



UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA AT CHARLOTTE  
 Department of Languages and Culture Studies  
 SYLLABUS FOR TRANSLATION 6001S (Section S90):



# HISTORY AND THEORY OF TRANSLATION

Semester: Fall 2006

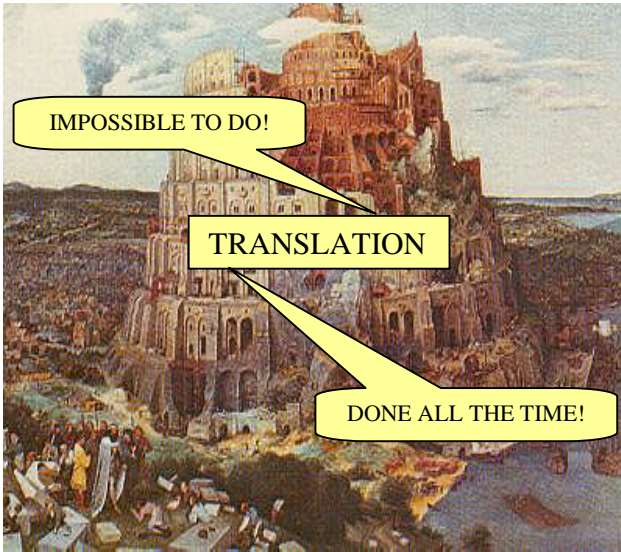
Meeting Times: Tuesdays, 5:00-7:30

Location: COED 402

Professor: Dr. Michael Scott Doyle

Office: COED 417, Tel. 687-8771; msdoyle@email.uncc.edu

Office Hours: TR 11-12, T 3:30-4:30 and by appointment



Now the whole earth had one language and few words. And as men migrated from the east, they found a plain in the land of Shinar and settled there...

Then they said, "Come, let us build ourselves a city, and a tower with its top in the heavens, and let us make a name for ourselves, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth."

And the Lord came down to see the city and the tower, which the sons of men had built. And the Lord said, "Behold, they are one people, and they have all one language; and this is only the beginning of what they will do; and nothing that they propose to do will now be impossible for them. Come, let us go down, and there confuse their language, that they may not understand one another's speech."

So the Lord scattered them abroad from there over the face of the earth, and they left off building the city. Therefore its name was called Babel, because the Lord had confused the language of all the earth; and from there the Lord scattered them abroad over the face of all the earth.

Genesis 11:1-9

"With the fall of Babel, God dispersed the word, gave us tongues and the solitude of difference, and also the impossible but pleasurable duty to repair our separation. After the destruction the deity implicitly challenged us to look up again and rebuild the tower of another Babel. The act of translation is the other Babel, that impossible tower." Barnstone, *The Poetics of Translation*, 3.

"If a word is a metaphor for a thing, why does a single thing have so many metaphors in orbit about it? Here we have the dire consequences of Babel." Rabassa, *If This Be Treason*, 5.

"The Kabbalah, in which the problem of Babel and the nature of language is so insistently examined, knows of a day of redemption on which translation will no longer be necessary. All human tongues will have re-entered the translucent immediacy of that primal, lost speech..." G. Steiner, *After Babel: Aspects of Language and Translation*, 498.

**Babel** (bā' bel or ba' bel): Confused mixture of sounds or voices; a scene of noise and confusion. RHDEL

**History**: The branch of knowledge dealing with past events; a continuous, systematic narrative of past events...a chronological account; the aggregate of past events; the record of past events and times; acts, ideas, or events that will or can shape the course of the future. RHDEL

**Theory**: A coherent group of general propositions used as principles of explanation for a class of phenomena; a proposed explanation whose status is still conjectural; the branch of a science or art that deals with its principles or methods, as distinguished from its practice; a particular conception or view of something to be done or of the method of doing it; a system of rules or principles; contemplation, speculation, guess, conjecture; hypothesis (conjecture put forth as a possible explanation; *conjecture: opinion or theory without sufficient evidence for proof*). RHDEL

USE OTHER WORDS TO SAY THE SAME THING TO THE SAME EFFECT.  
 SAY NO MORE, SAY NO LESS, SAY IT THE SAME WAY. Doyle

**DESCRIPTION.**

This course will explore representative topics and texts in the history and theory of translation, from Cicero and Horace to the present.

