Translation and Censorship in Eastern Europe
Department of East European, Eurasian, and Russian Studies
RUSS 38.26 (Fall 2023)
Distributives: SOC, NW

Instructor: Lada Kolomiyets
Meeting times: Tue, Thu, 10A
Office hours: TBA
Email: Lada.Kolomiyets@dartmouth.edu

Course description:
Translation has been a target of censorship and control over several centuries. In this course, we will use Ukraine as a case study to trace and discuss the relationship between translation and censorship, with close references to other countries of Eastern Europe, in particular the former Soviet Republics Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Moldova, and those belonging to soviet bloc, such as Poland, Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria, as well as new countries that appeared in the place of old Soviet entities, including Serbia, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Slovenia, etc.

Translation has played key roles on the battlefield between reactionary (colonial) mentality and nation-building (postcolonial) revision of national identities of the former Soviet Republics and socialist countries, some of which remain of primary significance for the Russian Federation’s Eurasian project today, and translation is a mighty weapon in the present-day information wars.

Course readings:
- All texts are on Canvas in pdf format.

Specific course policies, assignments, and assessment

Grading:
25% Participation in Class. Be active and present.
25% Short written assignments/answers to questions on Canvas discussion boards.
25% Research Project Progress:
  5% Progress report 1
  5% Progress report 2
  10% PowerPoint Presentation
  5% Corrected summary of final paper (300 words)
25% Final paper
(a list of suggested topics will be provided, but you are also allowed to choose your own)

Scheduled due dates:
at the beginning of week 4 – Research project progress report 1
by the end of week 8 – Research project progress report 2
at the last meeting on week 10 – PowerPoint Presentation of the research project + corrected summary of final paper (300 words)
by the end of the final exam period – the final paper of 7-9 pages due

**Tasks explained:**

*Participation in Class.* Be active and present.
Be ready with your reading for class discussion and actively participate in class conversations on the discussed topic(s).

*Answers to questions on Canvas Discussion Boards*
Respond in writing (3-5 sentences) to questions on the assigned reading(s) for each class before the due time.

*Research project* has to be related to the topic of the course and must use the interpretive skills that you practice. It’s a broad spectrum, and it should not be difficult to find something you’re interested in. Although this is a literature-in-translation and censorship seminar, you can always bring your other interests to the interpretation and analysis of different modes of censorship in particular, for example, in the following fields: dictatorships, the censor on theater stage, self-censorship, censorship and the media, etc.

You will hold two intermediate *progress reports* in the form of oral presentations in class (up to 5 minutes) of your research project in progress. These should be short presentations on the topic chosen for the research project (most of the topics are outlined on the syllabus in each concrete case, and usually directly pertinent to our readings).

**Guiding questions to research project progress report 1:**

- *Describe your primary source(s).*
- *Why do you want to analyze them? What interests you? Why should other people care?*
- *How might your primary source(s) be analyzed (if you can think of several possibilities or patterns of interpretation, address them)?*

The first draft of the *summary of course paper* (brief final paper proposal) has to be submitted in writing on the due date of progress report 1. This assignment lets you revise the content and form of your course paper. Here you will describe your proposed final paper research in 300 words, explaining what you will be writing, what kind of analysis/analyses you will be using, and why the topic matters. After the feedback, you will revise it, submitting the final draft on the first page of the paper by the last class meeting, like an abstract.

**Guiding questions to research project progress report 2:**
• Connect your primary source(s) with your personal background knowledge and experience.
• Connect them with the existing (known to you) practice in the field.
• What interesting/revealing/important observations have you made?

The second draft of the summary of course paper (brief final paper proposal) has to be submitted in writing on the due date of progress report 2.

PowerPoint Presentation of the research project + the final draft of the summary of course paper

Your presentation will be assessed on these criteria: addressing the questions, choosing a focus, and concision; ability to present orally without notes (excluding extremely short bullet points); the depth of analysis (privilege depth over breadth); ability to engage with the new terms pertinent to the course subject matter and material; contact with the audience and the ability to address intelligent non-experts and explain new concepts.

Remember to privilege depth over breadth. Ideally, you will work with an artifact we have seen or read (or another artifact that you could analyze with the sources from our course) and deepen our appreciation of it through further research, a productive comparison, close interpretation of a specific motif, contextual analysis, and/or a specific angle/method. You should start writing immediately after submitting the first draft of your abstract. Use the sources in “Additional readings” to jump start your research—that is their purpose.

You will present your research with a PowerPoint Presentation, followed by the 5-minute Q&A session, on the last day of class.

The Final Research Paper will be 7-9 pages long (font 14 of Times New Roman, double-spaced) and due by the end of the final exam period. Please don’t forget to submit on the first page of the paper its summary (brief final paper abstract) consisting of no more than 300 words.

