

LIT 6326 Translation Workshop

Fall 2023, T 1:00 – 3:45, FN2.210

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Office: JO 5.414

Office Hours: Mondays at noon, or online by appointment

## **Literary Translation**

This graduate workshop will introduce students to the conceptual problems and practical skills of literary translation. Our discussions will focus on the practice of international imagination: the process of creating the inter-regional, inter-lingual, and inter-cultural connections that constitute the work of a literary translator. Through close reading and adventurous writing, we will experience the influence of works on English and English on works from other languages. An underlying concern of the workshop will be to develop our abilities to talk about translation. The field of Translation Studies is undergoing rapid changes; part of our job will be to come up to speed on the discussion. We will read translators' accounts of their work, as models of the process of imagining equivalences, working with original authors, and pressing the cases of foreign works within American literary publishing. We will find in translation new ways of understanding literary works, how these works travel across cultures, and theoretical questions of reading and writing international literature.

## **Policies**

### **Participation**

A workshop like this one depends on the active engagement of all participants. Please be present and on time for every session, to show your engagement with the class and respect for your colleagues. A pattern of absence or lateness can affect your grade adversely.

### **Communication**

Email is the best way to get in touch with me—better than Teams, eLearning, or carrier pigeon. If I have not responded to your message within two days, then something has gone wrong; please resend.

## **Assignments**

### **Translation Exercises**

These creative “writing under constraint” and trot exercises introduce the work of the term through a set of translation simulacra.

## Translation Cover Letter

Your assignment is to write a one-page letter pitching your project to a journal or book editor. It should contain basic factual information about your project, such as its language and country of origin, as well as a concrete description of the work itself.

## Translation Analysis

For this assignment, you will choose a substantive passage translated from the same language and genre you are working from. Describe the original text, focusing on one point that presents a challenge to the translator. (Choose, in other words, one of the many challenges the text presents.) Describe the strategies the translator has followed to handle this point. What choices could you incorporate into your own translation? Which would you want to avoid? Use enough detail to be clear to a reader who does not understand the original. Include the original passage and translation as appendices to your three-page essay.

## Translation Project

A project consists of five poems (roughly 100 lines total) and their trots, eight pages of prose, or eight pages of a play. We will workshop both in small groups and with the full class.

Please post your originals to your group's discussion board, starting a thread with your name (not your author's). For each small group workshop day, please post one page of work to your thread on your *group* discussion board. So that your group may read the translations before class, please post your work by 5:00 on the Sunday before class.

For the week we discuss your work as a full class, please post your entire project—translation and originals (again)—to the *Full Class* discussion board, by 5:00 on the Sunday before class.

Your original should be a scan, in PDF format. Please do not retype or copy and paste the text. We want to avoid chances for errors to come in. Your translation may be in either PDF or Word format. Poetry projects should also include a trot: a line-by-line list of multiple possible English versions for each original word. The original line is underlined, and the English follows, single-spaced, underneath. This example is from the Romanian of Nichita Stănescu:

## Poem

### Poem

<u>Spune-</u>	<u>mi,</u>	<u>dacă</u>	<u>te-</u>	<u>aș</u>	<u>prinde-</u>	<u>ntr-</u>	<u>o</u>	<u>zi</u>
Tell	me	if	you	I would	catch	in	a	day
Say		whether			grab		one	
					hold			
					capture			

<u>și</u>	<u>ți-</u>	<u>aș</u>	<u>săruta</u>	<u>talpa</u>	<u>piciorului,</u>
and	to you	I would	kiss	the sole	of the foot
	your				of the leg

<u>nu-</u>	<u>i</u>	<u>așa</u>	<u>că</u>	<u>ai</u>	<u>șchiopăta</u>	<u>puțin,</u>	<u>după</u>	<u>aceea,</u>
not	it is	so	that	you would	limp	little	after	that
						a little		

<u>de</u>	<u>teamă</u>	<u>să</u>	<u>nu-</u>	<u>mi</u>	<u>strivești</u>	<u>sărutul?</u>
of	fear	[x]	not	to me	you crush	the kiss
	fright			my		

## Comments

Everyone is responsible for reading the translations and contributing to workshop discussion. In fact, much of the learning in this class occurs in commenting on others' works. An effective way to prepare is to make written notes on that week's drafts. Share these with the translator.

