COLT 19.06/EEER 38.27: **Decolonizing Translation**
Summer 2024
Distributives: LIT/Wcult and NW, LRP

**Course description**

The course takes a panoramic view of translation as an ambivalent reflection of the (post)colonial condition. As a “channel of colonization,” translation has relied on legal and linguistic manipulations and prohibitions to unleash epistemicide and linguicide. As a form of resistance, translation has channeled emancipatory postcolonial struggles. In this course, we will survey both functions between the 18th to the early 21st century. We will draw on case studies from around the globe, including the Middle East, South, Southeast and Western Asia, South and Central America, Mexico and the islands of the Caribbean, as well as North America, Europe and Eurasia. We’ll revisit the relationship between translation, orientalism, world literature, have a closer look at border identities across geographical regions and historical circumstances, reconsider translational imagination and the art of self-translation, and reflect on the gains, loses, misses, and un/translatables in translation.

**Learning Outcomes**

1) think about and reflect upon the relationship between translation strategies and social orders, the translator’s identity and (post)colonial situation, the language of translation and ideology; 2) develop a general understanding of the term “de/colonization” as well as the social background, cultural nature, and perspectives of decolonizing strivings and processes in the field of translation; 3) develop close-reading skills of literary works in translation, with due attention to both their stylistic/poetic form and semantic content; 4) develop an understanding of postcolonial translation theories and practices across geographical regions and historical circumstances; 5) develop original research that can relate a translation to its literary, ideological, and social contexts; 6) develop critical thinking and essay writing skills around the ideas, issues, and challenges of translating literary works from minor languages into English and vice versa; 7) gain experience in translation analysis and the verbal and visual presentation of critical and analytical thinking.

**Teaching Methods & Philosophy**

The basic teaching methods will include lectures, discussions, active learning, web-based learning, and experiential learning (writing a research project), among others. General philosophy is student-centered teaching guided by the precepts of enthusiasm, flexibility, relevance, and evolution.

- **Teaching methods**: lectures, PPT presentations, mini-workshops, discussions, presentations of research essays.
Expectations & Norms

- Contact information:

Instructor: Lada Kolomiyets
Email: Lada.Kolomiyets@dartmouth.edu
Meeting times: 2A Tue/Thu 2:25 pm – 4:15 pm
X Hour: Thurs 1:20 pm – 2:10 pm
Office hours: Tue, Thu 12:00-1:00 pm Reed Hall

Course readings:
- All texts are on Canvas in pdf format. Complete the assigned reading(s) related to class meetings for each class discussion.

- Class workload & 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
(you are encouraged to choose and formulate your own topic of research)

- Attendance and timeliness:
Be active and present.
Be ready with your reading for class discussion and actively participate in class conversations on the discussed topic(s).

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
by the end of the final exam period – the final paper of 7-9 pages due

Tasks explained:
Answers to questions on Canvas Discussion Boards
Respond in writing (5-7 sentences) to questions on the assigned reading(s) for each class before the due time.

**Research project 1.**

**Translation and Reflection: Practice-based Research Project**

**Step 1:**

Choose a literary text/fragment of text or several short texts of 500-800 words for translation into English: from any foreign (ideally: minor/small) language that you understand in semantic and stylistic nuances.

**Step 2:**

Describe exactly when and under what socio-economic, political, cultural conditions the work(s) you chose was written. If there is an English translation(s) of it and you are making your translation as an alternative to an already existing translation or translations, also describe when these translations were made and what exactly should be reconsidered/corrected in them.

**Step 3:**

Make your own translation of your chosen work(s) from a postcolonial perspective, that is, considering the work of theorists and practitioners of the postcolonial approach.

**Step 4:**

Closely analyze – line by line – the process and outcome of your translation as reflecting a particular translation strategy, or a set of strategies, aimed at decolonizing translation as a text and as a socio-communicative activity.

**Step 5:**

Prove your translation choices based on the arguments of any of the postcolonial theories.

**Research project 1** has to be related to the topic of the course and must use the interpretive skills that you practice. It’s a broad spectrum – literature-in-translation and de/colonization issues – and it should not be difficult to find something you’re interested in for translation, interpretation, and analysis of the mode(s) of decolonization in translation, particularly when analyzing the minor languages translated into the language of the hegemon through the lens of postcolonial theories, migration, and cultural studies.
You will hold two intermediate progress reports in the form of oral presentations in class (3-5 minutes) of your “Translation and Reflection” project in progress.