General Course Policies:

Learning Objectives
1) think about and reflect upon the relationship between translation strategies, textual manipulations and censorial power in translation; 2) develop a general understanding of the term “censorship” as a set of unwritten rules and an apparatus of (state) control over foreign influence; 3) develop close-reading skills of literary works in translation, with due attention to the types and forms of sensorial intrusions into them; 4) develop an understanding of institutional, structural, and self-imposed forms of censorship; 5) develop original research that can relate a translation to its literary, ideological, and social contexts, as well as the main operational modes of censorship; 6) develop critical thinking and essay writing skills around the ideas, issues, and challenges of tracking down the traits of censorship in translated texts; 7) gain
experience in translation analysis and the verbal and visual presentation of critical and analytical thinking.

_Taught in English. No prerequisites._

**Sharing notes**

It is fine to pool or exchange notes in order to keep up with the course in case of excused absences or just to review/keep track of new vocabulary and ideas. Try to set up study pods early on in the term and discuss what note-sharing platform and standards work best for you. **This said, please keep in mind that you should not reuse the notes or the ideas in them in any of your writing (all your footnotes should come from original or published sources with clearly traceable sources: books, articles, videos, podcasts, artworks).**

**Infectious illness policy**

- **Please do not come to class if you have any flu-like symptoms.** If you do, you jeopardize the health of your classmates as well as my health and potentially the health of my children and their ability to attend school, which, in turn, impacts the quality of our class. If you’re feeling sick, please let me know in advance, get well, and make note-sharing arrangements.
- **If two or more people cannot attend class or if I am sick, the meeting will happen on Zoom at this address.** I will send an email notification: [https://dartmouth.zoom.us/j/94129360056?pwd=bm9sZzQ2OXRScz1dERvT2VlQVRYZz09](https://dartmouth.zoom.us/j/94129360056?pwd=bm9sZzQ2OXRScz1dERvT2VlQVRYZz09).
  Meeting ID: 941 2936 0056. Passcode: 257217
- **If you are too sick to attend class virtually,** let me know and make note-sharing arrangements.
- **If I am too sick to teach virtually,** we will use the X hour or arrange an alternative meeting.

**Academic Honesty**

You may only submit your own, original academic work that attributes ideas clearly and cites other people’s work respectfully.

If you are in doubt about what other Honor Principle tenets entail, please ask me. For more information see, [https://student-affairs.dartmouth.edu/policy/academic-honor-principle](https://student-affairs.dartmouth.edu/policy/academic-honor-principle)

**Late Assignments**

Please submit all short responses to readings and have the research project progress reports, as well as the final presentation, ready on time. The discussion questions on Canvas are short and low-stakes on purpose—please don’t write more than requested or feel like you have to write or say more than requested. Less is more.

If you need longer with the final paper, please **contact me at least one day in advance** to arrange for an extension within reasonable time limits—this happens. If you find yourself struggling to meet deadlines more generally (and in other classes as well), please get in touch as soon as possible so that we can work on the issues to get you back on track. Don’t let the issues snowball.

**Email policy**

Thoughtful email communication can help make for a healthier workplace, and you can contribute! If you have questions about assignments, please check the syllabus first and ask peers—they may have been addressed already. To prevent pileups of busy work and the buildup of stress resulting from that, please email me to make an office hour appointment, in emergency, or to ask a pressing question. Please save all other questions for class or office hours.
Absences
Communicate! Unexcused absences will impact your participation grade. If you need to miss class, please contact me in advance. Working on communication is crucial. It helps you feel in control and is good practice for a professional future.

Religious Observance
Some of you may wish to take part in religious observances that occur during this academic term. If you have a religious observance that conflicts with your participation in the course, please meet with me before the end of the second week of the term to discuss accommodations, and they will be honored.

Student Accessibility and Accommodations
Students requesting disability-related accommodations and services for this course are required to register with Student Accessibility Services (SAS; Apply for Services webpage; student.accessibility.services@dartmouth.edu; 1-603-646-9900) and to request that an accommodation email be sent to me in advance of the need for an accommodation. Then, students should schedule a follow-up meeting with me to determine relevant details such as what role SAS or its Testing Center may play in accommodation implementation. This process works best for everyone when completed as early in the quarter as possible. If students have questions about whether they are eligible for accommodations or have concerns about the implementation of their accommodations, they should contact the SAS office. All inquiries and discussions will remain confidential.

For detailed information regarding expectations of the faculty to ensure accessibility for students with disabilities, please see Student Accessibility Services’ faculty pages.

Diversity & Inclusion
This classroom is an inclusive space in which all identities and perspectives have a place, as long as they are respectful to others.

