

MOBILIZING KNOWLEDGE IN TRANSLATION

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Office Hours: by appointment

Course Description

Translation has become part of our everyday life, as we listen to music, watch videos, and surf the web for work and pleasure. We often attempt to communicate our understandings in different languages, but what happens when our knowledge is transferred across linguistic boundaries? This course explores translation as a core process within any knowledge mobility, because knowledge rarely remains intact when transmitted across geo-political borders and social milieus. Furthermore, translation often involves learning how to operate in a new cultural environment. Zooming in on the history of knowledge in translation is an advantageous way of looking into a wide range of practices, and developing new expressive vocabularies for depicting epistemic phenomena. We will examine the mobilizing of knowledge in translation across a variety of historical sites and contexts, witness the rise and fall of dominant languages in knowledge transfer, and observe the beginnings of global scientific communication. How is knowledge in translation embedded into the cultures of writing and networks of localization? What is the role of various media and material objects thereby? Who are the practitioners of translation? How do gender models play a role in translation? What technologies are used in translating knowledge? What are the functions of artificial languages? How do large-scale translation projects facilitate collective learning? These considerations will help us tackle our key issue – how translation participates in mobilizing knowledge across boundaries.

Requirements

Academic Integrity

Bard College Berlin maintains the staunchest regard for academic integrity and expects good academic practice from students in their studies. Instances in which students fail to meet the expected standards of academic integrity will be dealt with under the Code of Student Conduct, Section 14.3 (Academic Misconduct) in the Student Handbook.

Attendance

Attendance at all classes is a crucial part of the education offered by Bard College Berlin. To account for minor circumstances, two absences from twice-per-week courses or the equivalent (e.g. one absence from a once-per-week course) should not affect the participation grade or require documentation.

Bard College Berlin does not offer credit for any course in which a student has missed more than 30% of classes, regardless of the reasons for the absences, whether excused or unexcused.

The full Bard College Berlin attendance policy can be found in the Student Handbook, Section 2.8.

SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR SPRING 2021: Some students might need to begin the semester remotely due to travel restrictions caused by the pandemic. In addition, all students and instructors must refrain from in-person attendance if they are feeling ill. Instructors should make efforts to offer alternatives to in-person attendance where needed, including remote participation or asynchronous options.

Assessment

Reading

Students are required to complete the essential reading for each session (see below), and are encouraged to take a look at the further reading, which should also be used as the starting point in preparing essays. There is no required textbook, but all essential reading and some sources for further reading will be provided via Google Drive.

Class Presentations

Each student will make one brief (10 minutes) presentation on a topic of their choosing, and then answer questions relating to their presentation. The presentation topic should relate to the theme of the course. Students will be encouraged to discuss their choice of topics during the first month of the semester. Once the topic has been selected and discussed with the instructor, depending on the number of students in the group, a presentation slot will be allocated for each student during classes in the second half of the semester.

Writing Assignments

Students must write one mid-term essay, and one final essay.

Word count: Mid-term Essay: 2,000-3,000 words

Final Essay: 3,000-4,000 words

Essay Deadlines

Deadline for the mid-term essay: 22 March 2021

Deadline for the final essay: 10 May 2021

Policy on Late Submission of Papers

Essays that are up to 24 hours late can be downgraded up to one full grade (from B+ to C+, for example). Instructors are not obliged to accept essays that are more than 24 hours late. Where an instructor agrees to accept a late essay, it must be submitted within four weeks of the deadline. Thereafter, the student will receive a failing grade for the assignment. Grades and comments will be returned to students in a timely fashion. Students are entitled to make an appointment to discuss essay assignments and feedback during instructors' office hours.

Students receive mid- and end-of-semester grades for their seminar work. Students are entitled to make an appointment with an instructor to discuss seminar participation, or may be asked to meet with the instructor at any stage in the semester regarding class progress.

Policy on Late Submission of Papers

Essays that are up to 24 hours late will be downgraded one full grade (from B+ to C+, for example). Instructors are not obliged to accept essays that are more than 24 hours late. Where an instructor agrees to accept a late essay, it must be submitted within four weeks of the deadline and cannot receive a grade of higher than C. Thereafter, the student will receive a failing grade for the assignment. For more information, please consult the Student Handbook.

Grade Breakdown

Attendance and Active Participation in Classes - 25%

Class Presentations – 25%

Mid-term essay – 25%

Final essay – 25%

Grades Submission

All grades are submitted digitally to the Registrar's Office. Midterm grades are due end of week 8, which is 26 March 2021. Final grades for senior students are due 20 May 2021 by noon. Final grades for all students are due 4 June 2021.

