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Office Hours, Mondays, 3:30-4:30

AB 4135 (15 Seminary Place, West Wing)

16:470:671:01

Fall 2018

AB 4050

COURSE TITLE: Lessons from a Laboratory in Literary Translation (3 cr.)

Mondays, 4:30-7:10 pm

Course location [AB 4050, 15 Seminary Place]

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

In this graduate seminar on the art and craft of literary translation, we will focus on the essential goal of the translator, which is to transmit a living voice from one language, culture and moment to another. Each session will begin with aesthetic and/or practical considerations concerning the art and craft of translation. We will break down written language to its essential building blocks: words, sentences, paragraphs, points of punctuation; and consider how these elements are variously employed in different languages, particularly in English and German. The instructor will also share his own experience as a writer and playwright inspired by bilingualism and translation. Students will address particular challenges they face in their own translation projects. They will also be invited to engage in self-translation and to explore how translation can help pave the way for creative expression. The instructor will also offer insight into the publishing process for translations into the English language. Selections from English translations of works by some of the following German language authors will be examined and dissected, highlighting specific translation challenges: 16th-century Humanist Johannes Reuchlin; German Romantics Adelbert von Chamisso, The Brothers Grimm, E.T.A. Hoffmann, Heinrich von Kleist and Heinrich Heine; and 20th century masters Peter Altenberg, Ingeborg Bachmann, Paul Celan, Mynona (aka Salomo Friedlaender), Rainer Maria Rilke, Franz Kafka, Robert Musil, Dada artist Kurt Schwitters, Expressionist playwright Ernst Toller, Surrealist Unica Zürn, et. al.

Taught mostly in English. Students must be able to read German.

PREREQUISITES: Graduate level mastery of German

LEARNING GOALS: An appreciation of the essential elements of competent, faithful and fluid translation of literary texts from German into English.

FINAL GRADE:

Active class participation/attendance	10%
Oral presentations of individual translation projects in progress	20%
Thoughtful and constructive critique of classmates' translations	10%
Self-translation assignment	10%
Final translation project	50 %

GRADE DISTRIBUTION:

A=90-100%; B+=85-89; B=80-84; C+=75-79; C=70-74; D=65-69; F=64 and below

REQUIRED READING:

Tales of the German Imagination, from the Brothers Grimm to Ingeborg Bachmann, selected, translated and edited by Peter Wortsman, London: Penguin Classics, 2012

<https://www.penguin.co.uk/books/183607/tales-of-the-german-imagination-from-the-brothers-grimm-to-ingeborg-bachmann/> (ISBN: 978-0141198804)

Konundrum, Selected Prose of Franz Kafka, selected and translated by Peter Wortsman, Archipelago Books, 2016

<https://archipelagobooks.org/book/selected-prose-of-franz-kafka/> (ISBN: 978-0914671510)

Hinkemann, a Tragedy, by Ernst Toller, translated by Peter Wortsman, in *The Mercurian*, 2017

<https://the-mercurian.com/2017/11/16/hinkemann/>

[free PDF available online]

Recommendation Whether to Confiscate, Destroy and Burning All Jewish Books, by Johannes Reuchlin, a classic treatise against Anti-Semitism, translated from the German by Peter Wortsman, Paulist Press, 2000

<https://www.amazon.com/Recommendation-Whether-Confiscate-Destroy-Jewish/dp/0809139723> (ISBN 978-0809139729)

Burning Words, a play by Peter Wortsman, 2006, (to be distributed in PDF format)

The Tattooed Man Tells All, a play by Peter Wortsman, 2000, (be be distributed in PDF format)

ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDED READING:

Is that a Fish in Your Ear?—Translation and the Meaning of Everything, by David Bellos, Faber and Faber, 2011 (ISBN: 978-0865478763)

In Translation, Translators on Their Work and What it Means, edited by Esther Allen and Susan Bernofsky, Columbia University Press, 2013 (ISBN: 978-0231159692)

Final translation project due on or before Monday, December 10, 2018. To avoid an avalanche of projects all at once, individual deadlines will be set with each student.

CLASS ASSIGNMENTS:

Students will pursue translation projects in a genre of their choosing, of no less than 15 and no more than 30 pages, double-spaced, to be completed by the end of the semester. Each student will be responsible for at least four class presentations:

- 1) proposal and outline of planned translation project;
- 2) presentation of the translation in progress and discussion, inviting input on specific challenges;
- 3) presentation of the completed translation.

