

SL 427/EN 675/RL 899 (S:3)
Boston College
Fall Semester 2009
Classes M W 4:30-5:45 Lyons 210A (Slavic Seminar)

Professor Maxim D. Shrayer
Lyons Hall 201B
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Office hours: M 2-3 F 3-4*

THE ART AND CRAFT OF LITERARY TRANSLATION

In Memoriam Albert S. Cook (1925-1998)

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Literary translation as an art. Discussion of the history and theory of literary translation, but mainly practice in translating poetry or artistic prose into English.
Conducted in English as a workshop. Prerequisites: knowledge of a Classical, Germanic, Romance or Slavic language beyond the intermediate level. Instructor's permission is required for undergraduate students and for other languages.

REQUIRED TEXTS (for sale at the BC Bookstore and on reserve at O'Neill Library):

Pushkin, Alexander. *Eugene Onegin*. A Novel in Verse. Tr. Vladimir Nabokov.
Vol. 1 Introduction and Translation. Princeton: Princeton U Press, 1975
(PUSHKIN).

Venuti, Lawrence, ed. *The Translation Studies Reader*. 2nd ed. New York: Routledge, 2004.
(VENUTI)

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

- attendance and active participation in class discussion;
- regular translation homework and short reports on the readings;
- 1 (one) 20-minute class presentation, dates of individual presentations TBA;
- 1 (one) midterm written examination;
- 1(one) final translation project, due in instructor's office on December 14 at 3 PM.

THE FINAL GRADE will be calculated as follows:

- 45% attendance, class participation and short reports, translation homework;
- 15% class presentation;
- 15% midterm examination;
- 25% final project

A = excellent **B** = good **C** = satisfactory **D** = unsatisfactory but passing **F** = failure
plus and minus are discretionary qualifiers.

* To schedule an appointment, please contact Ms. Demetra Parasirakis at (617) 552-3910 or demetra.parasirakis@bc.edu.

CLASS ATTENDANCE AND ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:

Class attendance is mandatory. Boston College values the academic integrity of its students and faculty. It is your responsibility to familiarize yourself with the university's policy on academic integrity (pp. 33-36 of the 2009-10 BC Catalog; online www.bc.edu/integrity). If you have any questions, always consult your professor. Violations of academic integrity will be reported to your class dean and judged by the academic integrity committee in your school. If you are found responsible for violating the policy, penalties may include a failing grade as well as possible probation, suspension, or expulsion, depending on the seriousness and circumstances of the violation.

BIBLIOGRAPHY:

A fairly extensive, albeit hardly exhaustive Bibliography of Translation Studies, including monographs, encyclopedias, edited collections, and single articles, has been provided to each member of the seminar (for technical reasons, accent and diacritical marks are missing in the transliterated foreign language titles). Note also a useful general bibliography of translations studies in Lawrence Venuti's *The Translation Studies Reader*.

I will be happy to make further suggestions for reading and research. Participants of the seminar are also encouraged to consult members of the foreign languages and literatures departments at Boston College.

CLASS WORK AND HOMEWORK:

1. **COLLECTIVE TRANSLATION PROJECT.** Vladimir Nabokov's literal annotated English translation of Pushkin's *Eugene Onegin* will serve as our basic text throughout the semester. Selected essays, drawn from Lawrence Venuti's *Translation Studies Reader* and supplemented by several other sources, will form a theoretical framework for our discussions. For EVERY class meeting, EACH member of the seminar will prepare a polished English-language metrical (rhymed iambic tetrameter) rendition of 1 (ONE) stanza from *Eugene Onegin* and e-mail it to the instructor by 10AM of the class day (e.g. if we have class on Monday, by 10 AM on Monday, if we have class on Wednesday, by 10 AM on Wednesday). The instructor will put all the versions of the same stanza in a single file and distribute the file by e-mail to the members of the seminar; each new batch of the renditions will be discussed in class the following day. By producing a new stanza in English for each class meeting, by the end of the semester we will have thus created a **COLLECTIVE ENGLISH TRANSLATION** of a section of *Eugene Onegin*. This is very exciting! We will begin with stanza 1 (I), ch. 2 (p. 125 in your editions), which will be due on Wednesday, September 16. The daily stanza assignments will not be marked in the syllabus; unless you