Schedule

Scheduled class times will be available online under the relevant course heading:

<https://berlin.bard.edu/academics/courses/>

Session 1: Knowledge in Translation: Introduction 1 February

There is no assigned reading for this class, but students should prepare brief statements (ca. 5 min) about their interest in the topic of translation and their own experiences, of any kind, in translating knowledge across linguistic boundaries. We will discuss the main scope and tasks of the course, including the competences that will be developed further during the semester.

Session 2: Knowledge in Translation: Translator's Art 5 February

Essential Reading:

- Walter Benjamin, "The Task of the Translator"
[first printed as introduction to a Baudelaire translation, 1923], in *Illuminations*, trans. Harry Zohn; ed. Hannah Arendt, New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1968, 69-82.

Further Reading:

- Lawrence Venuti, *The Translator's Invisibility: A History of Translation*. New York: Routledge, 1995.

Session 3: Translation, Translating, Translators: Normativities in Translation 8 February

Essential Reading:

- Eugene Nida, "Principles of Correspondence," *The Translation Studies Reader*, in Lawrence Venuti (Ed.), *The Translation Studies Reader*, Routledge: New York and London, 2002, 153-167.

Further Reading:

- Lawrence Venuti (ed.) 2000. *The Translation Studies Reader*. New York: Routledge.

Session 4: Translation, Translating, Translators: Translation Methods 12 February

Essential Reading:

- Jean-Paul Vinay and Jean Darbelnet, “A Methodology for Translation,” in Lawrence Venuti (Ed.), *The Translation Studies Reader*, Routledge: New York and London, 2002, 128-137.

Further Reading:

- Carmen Millán and Francesca Bartrina (ed.) 2012. *The Routledge Handbook of Translation Studies*. New York: Routledge.

Session 5: Translation in Premodern Europe: Cultural Translation 15 February

Essential Reading:

- Peter Burke, R. Po-Chia Hsia (Eds.), *Cultural Translation in Early Modern Europe*, Chapter 1, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007, 7-38.

Further Reading:

- *ISIS: A Journal of the History of Science Society*, June 2018, 109:2
Focus: Translating Science over Time, ed. Sven Dupré.

Session 6: Translation in Premodern Europe: Collaborative Networks 19 February

Essential Reading:

- Jan van de Kamp, “Networks and Translation within the Republic of Letters: The Case of Theodore Haak (1605–1690),” in Sietske Fransen, Niall Hodson, and Karl A.E. Enenkel (Eds.), *Translating Early Modern Science*, Leiden: Brill, 2017, 41-65.

Further Reading:

- Belen Bistue, *Collaborative Translation and Multi-Version Texts in Early Modern Europe*, Farnham: Ashgate, 2013.

Session 7: Translation in Premodern Europe: Translating Discoveries 22 February

Essential Reading:

- Aphra Behn, “Translator’s Preface to *A Discovery of New Worlds*,” from French made in English by A. Behn, London: Printed for William Canning, 1688, pages unnumbered.

Further Reading:

- Line Cottegnies, "The Translator as Critic: Aphra Behn's Translation of Fontenelle's "Discovery of New Worlds" (1688)," *Restoration: Studies in English Literary Culture, 1660-1700*, Vol. 27, No. 1 (SPRING 2003), pp. 23-38.

Session 8: Translation in Premodern Europe: Translating Scientific Norms 26 February

Essential Reading:

- Alexander Fraser Tytler, *Essay on the principles of translation*, Chapters I-III, XIII. London: J. M. Dent & co.; New York, E. P. Dutton & co., 1907, 1-34, 176-196.

Further Reading:

- Thomas Blount, *Glossographia; or, a dictionary interpreting the hard words of whatsoever language, now used in our refined English tongue*, London: Printed by Tho. Newcombe for George Sawbridge, 1661 (1656).
- Jan Surman, Rocío Sumillera, and Katharina Kühn (eds.), *Translation in Knowledge, Knowledge in Translation*. John Benjamins, 2020. 189-208.

Session 9: Translating for the State: Knowledge Transfer in Muscovy 1 March

Essential Reading:

- Clare Griffin, "In Search of an Audience: Popular Pharmacies and the Limits of Literate Medicine in Late Seventeenth- and Early Eighteenth-Century Russia," *Bulletin for the History of Medicine* (89), 2015, 705-732.

