

Fall Semester

Monday: 11:30-13:00 and 13:15-14:45

Tuesday: 11:30-13:00 and 13:15-14:45

CASH

Jagiellonian University

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Tuesday: 10:45-11:30

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Between Intimacy and Politics.

Modern Polish Literature, Comparative Studies, and Translation Theory

Overview

In recent debates concerning the prospects of comparative literature, which has often been perceived as the place of renewal in the whole area of studies devoted to culture, the issue of interpretation and/as communication clearly becomes a central one. In this way, the discipline gives its answer to the ongoing and increasingly more complex process of globalization that affects many spheres of cultural production. Numerous questions raised by comparatists, trying to find for literature some new space in the intellectual life of modern societies, lean toward a revision of the existing ideas regarding translation – the key notion in thinking about cultural dialogue in the era of technology.

The process of translation has often been viewed as a purely technical operation involving neutral, value-free inter-lingual communication. Our cultural tradition stubbornly maintains that translating is a kind of secondary, not necessarily creative, activity; a rather auxiliary tool which, as a transparent pane of glass, leads to the real source. This stereotypical view has created a whole set of binary and value-oriented oppositions in which the authority of a perfect original is imperfectly rendered by its copy, replica, duplicate, portrait, reflection, reproduction, imitation or mirror image.

Apart from that binarism, deeply reinforced by the structuralist tradition, the last thirty years in critical theory have challenged some ossified assumptions about translation, showing it as a complex, plural, de-centred, polyphonic and hybrid phenomenon. Many scholars, representing different areas of the humanities, have emphasized that translation can no longer be viewed as a secondary issue in contemporary academic discussions but deserves to be treated as a point of departure for reflection on the whole spectrum of human experience. The hermeneutic idea that translation ‘confronts us everywhere in a variety of forms’ (Schleiermacher) inspired, especially in the last 15 years, quick development of studies on translation in reference to the issues of identity, gender, ethnic, social or sexual differentiation. Numerous innovative studies proposed a new way of interpreting cultural phenomena through the lenses of the translation process, pointing out that the process, on the one hand, can be treated as “the most intimate act of

reading” (Spivak) or/and , on the other, as a result of micro- and macro-political/ideological strategies.

The aim of this course is to demonstrate, in a comparative perspective, how this broad concept of translation penetrates different areas of literary and cultural studies and how it coincides with various fields influenced by the so called “translation turn”: anthropology, philosophy, psychology, women, gender and queer studies, linguistics, and even theology. We will examine in the context of Eastern European literature and culture, which after the collapse of the Berlin Wall became a hot topic in the most recent debates on the state of comparative studies, how cultural and literary theories handle the issue of translation and how they try to use it as a fresh comparative perspective in thinking about literature and culture.

Our weekly classes will be divided into two parts. The first meeting will be devoted to the analysis of historical and theoretical issues; the second one will try to make use of the previous discussions and apply them in reading Polish literature and culture. The course will start with an introductory outline and an attempt to look at translation and Polish experience from the outside (Eva Hoffman). Then we will switch into authors representative of various streams of 20th century Polish literature and culture: Witold Gombrowicz, Bruno Schulz, Ryszard Kapuściński, Tadeusz Różewicz, Zbigniew Herbert, Czesław Miłosz, Wisława Szymborska, Anna Świrszczyńska, Adam Zagajewski, and others.

I . Reading, translating, placing.

1. Ungar, Steven. “Writing in Tongues: *Thoughts on the Work of Translation.*” *Comparative Literature in an Age of Globalization.* Ed. Haun Saussy. Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2006, 127-138.

II. Space of culture: translation and/as interpretation.

1. Iser, Wolfgang. “Interpretation as Translatability.” *The Range of Interpretation.* New York, Chichester: Columbia University Press, 2000, 5-12.
2. Bassnett, Susan. “The Translation Turn in Cultural Studies.” *Constructing Cultures. Essays on Literary Translation.* Susan Bassnett and André Lefevere. Clavendon, Philadelphia, Toronto, Sydney, Johannesburg: Multilingual Matters, 1998, 123-141.

