
LITERARY TRANSLATION AND CREATIVE WRITING in Spring 2019 (CL3400)

Course Code	CL3400	Professor(s)	Amanda Dennis
Prerequisites	None	Office Number	G-111
Class Schedule	R: 16:55-19:50 in G-002	Office Hours	
Credits	4	Email	adennis@aup.edu
Semester	Spring 2019	Office Tel. Ext.	N/A

Course Description

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This workshop offers an introduction to the practice of literary and cultural translation, with special emphasis on creativity: how does translation stimulate critical thinking and feed other forms of creative writing? How might working closely with another language influence our style as writers in English? Through readings, discussion, and, above all, practice, students will encounter some of the key linguistic differences between French and English (particularly around questions of tense, the use of prepositions, syntax, punctuation and register); and they will be asked to find ways to resolve and/or exploit these differences in their translations and in other creative work. In this way, they will improve their writing skills and gain insight into the challenges and creative possibilities of literary translation.

Course Learning Outcomes

Gain practical experience of French-English literary translation through group exercises and regular individual assignments.

Gain practical experience of using translation as a tool to develop as a creative writer (as a means to expand one's vocabulary, experiment with syntax, write in another voice and so on) through group exercises and regular individual assignments.

Gain knowledge of the most common linguistic challenges that translators face when working from French to English through group discussion and workshopping specific translation problems.

Enhance their creative capacity to conceive and apply creative solutions to translation problems and specific writing tasks through group discussion and regular individual assignments.

Enhance their critical capacity to think through and defend an approach to an exercise as well as specific stylistic choices through critical reflection on work produced in the form of a learning

journal and written commentary.

Develop editorial skills with a view to achieving a high standard of presentation in their submitted work by engaging in the collaborative analysis and peer review of texts.

General Education

Course Outline

Outline:

Literary translation demands rigorous attention to language and its possibilities for expression, especially rhythm, word choice, syntax, tense and style. It also requires an intensity of focus, as the translator spends a long time with a single text, working on just one sentence, or one short paragraph at a time. But one of the most fascinating things about translation is how this tight focus – working closely on just one sentence – can open out onto a whole crowd of questions (linguistic, cultural, aesthetic, historical, political, ethical). Another benefit is that focused attention on the construction and rhythm of another sentence can suggest new possibilities for our own writing. The workshop will mirror this process by working closely on two literary works in French for the duration of the semester (with excerpts from other texts added to address particular issues in translation). The pair of works will serve as both case studies and source materials, as translation conundrums to be solved and as prompts to write from.

Our two texts will be *L'étranger* by Albert Camus (first published in 1942) and a more contemporary text, Nathalie Léger's *Supplement à la vie de Barbara Loden* (P.O.L. 2012). The second book—which may be less familiar—is the story of a French writer's quest to learn more about the maker of the American film, *Wanda*. The journey takes her across continents, into archives, and through mining towns of Pennsylvania, all to get closer to the film and its maker. Over the course of the semester, we will translate excerpts from other texts, including Georges Perec's playful exercise, *Tentative d'épuisement d'un lieu parisien*. We'll use this text as a translation exercise and as a writing prompt, going out into the city to hone our powers of sensory observation on a particular city square. We'll also compare our two texts, thinking about the role of the outsider, foreigner or "stranger" relative to culturally received mores and values. Students will be asked to imagine encounters between the two texts, employing a range of formal constraints that will increase their knowledge of the texts in question and generate new pieces of writing.

Textbooks

Title	Author	Publisher	ISBN	Required
Supplement a La Vie De Barbara Loden	Nathalie Leger	Gallimard (September 12, 2013)	978-2070453221	Yes
L'Étranger	Camus	Gallimard Revised ed. edition (December 1971) (folio)	978-2070360024	Yes

Attendance Policy

Students studying at The American University of Paris are expected to attend ALL scheduled classes, and in case of absence, should contact their professors to explain the situation. It is the student's responsibility to be aware of any specific attendance policy that a faculty member might have set in the course syllabus. The French Department, for example, has its own attendance policy, and students are responsible for compliance. Academic Affairs will excuse an absence for students' participation in study trips related to their courses.

Attendance at all exams is mandatory.

IN ALL CASES OF MISSED COURSE MEETINGS, THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR COMMUNICATION WITH THE PROFESSOR, AND FOR ARRANGING TO MAKE UP MISSED WORK, RESTS SOLELY WITH THE STUDENT.

Whether an absence is excused or not is ALWAYS up to the discretion of the professor or the department. Unexcused absences can result in a low or failing participation grade. In the case of excessive absences, it is up to the professor or the department to decide if the student will receive an "F" for the course. An instructor may recommend that a student withdraw, if absences have made it impossible to continue in the course at a satisfactory level.

Students must be mindful of this policy when making their travel arrangements, and especially during the Drop/Add and Exam Periods.

Grading Policy

In addition to group work in class, students will have weekly writing and translation assignments throughout the semester. Students will also be required to submit two more fully realized pieces of writing (whether translations, creative writing, or a combination of the two), along with commentary or notes on their process, once at mid-term and again at the end of the semester. Assessment will also be based on regular and engaged participation throughout the course.

The assessment methods for this class are:

- In-class group exercises and workshops
- Short individual writing and translation assignments
- Ongoing learning journal
- Two longer assignments with critical notes or commentary

Grading Breakdown:

Participation	20%
Regular Exercises	30%
Midterm translation (or creative writing assignment) and commentary	20%
Final translation (or creative writing assignment) and commentary	30%

Other
