

Course Number—The Theory and Practice of Translation Spring 2021

Tuesdays 2:00–4:45pm
Remote

Prof. Liane Feldman
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Pronouns: she/her

Office Hours by appointment via Zoom (<https://nyu.zoom.us/j/4025341198>)

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES

This course is designed as a seminar for students actively engaged in the translation of texts across Jewish Studies disciplines. In this class, students will learn about the history of translation in Jewish Studies, be introduced to a number of theories of translation, and complete their own translation projects.

In the first portion of the course, we will cover a condensed history of translation in Jewish Studies from antiquity to the modern period. In the second and longer portion of the class, we will focus on the theory and practice of translation. Students will explore a number of theories of translation in this course, most of which originate outside of the fields of Jewish Studies or Religious Studies. Students will be asked to connect these theories to specific issues, questions, or problems within their own subfields. Issues to be addressed include the purpose and goal of translations, the problem of compositeness in texts to be translated, the negotiation between the meaning(s) and literary/aesthetic features of a text, and the politics of translating religious texts.

Finally, students in this course will be expected to propose and complete a short translation project that both relates to their broader research goals and integrates some of the history or theory of translation they have learned in this seminar. Students will present a work-in-progress version of their project to their classmates during the semester.

Note: there will be a number of guest lecturers throughout the semester. These are scholars in various areas of Jewish Studies or Religious Studies who are currently working on or have completed major projects related to translation.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING

Participation (40%)

Students will be expected to be active participants in the discussion portions of the seminar. Each week, one or two students (depending on the amount of reading and size of enrollment) will be assigned to lead discussion of the assigned readings.

In addition, for each week marked with an asterisk (*) in the syllabus, each student should find an something from their own field of study that is relevant to the topic at hand and prepare that material to discuss with the seminar. This could be a primary text, an article, essay, book, or even a tweet thread (seriously: there have been a lot of great conversations on academic Twitter about translation in the last few months!). There will be a section on the google doc version of the syllabus for students to add the bibliographic information for these materials so that we can collect a class-wide bibliography.

Your participation grade will be broken down according to the following:

Participating actively in seminar discussions of theory readings: 20%

Leading Class Discussion: 15%

Contributing material on *-marked weeks: 5%

Translation Project (40%)

In addition to regular course participation, each student will be required to develop a translation project that they propose in the first two weeks of the course. The project should be informed by course readings, discussions and additional research.

Each student's project will look different, but all projects should include two main parts: 1) an original translation of a text germane to the student's research interests and 2) a translator's note that addresses issues specific to this particular project, the theoretical approach taken by the translator, and a brief reflection on the process of translation.

Project Presentation (20%)

To facilitate the development of this project, each student will also make a presentation of their work in progress in class. Presentations should be 20–25 minutes in length. We will then have a 20–30 minute open discussion with the class.

REQUIRED BOOKS

Note: Most of these are available digitally through the NYU Library; links are provided where possible.

1. Jeremy Munday, [*Introducing Translation Studies: Theories and Applications*](#). 4th ed. New York: Routledge, 2016.
2. Anthony Pym, [*Exploring Translation Theories*](#). 2nd ed. New York: Routledge, 2014.
3. Lawrence Venuti, [*The Translation Studies Reader*](#). 3rd ed. New York: Routledge, 2012.
4. Lawrence Venuti, [*The Translator's Invisibility: A History of Translation*](#). Routledge Translation Classics. New York: Routledge, 2017.

OTHER NOTES AND POLICIES

Attendance Policy

You are expected to attend each seminar session. One unexcused absence will be permitted.

Academic Integrity

Students are expected to adhere to the guidelines for academic honesty found on the university website. Plagiarism or cheating of any kind will be reported to the proper authorities including, but not limited to, the department chair and the student's advisor. It will result in a grade of F on the assignment and, depending on the severity of the offense, failure of the entire course. NYU's academic integrity policy can be found [here](https://www.nyu.edu/about/policies-guidelines-compliance/policies-and-guidelines/academic-integrity-for-students-at-nyu.html). (<https://www.nyu.edu/about/policies-guidelines-compliance/policies-and-guidelines/academic-integrity-for-students-at-nyu.html>)

Learning Disability or Difference

If you are a student with a documented disability at NYU, I will be happy to work with you to adapt the course material and assignments to your needs. Please provide me with documentation of your learning needs as soon as possible because accommodations cannot be provided retroactively. If you have any questions about documentation, please contact the [Henry and Lucy Moses Center for Students with Disabilities](#) online or at (212)-998-4980.

Forms of Address

You are welcome to share your preferred name and/or pronoun at any point in the semester. We will address you respectfully in accordance with your preference.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Tue., Feb. 2 **Introduction; What is Translation?; Planning the Course**

Walter Benjamin, "The Task of the Translator" in *TSR* 15–22 and "Doctrine of the Similar," 65–9
Robert Payne, "On the Impossibility of Translation," in *The World of Translation*, 361–65
Venuti, *The Translator's Invisibility*, 1–34

A History of Translation in Jewish Studies

Tue., Feb. 9 **A History of Translation: Ancient to Medieval (Guests: Catherine Bonesho, Translating Palmyrene Bilingual Texts; Annette Yoshiko Reed, LXX and Late Antique Jewish translation)**

Jeremy M. Hutton and Catherine E. Bonesho, "Interpreting Translation Techniques and Material Presentation in Bilingual Texts: Initial Methodological Reflections," 253–94
Annette Reed, "When did *daimones* become demons? Revising Septuagintal Data for Ancient Jewish Demonology" (work in progress)
Munday, *Introducing Translation Studies*, 1–57