**Progress report 1.** This should be a short presentation of the text(s) chosen for translation (Step 1) and a description of the socio-economic, political, cultural conditions under which the original work(s) was written (Step 2).

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 text(s) you will be translating, what kind of analysis/postcolonial theories 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.

**Progress report 2.** This should be a short presentation of your own translation of the chosen work(s) (Step 3) and self-analysis of your translation as reflecting a particular translation strategy, or a set of strategies, aimed at decolonizing translation as a text and as a socio-communicative activity (Step 4).

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/Handout Presentation** of the research project + the final draft of the summary of course paper. This should be proof/demonstration of your translation choices based on the arguments of any of the postcolonial theories (Step 5). Your presentation, scheduled for the last day of class, will be followed by the 3-5-minute Q&A session.

The presentation will be assessed on these criteria: addressing the questions, choosing a focus, and concision; ability to present orally without notes (excluding 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.

The Final Research Paper will be 7-9 pages long (font 14 of Times New Roman, 1.5 or 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.

**Research project 2.**
An alternative to research project 1 if you are not inclined to personally translate literary texts for various reasons.

**Research project 2** 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 de/colonization issues course, you can always bring your other interests to the interpretation and analysis of different modes of de/colonizing translation in particular, for example, in the following fields: the minor languages translated into the language of the hegemon, post-translation, migration, and cultural studies, etc.

You will hold two intermediate progress reports in the form of oral presentations in class (3-5 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. You will present your research with PowerPoint Presentation, followed by the 3-5-minute Q&A session, on the last day of class.

Your presentation will be assessed on these criteria: addressing the questions, choosing a focus, and concision; ability to present orally without notes (excluding 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.

The Final Research Paper will be **7-9 pages long** (font 14 of Times New Roman, 1.5 or 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.

- **Technology use in the classroom:**
  PPT Presentations, audiovisual materials, access to the Internal and social platforms.

  - **Technology for managing course:** Canvas, access to the Internet, social platforms & Zoom, PPT Presentations.

**Class Climate & Inclusivity**

**General Course Policies:**

  - **Respect**

**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://students.dartmouth.edu/community-standards/policy/academic-honor-principle](https://students.dartmouth.edu/community-standards/policy/academic-honor-principle)

**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. Please refer to the Tucker Center for Spiritual and Ethical Life’s [holy day calendar](https://students.dartmouth.edu/community-standards/policy/academic-honor-principle).

  - **Civility**

**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](https://students.dartmouth.edu/community-standards/policy/academic-honor-principle); 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](https://students.dartmouth.edu/community-standards/policy/academic-honor-principle) 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.

**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/](https://students.dartmouth.edu/undergraduate-deans/)), the Counseling Center ([https://students.dartmouth.edu/health-service/counseling/about](https://students.dartmouth.edu/health-service/counseling/about)), and the Student Wellness Center ([https://students.dartmouth.edu/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](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](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 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.

- Conduct

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).**

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.

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 take place via Zoom at this address. I will send an email notification: https://dartmouth.zoom.us/j/94129360056?pwd=bm9sZzQ2OXlSczh1dERvT2VlQVRLZz09. 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.

- **Language**: Taught in English. No prerequisites.

- **The course acknowledges bias** (in personal viewpoints, of researchers, in course materials). The course is aimed at giving and receiving feedback between the instructor and students.

---

**Course Syllabus**

**Week 1. Introduction. Colonialism and Translation**

**Meeting 1. Translation as a “channel of colonization.” Theories of postcolonial translation.**


Basic theoretical sources:


Reading for the next class:


Additional reading:

- Prasenjit Gupta (University of Iowa). Reviews of:

Week 2. (De)Colonial Reconstruction of Native Languages, Literatures, and Law

Meeting 1. Exploring translation theories from a postmodern perspective.


References in the Focus:


Toury, Gideon (1980). *In Search of a Theory of Translation*. Tel Aviv: The Porter Institute for Poetics and Semiotics; Tel Aviv University.


