Description:

“Translating Theatre” is a workshop format course that combines hands-on translation practice (French to English) with discussion of theoretical and dramaturgical issues specific to translating theatre. We begin our work with the observation that all theatre performance is inherently translative in its interpretation of a text, and inversely that the translation of a text is a performative act. From this point, we consider how the linguistic translation of a text intended for performance is shaped by the context of its enactment and reception. We discuss and translate, both collaboratively and individually, from five French-language plays during the workshop session. We will also attend, as a class, new productions of the plays in Paris; these experiences will enrich our exploration of the conditions, possibilities, and limits that performance presents to theatre translation.

Participants will engage in group translation work from the featured plays as well as submit their own translations at the end of each week. The third week of the session will include collaboration with a group of French students from the École Normale Supérieure in Paris (Département d’Études Théâtrales). The purpose of these joint sessions is to share and provide feedback on one of the plays we are translating from French to English and an English-language play the ENS students are translating into French.

Learning Objectives

During the course participants will:

- Read, research and discuss five plays in French; study of their composition and performance contexts.
- Translate independently and collaboratively into English selected scenes from each of the plays.
- Attend performances of all five plays and participate in post-theater discussions.
- Collaborate with a group of French students from the École Normale Supérieure in Paris (week three) on their project of the translation of a play from English into French, and receive feedback from them on one of our translations.
The following five plays will be featured in the summer 2018 iteration of the course. All plays will be available either in online version or provided by instructor.

Racine, *Bérénice* (performance at Théâtre de l’Odéon)
Molière, *L’Avare* (performance at Théâtre de l’Odéon)
David Lescot, *Les Ondes magnétiques* (performance at Théâtre du Vieux-Colombier)
Robert Linhart, *L’Établi* (performance at L’Épée de Bois-Cartoucherie)

*Students registered for the workshop will be directed to read Racine’s “Bérénice” before the first session.*

**Syllabus**

Each three hour workshop session is divided into three parts combining discussion of material prepared for the session, group translation work, and dramatic reading/discussion of translations.

1. **Monday, June 4, 2018**
   - Introduction to course: Historical and theoretical context of theatre translation.
   - Discussion of compositional context and performance history of Racine’s “Bérenice”
   - Group translation work on “Bérénice”.

   **Assignment for session 2:**
   - Reading: David Johnston, “Professing translation: the acts in-between” and “Securing the Performability of the Play in Translation”
   - Collection of published translations of “Bérénice”; prepare comments on these for next session with reference to the scene you have translated.
   - Translation work on scenes from “Bérénice”
   - Discussion group A prepares questions and discussion. Post by noon Tues. 6/5

2. **Tuesday, June 5, 2018**
   - Discussion of David Johnston essays on translating theatre.
   - The translator’s preface/note
   - Discussion of translation history of “Bérénice” using collection of translations.
   - Group scene work: “Bérénice”

   **Assignment for session 3:**
   - Translation work: Revision of your scene from “Bérénice”
• Reading: David Lescot, “Les Ondes Magnétiques”
• Reading: Manuela Perteghella, “A Descriptive-Anthropological Model of Theatre Translation”
• Discussion group B prepares questions and discussion. Post by noon Thurs. 6/7

**Wednesday June 6:**
Afternoon guided visit of Théâtre de l’Odéon  
Evening performance of “Bérenice” at the Théâtre de l’Odéon

3. **Thursday, June 7, 2018**
• Discussion of performance of “Bérenice”
• Dramatic reading of translations and discussion of “Bérenice” scenes
• Discussion of David Lescot’s “Ondes Magnétiques”

**Assignment for session 4:**
• **Translation assignment #1:** Submit final version of your scene of “Bérenice” by Friday June 8 at 11:59 p.m.
• Translate work on a scene of your choice from “Ondes Magnétiques”
• Reading: Claire Finburgh, “The Politics of Translating Contemporary French Theatre: How ‘Linguistic Translation’ becomes ‘Stage Translation’”
• Discussion group C prepares questions and discussion for 6/11. Post by noon, Mon. 6/11.

4. **Monday, June 11, 2018**
• Discussion of translation work on “Ondes magnétiques”
• Workshopping of scenes translated from “Ondes Magnétiques”

**Assignment for session 5:**
• Reading: Molière, “L’Avare”
• Revision of your scene from “Ondes Magnétiques” in preparation for our work next week with ENS.