Presentations of translations in progress and the finished project will include the translation and an exposition of challenges and proposed solutions. Copies of the original text and the translation will be emailed to the instructor and all participants at least two days prior, optimally a week, prior to the scheduled presentation date.

In addition, students will produce and present:

- 4) a short self-translation in any genre of their choosing composed in their second language and translated or adapted back into their native tongue. The class presentation will comprise both the original and the translation/adaptation.

September

1st Class (9/10)

- Instructor to lay down the ground rules of the course
- Students asked to introduce themselves, reflecting on their bilingual experience, if any, and to begin thinking of a translation project to be completed by the end of the semester
- “Talking in Tongues: A Life in Translation,” instructor’s introductory remarks (Part I)
- Establishing criteria for a good translation, a directed discussion
- Screening of brief excerpt of YouTube video of Peter Wortsman reading from his translation of Peter Altenberg

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V98ErjdwrMY>

Required reading for this class session:

“What is a Good Translation?” by Katy Derbyshire

<http://myemail.constantcontact.com/Seagull-Newsletter---April-2018.html?soid=1117322804977&aid=fuEe9qSw1Sg>

2nd Class (9/17)

- “Talking in Tongues: A Life in Translation,” instructor’s introductory remarks, (Part II)

- Review and discuss students' proposed additional criteria for a good translation
- Essential building blocks of language: words, sentences, paragraphs, punctuation—a comparative look at the nuts and bolts of translation in English and German
- Screening of YouTube recording of Virginia Woolf's spoken reflection on the nature of words

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E8czs8v6Pul&feature=youtu.be>

- Review and discuss students' proposed translation projects
- Remind students to bring in translation knots and dilemmas they encounter throughout the semester

3rd Class 9/24)

- "Talking in Tongues: A Life in Translation," instructor's introductory remarks, (Part III)
- A virtual anatomy of translation
- Why retranslate classic texts?
- "Facing Fears and Furies: the Unexpurgated Brothers Grimm"
- The Brothers Grimm and E.T.A. Hoffmann, translating the language and logic of dreams and the unconscious—selected excerpts in German and English
- Students to select and commit to class sessions to present translation projects in progress
- Discuss translation knots and dilemmas students bring up

Required Readings for this class session:

"The Singing Bone" and "Hansel and Gretel," as told by The Brothers Grimm, pp 5-18, in *Tales of the German Imagination, from the Brothers Grimm to Ingeborg Bachmann*, selected and translated by Peter Wortsman

Original German text of "Der Singende Knochen"

https://www.grimmstories.com/de/grimm_maerchen/der_singende_knochen

Original German text of "Hansel und Gretel"

<https://www.grimmstories.com/language.php?grimm=015&l=en&r=de>

"The Sandman," by E.T.A. Hoffmann, op cit, pp 19-53

Original German text of E.T.A. Hoffmann's "Der Sandmann"

<http://gutenberg.spiegel.de/buch/der-sandmann-3093/1>

Original German text of E.T.A. Hoffmann's "Der Goldene Topf"

<http://gutenberg.spiegel.de/buch/der-goldne-topf-3103/1>

Excerpts from Peter Wortsman's translation in progress "The Golden Pot." (to be distributed as PDF handout)

October

4th Class (10/1)

- Tilting with windmills, the challenges of pursuing publication of translations
- “All Fall Down: The Collapsing Life and Enduring Words of Heinrich von Kleist”
- The incomparable challenge and delight of translating Kleist’s box sentences—selected passages in German and English
- Translating shadows—*Peter Schlemiel*, by Adelbert von Chamisso—selected passages in German and English
- Student presentations of translation projects in progress

Required Readings for this class session:

“St. Cecilia or the Power of Music,” by Heinrich von Kleist, pp. 76-87, *Tales of the German Imagination, from the Brothers Grimm to Ingeborg Bachmann*, selected and translated by Peter Wortsman

German original text of „Die heilige Cäcilie oder die Gewalt der Musik“

<http://gutenberg.spiegel.de/buch/-5598/1>

“Peter Schlemiel,” by Adelbert von Chamisso, translation by Peter Wortsman, pp. 88-143, op. cit.

