

SAMPLE SYLLABUS

COLT 19.1: TRANSLATION: THEORY AND PRACTICE

11 hour: MWF 11:30-12:35 / x-hour TU 12:15-1:05

Prof. Michael Wyatt

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Appointments in person or on Zoom



St. Jerome, Antonello da Messina (1474)

Course Description

Translation is both a basic and highly complex aspect of our engagement not only with literature, but with a variety of cultural forms, and indeed with the world in which we live and work. We often take it for granted, yet the idea of meanings “lost in translation” is commonplace. In this course we work intensively on the craft of translation while exploring its practical, cultural, and philosophical implications through readings in analytic and translated literary texts. All students will complete a variety of translation exercises as well as a substantial final project from their chosen language(s) into English, for which A STRONG COMMAND of another language in addition to English is a course prerequisite.

General Information

Required Texts

1. Mark Polizzotti, *Sympathy for the Translator: a Translation Manifesto*
2. Other readings will be posted on Canvas as the term develops

Requirements

1. Readings:

Please read carefully and actively; make plenty of notes for discussion, especially when you are asked to compare and contrast translations. Regular attendance and lively class participation are expected and essential.

2. Four short written exercises: translations of brief texts, with commentary (2-3 pages, 1000-1500 words):

Each of these invites you to select a text of your own choice but within parameters that have to do with the genre or particular issues we address in class in that week (short-form fiction; performative texts, etc.). You should choose very short texts (never longer than one to two published or single-spaced manuscript pages): quality is more important than quantity here. Your translation will be accompanied by a commentary and reflection on the translation. In evaluating these, I will be as interested in the commentary as in the translation itself. A failed or problematic translation with a commentary that reflects critically on its shortcomings is more than welcome (in other words, you are encouraged to experiment and to try out small projects that are perhaps somewhat beyond your reach at the moment).

3. Active and thoughtful participation in the group workshops dedicated to your short translations:

Throughout the term, you will be sorted into small groups for workshopping your translations. Each of you will distribute a draft of your work to your group in advance of workshop sessions, and all group members are required to read each other's work critically and offer feedback. Further details will be provided before the first workshop.

4. Each student will work on a final project of her/his/their choice: a translation of a short text with a commentary/critical essay, 8-10 single-spaced pages (4000-5000 words):

Begin thinking about this as soon as possible and plan to work on it during the term. Consult with me early on and often as your ideas are beginning to take shape, even if they are still quite undefined. Be prepared to revise and rewrite your translation several times (a common practice among professional translators). Select a text that really interests and challenges you: you will be spending a lot of time with it. It should not be too long: roughly 5-7 published or single-spaced typescript pages of prose, less if it's poetry or very complex prose. It can be a self-contained text or a selection from a longer one. Give as much attention to the commentary/critical essay as you do to the translation itself. Two conferences with me to discuss this project are mandatory (see schedule below); more are recommended. If you are working with another language professor or graduate student (see below), plan on additional meetings with her/him/them.

Important!

If you are working with a language other than those I read (Italian, French, or Latin), we will need to identify another faculty member or perhaps a graduate student who can assist

you with the source-language of your work. We need to discuss these arrangements as soon as possible, so please let me know right away if this applies to you.

Grading

The final project will account for 40% of your grade; the graded short exercises together will account for another 40%. The remaining 20% is participation, which includes attendance, active contribution to discussions and to your workshop groups.

How to Be in Touch with Me Outside of Class

You are encouraged to come to meet with me in my office or on Zoom (use the link at Home on the course Canvas site), to discuss your final project, your exercises, the texts we are reading, translation in general, etc. Please make an appointment to do so, before or after class, or via email.

Schedule

Apart from the first three weeks, the topics for each of the successive weeks, and the dates for the workshops, Short Exercises and Final Projects, the following schedule is deliberately a work in progress that will be updated periodically in order to take into account your responses to Polizzotti's book and to tailor subsequent readings accordingly. **BE SURE TO CHECK THE SCHEDULE AT CANVAS REGULARLY!** Also, the three guest lecturers have yet to confirm the dates I have proposed, and those weeks may need to be rejuggled depending upon their availability.