Further Reading:

- Grigory Kotoshikhin, 2014. *Russia in the Reign of Aleksei Mikhailovich* [manuscript ca. 1666]. Edited by Marshall Poe. Translated by Benjamin Uroff. Berlin and Warsaw: De Gruyter Open.

Session 10: Translating for the State: Building the Russian Empire 5 March

Essential Reading:

- Maria Avxentevskaya. "The Leviathan and the Woods: Translating forestry policies under Peter I of Russia." *Translation in Knowledge, Knowledge in Translation*. Ed. Jan Surman, Rocío Sumillera and Katharina Kühn. John Benjamins, 2020. 189-208.

Further Reading:

- Gouzevitch, Irina, and Dmitri Gouzevitch. 2009. "Introducing Mathematics, building an empire." In *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Mathematics*, edited by Eleanor Robson and Jacqueline Stedall, 353-403. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Session 11: Travel and Translation in Dutch Republic: Problem of Translatability 8 March

Essential Reading:

- Benjamin Schmidt, "The Limits of Language and the Challenges of Exotica," in H. J. Cook and S. Dupre (Eds.), *Translating Knowledge in the Early Modern Low Countries*, Zurich: Lit. Verlag, 2012, 79-106.

Further Reading:

- Sietske Fransen, Niall Hodson, and Karl A.E. Enenkel (eds.), *Translating Early Modern Science*, Leiden: Brill, 2017.

Session 12: Travel and Translation in Dutch Republic: Translatability of Terms 12 March

Essential Reading:

- Yulia Frumer, "Translating Words, Building Worlds: Meteorology in Japanese, Dutch, and Chinese," in *ISIS: A Journal of the History of Science Society*, June 2018, 109:2, Focus: Translating Science over Time, ed. Sven Dupré, 326-332.

Further Reading:

- Cassin, Barbara et al. (ed.) 2014. *Dictionary of Untranslatables: A Philosophical Lexicon*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Session 13: Languages of the New World: The English Discovery of America 15 March

Essential Reading:

- Ralph Bauer, "The Crucible of the Tropics: Alchemy, Translation, and the English Discovery of America," in Jaime Marroquin Arredondo and Ralph Bauer (Eds.), *Translating Nature: Cross-Cultural Histories of Early Modern Science*, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2019, 171-177.

Further Reading:

- Patrick Manning, Abigail Owen (eds.), *Knowledge in Translation: Global Patterns of Scientific Exchange, 1000-1800 CE*, University of Pittsburgh Press, 2018.

Session 14: Languages of the New World: Colonial Science in Translation 19 March

Essential Reading:

- Sumit Guha, "Bad Language and Good Language: Lexical Awareness in the Cultural Politics of Peninsular India, ca. 1300–1800," Sheldon Pollock (Ed.), *Forms of Knowledge in Early Modern Asia: Explorations in the Intellectual History of India and Tibet, 1500–1800*, Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011, 49-68.

Further Reading:

- Marwa Elshakry, 2008. "Knowledge in Motion: The Cultural Politics of Modern Science Translations in Arabic." *Isis* (University of Chicago Press) 99 (4): 701-730.
- *The Routledge Handbook of Translation and Globalization*, Esperança Bielsa, Dionysios Kapsaskis (eds.), Routledge 2020.
- Sheldon Pollock, 2011. "The Languages of Science in Early Modern India." *In Forms of Knowledge in Early Modern Asia: Explorations in the Intellectual History of India and Tibet, 1500–1800*, 19–48. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Session 15: Translation and Industry: Translating Scientific Methodologies 22 March

Essential Reading:

- Scott L. Montgomery, Chapter 6 "Japanese Science in the Making," in *Science in Translation: Movements of Knowledge Through Cultures and Time*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000, 227-249.

Further Reading:

- Anthony Pym, 2004. *Moving Text: Localization, translation, and distribution*. John Benjamins Publishing Company.

Deadline for Mid-Term Essays: 22 March

Session 16: Translation and Industry: Between Science and Manufacturing 26 March

Essential Reading:

- John Fryer, Chief Translator to the Chinese Arsenal, "Science in China," *Nature*, 5, 19 May, 1881, 9-11, 54-57.

Further Reading:

- John Krige (ed.), *How Knowledge Moves. Writing the Transnational History of Science and Technology*, University of Chicago Press, 2019.