German original text of “Peter Schlemihls Wundersame Geschichte”

<http://gutenberg.spiegel.de/buch/peter-schlemihls-wundersame-geschichte-759/1>

5th class (10/8) Columbus Day

- A critique of critics—how translations are viewed and reviewed
- “In the Caves of the Unconscious, K is for Kafka”
- Translating the ineffable—a consideration of selected excerpts of stories and other enigmatic prose by Franz Kafka in the German original and English translation
- Student presentations of translation projects in progress

Required Readings for this class session:

“How We Review Translations, in Defense of an Endless Task,” by David Stromberg, in Public Seminar

<http://www.publicseminar.org/2018/04/how-we-review-translations/>

“In Praise of the near-impossible-to-translate-novel,” by Veronica Scott Esposito

<https://lithub.com/in-praise-of-the-near-impossible-to-translate-novel/>

“How Do We Judge Translations,” by Kate Briggs

<https://lithub.com/how-do-we-judge-translations/>

Selections from *Konundrum, Selected Prose of Franz Kafka*, selected and translated by Peter Wortsman, Archipelago Books, 2016—“The Hunger Artist,” pp. 86-101

Original German text of “Ein Hungerkünstler”

<http://gutenberg.spiegel.de/buch/-9763/21>

“Josephine, Our Meistersinger, or the Music of Mice,” op cit, pp. 102-128

Original German text of “Josefine, die Sangerin, oder das Volk der Mause”

<http://gutenberg.spiegel.de/buch/-9758/8>

“In the Penal Colony,” pp. 287-330

Original German text of “In der Strafkolonie,”

<http://gutenberg.spiegel.de/buch/in-der-strafkolonie-9766/1>

6th class (10/15)

- Translating the surreal (or doing the DADA dance)--Kurt Schwitters, Mynona (aka Salomo Friedlaender), Unica Zurn, Alfred Lichtenstein, and Klabund (aka Alfred Henschke)—reviewing selected excerpts in German and English
- Student presentations of translation projects in progress

Required Readings:

“The Onion,” by Kurt Schwitters, pp. 281-288, in *Tales of the German Imagination, from the Brothers Grimm to Ingeborg Bachmann*, selected and translated by Peter Wortsman

Original German text of “Die Zwiebel,” Kurt Schwitters

<http://bluemountain.princeton.edu/bluemtn/cgi-bin/bluemtn?a=d&d=bmtnabg19191010-01.2.4&e=-----en-20--1--txt-txIN----->

“A New Kind of Plaything,” by Mynona (aka Salomo Friedlaender), pp. 200-204, op cit

Original German text of “Neues Kinderspielzeug,” Mynona

<http://bluemountain.princeton.edu/bluemtn/cgi-bin/bluemtn?a=d&d=bmtnabr191807-01.2.7&e=-----en-20--1--txt-txIN----->

“A Conversation Concerning Legs,” by Alfred Lichtenstein, pp. 278-280, op cit

Original German text, “Gesprach uber Beine”

https://de.wikisource.org/wiki/Gespr%C3%A4ch_%C3%BCber_Beine

“A Raw Recruit,” by Klabund (aka Alfred Henschke), pp. 289-290

Original German text of “Gestellung”

<http://www.zeno.org/Literatur/M/Klabund/Erz%C3%A4hlungen/Kunterbuntergang+des+Abendlandes/Gestellung>

7th class (10/22)

- “Robert Musil’s Posthumous Papers Revisited”
- “Preserving the Imprint of the Ineffable in Musil’s Prose”
- Translating between the lines—the challenges of making English of Robert Musil’s *Nachlaß zu Lebzeiten* (*Posthumous Papers of a Living Author*) and *Vereinigungen* (*Intimate Ties*)
- Student presentations of translation projects in progress

Required Readings:

“Flypaper” and “Clearhearing,” excerpts from *Posthumous Papers of a Living Author*, by Robert Musil, translated by Peter Wortsman—(handouts distributed in PDF format)

Original German text of “Fliegenpapier”

<http://gutenberg.spiegel.de/buch/-6941/2>

Original German text of “Hellhörigkeit”

<http://kaffeehouse.com/literature/hellhorigkeit/>

“The Blackbird,” by Robert Musil, pp. 248-264, *Tales of the German Imagination, from the Brothers Grimm to Ingeborg Bachmann*, selected and translated by Peter Wortsman

