

LIT 102 (Summer)

# Translation Theory

M/W 9:00 AM – 12:30 PM - McHenry Lib 1340



(Caravaggio, *Saint Jerome*, 1605-06, Rome, Galleria Borghese)

Prof. Filippo Gianferrari

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Rm. 627, Humanities 1

Office Hour: In-person or via Zoom **M&W from 1:00-2:00 PM** (or right after class if that works best for you).

If you plan to attend office hours, [please sign up here](#) for an appointment slot.

Teaching Assistants:

Wesley Viebahn ([wviebahn@ucsc.edu](mailto:wviebahn@ucsc.edu)), office hours by appointment, online or in person

Matthew Simmons ([macsimmo@ucsc.edu](mailto:macsimmo@ucsc.edu)), office hours by appointment, online or in person

**N. B. This document is a roadmap of the topics, readings, and assignments that make up this course. More detailed descriptions of assignments and guidelines will be available on [canvas.ucsc.edu](https://canvas.ucsc.edu). Always refer to the class's site to know what you are expected to do week by week. Please make sure that your Canvas settings are set to send you a notification whenever new announcements for this class are made.**

## Required Materials:

- 1) Jhumpa Lahiri, *In Other Words* (Vintage: 2017) ISBN 9781101911464
- 2) Weissbort & Eysteinnsson, *Translation – Theory and Practice: A Historical Reader* (Oxford 2006 or 2024). This is available online for free on the Library's reserve list for this class

All books are available for purchase here: <https://ucsc.textbookx.com/adm/> and will be available for limited-time checkout via the Library's reserve for this course, here: [LIT 102 Course Reserves](#).

All other readings and audiovisual materials will be posted on Canvas.

## COURSE DESCRIPTION

In this class we will test and evaluate the following statements to attempt a first recognition of the act of translation both in theory and practice:

*... everyone should recognize that no writing fashioned into a harmonious unity by its musical form can be translated from its original language without all its sweetness and harmony being destroyed. (Dante Alighieri)*

*Inside or between languages, human communication equals translation. (George Steiner)*

*Translation is not a matter of words only: it is a matter of making intelligible a whole culture. (Anthony Burgess)*

*Nearly everywhere, the great ages of poetry have been, not coincidentally, periods of intense translation. With no news from abroad, a culture ends up repeating the same things to itself. It needs the foreign not to imitate, but to transform. (Eliot Weinberger)*

*To translate is to produce literature, just as the writing of one's own work is – and it is more difficult, more rare. In the end, all literature is translation. (Novalis)*

To familiarize ourselves with some of the key ideas and issues entailed by the act of translation, we will combine three different types of sources: 1) Dante's discussion of the Italian vernacular vis-à-vis his time's language of literacy, Latin—in particular, we will closely read his *Vita nuova* in the new translation by Virginia Jewiss, considering both its contents, history of reception, and different translations; 2) a selection from some of the essays that through the centuries have shaped the field of translation, particularly in the West; and 3) Jhumpa Lahiri's *In Other Words*, her first book written in Italian and collecting reflections on her experience of becoming proficient in Italian—the language in which she also wrote one her latest novels, *Whereabouts*, and from which she regularly translate literary texts into English. We will tackle this complex

topic from the particular angle of literary translation, with an emphasis on the cultural implications of this process. What we are ultimately after here, though, is a nuanced understanding of language—its cognitive, cultural, and ideological undertones.

#### COURSE OBJECTIVES

At the end of the course you will be able to:

- ❖ Demonstrate substantial knowledge of the primary texts on which the course is based and good knowledge of their historical and cultural contexts. As a result of this extended reading exercise, you will be able to appreciate the challenges entailed by the act of translating and interpreting.
- ❖ Acquire general knowledge and understanding of the history of translation theory—primarily in the West.
- ❖ Master the basic critical and rhetorical tools to produce your very own translation of a text.
- ❖ Communicate your own ideas and findings with clarity and coherence, both orally and in writing.
- ❖ Research and evaluate secondary sources, to facilitate an understanding of the primary material presented in class.
- ❖ Demonstrate a broader understanding of intellectual and cultural activity, as carried out through honesty, accountability, humility, and criticism in the classroom, in group collaboration, and in personal work. You will learn that the study of translation can provide a useful means for communicating or questioning ideological positions while opening our minds to realities and experiences different from our own and thus enriching our capacity for fruitful dialogue.