III. Topographies: Eastern Europe and a new comparative perspective.

1. Saussy, Haun. "Exquisite Cadavers Stitched from Fresh Nightmares: *Of Memes, Hives, and Selfish Genes.*" *Comparative Literature in an Age of Globalization*. Ed. Haun Saussy. Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2006, 3-42.
2. Emerson, Caryl. "Answering for Central and Eastern Europe." *Comparative Literature in an Age of Globalization*. Ed. Haun Saussy. Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2006, 203-212.

Film:

1. *Man of Iron*. Dir. Andrzej Wajda. Perf. Jerzy Radziwiłłowicz, Krystyna Janda, Marian Opania, Andrzej Seweryn, Irena Byrska, Artur Barciś, Janusz Gajos, Bogusław Linda. Vision, 1981.
2. *Katyń*. Dir. Andrzej Wajda. Perf. Artur Żmijewski, Maja Ostaszewska, Maja Komorowska, Władysław Kowalski, Jan Englert, Danuta Stenka, Andrzej Chyra, Paweł Małaszyński, Magdalena Cielecka, Tim Film Studio 2008.

IV. From the singular to the collective: literature as/in search of identity

Introduction:

1. Brisset, Annie. "The Search for a Native Language: Translation and Cultural Identity." Transl. Rosalind Gill and Roger Gannon. *The Translation Studies Reader*. Ed. Lawrence Venuti, New York and London: Routledge, 2002, 337-369.

Literary texts:

2. Hoffman, Eva. *Lost in Translation. A Life in a New Language*, New York: Penguin Books, 1990.
3. Gombrowicz, Witold. *Trans-Atlantyk*. Transl. Carolyn French and Nina Karsov, New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1999.

V. In conversation with the past: literature and memory

Introduction:

1. Motzkin, Gabriel. "Memory and Cultural Translation." *The Translatability of Cultures. Figuration of the Space Between*. Ed. Sanford Budick and Wolfgang Iser, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996, 265-282.

Literary text and film:

2. Miłosz, Czesław. *The Captive Mind*. Transl. Jane Zielonko, New York: Vintage Books, 1990.
3. *Three Colours: White*. Dir. Krzysztof Kieślowski. Perf. Julie Delpy, Janusz Gajos, Jerzy Stuhr, Zbigniew Zamachowski. Best Film CO, 1994.

VI. Literature and the unconscious.

Introduction:

1. Benjamin, Andrew. "Psychoanalysis and Translation." *Translation and the Nature of Philosophy. A New Theory of Words*. London and New York: Routledge, 1989, 109-150.

Literary text:

2. Schulz, Bruno. *The Street of Crocodiles and Sanatorium under the Sign of the Hourglass*. Transl. Celina Wieniewska. London: Picador, 1988.

VII. Communication after Babel – archaeology of translation and the access to the Sacred.

Introduction:

1. Assman, Jan. "Translating Gods: Religion as a Factor of Cultural (Un)Translatability." *The Translatability of Cultures. Figuration of the Space Between*. Ed. Sanford Budick and Wolfgang Iser. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996.

Literary texts:

2. Miłosz, Czesław. *Second Space: New Poems*. Transl. Czesław Miłosz and Robert Hass. New York: Ecco, 2004.
3. Szymborska, Wisława. *View with a Grain of Sand: Selected Poems*. Transl. Stanisław Barańczak and Clare Cavanagh. London: Faber & Faber, 1996.

VIII. Literature and gender: deconstructing discourses and voicing the oppressed.

Introduction:

1. Chamberlain, Lori. "Gender and the Metaphorics of Translation." *The Translation Studies Reader*. Ed. Lawrence Venuti. New York and London: Routledge, 2002, 306-322.

Literary texts and film:

2. *Seksmisja*. Dir. Juliusz Machulski. Perf. Jerzy Stuhr. Ryszarda Hanin, Ogierd Łukaszewicz, Bożena Strykówna, Best Film CO, 1983.
3. Selected poems of Anna Świrszczyńska from: *Postwar Polish Poetry*. Ed. Czesław Miłosz. Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1983, 58-70.

IX. The Politics of Reading: Translation and Power.

Introduction:

1. Robinson, Douglas. "Translation as Empire: The Theoretical Record." *Translation and Empire. Postcolonial Theories Explained*. Manchester: St. Jerome, 1997, 46-62.

Literary texts:

2. Kapuściński, Ryszard. *The Shadow of the Sun: My African Life*. Transl. Klara Głowczewska. London: Allen Lane, 2001.
3. Herbert, Zbigniew. *Selected Poems*. Transl. John and Bogdana Carpenter, Czesław Miłosz, Peter Dale Scott. Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 2000.