Original German text of “Die Amsel”

<http://gutenberg.spiegel.de/buch/-6941/5>

Excerpts from *Vereinigungen*, by Robert Musil, and *Intimate Ties*, a forthcoming English translation by Peter Wortsman—(distributed as PDF handouts excerpted from the uncorrected proofs)

Original German text of *Vereinigungen*

<http://gutenberg.spiegel.de/buch/vereinigungen-6942/1>

8th class (10/29)

- “To Make a Long Story Short: The Prose of Peter Altenberg”
- “Inverted Anonymity, the Mindful Farce of Mynona”
- The challenges of translating poetic prose—Peter Altenberg, Mynona, Paul Celan, Ingeborg Bachmann, and Robert Walser
- Student presentations of translation projects in progress

Required Readings for this class session:

“My Gmunden,” by Peter Altenberg, pp. 193-194, *Tales of the German Imagination, from the Brothers Grimm to Ingeborg Bachmann*, selected and translated by Peter Wortsman

Original German text of “Mein Gmunden”

<http://gutenberg.spiegel.de/buch/prosaskizzen-9535/63>

“Flower Allée,” pp. 18-19, excerpted from *Telegrams of the Soul, Selected Prose of Peter Altenberg*, selected and translated by Peter Wortsman (ISBN 0-9749680-8-0) —(distributed as PDF handouts)

German original text of “Blumen-Korso”

<http://gutenberg.spiegel.de/buch/prosaskizzen-9535/20>

“The Magic Egg” by Mynona, pp. 195-199, op cit

Original German text of “Das Wunder-Ei”-Kapitel 17

<http://gutenberg.spiegel.de/buch/rosa-die-schone-schutzmannsfrau-und-andere-grotesken-9242/17>

“Shadowlight,” by Paul Celan, pp. 328-330, op cit

Original German text of “Gegenlicht”

(to be distributed as PDF handout)

“The Secrets of the Princess of Kagraan,” by Ingeborg Bachmann, pp. 331-337, op cit

German original text of “Die Geheimnisse der Prinzessing von Kagraan,” (to be distributed as PDF handout)

“The Kiss,” by Robert Walser, pp. 246-247, op cit

German original text of “Der Kuß”

<https://www.offenesbuch.com/g13664>

November

9th class (11/5)

- Translating the sting of stark realism—in short fiction by Rainer Maria Rilke, Georg Heym, Egon Erwin Kisch, Egon Erwin Kisch, and Wolfgang Borchert
- Student presentations of completed translation projects

Required Reading for this class session:

“The Seamstress,” by Rainer Maria Rilke, pp. 205-212, *Tales of the German Imagination, from the Brothers Grimm to Ingeborg Bachmann*, selected and translated by Peter Wortsman

The German original text of “Die Näherin”

<http://gutenberg.spiegel.de/buch/-822/1>

“The Lunatic,” pp. 265-277, op cit

Original German text of “Der Irrre”

<http://gutenberg.spiegel.de/buch/der-dieb-2978/3>

“The Tattooed Portrait,” by Egon Erwin Kisch, pp. 295-306, op cit

Original German text of “Das Tätowiete Porträt”

(to be distributed as PDF handout)

“The Dandelion,” by Wolfgang Borchert, pp. 314-327, op cit

German original text of “Die Hundeblyume”

<http://gutenberg.spiegel.de/buch/die-hundeblyume-10070/2>

10th class (11/12)

- Preserving dramatic voice in translation—Ernst Toller’s *Hinkemann*
- Students will team up to read aloud scenes from *Hinkemann*
- “Orpheus Raising Hell: Memories of the Late Aleksander Kulisiewicz”
- Translations of selected “Songs from the Depths of Hell,” songs from the concentration camps sung by Aleksander Kulisiewicz, produced, translated and annotated by Peter Wortsman, Folkways Records, 1978
<https://folkways.si.edu/aleksander-tytus-kulisiewicz/songs-from-the-depths-of-hell/historical-song-judaica-world/music/album/smithsonian>
- Translation as inspiration: *The Tattooed Man Tells All*, a play by Peter Wortsman inspired by his translations of interviews in various languages with survivors of the concentration camps
- Screening of excerpt from video of Silverthorne Theater production of *The Tattooed Man Tells All*
- Student presentations of completed translation projects