**MECHANICS:** You are responsible for: 1) reading and analyzing the assigned materials before class; 2) completing all assignments (quizzes, discussion boards, oral presentations, the three main assignments, and other occasional ones); 3) participating in our in-class conversations; 4) asking questions if you have any or don't understand something.

**Students taking this class for credit in Italian Studies** need to reach out and meet with me to discuss expectations for this class.

#### Course Responsibilities and Final Grading:

<b>Important Summer Session Deadlines</b>	<b>Summer is unique. You will not be dropped for non-attendance or non-payment. You must drop yourself.</b> For all dates and deadlines, including 'change of grade option' (P/NP) and grades due, here is the summer academic calendar: <a href="https://summer.ucsc.edu/studentlife/index.html">https://summer.ucsc.edu/studentlife/index.html</a> For questions about dropping, requesting a W grade for a course, or withdrawing from the summer quarter, email <a href="mailto:summer@ucsc.edu">summer@ucsc.edu</a> .
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Grading Criteria	<p><b>Your final grade in the course will be determined as follows:</b></p> <p><b>Weekly Quizzes</b> <span style="float: right;"><b>20%</b></span>  <b>Response Paper</b> (essay questions on the assigned readings) <span style="float: right;"><b>10%</b></span>  <b>Final Project, First Installment</b> (A literary translation with annotations (about 2-3 pages, depending on the text)) <span style="float: right;"><b>10%</b></span>  <b>Final Project Final Installment</b> (A literary translation with annotations (about 2-3 pages, depending on the text) and a 2-3 page commentary on your process, incorporating ideas from class and your reflections on what you've learned in the course) <span style="float: right;"><b>20%</b></span>  <b>Attendance &amp; Participation</b> (Attendance to Lectures + Short Canvas quizzes and discussion boards on assigned materials + Oral Presentation) <span style="float: right;"><b>40%</b></span></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>*All assignments must be completed to pass the class.</b></p> <p><b>Late submissions policy:</b> If you need extra time to complete the weekly assignments you can take them without penalty. However, if you need an extension on one of the three major assignments (Response paper, Final Project/1, &amp; Final Project/2), permission will have to be granted by the TA. There will be no make-up for in-class activities. Please make sure to request it in advance.</p> <p>All grades are assigned in percentage. For the grade percentage to letter ratio refer to this table:</p> <p><b><u>Grade Scale (numbers are %)</u></b></p> <table border="0" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td><b>A+</b></td> <td><b>99-100</b></td> <td><b>C+</b></td> <td><b>77-79</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>A</b></td> <td><b>96-98</b></td> <td><b>C</b></td> <td><b>73-76</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>A-</b></td> <td><b>90-95</b></td> <td><b>C-</b></td> <td><b>70-72</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>B+</b></td> <td><b>86-89</b></td> <td><b>D</b></td> <td><b>60-69</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>B</b></td> <td><b>83-85</b></td> <td><b>F</b></td> <td><b>0-59</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>B-</b></td> <td><b>80-82</b></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	<b>A+</b>	<b>99-100</b>	<b>C+</b>	<b>77-79</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>96-98</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>73-76</b>	<b>A-</b>	<b>90-95</b>	<b>C-</b>	<b>70-72</b>	<b>B+</b>	<b>86-89</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>60-69</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>83-85</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>0-59</b>	<b>B-</b>	<b>80-82</b>		
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Class Attendance	Attendance <u>is required</u> , it corresponds to 40% of the final grade and is evaluated on the basis of activities carried out in class. Up to Two absences due to medical or other extenuating reasons can be excused.																								
Electronic Devices	<b>You will be asked to use your laptop or personal data device to complete in-class activities. You are also welcome to use them for reading and taking notes. Any other use is strongly discouraged.</b>																								
Academic Integrity	All work submitted for this course must be your own. If you do not understand fully the standards of academic integrity enforced at UC Santa Cruz, inform yourself by consulting <i>The Navigator</i> at < <a href="https://registrar.ucsc.edu/navigator/section1/academic-integrity.html">https://registrar.ucsc.edu/navigator/section1/academic-integrity.html</a> >  Breaches in academic integrity will result in failure of this course and may incur																								