- hear otherwise, please assume that the next (subsequent) stanza is due on the next class meeting.
2. **CLASS PRESENTATION.** Every member of the seminar will give one 20-minute class presentation. For the presentations you should take a shorter poem (about 20 lines or an short excerpt from a longer poem) of your choice, which **HAS PREVIOUSLY BEEN** translated into English. You are to comment on the structure and formal features of the poem, describe the merits and infelicities of the existing translation(s), **AND** present your own polished translation of the text. Please bring handouts with copies of both the original and the translations for the members of the seminar.
 3. **SHORT REPORTS ON READINGS.** Every member of the seminar will be asked to give short (3-4 min.) reports on the theory part of the readings.
 4. **MIDTERM.** You will be asked to render in English a short poem from your designated foreign language. You will be able to use a dictionary. You will have 75 minutes to complete the task.
 5. **FINAL PROJECT.** For your final project, you are to submit to the instructor a polished English translation of poetry or prose from your designated language. For poetry, the minimum requirement is 200-250 lines, for prose, 20 typed pages. I encourage you to concentrate on those authors whose works have never been translated into English or are not widely available in English translation. I further encourage you to seek out texts that exhibit self-conscious formal devices (e.g. metrical rhyming stanzaic poetry; complex syntax in prose, etc.)

SCHEDULE OF CLASS MEETING, READINGS, AND ASSIGNMENTS:

W, Sept 9	Introduction.
M, Sept 14	Vladimir Nabokov, "Foreword," "EO Revisited," "Method of Transliteration," "Calendar", "Translator's Introduction," <u>PUSHKIN</u> vii-xxiv; 3-83; A. S. Pushkin, <u>Eugene Onegin</u> , ENTIRE TEXT OF THE NOVEL in <u>PUSHKIN</u> 89-334.
W, Sept 16	<u>VENUTI</u> 1-11; Vladimir Nabokov, "Problems of Translation: <i>Eugene Onegin</i> ," <u>VENUTI</u> 109-128; <u>PUSHKIN</u> 145-248.
M, Sept 21	Walter Benjamin, "The Task of the Translator," <u>VENUTI</u> 69-86.
W Sept 23	Ezra Pound, "Guido's Relations," <u>VENUTI</u> 86-94.
M, Sept 28	CLASSES CANCELLED: YOM KIPPUR

W, Sept. 30	<u>VENUTI</u> 67-70; Jean-Paul Vinay and Jean Darbinet, “A Methodology for Translation,” <u>VENUTI</u> 128-138.
M, Oct 5	Roman Jakobson, “On Linguistic Aspects of Translation, <u>VENUTI</u> 138-145.
W, Oct 7	Jiri Levy, “Translation as a Decision Process” in <i>The Translation Studies Reader</i> , ed. Lawrence Venuti, 1 st . ed. (London, 2000): 148-159.
M, Oct 12	NO CLASSES: COLUMBUS DAY
W, Oct 14	Student Presentations
M, Oct 19	George Steiner, “The Hermeneutic Motion,” <u>VENUTI</u> 193-199.
W, Oct 21	Eugene Nida, “Principles of Correspondence,” <u>VENUTI</u> 145-168.
M, Oct 26	MIDTERM EXAMINATION
W, Oct 28	Itamar Even-Zohar, “The Position of Translated Literature within the Literary Polysystem,” <u>VENUTI</u> 199-205.
M, Nov 2	André Lefevre, “Mother Courage’s Cucumbers: Text, System and Refraction in a Theory of Translation,” <u>VENUTI</u> 239-255.
W, Nov 4	Philip E. Lewis, “The Measure of Translation Effects,” <u>VENUTI</u> 256-276.
M, Nov 9	Lori Chamberlain, “Gender and the Metaphorics of Translation,” <u>VENUTI</u> 306-323.
W, Nov 11	Student Presentations
M, Nov 16	Annie Brisset, “The Search for A Native Language: Translation and Cultural Identity,” <u>VENUTI</u> 323-368.
W, Nov 18	Student Presentations
M, Nov 23	Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, “The Politics of Translation,” <u>VENUTI</u> 369-389.
W, Nov 25-F, Nov. 27	NO CLASSES: THANKSGIVING RECESS

- M, Nov 30 Keith Harvey, "Translating Camp Talk: Gay Identities and Cultural Transfer," VENUTI 402-423.
- W, Dec 2 Maxim D. Shrayer, "After Rapture and Recapture: Transformations in the Drafts of Nabokov's Stories" in *The Russian Review* 58 (October 1999): 448-64
- M, Dec 7 Jacques Derrida, "What Is A 'Relevant' Translation?," VENUTI 423-447.
- W, Dec 9 Vladimir Nabokov, "The Structure of *Eugene Onegin*," PUSHKIN 15-60; Vladimir Nabokov, "Pounding the Clavicord," in Nabokov, *Strong Opinions* (New York: Vintage, 1990), 231-240; Nabokov, "Reply to My Critics," in Nabokov, *Strong Opinions* (New York: Vintage, 1990), 242-267.
- M, Dec 14 FINAL TRANSLATION PROJECT IS DUE IN LYONS 201 at 3 PM
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Please register all your questions, doubts, and suggestions with me as soon as they have arisen. I am delighted to be working with you. M.D.S.