Required Readings for this class session:

Hinkemann, a Tragedy, by Ernst Toller, translated by Peter Wortsman, in *The Mercurian*, 2017

<https://the-mercurian.com/2017/11/16/hinkemann/>

And the German original text of “Hinkemann”

(excerpt to be distributed as PDF)

The Tattooed Man Tells All, a play by Peter Wortsman (to be distributed in PDF format)

11th class (11/19)

- Translation as a journey in time—rendering the language of an historic legal brief in defense of freedom of faith by 16th Century German Humanist Johannes Reuchlin addressed to Emperor Maximilian I
- Translation as inspiration: *Burning Words*, a play by Peter Wortsman, inspired by Wortsman’s translation of *Recommendation Whether to Confiscate, Destroy and Burning All Jewish Books*, an historic call for tolerance, by Johannes Reuchlin
- Screening of excerpts of DVDs of Hampshire Shakespeare Company and Kulturhaus Osterfeld English and German productions of *Burning Words* and *Wo man Bücher verbrennt*
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DS6CJck7R2I>
- Student presentations of completed translation projects

Required Readings:

Excerpts from *Recommendation Whether to Confiscate, Destroy and Burning All Jewish Books*, a classic treatise against anti-Semitism, by Johannes Reuchlin, translated from the German by Peter Wortsman, Paulist Press, 2000 (ISBN 978-0809139729)

Burning Words, a play by Peter Wortsman—(to be distributed in PDF format)

12th class (11/26)

- “Talking in Tongues: A Life in Translation,” instructor’s introductory remarks, Part IV
- Zen and the art of self-translation
- “Stimme und Atem/Out of Breath...Out of Mind,” by Peter Wortsman, presentation and discussion of a bilingual work in progress—selections in German and English
- Students assigned self-translations of short original compositions from their weaker into their stronger language, i.e. from second language into native tongue
- Student presentations of completed translation projects

Required Readings for this class session:

Excerpts from “Stimme und Atem/Out of Breath...Out of Mind,” a bilingual work in progress in German and English, by Peter Wortsman—(to be distributed in PDF format)

December

13th class (12/3)

- Student presentations of self-translations and completed translation projects

14th class (12/10)

- Tying up knots and wrapping things up, concluding remarks and discussion
- Last student presentations of self-translations and completed translation projects

All final class projects are due and will be presented in this last session.

DEPARTMENTAL POLICIES

- **Attendance**

All students must attend regularly and arrive prepared; if you expect to miss one or two classes, please use the University absence reporting website <https://sims.rutgers.edu/ssra/> to indicate the date and reason for your absence. An email is automatically sent to me. Those who miss more than two class sessions without a compelling excuse should expect a one-step reduction in the course grade (i.e. an A becomes a B+, a B+ becomes a B). Every additional three absences may entail a further one-step grade-reduction. Three late arrivals count as one absence. Note: It is the responsibility of students who have been absent (for any reason) to find out what they have missed and obtain materials that may have been handed out.

- **Cell Phones**

Cell phones and all other technological devices (beepers, iPods, MP3players...) must be turned off during class out of respect for the instructor and fellow students. Please schedule all important phone communications outside of class time.

- **Photocopies**

Department photocopying fees add up quickly and impressively; we will therefore need to collect from each student 5 cents per page toward the cost of handouts other than quizzes and tests.

- **Disability Support Services**

Students who may be requesting accommodations due to disabilities are encouraged to familiarize themselves with procedures and policies regarding disability support services at the following website: <http://disabilityservices.rutgers.edu/>. It is recommended that students seeking accommodations begin filing paperwork as soon as possible as the documentation review process may take up to 30 business days. Students are encouraged to speak with teachers about these issues at the beginning of the term. All such conversations will be kept strictly confidential.

- **Academic Integrity**

Violations of academic integrity are an extremely serious matter, and can lead to a student's failing the course and being referred to the University's Office of Student Conduct for disciplinary action. When referring to ideas other than your own, always acknowledge your sources clearly and completely, whether you are quoting or paraphrasing. **Note also that use of online translation services is not permitted as a tool for generating work that you submit for course credit.** Please see the University's policies on academic integrity at <http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/>, and discuss with your instructor any questions you may have about this and related issues.