**OBJECTIVES.** The course is designed to provide you with:

- A historical overview (record and aggregate of past ideas and events) of the genre of translation theory
- A familiarity with representative thinkers, translators, and texts re. the history, theory, practice, and products (outcomes) of translation
- A familiarity with critical issues in translation theory and translation studies (principles and methods, description vs. prescription vs. speculation, etc.)
- A language (vocabulary) and discourse (manner) for “talking” about translation
- A theoretical framework for the translation enterprise (theory into/vs. practice: ideas and events that can shape the course of the future, i.e., how translation is done)
- WE WILL BE DEVELOPING ANALYTICAL, COMPARATIVE, AND CRITICAL THINKING SKILLS REGARDING THEORY AND PRACTICE OF THE ART, SCIENCE, AND CRAFT OF TRANSLATION. (Rabassa says translation is “art and not craft because you can teach a craft but you cannot teach an art. You can teach Picasso how to mix his paints but you cannot teach him how to paint.” Do you agree with this statement? Is there a value in learning how to paint by the numbers, etc.? Kerrigan also has something to say about this. . .)

**NOTE.** The University has enacted “The UNC Charlotte Code of Student Academic Integrity,” presented in the “University Regulation of Student Conduct” section of the *UNC Charlotte Catalog*. Cheating, plagiarism, fabrication and falsification are expressly forbidden, i.e., one may not intentionally or knowingly present the work of another as his or her own, and one may not invent or alter information for use in any academic exercise. If you are using the ideas and words of another person, you *must* cite the source. Be especially careful when using internet sources—I will check these! All students are required to read and abide by the “Code of Student Academic Integrity.” Any violation of this Code will result in disciplinary action as provided in the Code. *This is serious business with very serious consequences!* You may also access the Code online at: <http://www.uncc.edu/policystate/ps-105.html>.

**LEARNING DISABILITIES.** Students with documented disabilities who require accommodations in this class must consult with and formally access services as soon as possible through the UNC Charlotte Office of Disability Services. Students must follow the instructions of that office, located in Fretwell Building #230, for securing appropriate accommodations.

**GUIDELINES.** Come to every class **very well prepared**. Your active, high-quality participation is expected, it should be a given. Should extenuating circumstances require that you miss a class, you are expected to notify me in advance. More than two (2) unexcused absences will result in your final grade being lowered automatically by five points (half a letter grade) for each absence thereafter.

**GRADE DISTRIBUTION**

Active and informed participation..... 15%  
 Quizzes (indicated by \* in syllabus; equally weighted)..... 35%  
 Research paper.....25%  
 Final Examination.....25%

**GRADING SCALE**

A = 90-100 POINTS  
 B = 80-89  
 C = 70-79  
 D = 60-69  
 F = BELOW 60

- The grade for active and informed participation is based on leadership/willingness to engage in intelligent discussion (quality and quantity), improvement, attitude, and attendance. Participation means coming to class with thought-provoking questions, observations, or critiques (at least one or two per class meeting) based on the readings and at least one illustrative example in English/Spanish translation, as appropriate. Note: RHDEL defines a “critique” as “a criticism or critical comment on some problem, subject, etc.” This, of course, implies raising questions about a given topic or treatment of it, as “criticism” is defined as “the act of passing judgment as to the merits of anything; the act of passing severe judgment; censure, faultfinding.” But this must not be done in a cavalier manner.
- The research paper (10-12 pages, MLA format) is open to your choice of topic within the history and theory of translation. Please review the works in the TTS Graduate Reading List for possibilities. Examples of topics:
  - Translation theory polemics
  - Study of a theorist (e.g., Ortega, Benjamin, Venuti)

- Comparison of two or more theories
- Translators as theorists
- Study of translator's introductions over the ages (see Vega and Lefevere)
- Key issues in translation theory / translation practice
- The literal vs. free debate
- Equivalence, Fidelity, and Invisibility in Translation (see Nida, Venuti)
- A particular aspect of translation and its variations
- Translation and transculturation
- Why theorize about translation?
- Chapters in Venuti's *The Translation Studies Reader* not covered during the semester (due to time).