Week I: PRELIMINARIES I

M	Jan	6	Introduction
W		8	Polizzotti, <i>Sympathy for the Traitor</i> , pp. xi-47
F		10	Polizzotti, <i>Sympathy for the Traitor</i> , pp. 49-110

Week II: PRELIMINARIES II + THE ANCIENT WORLD I

M	Jan	13	Polizzotti, <i>Sympathy for the Traitor</i> , pp. 111-151; email selection for Tuesday in-class Dartmouth Chat exercise (due by 6:00 pm)
Tu		14	Dartmouth Chat exercise
W		15	Dictionaries, Rauner Library
F		17	Young, "Finding Catullus in Translation", from <i>Translation as Muse: Poetic Translation in Catullus's Rome</i> , pp. 1-23 + "Catullus 4 and Late-Republican Alexandrianism", pp. 89-101

Week III: THE ANCIENT WORLD II

M	Jan	20	MARTIN LUTHER KING DAY, no class
W		22	King James Bible, <i>Gospel of John</i> 1 / Sarah Ruden, <i>The Good News According to Iōannēs</i> 1
F		24	Sussan Abbaie, "Effects and Messianic Aspirations at the Court of Shah 'Abbas I", from <i>Toward a Global Middle Ages</i> , pp. 137-147
Su		26	Draft Short Ex. 1 (ungraded, due by 11:59 pm): a classical, philosophical, or scriptural/religious text

Week IV: SHORT-FORM PROSE

Conferences for Final Project, sign-up @ Google Calendar, Canvas Home

- M Jan 27 Katie Chenoweth, "Montaigne on Language", in *Oxford Handbook of Montaigne*, pp. 367-84; Montaigne/Florio, *Essays*, II.17, "Of presumption" (1632) and Montaigne/Wyatt, *Essays* II.16, "On presumption"
- Tu 28 **Workshop for Ex. 1**
- W 29 Discussion with online guest, Nina Murray, translator from Ukrainian and Russian; Oksana Zabuzhko, "An Album for Gustav", in *Your Ad Could Go Here, Stories*, ed. and trans. Nina Murray
- F 31 Discussion of Murray visit and **Short Ex. 1**
Final version of Short Ex. 1 (due by 11:59 pm)
- Su Feb 2 **Draft Short Ex. 2 (ungraded, due by 11:59 pm): selection from a short story, prose poem, or literary essay**

Week V: PERFORMATIVE TEXTS

- M Feb 3 Brian Friel, *Translations* Act 1-Act 2, scene 1, National Theatre, London (view @ Panopto Video); Roy Foster, "We cannot resemble our fathers", "Hedge Schools", "Ordnance Survey", in *Translations, National Theatre, Official Program* (2019)
- Tu 4 **Workshop for Short Ex. 2**
- W 5 Friel, *Translations* Act 2, scene 2-Act 3 (view @ Panopto Video); Colm Tóbin, "Language in all its ambiguities", Martine Pelletier, "Translations, the Field Day debate and the reimagining of Irish identity", in *Translations, National Theatre, Official Program* (2019)
- F 7 Discussion of *Translations* and **Short Ex. 2**
Final version of Short Ex. 2 (due by 11:59 pm)
- Su 9 **Draft Short Ex. 3 (ungraded, due by 11:59 pm): a short scene from a theatrical text or performance OR from a radio, television, or film script**

Week VI: LONG-FORM PROSE

- M Feb 10 About The Tale of Genji and Overview of Chs. 1-2; Murasaki Shikibu, trans. Dennis Washburn, *The Tale of Genji*, "On the translation" + Ch. 3
- Tu 11 **Workshop for Short Ex. 3**
- W 12 Discussion with guest, Jonathan Smolin (MES); reading TBD
- F 14 Discussion of Smolin visit and **Short Ex. 3**
Final version of Short Ex. 3 (due by 11:59 pm)
- Su 16 **Draft Short Ex. 4 (ungraded): a short scene from a theatrical text or performance OR from a radio, television, or film script**

