER PROTECT NOR DEFEND YOU NOR_ASSUME ANY RESPONSIBILITY FOR EMPLOYEE OR STUDENT VIOLATIONS OF COPYRIGHT AND FAIR USE LAWS. Violations of copyright laws could subject you to federal and state civil penalties and criminal liability as well as disciplinary action under University policies. To help you familiarize yourself with copyright and fair use policies, the University encourages you to visit its copyright web page at: http://www.unlv.edu/committees/copyright
Disability Resource Center (DRC) – The Disability Resource Center (DRC) coordinates all academic accommodations for students with documented disabilities. The DRC is the official office to review and house disability documentation for students, and to provide them with an official Academic Accommodation Plan to present to the faculty if an accommodation is warranted. The DRC strongly encourages faculty to provide accommodations only if and when they are in receipt of said plan. Faculty should not provide students accommodations without being in receipt of this plan.

UNLV complies with the provisions set forth in Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, offering reasonable accommodations to qualified students with documented disabilities. If you have a documented disability that may require accommodations, you will need to contact the DRC for the coordination of services. The DRC is located in the Student Services Complex (SSC), Room A-143, and the contact numbers are: VOICE (702) 895-0866, TTY (702) 895-0652, FAX (702) 895-0651. For additional information, please visit: http://studentlife.unlv.edu/disability/

Religious Holidays Policy -- Any student missing class quizzes, examinations, or any other class or lab work because of observance of religious holidays shall be given an opportunity during that semester to make up missed work. The make-up will apply to the religious holiday absence only. It shall be the responsibility of the student to notify the instructor no later than the last day at late registration of his or her intention to participate in religious holidays which do not fall on state holidays or periods of class recess. This policy shall not apply in the event that administering the test or examination at an alternate time would impose an undue hardship on the instructor or the university which could not be avoided.

http://catalog.unlv.acalog.com/content.php?catoid=1&navoid=44&bc=1

Tutoring -- The Academic Success Center (ASC) provides tutoring and academic assistance for all UNLV students taking UNLV courses. Students are encouraged to stop by the ASC to learn more about subjects offered, tutoring times and other academic resources. The ASC is located across from the Student Services Complex, #22 on the current UNLV map. Students may learn more about tutoring services by calling (702) 895-3177 or visiting the tutoring web site at: http://academicsuccess.unlv.edu/tutoring/

Writing Center - One-on-one or small group assistance with writing is available free of charge to UNLV students at the Writing Center, located in CDC-3-301. Although walk-in consultations are sometimes available, students with appointments will receive priority assistance. Appointments may be made in person or by calling 895-3908. The student’s Rebel ID Card, a copy of the assignment (if possible), and two copies of any writing to be reviewed are requested for the consultation. More information can be found at: http://writingcenter.unlv.edu/