### **TEXTS:**

1. *Translation Studies*, rev. ed. by Susan Bassnett-McGuire. London and New York: Routledge, 1991. ISBN 0-415-06528-3. (Or most recent edition.)
2. *Textos clásicos de teoría de la traducción*, Edición ampliada de Miguel Ángel Vega. Madrid: Ediciones Cátedra, 2004.
3. *The Translation Studies Reader* ed. by Lawrence Venuti. London and New York: Routledge, 2000. ISBN 0-415-18747-8.

### **Recommended RESOURCE:**

- *Routledge Encyclopedia of Translation Studies* ed. by Mona Baker and Kirsten Malmjær. London and New York: Routledge, 2001. ISBN 0-415-25517-1. **THIS IS A VERY VALUABLE RESOURCE!**

**\*NOTE:** Those readings marked with a single asterisk in the syllabus are works/authors from the Graduate Readings List for TTS.

**RECOMMENDED READING:** Consult Graduate Reading List for Track II, Translating and Translation Studies (TTS), at <http://www.languages.unc.edu/masters/index.htm>. Those in the TTS track of the M.A. in Spanish should be reading these works on an ongoing basis, from day one, so that you are preparing all along for your M.A. Comprehensive Examination.

### **NOTE: THE READINGS ASSIGNED BELOW ARE SUBJECT TO MODIFICATION DURING THE SEMESTER.**

#### **Week 1**

August 22 Course overview. Syllabus and texts. An introduction to issues and problems: 1) "The Many Faces of Treason" by Gregory Rabassa (handout in class) and 2) Cormac McCarthy in Spanish.

#### **Week 2**

29 \*Bassnett-McGuire: Preface to the Third Edition (1-10), Introduction (pp. 11-20) and Central Issues (21-44)

#### **Week 3**

September 5 \*Bassnett-McGuire: History of Translation Theory (45-78)

#### **Week 4**

12 \*Bassnett-McGuire: Specific Problems of Literary Translation (79-131) and Conclusion (132-134)

#### **Week 5**

19\* QUIZ I. Then *Textos clásicos de teoría de la traducción*: Presentación (13-14) and Introducción (15-38)

#### **Week 6**

26 *Textos clásicos de teoría de la traducción*: Introducción (38-61) and from Cicerón to Cartagena (81-98)

## Week 7

October 3 *Textos clásicos de teoría de la traducción*: from Bruni to Chapman (99-139)

## Week 8

**FALL BREAK – NO CLASS MEETING.**

## Week 9

17 *Textos clásicos de teoría de la traducción*: from Fray Luis de León to Prévost (140-198)

## Week 10

24\* QUIZ II. Then *Textos clásicos de teoría de la traducción*:

- “Ensayo sobre los principios de la traducción” by A.F. Tytler (231-236)
- \*”Sobre los diferentes métodos de traducir” by F. Schleiermacher (244-255)

Also a handout of the English translation: “On the Different Methods of Translating.” Trans. Waltraud Bartscht. *Theories of Translation*. Ed. Rainer Schulte and John Biguenet, Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1992, 36-54.

## Week 11

31 *Textos clásicos de teoría de la traducción*:

- \*”La tarea del traductor” by W. Benjamin (307-318)
- \*”Miseria y splendor de la traducción” by J. Ortega y Gasset (323-332)
- \*”Un nuevo concepto de traducción” by Nida and Taber (351-359)

## Week 12

November 7 *The Translation Studies Reader*:

- 1900s-1930s (9-14)
- \*”The Task of the Translator” by Walter Benjamin (94-112)
- \*”The Misery and Splendor of Translation” by José Ortega y Gasset (49-63)
- 1940s-1950s (65-70)
- \*”Problems of Translation: *Onegin* in English” by Vladimir Nabokov (71-83)

\*Also a handout of “Pierre Menard, Author of *Don Quixote*” by Jorge Luis Borges. Trans. Anthony Bonner. *Ficciones*. Ed. Anthony Kerrigan, New York: Grove Press, 1962. Handout.