Mental Health and Wellness
The academic environment at Dartmouth is challenging, our terms are intensive, classes are not the only demanding part of your life, and there is still the pandemic. There are a number of resources available to you on campus to support your wellness, including your undergraduate dean (https://students.dartmouth.edu/undergraduate-deans/), the Counseling Center (https://students.dartmouth.edu/health-service/counseling/about), and the Student Wellness Center (https://students.dartmouth.edu/wellness-center/).

Title IX
Please note that I am required by law to share disclosures regarding conduct under Title IX with Dartmouth’s Title IX Coordinator. For a list of confidential resources on campus, see https://sexual-respect.dartmouth.edu/reporting-support/title-ix-resources/confidential-resources

Writing and other Academic Support:
• Language tutoring, in case you need help with specific language skills; please contact them early on: https://students.dartmouth.edu/academic-skills/Peer-Tutoring-Program/about-peer-tutoring-program
• English-language writing help: RWIT offers one-on-one tutoring sessions, where you can work on workshop ideas and drafts. [https://students.dartmouth.edu/rwit/appointments/undergraduate-sessions](https://students.dartmouth.edu/rwit/appointments/undergraduate-sessions)

• Struggling with time management? Looking to improve academic skills like notetaking? Check out the resources at the Academic Skills Center ([https://students.dartmouth.edu/academic-skills/](https://students.dartmouth.edu/academic-skills/)).

**Laptop policy**

In the first three weeks, please bring along hard copies of all assigned readings. Thereafter, please abstain from using your laptop unless you really cannot afford to print the readings and must use pdf files. If that’s the case, please keep all unrelated windows closed, know your readings well, and make notes on the files. Navigating a pdf generally takes longer, please take this into consideration. Using your laptops for any other purposes will affect your participation grade.

**Financial Difficulty**

If you encounter financial challenges related to this class, please let me know.

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**Week 1. Censoring Translation**

**Meeting 1. Introduction. Commissioners and Agents of Translation.**

*Synopsis of topics:*

The cultural, aesthetic, political and ideological capital that translated texts enjoy and produce in the target culture. Interactions between cultural, ideological, and censorial discourses. Textual manipulations and censorial power in translation. The relationship of censorship with the habitus of the field of translation. The main operational modes of censorship: preventive and formative.

*Reading:*


**Meeting 2. An Apparatus of Control Over Foreign Influence.**

*Synopsis of topics:*

Texts of foreign origin perceived as part of the national textual corpus. Orchestrating the apparatus that establishes control over foreign influence. Restrictive and protective functions of censorship.

Reading:


**Week 2. Translation and Empire**

**Meeting 1. Prohibition of Ukrainian Printed Production in the Russian Empire.**

*Synopsis of topics:*

Tzarist censorship of the Ukrainian language: "There was no separate 'Little Russian language', there is not and there cannot be" (from the Valuev Circular of 18 July 1863, a secret decree issued by the Minister of Internal Affairs of the Russian Empire Pyotr Valuev). Self-censorship in Nikolai Gogol (Mykola Hohol), among other writers of Ukrainian origin. Ways to circumvent the outright prohibition of the Ukrainian language in print.

*Readings:*


**Meeting 2. Translation as a Gatekeeper to Europe.**

*Synopsis of topics:*

Linguistic russification in the Russian Empire. The Habsburg Monarchy’s policy towards the languages of its subjects in the Austro-Hungarian Empire. The Ukrainian language in the Austrian Empire and, after 1867, in the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Polish as a lingua franca in Halychyna (Galicia).
Readings:


Week 3. Translation and Stalinism

**Meeting 1. Controlled Indigenization by Means of Translation.**

Synopsis of topics:


Readings:


**Meeting 2. Russification and Stalinist Terror.**

Synopsis of topics:

The advent of Russian “national Bolshevism” and Stalinist campaigns against “bourgeois nationalism” in the Union republics. The extermination of the Ukrainian intellectual elite known as the “executed renaissance” during the Great Terror of 1937–1938. The task of merging the Ukrainian and Russian
languages into one. The scope and character of Russification affecting cultural production in the Soviet Union.

Mediator censorship. Restrictive and protective functions of censorship. Obedience to the structured totalitarian logic. Propagandistic declarations of the aim to protect readers from perilous influences of the foreign. Total control over the circulation of the symbolic capital that foreign texts enjoy in the receiving country.

Readings:


Week 4. Remapping Eastern Europe and the Politics of Translation After WWII.

Meeting 1. Translation Flows in the Soviet Bloc Countries.

Synopsis of topics:

Censoring translation in the group of eastern European countries that were aligned militarily, politically, economically, and culturally with the Soviet Union approximately from 1945 to 1990 (members included Albania, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, East Germany, Hungary, Poland, Romania, and Yugoslavia).

