Translation

Director, Division of World Languages, Literatures and Cultures

- Russell Ganim

Graduate degree: M.F.A. in comparative literature—translation
Website: https://translation.uiowa.edu/

Beginning with the country's first translation workshop over 50 years ago, literary translation has long been an integral part of the conversation about writing at the University of Iowa. The M.F.A. program in comparative literature—translation combines creative practice, international literature in-the-making, with training in world languages, literatures, and theory. The focus of the program is on creating translations into English that convey both the distinctness of the original and the immediacy of contemporary language.

The translation program enjoys close relationships with the University's M.F.A. programs in creative writing (fiction, poetry, and Spanish creative writing), nonfiction writing, and playwriting; and the International Writing Program. Faculty members from departments in the Division of World Languages, Literatures and Cultures provide resources for the translation program and often serve as language mentors and committee members for M.F.A. students in translation. The program also sponsors residencies for renowned translators who facilitate a five-week translation workshop during their stay.

The translation program is administered by the Division of World Languages, Literatures and Cultures.

Resources

Student translators in the M.F.A. program publish Exchanges, a journal of literary translation. A vibrant source of international writing in translation, the journal provides hands-on editing and online publishing experience as well as an occasional venue for the editors' own works. The M.F.A. program regularly hosts and cohosts conferences, invites speakers from around the world for readings and short-term residencies, and is a constituent unit of the Virtual Writing University.

Programs

Graduate Program of Study

Major

- Master of Fine Arts in Comparative Literature—Translation

Courses

Translation Courses

TRNS:1000 First-Year Seminar 1 s.h.
Small discussion class taught by a faculty member; topics chosen by instructor; may include outside activities (e.g., films, lectures, performances, readings, visits to research facilities, field trips). Requirements: first-semester standing.

TRNS:1620 Bhagavad Gita: Essential Teachings of Indian Religion 3 s.h.
Students read the Bhagavad Gita and discuss its interpretations and use in classical and modern religious, literary, and political contexts; composed around 2000 years ago, it is the best known and most influential religious text in Indian history and concisely addresses war and peace, duty and righteousness, renunciation, devotion, and the nature of the universe; its been read, debated, and discussed by ancient philosophers, modern religious teachers, and political figures such as Mahatma Gandhi, the father of modern Independent India. Same as RELS:1620, SOAS:1620.

TRNS:2000 Translation and Global Society 3 s.h.
Contexts and functions of translation in the age of globalization; how translations are produced, received, and utilized in various contexts; effects of globalization on ethics, aesthetics, and politics of translation; how we understand cultures when they are received or transmitted through translation; effects of these exchanges on the English language. GE: Diversity and Inclusion.

TRNS:2001 Global Science Fiction 3 s.h.

TRNS:2208 Classical Chinese Literature Through Translation 3 s.h.

TRNS:2248 The Invention of Writing: From Cuneiform to Computers 3 s.h.
Invention of writing as one of the most momentous events in the history of human civilizations; how the use of written sign systems, notations, maps, graphs, encryptions, and most recently, computer programs have consequences that reach deeply into all aspects of people’s lives; how writing fascinates and delights, fosters reflexive thinking and facilitates development of complex societies, and gives rise to institutions of social power and control; students explore the invention of writing and its consequences in broad international and interdisciplinary context. Taught in English. Same as ANTH:2248, ASIA:2248, CL:2248, CLSA:2048, COMM:2248, GRMN:2248, HIST:2148, IS:2248, LING:2248, WLLC:2248.

TRNS:3179 Undergraduate Translation Workshop 3 s.h.

TRNS:3189 Undergraduate Translation Workshop II 3 s.h.
Continued training through translation exercises, discussion of translation works in progress; alternative strategies for translation projects. Prerequisites: TRNS:3179.
TRNS:3200 Literary Translation from German 3 s.h.
Workshop and seminar on translating from German to English; emphasis on literary translations and studying existing translations; special issues of German as a source language for translation into English. Taught in English and German.
Requirements: prior completion of two German courses at the 3000 level or above. Same as GRMN:3200.

TRNS:3201 Workshop in Japanese Literary Translation 3 s.h.

TRNS:3202 Workshop in Chinese Literary Translation 3 s.h.
Translation from Chinese to English with emphasis on literary translation; issues in theory and practice of translation; special features of Chinese as a source language for translation. Prerequisites: CHIN:3102. Same as CHIN:3201.

