

Advanced English: Translation workshop - Perfect your English and broaden your horizon through translation

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This course is meant for students of the advanced C1 and C2 levels. Theme-based language classes aim at developing written and oral skills through the study of a specific topic.

Course Objectives

English is ubiquitous, and yet translation, albeit quite invisible, has not disappeared. And it begs vital political and cultural questions: Will AI replace translators? Can mistranslation lead to political and social conflicts? Are all translators 'traitors'? Is translation a means of domination or emancipation? What are the ethics of translation? Is there a single best way to translate a text? etc.

These are some of the questions this course will try to address, raising awareness of the numerous and complex issues at play when translating. Translation is also an excellent means of improving your reading and writing skills, both in French and English.

The main objectives are:

- Perfecting the students' knowledge of English through the thorough examination of texts, close reading and the enlightening comparison of both languages, but also with other languages.
- Discovering the art of translation – an asset for many careers (Affaires étrangères, UN, EU and other international institutions, global corporations, NGOs, journalism, publishing, etc.).
- Presenting a wide range of translation problems in playful way.

Course Description

The approach is non-academic, mainly based on activities and challenges. Translation will be practised through different team assignments, such as group translation, translation 'jousts', live interpreting, competing against an AI translation software, roleplaying, etc.

In a typical class, several fields will intersect such as a focus on a few linguistic problems, a reflection on a particular translation problem (how to translate race, class, gender, nation, dialect, humour, literature, for example).

Translation exercises will run the whole gamut of texts, from newspapers to poetry, tackling various types of written English and a wide array of issues. We will also try our hands at different styles and genres, including social sciences, literature, pulp fiction, comics, music, drama, film/series subtitling and dubbing.

It is to be noted that this subject requires a very level good of French and a taste for writing, as the exercise is as demanding in French as it is in English. Classes will be held in English, but part of the work on the texts will require the use of French.

Organization

Activities will cover the four language skills, with an emphasis on speaking, comprehension and writing:

- Reading: students will be asked to prepare short translations for each class. Students will also have to read a whole book of their choosing in English.
- Writing: translation will be mostly from English to French, but the course will develop stylistic abilities in both languages, improving fluidity, accuracy and elegance. Translations will be submitted for assessment during the semester.
- Listening: audio and video extracts relevant to the topic will be used in class, and time will be allocated to the practise of live interpreting.
- Speaking: students will be asked to share their views about translation. There will be an emphasis on reading aloud, as a way of accessing the meaning of the texts. Each topic should provide many opportunities for class discussion. Other languages will also be used in class.