Course Syllabus

Translation and Technology

(3301-JS2816)

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Classes: Fri 2:00 pm – 3:30 pm, Room 129 (Hoża 69)
Duty hours: Fri 10:15 am – 11:45 am, Room 220 (Hoża 69)

It’s easy to notice how translation today is closely tied to technology. What’s less easy, but much more interesting, is to realize how technology has been affecting the nature and very existence of translation in it various forms. Translation has always fed off technology, and vice versa. In this course we look at more than 5,000 years of technological history to take in the complex network of translation practices along with the mental or cultural changes that made them possible.

Oral Exam
60% of your grade will be awarded for your oral exam made up of 10 terminology questions and one open question.

Collaborative Work
You will be required to write collaborative essays on certain aspects of the course, accounting for 40% of your grade.

Essay
Some of you may need to write an essay for your BA thesis. Talk to me if that’s the case.

10% Penalty
I will be docking ten percentage points from your grade for every day your assignment is late. This is a self-preservation thing.

Perfect Attendance
Perfect attendance: +5%.
Near-perfect attendance: +3%.
More than 3 absences: -5% per absence.

Exceptions?
There will be no exceptions unless agreed on in advance or caused by a medical or personal emergency.

Be Open-Minded and Willing to Learn

You will need an internet connection to do your assignments and learn effectively from the course. Talk to me if this is a problem.

We will be collaborating as a group to develop a Google document with course revision material and for the final quiz and shared essays (Google Drive), and using Wikipedia’s crowdsourcing platform to write your own article on Wikipedia. Both are easy to use and highly useful. Please don’t be discouraged if you run into problems at first. Read the How-to pages, Google stuff and ask your friends (or me) for help.
Required Reading and Other Things

Translation and Technology

Your Reading
You will be provided with your required reading. Please read everything I ask you to. We will read *Orality and Literacy* by Walter Ong, a highly approachable book that’s also a journey of discovery. I will provide you with some reading material on the print revolution (the classic is Elizabeth Eisenstein’s *The Printing Press as an Agent of Change*, 1979). For the modern media, Karen Littau has a good starting point with *First Steps Towards a Media History of Translation* (2011). For your computer-related material we’ll be relying on C. K. Quah’s *Translation and Technology* (2006), but there will be other material that I’ll make available.

Collaborative Work
60% of your final grade comes from an oral test you take at the end of the course. The test will comprise ten randomly selected terminology questions plus one longer question on a broader topic in Translation Studies. You will know the terminology questions and general topics in advance. 40% of the grade will come from collaborative projects done using shared Google documents. You will be invited to research and add your definitions (answers) and write collaborative essays and resources.

Wikipedia
Polish Wikipedia has some really good articles on the basics of Translation Studies. That’s because those articles were created, developed and improved by my IA UW students in the past. **Now it’s your turn.** You are invited to contribute to Wikipedia in your own language using the material you learned in the course. We will discuss the possible topics in class. Bonus points can be won this way.

This course is a learning experience first and foremost.

This course as an invitation. Technology is a central element in human lives, and translation lies at the heart of many human interactions. By grasping the interplay between the two you will gain a better understanding of humanity and modernity. That’s a big promise but I intend to make good on it. So long as you are willing to work I am confident that this course will repay your time and effort.

Be curious, be interested, be open to new ideas. I hope you’ll enjoy the course.
The important thing to realize is that this is not a how-to course on computers in translation. We look at how technology and translation have jointly affected human minds, languages and cultures. Having said that, you will have a better idea about computers and translation at the end of the course.

Introduction. I get to know about you, and you get to know about the course format, my teaching approach, credit requirements, technology requirements, etc.

Orality and oral cultures 1. An examination of orality and its effects on language and the human mind.

Orality and oral cultures 2. To illustrate the problems of orality we will look at a single short text and the way it’s been changing in translation for 2,600 years.

Literacy & major translation projects. Effects of literacy on language, the human mind and literary production. Buddhism, the Torah and the New Testament, other projects.

Humanism and Print Culture 1 (15th century). Emergence of philology and revival of literary production, effects on language and culture

Humanism and Print Culture 2 (16th century onwards). Impact of printing on cultural transfers and human mind, emergence of publishing and professional translation.

Technical Translation and Functional Approaches. Emergence of technical translation following the industrial revolution, modern science and globalized commerce.

Modern Media. Impact of film and television on translation and translation studies: subtitles, dubbing, impact on the world’s cultural and linguistic polysystem.

Word Processing. Differences between digital and analog production, nature of word processing, impact on translators.


Machine Translation. From utopian ideas to Google Translate: an alphabet soup of acronyms from HAMT to MAHT to FAHQMT and others.

Crowdsourcing and Web 2.0. No longer a solitary profession. Basics of crowdsourcing and sharing, advantages and challenges to translators and other market players.

Wrapping up. We’ll use that class to wrap up any loose ends.

Wrapping Up. Oral test (in class and during duty hours). Deadlines for essay, other loose ends tied up.