

University of Jordan Faculty of Foreign Languages English Department

Course Title: Literary Translation Course Code: 2201741

Credit hours: 3 Prerequisite: None

---

**Course Description:** This course is a seminar on both the theory and the practice of literary translation. It aims at exploring some of the problems of literary translation such as: denotation and connotation, simile and metaphor, cultural implications of texts, translatability, fidelity, the divisions between original and translated texts, understatement and overstatement, translation gain and loss, verbiage and flowery language, etc. Students will be required to translate a variety of literary texts, ancient and modern, in order that they may acquire the skill of effective, idiomatic translation from Arabic into English and from English into Arabic.

**Course Objectives:** At the end of the course we will have compared and contrasted different translations of literary texts in order to examine how each version works and how translators address the questions of language, style, formal and cultural equivalence. Through a series of seminars on literary text types (involving different periods and languages) and their translation(s) into English or Arabic, students will familiarize themselves with the art of literary translation, with some of the major problems encountered in translating literary texts, and with a variety of translation strategies to resolve such difficulties.

**Teaching System:**eaching will be conducted mainly through seminar discussion and actual translation practice. Major theoretical text will be read and discussed. It is expected that everyone will do regular homework, submit short reports on the assigned readings and participate fully. There will be short introductory lectures throughout the semester in order to provide the theoretical background. At the end of the term, each student will prepare a final paper (about 10 pages) which may be either a theoretical analysis or an original translation (poetry or prose works) accompanied by a brief critical translator's introduction.

**Learning outcomes and competences:** During this course the students will familiarize themselves with the basic practice of literary translation, the most common problems that appear in literary translation, as well as techniques and strategies of producing literary translations that faithfully serve the original and at the same time stand as works of art in their own right within the linguistic and cultural context of the

translation culture. Moreover, the students will have an opportunity to read and discuss several different translations of one and the same literary work, familiarize themselves with the existing model translations of English and Arabic literature, critical comparisons and analyses of existing translations, and in this way learn about different approaches to literary translation as well as techniques and strategies literary translators employ in their work. The students will have an opportunity to choose literary texts (poetry, prose, drama) and translate them into English or Arabic. The translations will be presented, analyzed and discussed and in this way the students will gain a greater insight into their translation process and work.

**Grading Policy:** Midterm exam: 30 points; class presentation and attendance: 10 points; term paper: 20 points; final exam: 40 points.

**Required Textbooks:**

Dickens, James et al. (2002). *Thinking Arabic Translation*. London and New York: Routledge. "Phonic/Graphic and Prosodic Issues in Translation": PP: 80-95.

Lefevere, André (1992). *Translating Literature: Practice and Theory in a Comparative Literature Context*. New York: The Modern Language Association of America. "Language": PP. 16-83.

Newmark, Peter. (1988). *A Textbook of translation*. New York and London: Prentice Hall. PP. 162-173. "The Translation of Serious Literature": 162-173.

**Course Outline:**

Week 1: Orientation

Week 2: André Lefevere. *Translating Literature*: pp.16-41

Week 3: André Lefevere. *Translating Literature*: 41-83

Week 4: Discussion of Abdel-Wahab El-Messiri's translation of Thomas Gray's "Elegy Written in Country Churchyard"

Week 5: Discussion of Nazik Al-Malaika's translation of Thomas Gray's "Elegy Written in Country Churchyard"

Week 6: Student presentations (4) on assigned poetry translations

Week 7: Student presentations (4) on assigned poetry translations

Week 8: Discussion of 2-3 model translations

Week 9: Midterm Exam

Week 10: Peter Newmark. *A Textbook of translation*: "The Translation of Serious Literature": 162-173; James Dickens, et al. *Thinking Arabic Translation*. "Phonic/Graphic and Prosodic Issues in Translation": PP: 80-95.

Week 11: Discussion of Denys Johnson-Davies translation of Tawfiq Al-Hakim's يا  
طالع الشجرة

Week 12: Discussion of Denys Johnson-Davies translation of موسم الهجرة إلى الشمال

Week 13: Student presentations (4) on assigned prose translations

Week 14: Student presentations (4) on assigned prose translations

Week 15: Discussion of 2-3 selected model translations (e.g. Ihsan Abbas's translation  
of Melville's *Moby Dick*;

Week 16: Final Exam

### **Bibliography**

Abbas, Ihsan. Trans. (1998). *Mobi Dik (Moby Dick)*. By Henry Melville..Abu  
Dhabi: Al-Mada Cultural Foundation.

Retrieved 2009.

Al-Massiri, Abdul-Wahhab. 'Marthiya fi maqbarah rifiya' (elegy in a country churchyard).

Asfour, Mohammad. (2000). 'The Translation of Poetry: An Example from Nazik Al-  
Mala'ika'. *International Journal of Arabic-English Studies*, 1.1.:7-52.

Bassnett-MacGuire, Susan. (1980). *Translation Studies*. London and New York: Routledge.

Dickens, James et al. (2002). *Thinking Arabic Translation*. London and New York:  
Routledge.

Jacobson, Roman. (1993). "Linguistics and Poetics. In *Modern Criticism and  
Theory*. Ed. David Lodge. London and New York. Longman, 32-57.

Landers C. E, (2001). *Literary Translation: A Practical Guide*, Clevedon:  
Multilingual Matters .

Lefevere, André. (1975). *Translating Poetry: Seven Strategies and a Blueprint*.  
Amsterdam: Van Gorgum

----- (1992). *Translating Literature: Practice and Theory in a  
Comparative Literature Context*. New York: The Modern Language Association of America.

Newmark, Peter. (1988). *A Textbook of translation*. New York and London:  
Prentice Hall.

Venuti, L. C. (2000) *The Translation Studies Reader*, New York: Routledge.

Zaki, Mohammad Ibrahim. Trans. (1962). *The Mayor of Casterbridge*. By  
Thomas Hardy. Cairo: Roz Al-Yousef Foundation