Grading requirements and assignments

1. Active participation in class discussions. Grade value: 40%

This is a discussion class in which your active participation is an essential part of your grade. The best way to feel confident to talk in class is to come prepared, having read and thought about the assigned readings.

2. Homework. Grade value: 10%

There will be occasional homework (you will have to prepare short analyses of chosen materials – short stories, poems, pictures, movies).

3. Final paper. Grade value: 50%

For your final assignment you will write a term paper. The paper should be based on a critical analysis of both theoretical and literary texts we have read in class. You are also encouraged to propose your own selection of materials that will serve as a point of departure for your final essay. The paper should demonstrate awareness of the kind of issues (race, class, gender, sexuality, etc.) and approaches (structuralism, deconstruction, gender studies, postcolonial studies, psychoanalysis...) treated by the course. In brief, papers focused on a relatively confined

topic (i.e., a single work rather than a whole genre) will be more successful than ones trying to tackle too large of a topic. Papers should be approximately 3-5 pages and use one of the standard footnoting and bibliography formats (MLA, or APA).

Course Policies

A t t e n d a n c e

Successful learning is a cumulative process which requires diligent preparation and active participation. For this reason, it is imperative that you attend classes faithfully. You may have up to **one** unexcused absence. Further unexcused absences will result in an appropriate reduction in your final grade. Excused absences include death in the family, religious holidays, or an excuse from your doctor. You should provide your instructor with the original of an excuse.

P a r t i c i p a t i o n

Students will receive a participation grade for each class, based on a 0–5 scale:

0 = Did not attend class.

1 = Not prepared for class; does not participate.

2 = Rarely prepared; rarely able to answer when called on; rarely volunteers.

3 = Usually prepared, but preparation inconsistent; answers when called on; willingly participated in class activities; stays on task during partner/group work.

4 = Regularly prepared; answers when called on; willingly participates in class activities; stays on task during partner/group work; volunteers answers to open questions (not directed at anyone).

5 = High level of preparation; answers when called on; willingly participates in class activities; stays on task during partner/group work; volunteers answers to open questions (not directed at anyone); shares pertinent information; asks questions or volunteers information that is relevant to the class.

P u n c t u a l i t y

It is vital that each and every student comes to class on time. Latecomers lose the chance to learn a given day's material in its entirety. In addition to this personal disadvantage, late arrivals also distract the class and disrupt the process of learning. Tardiness will result in a reduction in the day's attendance/participation grade.

P e r s o n a l C o n d u c t

Plagiarism (representing the work of others as your own) will not be tolerated. While students are encouraged to form study partnerships, each individual student is responsible for his/her own work. Please see the section of this page concerning academic misconduct.

Discussion of sensitive topics often leads to conflicts of views. It would be difficult to avoid all disagreement on topics about which individuals have strong opinions. As a class, we should come to an agreement about the limits for acceptable behavior. Here are a few ideas to get us started. In this class:

1. Everyone has a right to be addressed in a respectful manner.
2. Everyone has a right to be listened to without interruption.
3. Everyone has a right to feel safe.
4. No one has a right to threaten, harass, or demean others in the class.

Please turn off all cell phones during class. If you *must* have it on for an emergency (e.g., sick family member), please tell your instructor before class and arrange to sit by the door that day.

From time to time, matters may come up that will require you to stop by your instructor's office. Every attempt will be made to find a mutually convenient time, but the responsibility is ultimately yours. You should be prepared to find some time to meet with your instructor during normal business hours.

Feedback

If there are any problems or worries while studying for the class, please feel free to contact the instructor. Do not wait until the end of the semester; then it will be too late. Complaints/ concerns/ comments may be emailed to the instructor. The students will also be given informal feedback on a regular basis. These comments will not affect your grade; it is only intended to help you learn better.

Academic Misconduct

As a student at Jagiellonian University, you are expected to adhere to all the standards and policies of the code of academic conduct. Any suspected infractions of this code will be handled by official rules and policies of the University. Penalties for infractions may result in a failing grade in the course or expulsion from the program.

Disclaimer

All information in this syllabus, including course requirements and lesson plans, is subject to change and should not be considered a substitute for attending class or for any information that is provided to you by your instructor.