## Week 13

14\* QUIZ III. Then *The Translation Studies Reader*:

- \*”On Linguistic Aspects of Translation” by Roman Jakobson (113-118)
- 1960s-1970s (119-125)
- \*”Principles of Correspondence” by Eugene Nida (126-140)

## Week 14

21 *The Translation Studies Reader*:

- “Translation As a Decision Process” by Jiří Levý (148-159)
- \*”The Hermeneutic Motion” by George Steiner (186-191)
- 1980s (213-220)
- \*”Skopos and Commission in Translational Action” by Hans J. Vermeer (221-232)

## Week 15

28 *The Translation Studies Reader*:

- “The Measure of Translation Effects” by Philip E. Lewis (264-283)

- “Gender and the Metaphors of Translation” by Lori Chamberlain (314-329)
- 1990s (331-342)
- \* “The Politics of Translation” by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (397-416)

### Week 16

- December 5     *The Translation Studies Reader:*
- “Thick Translation” by Kwame Anthony Appiah (417-429)
  - “Translator, Community, Utopia” by Lawrence Venuti (468-488)

Final paper due: 10-12 typed (on computer) pages in length (no more, no less), following the MLA format.  
Font = 12 point Times Roman.

Semester wrap-up. FINAL EXAMINATION SCHEDULE TBA.

### FOOD FOR THOUGHT: SOME QUESTIONS ON HISTORY AND THEORY OF TRANSLATION

- What is theory of translation, what are its concerns, what kinds of theory are there, and what value does theory have for the practicing translator?
- It has been said that translation is impossible. Do you agree or disagree? Why?
- What does it mean to say that a text is “untranslatable”? Why might this be said? Is this statement true? Explain.
- In translating a given text, what elements must a translator take into account and why?
  - What must a translator be able to do when his or her translation is finished, and why? (Justification)
- In writing about the phenomenology of reading, what useful types of readers does Iser identify for the would-be and practicing translator?
- What is “fidelity” in translation and what are its possibilities and limitations?
  - Analyze the following statement by Cicero: “If I render word for word, the result will sound uncouth, and if compelled by necessity I alter anything in the order or wording, I shall seem to have departed from the function of a translator.”
  - What approach to translation did Cicero and Horace advocate? (sense-for sense, imitate the author’s virtues but still retain one’s own individuality in translation)
  - In Barbara Johnson’s “Taking Fidelity Philosophically,” what does she mean by “faithful bigamy”?
- What does “equivalence” in translation mean, and why is this notion problematic?
  - What are some of the ways in which translators can consider or apply notions of equivalence in translating?
  - Explain Nida’s concept of “dynamic equivalence” in translation.
- What role has Bible translation played in the development of translation and translation studies in the West?
- What is the difference between interlingual and intralingual translation and which of the two has been a dominant concern of translation activity over the ages in Greece? Explain.
- Describe the Latin tradition in translation: What primary texts did the Romans translate and why?
  - How does the Latin tradition in translation serve as “a literary apprenticeship”? (Improvement and rivalry with ST/SA through creative imitation; conquest [Nietzsche])
- Explain how important texts (medical, scientific, mathematical, political, literary) traveled across languages and cultures in early Europe. (From Greek and Latin into the new European languages; from Greek into Arabic into Latin, then into the new European languages; and back and forth via Latin).
- What role has been attributed to translation in nation building?
- How does Antonio de Nebrija’s reported statement to Queen Isabel in 1492, that “language accompanies empire,” relate to colonization and translation as a key part of nation building?
  - How did Spain seek to maintain the language of empire after the Reconquista and during the Franco dictatorship? How is this internal control similar or different from the Spanish control exerted in the American colonies?
- Explain how intermediaries and intermediary texts were often used in translation projects in early Europe. What translation problems arise in doing so?
- Comment on the role of interpreters in the development of the Latin American tradition in translation.
  - How was translator recruitment and training often achieved in the American colonies?
- What educational role has translation played historically in the West?
  - Making texts available in the vernacular.
  - Comment on the role of translation in the politics of accessibility to knowledge and education in Europe.
- Who was Dolet and what are the tenets he prescribes for the act of translation?