5. **Tuesday, June 12, 2018**
• Dramatic reading of scenes from “Ondes Magnétiques”
• Context and performance history of “L’Avare”
• Group work on scenes from “L’Avare”

**Assignment for session 6**
• Reading: Reading of English-language play translated by ENS students (TBD)
• Translation work: Revision of your scenes from “L’Avare”
Wednesday, June 13
Afternoon walking tour of “Molière’s Paris” and guided visit of Comédie Française
Evening performance of “L’Avare” at Théâtre de l’Odéon

6. Thursday, June 14, 2018
- Discussion of performance of “L’Avare”
- Dramatic reading and discussion of scenes translated from “L’Avare”
- Discussion of context of English-language play chosen for translation by ENS students

Assignment for session 7
- **Translation assignment #2:** Submit final version of your scene of “L’Avare” by Friday June 15 at 11:59 p.m.
- Reading: Robert Linhart, “L’Établi”

7. Monday, June 18, 2018
- Group session #1 with ENS students: introductions and discussion of our collaboration
- Discussion of “Ondes magnétiques”
- Group work on “Ondes magnétiques”

Assignment for session 8
- Revision of your scenes of “Ondes magnétiques”

8. Tuesday, June 19, 2018
- Guest speaker from the Maison Antoine Vitez “La traduction théâtrale en France: théorie et pratique”
- Discussion of English-language play chosen by ENS group (TBD)
- Group work on ENS play

Assignment for session 9
- Revise your scenes from “Ondes magnétiques” for dramatic reading on Thursday, June 21.

Tuesday, June 19, 2018: Evening performance of “Ondés magnétiques” at Théâtre du Vieux Colombier (with ENS students)

Wednesday, June 20, 2018: Evening performance of “L’Établi” at the Théâtre de l’Épée de Bois-Cartoucherie (with ENS students)

9. Thursday, June 21, 2018
- Guest speaker: David Lescot, author of “Ondes magnétiques”
- Group performances of both “Ondes magnétiques” and the English-language play chosen by ENS.
• Discussion of performances of “Ondes magnétiques” and “L’Établi”; de-briefing of collaboration between BC/CU and ENS groups.

Assignment for session 10:
• **Translation assignment #3**: Submit final version of your scene of “Ondes magnétiques” by Friday June 22 at 11:59 p.m.
• Translate scenes assigned from “L’Établi”
• Read: Marivaux, “Le Triomphe de l’Amour”

10. Monday, June 25, 2018
• Group work on scenes from “L’Établi”
• Performance of scenes from L’Établi”
• Discussion of composition and performance history of Marivaux, “Le Triomphe de l’Amour”

Assignment for session 11
• **Translation assignment #4**: Submit the translation of passage from “L’Établi” by Mon, June 25 at 11:59 p.m.
• Translate scene assigned from “Le Triomphe de l’Amour”

11. Tuesday, June 26, 2018
• Group work on translation of “Le Triomphe de l’Amour”
• Rehearsal for performance of “Le Triomphe de l’Amour”

Assignment for session 12:
• **Translation assignment #5 (draft)**: Submit draft version of your scene of “Le Triomphe de l’Amour” by Wed June 27 at 4:00 pm

Wednesday, June 27, 2017
Evening performance of “Le Triomphe de l’Amour” at Théâtre des Bouffes du Nord

12. Thursday, June 28, 2018
• Performance of “Le Triomphe de l’Amour”
• De-briefing of course experience
• **Translation assignment #5**: Revision of your passage from “Le Triomphe de l’Amour” by Friday June 29 at 11:59 p.m.
Assignments and Grade Distribution:

75%  5 Translation assignments: Students will work in groups on translations of scenes from each play; these groups will change from play to play over the course of the 5 plays. The purpose of the group work is to give you experience in collaborative translation and these will be the performance texts.

However, each student will submit their own translation work; students are in no way limited or restricted by the group work. The grade for each assignment will be based on the written translations submitted through Google Docs.

Each written translation submitted must be from a source passage of a minimum of 1500 words; each translation must include a translator's note or preface of 300-600 words minimum. We will discuss on Tuesday, June 5 strategies for writing the translator’s note.

All written work will be submitted through Google Docs; assignments are due by 11:59 pm on the date indicated.

15% “Bérénice” (due Friday, June 8 at 11:59 pm)
15% “L’Avare” (due Friday, June 15 at 11:59 pm)
15% “Ondes magnétiques” (due Friday, June 22 at 11:59 pm)
15% “L’Établi” (due, Monday, June 25 at 11:59 pm)
15% “Le Triomphe de l’Amour” (draft due Wed. June 27 at 11:59 pm; final version due Friday, June 29 at 11:59 pm)

10% Discussion leader groups: On day 1, each student will be assigned a discussion group for this exercise; the groups will be responsible for organizing the discussion questions for the following session and initiating the discussion, based on selected readings. Consult with Prof Postlewate the session before you are assigned to lead the discussion for details.

15% Participation in class session and group activities including evening theatre performances.