Week VII: POETRY

Conferences for Final Project, sign-up @ Google Calendar, Canvas Home page

- M Feb 17 Edith Grossman, "Translating Poetry", from *Why Translation Matters*; Jorge Luis Borges, trans. Eric McHenry, 'Ariosto y los Árabes' / 'Ariosto and the Arabs', from Borges, ed. Alexander Coleman, *Selected Poems*
- Tu 18 **Workshop for Short Ex. 4**
- W 19 Seamus Heaney / Dante Alighieri, "The Light of Heaven" / Paradiso 33.49-145; Notes for Heaney, "The Light of Heaven"

F	21 Mahmoud Darwish, trans. Fady Joudah, "Eleven Planets for the End of the Andalusian Scene", in <i>If I Were Another</i>
	Final version of Short Ex. 4 (due by 11:59 pm)
Su	23 Proposal for Final Project (due by 11:59)

Week VIII: DOES TRANSLATION MATTER?

M Feb	24 Edith Grossman, "Why Translation Matters", in <i>Why Translation Matters</i> ; additional reading TBD
W	26 Presentations of Final Projects 1
F	28 Presentations of Final Projects 2

Week IX

M March	3 Presentations of Final Projects 3
W	5 Presentations of Final Projects 4
F	7 Presentations of Final Projects 5

FINAL PROJECTS DUE, M June 3 (by 11:59)

Course Policies

1. **Safety Precautions:** Our class will strictly follow the Dartmouth guidelines regarding the Covid-19 protocols.
2. **Attendance Policy. Participation and attendance:** Please be an active discussion participant. This is the kind of course that will work only if everyone is always present and regularly heard from. If you must miss a class for an important reason, please let me know in advance. You are expected to attend class in person unless you have made alternative arrangements due to illness, medical reasons, or the need to isolate due to COVID-19. For the health and safety of our class community, please: do not attend class when you are sick, nor when you have been instructed by Student Health Services to stay home. Please communicate with your instructor immediately if you unable to attend class due to COVID-19, so that arrangements can be made. **Outside of Covid-19-related issues, you are allowed 2 absences for class..** While computers will be used during select classes, use of technological devices for personal business should be reserved for outside the classroom.
3. **Late work:** Please contact me as far in advance as possible if extenuating circumstances will prevent you from turning in your work on time. Out of respect for students who complete their work in a timely manner, late work will be marked down by 10% for each day your submission is late.
4. **Canvas:** Be sure to consult the course Canvas site daily for complete information on assignments, coursework, and cultural events sponsored by the Program in Comparative Literature. You are responsible for all course information posted on Canvas.
5. **Accommodations:** Students requesting disability-related accommodations and services for this course are required to register with Student Accessibility Services (SAS; [Getting Started with SAS 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.

6. **Mental Health:** The academic environment at Dartmouth is challenging, our terms are intensive, and classes are not the only demanding part of your life. There are a number of resources available to you on campus to support your wellness, including: your Undergraduate Dean (<http://www.dartmouth.edu/~upperde/>); Counseling and Human Development (<http://www.dartmouth.edu/~chd/>); and the Student Wellness Center (<http://www.dartmouth.edu/~healthed/>).
7. **Religious observances.** Some students 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 appropriate accommodations.
8. **Honor Principle.** You are expected to adhere to the Dartmouth College Community Standard of Academic Integrity. For detailed information, please review the Students Handbook:
<http://www.dartmouth.edu/student-handbook/> For your information, an online version of Sources and Citation at Dartmouth College is available at
<http://writing-speech.dartmouth.edu/learning/materials/sources-and-citations-dartmouth>