TRNS:3491 Translation Internship 1-3 s.h.
Translation internship. Requirements: permission of the program coordinator of the undergraduate minor in translation for global literacy in consultation with the student's advisor.

TRNS:3498 Translate Iowa Project arr.
Internship with the Translate Iowa Project. Taught in English. Requirements: TRNS:2000 or TRNS:3179 or TRNS:3202 or ENGL:3724 or JNNS:3201 or FREN:4890 or SPAN:3030 or SPAN:3050 or SPAN:4980. Same as ARAB:3498.

TRNS:3700 Topics in Global Cinema 3 s.h.
Identification of new models and methods to investigate cinema's relationship to current global issues beyond traditional scholarly focus in Western Europe and the United States; exploration of an emerging field, moving away from the paradigm of national cinema and bringing together shared theoretical frameworks while acknowledging different historical and cultural contexts. Taught in English. Same as ASIA:3700, JNNS:3700, WLLC:3700.

TRNS:4050 Independent Study 1-3 s.h.
Focused study on topic of student's choosing under direction of faculty member. Requirements: permission of the student's academic advisor or the program coordinator of the undergraduate minor in translation for global literacy.

TRNS:4100 Approaches to Critical Theory 3 s.h.
Introduction to major critical approaches in literary and cultural theory from a variety of traditions; studying existing models, students learn to think theoretically about language and society, and to orient themselves among existing theoretical discourses, interrogating the latter critically in terms of their own perspectives and theoretical needs; selections from influential works, shared class discussion, and presentations; no prior knowledge in the area of critical theory is presumed. Same as CL:4100.

TRNS:4480 Literature and Translation 3 s.h.
Translation in the broadest sense; originality, authority, authorship, accuracy, ownership, audience; issues problematizing differences between medium and message.

TRNS:4497 Techniques of Translation 3 s.h.
Taught in French. Prerequisites: FREN:3300. Same as FREN:4890.

TRNS:4500 Undergraduate Capstone Project 0-3 s.h.
Culmination of undergraduate minor in translation for global literacy; translation manuscript or a scholarly/research thesis on topics relevant to scope of minor. Requirements: approval of the program coordinator of the undergraduate minor in translation for global literacy; consent of a faculty member willing to serve as director of the capstone project.

TRNS:4800 Seminar in Comparative Literature 3 s.h.
Focus on comparative, interdisciplinary, theoretical, and/or inter-arts topic; topics vary; required for comparative literature major. Taught in English. Same as CL:4800, GRMN:4800, WLLC:4801.

TRNS:5205 International Translation Workshop 1-3 s.h.
International writers pair with University of Iowa translators to write new works of poetry and fiction in English; second-language fluency not required for international writers. Same as IWP:5205.

TRNS:5491 Translation Internship arr.

TRNS:5500 Advanced Translation Practice 1-3 s.h.
Substantial translation project guided by a faculty advisor; readings and assignments designed to help translator with particular tasks and challenges presented by the project; translation and critical/reflective writing. Prerequisites: TRNS:6459 and TRNS:7460. Requirements: advanced-level translator in literary translation M.F.A. program.

TRNS:5999 Publishing, Prizes, and Prestige 3 s.h.
Introduction to contemporary world literature and its producers, circulation, and gatekeepers; students award the annual Translator's Choice Award for a literary translation published in the previous calendar year. Taught in English.

TRNS:6000 The Craft and Contexts of Translation 1 s.h.
Focus on craft and contexts of translation practice; provides students with information and experience regarding the profession and practice of translation; readings, reflective writing, and participation at guest events that focus on topics and practices relevant to the craft and professional contexts of translation.

TRNS:6050 Independent Study arr.

TRNS:6400 Thesis arr.
Translation thesis with critical introduction.

TRNS:6459 Issues in Translation 3 s.h.
Contemporary and historical theories.

TRNS:6555 Translator-in-Residence Workshop 3 s.h.
Translation workshop facilitated by the translator-in-residence; focus on review and revision of student manuscripts; readings on technique and theories, translation practice, and manuscript review.

TRNS:7460 Translation Workshop 3 s.h.
Requirements: at least one foreign language. Same as IWP:7460.