

Advanced English: Translation workshop - Perfect your English and broaden your horizon through translation

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Academic year 2023-2024 - Language Department - Spring semester.

This course is meant for students of the advanced C1 and C2 levels. Theme-based language classes aim at developing written and oral skills through the study of a specific topic.

Course Objectives

Despite the global dominance of English, translation remains ubiquitous, but still quite invisible. Yet it begs vital political and cultural questions: Can AI replace translators? Can mistranslation lead to political and social conflicts? Are all translators 'traitors'? Is translation a means of domination or emancipation? What are the ethics of translation? What is a 'good' or a 'bad' translation? etc.

These are some of the questions this course will strive to elucidate, raising awareness of the numerous and complex issues at play when translating. Translation is also an excellent means of improving your reading and writing skills, both in French and English.

The main objectives are:

- Perfecting the students' knowledge of English through the thorough examination of texts, close reading and the enlightening comparison of both languages (contrastive linguistics).
- Training the students in the art of translation – an asset for many international careers (Affaires étrangères, UN, EU and other international institutions, global corporations, NGOs, journalism, publishing, etc.).
- Presenting a wide range of contemporary problems and scholarship.

Course Description

Students will be introduced to different types of translation paradigms and to their underlying logics.

Translation will be practised through different team challenges, such as group translation, translation 'jousts', live interpreting, competing against an AI translation software, roleplaying, etc.

In a typical class, several fields will intersect such as a focus on a few linguistic problems, a reflection on a particular translation problem (how to translate race, class, gender, nation, dialect, humour, literature, for example) and the study of current affairs or research.

Translation exercises will run the whole gamut of texts, from newspapers to poetry, tackling various types of written English and a wide array of issues (political, economic, social, religious, cultural, etc.). We will also try our hands at different styles and genres, including social sciences, literature, pulp fiction, comics, drama, film subtitling and dubbing.

It is to be noted that this subject requires an excellent level of French and a taste for writing, as the exercise is as demanding in French as it is in English. Classes will be held in English, but part of the work on the texts will require the use of French.

Organization

Activities will cover the four language skills, with an emphasis on speaking, comprehension and writing:

- **Reading:** students will be asked to prepare short translations for each class. Students will also have to choose a book to read in English, to present it and to reflect on translation.
- **Writing:** translation will be mostly from English to French, but the course will develop stylistic abilities in both languages, improving fluidity, accuracy and elegance. Three translations will be submitted for assessment during the semester.
- **Listening:** audio and video extracts relevant to the topic will be used in class, and time will be allocated to the practise of live interpreting.
- **Speaking:** students will be asked to share their views about translations. There will be an emphasis on reading aloud, as a way of accessing the meaning of the texts. Each topic should provide many opportunities for class discussion.