Tue., Feb. 16 **A History of Translation: Medieval to Early Modern (Guests: Shaul Magid, Hasidic/Kabbalistic texts; Elisha Russ-Fishbane/Judeo-Arabic translations)**

Venuti, *The Translator's Invisibility*, 35–82
Martin Luther, "An Open Letter on Translating" (available here: <http://www.gutenberg.org/cache/epub/272/pg272.html>)
Steven Harvey, "Arabic into Hebrew: The Hebrew Translation Movement and the Influence of Averroes upon Medieval Jewish Thought," 258–80.
James Robinson, "The Ibn Tibbon Family: A Dynasty of Translators in Medieval Provence," 193–224
Shaul Magid, "Necessity of Translation"

Tue., Feb. 23 **A History of Translation: Early Modern to Modern (Guests: Michah Gottlieb, 18th century German Bible Translation; Gennady Estraiikh, Yiddish translation)**

Venuti, *The Translator's Invisibility*, 83–236
Michah Gottlieb, chapter from forthcoming book on German Bible Translation
Yaelle Frolich, "The Publication and Dissemination of the Yehoash Bible, 1922–1942"

Tue., Mar. 2 **Translation in Practice* (Guest: Lawrence Schiffman, The Temple Scroll)**

Robert Bly, "The Eight Stages of Translation," in *Translation: Literary, Linguistic, and Philosophical Perspectives*, ed. William Frawley, 67–89
Eugene Nida, "Principles of Correspondence," in *TSR*, 126–40
Munday, *Introducing Translation Studies*, ch 4. (Studying Translation Product and Process), 86–112
Mariam Mansuryan, "[Why Translating Literature is Sometimes Impossible](#)" (TED Talk)

Translation Theories

Tue., Mar. 9 **Translation and Linguistics* (Guest: Madadh Richey, Text Editions)**

Anthony Pym, *Exploring Translation Theories*, ch 1 (What is a translation theory?), 1–5
Munday, *Introducing Translation Studies*, ch 3 (Equivalence and Equivalence Effect), 58–85; c.f. Pym, *Exploring Translation Theories*, ch 2 & 3 (Natural Equivalence 6–23; Directional Equivalence 24–42)
Roman Jakobsen, "On Linguistic Aspects of Translation" (*TSR*), 126–32

Tue., Mar. 16 **Functional Theories and Contextual Approaches***

Munday, *Introducing Translation Studies*, ch 5 (Functional Theories of Translation), 113–40
Vermeer, "Skopos and Commission in Translational Action" in *TSR*, 191–202
Pym, *Exploring Translational Theories*, ch. 4 (Purposes, 43–61)

Tue., Mar. 23 **Discourse and Descriptive Analysis* / Student Project Presentations**

Munday, *Introducing Translation Studies*, ch 6 (Discourse and Register Analysis approaches), 141–68

Shoshana Blum-Kulka, “Shifts of Cohesion and Coherence in Translation” *TSR*, 298–313

Basil Hatim, “Translating Text in Context” in Routledge Translation volume, 36–53

Pym, *Exploring Translation Theories*, ch. 5 (Descriptions, 62–84)

Tue., Mar. 30 **Systems Theories and Uncertainty* / Student Project Presentations**

Munday, *Introducing Translation Studies*, ch 7 (Systems Theory approaches), 169–96

Itamar Even-Zohar, “The Position of Translated Literature with the Literary Polysystem” in *TSR*, 192–7

Gideon Toury, “The Nature and Role of Norms in Literary Translation” in *TSR*, 198–212

Pym, *Exploring Translation Theories*, ch 6 (Uncertainty, 86–116)

Tue., Apr. 6 **Culture and Ideology in Translation* / Student Project Presentations**

Munday, *Introducing Translation Studies*, ch 8 (Cultural and Ideological Turns), 197–221

Keith Harvey, “Translating camp talk: Gay Identites and Cultural Transfer” *TSR*, 446–67

Gayatri Spivak, “The politics of translation” in *TSR*, 397–416

Pym, *Exploring Translation Theories*, ch 7 & 8 (Localization, 117–137; Cultural Translation, 138–158)

Tue., Apr. 13 **Gender and Translation* / Student Project Presentations**

Lori Chamberlin, “Gender and the Metaphorics of Translation” in *TSR*, 314–30

Ross Kraemer and Jennifer Eyl, “Translating Women: The Perils of Gender-Inclusive Translation of the New Testament,” 295–318

Emily Wilson, “Ah, How Miserable! Three New Oresteias” in *London Review of Books*

Optional: Julie Faith Parker, “Blaming Eve Alone: Translation, Omission, and Implications of עמה in Genesis 3:6b”

Tue., Apr. 20 **Translating the Bible (Guest: Candida Moss, Slaves as Translators in the Roman Empire)**

Moss, “Forthcoming Mark Article”

Adam Nicolson, *God's Secretaries: The Making of the King James Bible*, 62–104, 216–250.

Naomi Seidman, “Translation,” in *Reading Genesis: Ten Methods*, 157–75

Robert Alter, *The Art of Bible Translation*

Read also: Edward Greenstein, “Review of Robert Alter, *The Art of Bible Translation*”; c.f. Edward Greenstein “Theories of Modern Bible Translation”

Tue., Apr. 27 **Translation and the Translator Today / Student Project Presentations***

Venuti, *The Translator's Invisibility*, 237–276

Munday, *Introducing Translation Studies*, ch 9 (The Role of the Translator), 222–48

Tue., May. 4 **Translating Jewish Studies**

No reading assigned. This is an open class session to think together and to talk about the role of translation in Jewish Studies more broadly—translation of texts as well as translation of the discipline in the academy more broadly. I will invite HJS faculty members to join our conversation.