Spring break: March 29 – April 5

Session 17: Student Conference on the Final Essay Research Projects 9 April

There is no assigned reading for this class, but students should prepare brief presentations (ca. 10 min) describing their projects for final essays which should include elements of their own research on the themes of translating knowledge across linguistic boundaries. We will discuss the essay topics, the relevant sources, and methodologies for writing the final essays.

Session 18: Artificial Languages and Translation: Artificial Language Projects 12 April

Essential Reading:

- Rhodri Lewis, Chapter 4 “Discursus: Artificial languages, religion, and the occult,” in *Language, Mind and Nature*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007, 110-145.

Further Reading:

- J. Maat, 2004. *Philosophical Languages in the Seventeenth Century Dalgarno, Wilkins, Leibniz*. London: Kluwer Academic Publishers.

Session 19: Artificial Languages and Translation: Universal Classifications 16 April

Essential Reading:

- John Wilkins, *An Essay Towards a Real Character, and a Philosophical Language*, London, 1668, 22-23, 414-421.

Further Reading:

- M.M. Slaughter, 1982. *Universal Languages and Scientific Taxonomy in the Seventeenth Century*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Session 20: Global Scientific Communication: Artificial Languages in Use 19 April

Essential Reading:

- Michael Gordin, Chapter 4 “Speaking Utopian,” in *Scientific Babel. How Science Was Done Before and After Global English*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015, 111-137.

Further Reading:

- Arika Okrent, *In the Land of Invented Languages: Adventures in Linguistic Creativity, Madness, and Genius*. New York: Spiegel & Grau, 2010.

Session 21: Global Scientific Communication: Anglophone Science 23 April

Essential Reading:

- Michael Gordin, Chapter 11 “Anglophonia,” in *Scientific Babel. How Science Was Done Before and After Global English*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015, 299-322.

Further Reading:

- *ISIS: A Journal of the History of Science Society*, September 2017, 108:3
Focus: Linguistic Hegemony and The History of Science, ed. Michael D. Gordin.
- James A. Secord, "Knowledge in Transit." *Isis* 95, no. 4 (December 1, 2004): 654–72.

Session 22: The Beginnings of Machine Translation: Cryptography 26 April

Essential Reading:

- Warren Weaver, "Translation," Sergei Nirenburg, Harold Somers, and Yorick Wilks (Eds.), *Readings in Machine Translation*, Cambridge (MA) & London (UK): MIT Press, 2003, 13-17.

Further Reading:

- John Hutchins, "From First Conception to First Demonstration: the Nascent Years of Machine Translation, 1947-1954. A Chronology," *Machine Translation*, Vol. 12, No. 3 (1997), pp. 195-252.

Session 23: The Beginnings of Machine Translation: Computer-Aided Tools 30 April

Essential Reading:

- John Hutchins, "ALPAC: The (In)Famous Report," Sergei Nirenburg, Harold Somers, and Yorick Wilks (Eds.), *Readings in Machine Translation*, Cambridge (MA) & London (UK): MIT Press, 2003, 131-135.

Further Reading:

- *Readings in Machine Translation*, ed. Sergei Nirenburg, Harold Somers, and Yorick Wilks, Cambridge (MA) & London (UK), MIT Press, 2003.

Session 24: Machine Translation: Professional and Popular Tools 3 May

Essential Reading:

- Thierry Poibeau, Chapter 14 "The Machine Translation Industry: Between Professional and Mass-Market Applications," *Machine Translation*, MIT Press, 2017, 221-246.

Further Reading:

- Castilho Sheila, Moorkens Joss, Gaspari Federico, et al., "Is Neural Machine Translation the New State of the Art?" *Prague Bulletin of Mathematical Linguistics*, 01 June 2017, Vol.108(1), 109-120.

Session 25: Machine Translation: Perspectives for the Future 7 May

Essential Reading:

- Thierry Poibeau, Chapter 15 “The Future of Machine Translation,” *Machine Translation*, MIT Press, 2017, 247-256

Further Reading:

- Minako O’Hagan (ed.) 2020. *The Routledge Handbook of Translation and Technology*. New York: Routledge.

Session 26: Computer-Aided Tools in Translation: Practice Session 10 May

There is no assigned reading for this class, but students should select a popular application in translation and be prepared to describe its main functions, advantages, and disadvantages. In class we will discuss and practice using one of the available automated translation tools.

Deadline for Final Essays: 10 May

Session 27: Revisiting Knowledge in Translation: Final Discussion 14 May

There is no assigned reading for this class, but students should look back at the primary and secondary sources which they have read during the semester. We will also discuss the final essays and exchange feedback about the final assignments and the course in general.