

Prof. Laurie Postlewate

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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 translatable 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.

Learning Objectives

During the course participants will:

- Read, research and discuss four 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 four plays and participate in post-theater discussions.

The following four plays will be featured in the summer 2019 iteration of the course. All plays will be available either in online version or provided by instructor.

Eugène Ionesco, “La Leçon” (performance at the Théâtre de la Huchette)

Wajdi Mouawad, “Fauves” (performance at Théâtre de la Colline)

Pauline Bureau, “Hors La Loi” (performance at Théâtre du Vieux-Colombier)

Molière, “Le Misanthrope” (performance at the Comédie Française)

PLEASE NOTE THAT THE SCHEDULE OF EVENTS BELOW IS STILL PROVISIONAL AND SUBJECT TO CHANGE. A FINAL SCHEDULE OF READINGS AND PERFORMANCES WILL BE PROVIDED UPON ACCEPTANCE TO THE PROGRAM.

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 3, 2019

- Introduction to course: Historical and theoretical context of theatre translation.
- Discussion of compositional context and performance history of Ionesco's "La Leçon"
- Group translation work on "La Leçon"

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 "La Leçon" prepare comments on these for next session with reference to the scene you have translated.
- Translation work on scenes from "La Leçon"
- Discussion group A prepares questions and discussion.

2. Tuesday, June 4, 2019

- Discussion of David Johnston essays on translating theatre.
- The translator's preface/note
- Discussion of translation history of "La Leçon" using collection of translations.
- Group scene work: "La Leçon"

Assignment for session 3:

- Translation work: Revision of your scene from "La Leçon"
- Reading: Wajdi Mouawad, "Fauves"
- Reading: Manuela Perteghella, "A Descriptive-Anthropological Model of Theatre Translation"
- Discussion group B prepares questions and discussion.

Tuesday June 4:

Evening performance of "La Leçon" at the Théâtre de la Huchette

3. Thursday, June 6, 2019

- Discussion of performance of "La Leçon"
- Dramatic reading of translations and discussion of "La Leçon" scenes
- Discussion of context of Wajdi Mouawad, "Fauves"

Assignment for session 4:

- **Translation assignment #1:** Submit final version of your translation from “La Leçon” by Friday June 7 at 11:59 p.m.
- Translate from a scene of your choice from Wajdi Mouawad, “Fauves”
- Discussion group C prepares questions and discussion for 6/10.

4. Monday, June 10, 2019

- Discussion of translation work on “Fauves”

Assignment for session 5:

- Revision of your scene from “Fauves”

5. Tuesday, June 11, 2019

- Workshopping of scenes translated from “Fauves”

Assignment for session 6

- Reading: Claire Finburgh, “The Politics of Translating Contemporary French Theatre: How ‘Linguistic Translation’ becomes ‘Stage Translation’”
- Group D prepares questions and discussion for 6/13.

Tuesday, June 11:

Evening performance of “Fauves” at the Théâtre de la Colline

Afternoon walking tour of “Molière’s Paris” and guided visit of Comédie Française

6. Thursday, June 13, 2019

- Discussion of readings: Claire Finburgh, “The Politics of Translating Contemporary French Theatre: How ‘Linguistic Translation’ becomes ‘Stage Translation’”
- Dramatic reading of translation of “Fauves”
- Discussion of social context of “Hors La Loi”

Assignment for session 7

- **Translation assignment #2:** Submit final version of your scene of “Fauves” by Friday June 14 at 11:59 p.m.
- Read Pauline Bureau “Hors La Loi”

7. Monday, June 17, 2019

- Discussion of “Hors La Loi”
- Group translation work on “Hors La Loi”

Assignment for session 8

- Revision of your scenes of “Hors La Loi”

8. Tuesday, June 18, 2018

- Guest speaker from the Maison Antoine Vitez “La traduction théâtrale en France: théorie et pratique”
- Workshopping of scenes from “Hors La Loi”

Tuesday, June 18:

Evening performance of “Hors La Loi” at the Théâtre du Vieux Colombier

Assignment for session 9

- Revise your scenes from “Hors La Loi” for dramatic reading on Thursday, June 21.

9. Thursday, June 20, 2018

- Discussion of performances of “Hors La Loi”
- Workshopping of scenes and dramatic reading.

Assignment for session 10:

- **Translation assignment #3:** Submit final version of your scene from “Hors La Loi” by Friday June 21 at 11:59 p.m.
- Read: Molière, “Misanthrope”
- Discussion Group E prepares questions and discussion for 6/24.

10. Monday, June 24, 2018

- Discussion of composition and performance history of Molière, “Le Misanthrope”
- Group work on scenes from “Le Misanthrope”

Assignment for session 11

- Translate scene assigned from “Le Misanthrope”

11. Tuesday, June 25, 2019

- Group work on translation of “Le Misanthrope”

Tuesday, June 25, 2019

Evening performance of “Le Misanthrope” at the Comédie Française

Assignment for session 12:

- **Translation assignment #5 (draft):** Submit draft version of your scene of “Le Misanthrope” by Wed June 26 at 4:00 pm

12. Thursday, June 27, 2018

- Performance of scenes from “Le Misanthrope”
- De-briefing of course experience

- **Translation assignment #5:** Revision of your passage from “Le Misanthrope” by Friday June 28 at 11:59 p.m.

Assignments and Grade Distribution:

60% 4 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 4 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 4 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% “La Leçon” (due Friday, June 7 at 11:59 pm)
- 15% “Fauves” (due Friday, June 17 at 11:59 pm)
- 15% “Hors La Loi” (due Friday, June 21 at 11:59 pm)
- 15% “Le Misanthrope” (due, Monday, June 24 at 11:59 pm)

15% Dramaturgy presentation and report: Dramaturgy is the study of a play’s composition and production history, and is an integral part of theatre production. On day 1, students will be assigned a play for which they are responsible for certain aspects of the dramaturgy of the play and a date on which to present to the class in a 15 minute presentation. Prof. Postlewaite will provide materials on the class Google Drive, materials that you should consult for your presentation and report (1200-word written version of your presentation.)

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 Postlewaite the session before you are assigned to lead the discussion for details.

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