- Explain Dryden's views on translation and the three basic categories he assigns to this act.
  - What is the translation strategy of metaphrase vs. paraphrase?
- What are the two fundamental choices that Schleiermacher identifies for the act of translating, and in what terms does Venuti shed light on these?
  - What are some of the "foreignization" strategies we learn from Venuti? (How can "foreignization" be retained, if that is a goal?)
  - What are domesticating and foreignizing strategies in translation, what does each seek to achieve, and why?
  - Which of the two strategies is most appropriate when translating the following types of texts, and why? Legal, Medical, technical, political, literary, film.
- What are Benjamin's primary concerns in "The Task of the Translator"?
- Who was Ezra Pound and what was the nature of his "influential" experiments in translation?
- Why does Ortega characterize translation as both "misery" and "splendor," and how do the "good" and "bad" utopian figure into his reflections on translation?
- What does the poet Valéry tell us about his "experience" in translating Virgil?
- What is Nabokov's approach to translation?
- What does Borges' "Pierre Menard, Author of *Don Quixote*" suggest about the acts of reading and translation? How might we affirm that Pierre Menard is all translators? Explain.
- What three types of translation does Jakobson identify? Explain how they differ.
- Characterize Octavio Paz's approach to translation. How does he view language, writing, originality, creation, and translation?
  - Why is translation referred to by some as a derived activity? Do you agree with this? Would Octavio Paz agree with it? Explain.
- In Szondi's article, what is the translation strategy adopted by Celan regarding Shakespeare's theme of "constancy" in Sonnet 105?
- Which elements in the translation process or phenomenon are foregrounded in Derrida and deconstruction, and what are the implications of this shift in privileging?
- Why did Venuti write *The Translator's Invisibility*? Explain his ideas and concerns about transparency and fluency in translation, and his strategy of resistance.
  - For Venuti, why is a statement such as the following so problematic: "This is good translation because it doesn't read like a translation."
  - To what extent is the translator invisible, secondary, derivative, in self denial, as opposed to not being characterized in this manner?
  - What is translatability and how do the analytical and hermeneutic approaches, and the translator's invisibility or presence, bear on issues of translatability?
- What does Venuti mean by the concept of "simpatico" as a possible benefit for the working translator? Was he able to apply this concept in his own work on De Angelis? Explain.
- Who are Rabassa, Lane and Kerrigan, and why should what they have to say about translation be of interest?
- How are multilingualism and translation different?
  - How is textual multilingualism typically resolved in translation, and what is the effect of one form of resolution over the other? (To translate into a single text/single main language, erasing all traces of foreignness vs. translating only the main language of the text while leaving the foreign elements unchanged)
- What are some of the universals of translation proper? (Cohesion and coherence; simplification; modernization [sayings, colloquial expressions, etc.]; explicitation; normalization; syntactic and stylistic changes; avoidance of repetitions; interference in discourse transfer)
- What is explicitation in translation, and how, when and why is it used as a strategy?
  - What cultural explications might be valid or necessary intralinguistically? Why?
  - How has globalization affected the need for explicitation?
  - Provide an example of a repertoreme and a texteme.
- Problem solving, which entails decision making, is a functional characteristic of translation. What is the difference between declarative and procedural knowledge, and how do both relate to decision making in translation? Provide an example.
  - How do notions of macrocontext and microcontext inform effective decision making in translation? Provide an example.
- What is a unit of translation and what forms may constitute said unit?
  - What is a unit of translation and what factors should be considered in choosing one?
  - Choose a unit of translation and explain the pros and cons of using that particular unit of translation in various contexts.
  - Should a unit of translation be resolved structurally or semantically?

- What does directionality refer to in translation?
  - What is direct vs. inverse translation? What are the advantages and disadvantages of each?
  - Is translation into the translator's "language of habitual use" an absolute requirement? Explain the pros and cons.
  - What is direct vs. indirect translation? What are the advantages and disadvantages of each?
- What is "literal" translation and how do Cicero (word for word) and Dryden (metaphrase) refer to this approach? Briefly discuss the evolution of literal translation, its appropriateness, and its problems or limitations.
  - Should a translator translate word for word or sense for sense, and what factors should be considered in choosing between the two strategies?
  - When should a text be translated literally and when should it not be?