Readings:


Research project progress report 1 due
Meeting 2. Institutions of Translation and Ideological Control.

Synopsis of topics:

The post-WWII Socialization and Russification of Eastern Europe, operational at an institutional level through translation, language policy, politics of education, censorship, demographic shifts (deportations, forced migration, relocation of work force within the USSR) as well as through systematic repression of key cultural figures, scholars, teachers, writers, translators.

Readings:


Week 5. The Translator as the Censored and the Censor

Meeting 1. Publishing Policies: The Editor as a Re/translator.

Synopsis of topics:

Publishing processes as the institutional basis for multilayered censorship, involving linguistic, stylistic and ideological interventions.

The power of the author-function in a censorial context. Pre-editorial censorship. The repressive and permissive effects of censorship. The all-pervasive sensorial presence. The dissenting and anticipating voice of the censored. The repressive and permissive power of the censor. A co-operative production process and surrendering the author-function to the regime’s propaganda machinery.

Readings:

Meeting 2. Indirect Translation as Censorship.

Synopsis of topics:

A multifaceted phenomenon of indirect translation via Russian into the languages of Soviet Republics in the Soviet Union and into the languages of Soviet States in Eastern Europe. Strategies and types of indirect translation and its persistence until early 21st century.

The figure of the editor as a key cultural mediator.

Readings:


Week 6. Censoring Translation in the Khrushchev Soviet Era

Meeting 1. Discourses of Regulation and Resistance.

Synopsis of topics:

The Soviet state apparatus’ dual control over all publications, ascending from the bottom up in a hierarchical order. The top-down Soviet censorship policy both on ideological and linguistic levels in its various forms: institutional, structural, and self-imposed.

The political instrumentalization of culture by the regime. The compulsory writers’ organizations. Internalization of official norms. Space for negotiation and resistance.

Readings:


**Meeting 2. Literary Translation Journals. Generation of the Sixtiers.**

*Synopsis of topics:*


*Readings:*


**Week 7. Translation, Political Stagnation, and Dissent**

**Meeting 1. ‘Totalitarian translation’ as a Means of Forced Cultural Change.**

*Synopsis of topics:*

Soviet translation project and a unified style of translation. Features of the style of totalizing narrative encouraged in translation Forced cultural change and the Soviet canon of world literature.

Dictionary in the Totalitarian Society. Case study: official lexicography as codification of Russian interference with the Ukrainian language.

*Readings:*

Meeting 2. Repressions Continued.

Synopsis of topics:


Readings:


Additional reading:


Week 8. After Totalitarianism

Meeting 1. Rethinking the Soviet Canon.

Synopsis of topics:

The impact on translation and translational thought of the Gorbachev perestroika. The fall of Soviet censorship. The anti-Soviet translation in the diaspora and translating the dissident authors who had not been published in the USSR. Marketing the translator’s image.

The language of the 1990s’ literary generation, cultural revolution, and the emergence of a new school of translation. Rethinking the canon; linguistic freedom and criticism of the “sovok” mentality.
Meeting 2. Retranslating the Colonial Past.

Synopsis of topics:
Translation and censorship in former Soviet Republics and soviet bloc countries after the collapse of the Soviet Union. Retranslations of the classics.

Readings:

Research project progress report 2 due

Week 9. Translation and Manipulation

Meeting 1. Post-Censorial Viewpoint Revisited.

Synopsis of topics:
Ideological dimensions of translation: ideologies of language and language ideologies/attitudes in translation. Censorship in the time of war.

Readings:
Meeting 2. Eastern European Media and Neo-imperial Powerplay in the Russian Federation.

Synopsis of topics:

Remedies for political correctness in translation. Translation as essential information in “the age of fake news.” Indirect translation revisited. Propagandistic and manipulative strategies of translation. The linguistic component of the Russian Federation’s hybrid warfare against Ukraine’s independence. Parodistic translation and dismantling neo-imperialistic Newspeak: as a battlefield of imperialist mentality against postcolonial revision.

Readings:


Week 10. Translation and Migration

Meeting 1. The Language of the Hegemon.

Synopsis of topics:

Translation as censorship. Translating from a minority language into the hegemon language. Migration issues and the violence of translation.

Summarizing discussion of the key issues considered in this course.

Readings:


Meeting 2. Student presentations and discussion of final essays. Q&A Session.

Your final essays will be assessed on these criteria: addressing the questions, choosing a focus, and concision; ability to present orally without notes (excluding extremely short bullet points); the depth of analysis (privilege depth over breadth); ability to engage with the new terms pertinent to the course subject matter and material; contact with the audience and the ability to address intelligent non-experts and explain new concepts.

PowerPoint Presentation of the research project + corrected summary of final paper (300 words) due

The final paper of 7-9 pages is due by the end of the final exam period.