Basic theoretical sources:


**Discussion**

*Reading for the next class:*


*Listening for the next class:*

- Gayatri Spivak’s “Can the Subaltern Speak,” on YouTube (also streaming on Canvas), [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DnRs3nVAUH0](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DnRs3nVAUH0)

**Meeting 2. The concept of cultural translation. Translation and construction of the “Other.”**

Focus: Cultural translation paradigm. Postmodern space and metropolitan space. The border-problem of the diasporic, the migrant, the refugee. Postcolonialism, subaltern studies, historical narratives, women’s resistance, othering.

Basic theoretical sources:


Discussion

Reading for the next class:

- Douglas Robinson (University of Mississippi). Tejaswini Niranjana, Retranslation, and the Problem of Foreignism. Review of:

Week 3. Translation Strategies in/as Response to the Needs and Demands of Imperial Powers

Meeting 1. Features and tricks of colonial discourse. Translation-as-rewriting the colonial past.

Focus: Colonial hybridity and representation of the original and saturation with a colonial translator’s “otherness” to and difference from the colonizing culture. A revisionist tendency in the post-colonial society as the “desire to retranslate,” associated with the “desire to re-write history.” From Walter Benjamin to Douglas Robinson and Tejaswini Niranjana.

Basic theoretical sources:


Discussion

Reading for the next class:


Meeting 2. Translation and epistemic transformation in Antiquity and Early Middle Ages. The Ascetic Foundations of Western Translation Theory.


Basic theoretical sources:


Jerome’s Letter to Pammachius “On the Best Method of Translating,”
https://www.bible-researcher.com/jerome.pammachius.html

Discussion
Reading for the next class:


Week 4. Translation Discourse in the Age of Enlightenment (17th and 18th centuries). Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries in Europe and Former British Colonies.

Meeting 1. Translation and 'transcreation' in Medieval India. Translations of the Bible in Europe: From the Middle Ages to the Renaissance (15th and 16th centuries) and Reformation Movement (16th and 17th centuries).


Basic theoretical sources:


Discussion
Reading for the next class:

- Prologue, p.1-16.

Research project progress report 1


Basic theoretical sources:


Chapter 2 Translation theory before the twentieth century, p. 18-35.

18 2.0 Introduction 19 2.1 ‘Word-for-word’ or ‘sense-for-sense’? 19 2.2 Martin Luther 23 2.3 Faithfulness, spirit and truth 24 2.4 Early attempts at systematic translation theory: Dryden, Dolet and Tytler 25 2.5 Schleiermacher and the valorization of the foreign 28 2.6 Translation theory of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in Britain 29 2.7 Towards contemporary translation theory 30


Introduction The Colonial History of Comparative Method, p. 17-49


Conclusion: Genealogies of Emergency, p. 187-200

**Discussion**

*Reading for the next class:*

  - 2. Conversion and Piracy: Defoe’s Captain Singleton, pp. 51-76 (on commerce)

**Week 5. A Closer Look at Translation in the Colonial Empires of European Powers**

**Meeting 1. Translation in the 18th and 19th century in Europe and former British colonies. Orientalism. Translation practice(s) and the circulation of cultural capital.**


Basic theoretical sources:


31 The Bible, that is the Old and New Testaments, Newly Translated from Hebrew and Greek Languages [The Protestant Translation of the Bible] (1865) ELI SMITH, CORNELIUS VAN DYCK, NASIF AL- YAZIJI, BUTRUS AL- BUSTANI, p. 220

32 The Seekers’ Guide to the Precious Bible (1869) SIMEON CALHOUN, p. 222
Discussion

Readings for the next class:

39 “Arabization” (1895) KHALIL BAIDAS, JURJI ZAIDAN, p. 257-259
44 Homer’s Iliad (1904) SULAIMAN AL- BUSTANI, p. 291-303
45 Celebrating the translator of the Iliad (al- Muqtataf magazine) (1904) VARIOUS AUTHORS, p. 304-315

Meeting 2. European tradition(s) of translating Homer and the concept of world literature.


Basic theoretical sources:

Discussion

Readings for the next class:

- Gentzler, Edwin (2016). *Translation and Rewriting in the Age of Post-Translation Studies*:
  - “Postcolonial Faust.” Chapter 3
  - “Hamlet in China.” Chapter 5.