When commenting on a translation you should think about the kind of text the original appears to be, the actual task of the poem/story/play on the page, and the ways in which the translation could be helped toward that text. What is the story or poem about? What are its key features? How is the translation alive to these features? Which words and phrases are working for the translation, and which are working against it? Does the translation present a self-coherent interpretation of the original text, or does it present different poems or stories at different moments?

## Final Portfolio

Your portfolio is due on our last class, December 5. It includes a thorough revision of your translation and a five-page presentation of your project. The presentation should focus on your approach to translating the text(s). How do these works function in the original? What are your focus points in your translation? What strategies have you employed to translate these key points? How has your translation evolved over the semester?

## Final Grade

Roughly 80% of your final grade will be based on the final portfolio. I will be looking for progression over the course of the term. The other roughly 20% will be based on your written and oral participation.

## Texts

- Collins, Martha and Kevin Prufer, eds. *Into English*. Graywolf, 2017. 1555977928
- Briggs, Kate. *This Little Art*. Fitzcardo Editions, 2018. 1910695459
- Davis, Lydia. *Essays Two: On Proust, Translation, Foreign Languages, and the City of Arles*. Farrar, 2021. 0374148864
- Göransson, Johannes. *Transgressive Circulation*. Noemi Press, 2018. 193481959X
- Hahn, Daniel. *Catching Fire: a Translation Diary*. Edinburgh: Charco Press, 2022. 1913867250
- Nakayasu, Sawako with Chika Sagawa. *Mouth: Eats Color -- Sagawa Chika Translations, Anti-Translations, & Originals*. Factorial Press, 2011. 0975446851
- de la Torre, Monica. *Repetition Nineteen*. NY: Nightboat Books, 2020. 1643620142
- Waldrop, Rosmarie. *Lavish Absence: Recalling and Rereading Edmond Jabès*. Wesleyan, 2003. 0819565806

## Schedule

Readings marked with an asterisk are available through eLearning.

Date	Readings	Assignments
August 22	Introductions	
August 29	<p>* Mathews, Harry. "Translation and the Oulipo: The Case of the Persevering Maltese" (<a href="http://www.electronicbookreview.com/thread/electropoetics/ethno-linguist">http://www.electronicbookreview.com/thread/electropoetics/ethno-linguist</a>).</p> <p>* Vinay, Jean-Paul and Jean Darbelnet. "A Methodology for Translation." Trans. Juan C. Sager and M.-J. Hamel. <i>The Translation Studies Reader</i>. Ed. Lawrence Venuti. Routledge, 2000. 84 – 93.</p> <p>* Pym, Anthony. "A Typology of Translation Solutions for Many Languages." <i>Translation Solutions for</i></p>	Oulipo Translation Exercises

	<i>Many Languages: Histories of a Flawed Dream.</i> Bloomsbury, 2016. 219 – 242.	
September 5	Hahn	Trot Translation Exercises
September 12	Collins and Prufer, vii – 38, 83 – 120	
September 19	*ALTA Guide “Breaking into Print” Collins and Prufer, vii – 38, 83 – 120  * Venuti, Lawrence. "How to Read a Translation" ( <a href="http://wordswithoutborders.org/article/how-to-read-a-translation">http://wordswithoutborders.org/article/how-to-read-a-translation</a> )	Cover Letter
September 26	Collins and Prufer, 123 – 190	Small Grp
October 3	Briggs, 11 – 193	Small Grp
October 10	Briggs, 195 – 365	Small Grp Full Wrkshp
October 17	Davis, 215 – 263, 391 – 408, 485 – 538	Translation Analysis
October 24	Waldrop	Small Grp Full Wrkshp
October 31	Göransson	Small Grp Full Wrkshp
November 7	*Spivak	Small Grp Full Wrkshp
November 14	Nakayasu	Full Workshop

	<p>*Forrest Gander, “The Great Leap: César and the Caesura.” <i>In Translation</i>. Esther Allen and Susan Bernofsky, eds. Columbia UP, 2013. 107 – 116.</p> <p>*Felstiner, John. “A Fugue after Auschwitz.” <i>Paul Celan: Poet, Survivor, Jew</i>. Yale UP, 1995. 22 – 41.</p>	
November 21	Fall Break	
November 28	de la Torre	Full Workshop
December 5	Conclusions	Final portfolio

The information contained in the following link constitutes the University’s policies and procedures segment of the course syllabus. Please go to <http://go.utdallas.edu/syllabus-policies> for these policies.

The descriptions and timelines contained in this syllabus are subject to change at the discretion of the Professor.