	suspension or dismissal from the university.
Inclusivity Statement	It is my intent that students from all backgrounds and with all perspectives feel included and are able to learn and achieve their goals in this course. Diversity of experiences and opinions is a resource to our communal, intellectual endeavor. Hence, not only is your contribution welcome but it is necessary in order for this class to succeed. Finally, your suggestions for making this learning community as inclusive as possible and for improving the effectiveness of this course are encouraged and appreciated.
Accessibility Accommodation	UC Santa Cruz is committed to creating an academic environment that supports its diverse student body. If you are a student with a disability who requires accommodations to achieve equal access in this course, please submit your Accommodation Authorization Letter from the Disability Resource Center (DRC) to me privately during my office hours or by appointment, preferably within the first week of the Summer quarter. At this time, I would also like us to discuss ways we can ensure your full participation in the course. I encourage all students who may benefit from learning more about DRC services to contact DRC by phone at 831-459-2089 or by email at <a href="mailto:drc@ucsc.edu">drc@ucsc.edu</a> .
DRC, CARE, TITLE IX	If you qualify for classroom accommodations because of a disability, please submit your Accommodation Authorization from the Disability Resource Center (DRC) to me within the first two weeks of the quarter (or asap). For more information about disability accommodations, contact DRC at 459-2089 (voice), < <a href="mailto:drc@ucsc.edu">drc@ucsc.edu</a> >, or < <a href="mailto:drc.ucsc.edu">drc.ucsc.edu</a> > for more information about the requirement and/or process for qualifying for classroom accommodation. The following offices are also at your disposal for other resources and support on campus: <a href="#">CARE</a> , and <a href="#">Title IX</a>
Hours Distribution	Because this is an intensive summer course, you will be responsible for an estimated 30 hours of course-related work per week, as follows: seven hours of class attendance, 15 hours of reading and quiz preparation, eight hours of research and exam/paper writing. You will be accountable for having effectively prepared for each class, and I will help motivate you to stay on top of the reading by giving daily reading quizzes.

### Syllabus

**This is only a general program of readings and assignments. For more precise instructions on what to read and do every week check the weekly modules on Canvas**

Week 1: Topics	Readings To do BEFORE class	Special Assignments
Communication, Culture, & Translation	<u>Before class on Monday 07/29:</u> 1) Read Jhumpa Lahiri, the short story "The	Sign up for one of