Week 6. Translation, Unfaithful Fidelity, Betrayal in (De)colonial Contexts


Basic theoretical source:


- 2. Orientalism and the Institution of Indian Literature.
- 3. Global English and Its Others;
- 4. “Our Philological Home Is the Earth”: World Literature from Auerbach to Said.

Discussion

Readings for the next class:

Focus: The Missionary Novels of Nineteenth-Century China. Translation and Betrayal.

Basic theoretical sources:

Discussion

Readings for the next class:

  - 5. La Jotería: Stereoscopic Readings Against Epistemicide, pp. 137-149.
  - Conclusion: An Ethics and Politics of Bewilderment, pp. 150-164.

Week 7. Translation in the Americas and Eastern Europe from a
Postcolonial Perspective


Basic theoretical sources:


- 5. Language worlds, pp. 120-153.


- 2. The Anguish of Decolonial Translation: José María Arguedas and Walter Benjamin, pp. 53-74.

**Discussion**

*Reading for the next class:*


**Meeting 2. Translation and Censorship in the 19th—early 20th century Russian and Austro-Hungarian Empires. Prohibitions of vernacular cultural production in the late Russian Empire and Soviet Union.**

Focus: Censorship and Linguistic russification in the Russian Empire. The Habsburg Monarchy’s policy towards the languages of its subjects in the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Polish as a *lingua franca* in Western Ukraine (Galicia). 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.


**Basic theoretical sources:**


*Translation under Communism*. Rundle, Christopher, Anna Lange, and Daniele Monticelli (eds.). Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan.


Discussion

Reading for the next class:


Week 8. Decolonizing Translation in the Post-Soviet Countries in Eastern and Central Europe. The Mediterranean as/in Translation and Beyond


Debunking the myth of greatness: The place of translations from Russian and non-Russian literatures on the post-soviet book market. The shaping of modern Europe through translation: Post-soviet national literatures translated. Translation and the language of the Hegemon in the early 2020s. Migration and the victims of translation. Translating from a minority language into the hegemon language. Migration, refugees, and the violence of translation. Translations of the works by contemporary authors from the former Soviet republics written in Russian. The concept of intranational translation, or Russian-to-Ukrainian translation of the works of Ukrainian authors written in Russian. Language of literary writings in transition.
Basic theoretical sources:


Discussion

Reading for the next class:


Meeting 2. Linguistic heterogeneity, postcolonial resistance and border identities across geographical regions and historical circumstances.


Basic theoretical sources:


**Discussion**

**Reading for the next class:**


**Research project progress report 2**

**Week 9. Decolonizing the Digital Humanities and Rehumanizing Translation Studies**

**Meeting 1. The translator’s art as an act of linguistic and personal metamorphosis. The Mediterranean as/in Translation and Beyond**


Basic theoretical sources:

- Ramakrishna, Shantha [Chapter 4]. “Cultural Transmission Through Translation: An Indian Perspective,” pp. 87-100.

**Discussion**

**Reading for the next class:**


**Meeting 2. Transmutation and translational imagination. Summary and further application of postcolonial translation theories.**

Focus: Modelling the process of translation. Anisomorphisms, or the linguistic, cultural and textual areas in which systematic difference takes place in translation. Adaptation and inculturation in translation. Transformational model of translation. Redefinition of translation: “What if we erase the border completely and rethink translation as an always ongoing process of every communication. Translation becomes viewed less as a speech-act carried out between languages and cultures, and instead as a condition underlying the languages and cultures upon which communication is based” Gentzler (*Translation without Borders*, 06-17-2011, [https://www.njzyw.com/thread/20110617/181234.html](https://www.njzyw.com/thread/20110617/181234.html)).

**Basic theoretical sources:**

Discussion

Watching:
- "Susan Bassnett: The Translational Imagination" on YouTube (also streaming on Canvas), [https://youtu.be/Js-ANXknsFc](https://youtu.be/Js-ANXknsFc)

Week 10. Student Presentations and Discussion of Final Essays

Meeting 1. PowerPoint Presentations of students’ research papers. Q&A Session.

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.

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.