<p>Babel: Translation as Redemption?</p>	<p>Interpreter of Maladies" (PDF on Canvas) 2) Read Jhumpa Lahiri's article "the Book that Taught Me What Translation Was" (PDF on Canvas)</p> <p>Wednesday 07/31</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Read the section "Babel" in the <i>Historical Reader</i> (pp.8-14) Use this <a href="#">link</a> to access the book via the Library website</li> <li>2) Read Dante, <a href="#">On Vernacular Eloquence</a> (Read from I.I to I.VIII.9)</li> <li>3) Read Primo Levi, "On the Bottom," "The canto of Ulysses" from <i>If this is a man</i> (PDF on Canvas)</li> </ol>	<p>the oral presentation slots <a href="#">here</a></p> <p>Quiz 1 Worksheet 1 Discussion 1 Introduce yourself All are due by Saturday @ 11:59 PM</p>
<p>Week 2: Topics</p>	<p>Readings</p>	
<p>Languages and Translation in the Pre- and early- modern World</p>	<p>Monday (08/05):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Read Chapter 1 in the <i>Historical Reader</i></li> <li>2) Read Dante <i>Vita nuova</i> (Transl. By Jewiss): "A note on the Text and Translation" (pp. 27-32); Chapter 1-16 (pp. 1-59)</li> </ol> <p>Wednesday 08/07:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Listen to the podcast from <i>In Our Time</i> on "<a href="#">The Translation Movement</a>"</li> <li>2) Read Sharon Kinoshita, <i>Introduzione</i> (PDF on Canvas)</li> <li>3) Read Dante, <i>Vita nuova</i> (Transl. By Jewiss) chapters 17-23 (pp. 60-99)</li> </ol>	<p>Bring to class a page from your favorite text either in English or in any other language from which you'll be translating.</p> <p>Response Paper Due by Thursday, at 11:59 PM</p> <p>Quiz 2 Due by Saturday @ 11:59 PM</p>
<p>Week 3: Topics</p>	<p>Readings</p>	
<p>Romanticism</p>	<p>Monday 08/12</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Read "Goethe" &amp; "Schleiermacher" in the <i>Historical Reader</i> (pp. 198--209)</li> <li>2) Read Jhumpa Lahiri, <i>In Other Words</i> (Author's note + pp. 1-25)</li> </ol>	<p>Worksheet 2 due on Wednesday</p> <p>Quiz 3</p>

	<p>Wednesday 08/14</p> <p>1) read Benjamin's <i>The Task of the Translator</i> in the <i>Historical Reader</i>, pp. 297–307.</p> <p>2) Jhumpa Lahiri, <i>In Other Words</i> (pp. 26–59, 66–113)</p>	<p>Worksheet 3</p> <p>All are due by Saturday @ 11:59 PM</p>
<b>Week 4: Topics</b>	<b>Readings</b>	
<p><b>Twentieth Century &amp; Contemporary Perspectives</b></p>	<p>Monday 08/19:</p> <p>1) Read Roman Jakobson, in the <i>Historical Reader</i>, pp. 330-336 (Balnibarbi in <i>Gulliver's Travels</i>)</p> <p>2) Jhumpa Lahiri, <i>In Other Words</i> (114–123, 134–201)</p> <p>Wednesday 08/21:</p> <p>1) read Nabokov in <i>Historical Reader</i>, pp. 376–388</p> <p>2) "My Aunt's Languages," Chapter 3 of Bravi, Adrián N. et al. <i>My Language Is a Jealous Lover</i>. (Chicago: Rutgers University Press, 2023), pp. 13-18. Available via the Library <a href="#">here</a></p> <p>3) Translators' Note, and Introduction "My Non-Aligned Feminism," from Makaping, Geneviève. et al. <i>Reversing the Gaze : What If the Other Were You?</i> (Chicago: Rutgers University Press, 2023). Available <a href="#">here</a></p>	<p>Final Project/1</p> <p>Due by Wednesday at 11.59 PM</p> <p>Quiz 4</p> <p>Worksheet 4</p> <p>All are due by Tuesday @ 11:59 PM</p>
<b>Week 5: Topics</b>	<b>Readings</b>	
<p>Translation, Hermeneutics, &amp; Identity</p>	<p>Monday 08/26</p> <p>1) Read Steiner, <i>After Babel</i>, in <i>Historical Reader</i>, pp.396–405</p> <p>2) Read Gloria Anzaldúa, "How to tame a wild</p>	<p>Quiz 5</p> <p>Worksheet 5</p> <p>All are due by</p>

tongue” from *La Frontera* (PDF on Canvas)

Wednesday 08/28

1) Read Venuti, in *Historical Reader*, pp. 546–557

2) Watch the film *Arrival* available for streaming here: [LIT 102 Media Course Reserves](#)

Friday, 09/02 @  
11:59 PM

Final Exam Week

**Final Project/2**

Due by Sunday,  
September 1 @  
11:59 PM