



DESCRIPTION Scholars are often hard at work to reveal the underlying politics behind a work of translation. However, what happens when a text is translated because of its politics? How do we think about translation then? This course explores the translation of politics from the point of view of solidarity. It explores how individual translators selected and transmitted the causes of the peoples of the Levant to a global, anglophone audience. It challenges a prevalent concept of world literature that attempts to neutralize the work of solidarity and emphasizes instead how translators perceive their work as global cultural producers that not only work to translate a text into a new language, but labor for a world where the word is mightier than the gun.

REQUIREMENTS

- 1- Attendance at scheduled meetings is required. Everyone is allowed three absences for any reason for which no excuse is necessary. If you miss the class more than three times (unless there is a death in your immediate family or you are hospitalized), your final grade will be lowered accordingly.
- 2- Readings must be completed before class. You should come prepared to discuss the readings and be ready to share passages that caught your attention or that you highlighted. Please come to class with your own printed or electronic copy of the work to be discussed on the assigned day.
- 3- You are required to participate in class discussions. Your participation should be based on the readings and the work I expect of you. Shyness is acceptable if Moodle participation on the class forum shows your engagement with the class. You will be required to keep a **reception journal** (of at least 6 entries), which I will collect a few times during the semester. It should provide evidence of your research in the course, and will count as part of your participation grade. Two of the reception pieces must be about the public lectures you attended.
- 4- You will sit for a midterm exam on March 12 and write an essay on the texts we read and the issues we have discussed in class.
- 5- Your research/interpretive/comparative **essay**, about 2000 words, is due on the last day of class. Two weeks before the due date, submit a **precis** of about 250 words. *All work should be proofread for mechanical errors before submission.*

Bonus points will be awarded for seeking to publish reviews or critical responses on course material, in *Rusted Radishes*, *Outlook*, *Romman*, *Al-Jumhuriya*, or other established venues.

ASSESSMENT

Your grade will derive from the following formula:

- Reception journal (10%)
- Participation and Attendance (10%)
- Midterm Exam (30%)
- Precis (10%)
- Final paper (40%)

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students will develop critical perspectives on the following three questions:

1. What are the assumptions that govern the work of a translator engaged in struggles of solidarity? And what happens to literature proper when it is marketed for politics?
2. What is the impact of such translated books on the representations of Levantine people in the world? Who is the audience of these texts? And do they enter a solidarity “market”?
3. What are the untranslatables that confront translators of literature for politics? And what kind of politics of translation are employed in individual texts?

REQUIRED TEXTS

Make sure you have the version of the books being sold at the AUB Bookstore. [Titles of books are in *italics*. Other readings are available on Moodle.]

1. *Khirbet Khiza* by **Yizhar Smilansky**
2. *The Stillborn* by **Arwa Saleh**, Trans. Samah Selim
3. *We Crossed a Bridge and it Trembled* **Wendy Perlman**
4. *Translating Egypt’s Revolution* **Samia Mehrez**
5. *The Bilingual Anthology of the Nahda* by **Tarek el-Ariss** et. al.
6. *Limbo Beirut* **Hilal Chouman**
7. *Returning to Haifa* **Ghassan Kanafani**
8. Selections from Modern Poetry in Translation **Golan Haji**
9. Selections **Marilyn Hacker**’s translations of Arab women poets
10. “Ani min al-Yahud,” **Almog Behar**

THEORETICAL TEXTS

~on Moodle~

1. “What Is a Relevant Translation” **Jacques Derrida**
2. “Translation after 9/11” **Emily Apter**
3. “Beyond the Spectacle” by **Mona Baker**
4. “Translator vs. Author: Girls of Riyadh go to New York” **Marilyn Booth**
5. “Reading Edward Said in Hebrew” **Ella Shohat**
6. “On the Concept of History” **Walter Benjamin**
7. “Rigoberta Menchu in Print” **David Damrosch**
8. Selections from *The Sound of Listening* **Philip Metres**
9. “The Unmaking of the Arab intellectual” **Zeina Halabi**
10. Changing the Subject **miriam cooke**
11. A New Research Agenda: Exploring Transglobal Hip Hop **H. Samy Alim**

RECOMMENDED READING

~ on Moodle~

1. “Traveling Theory” by **Edward Said**
WEEK 7
2. “Engaged Literature” by **Jean Paul Sartre**
WEEK 2
3. Nael al-Toukhi Translator’s Intro to Teshhala w Hazkil
WEEK 13
4. “A Critique of Solidarity” **Yassin Haji Saleh**
WEEK 4

WEEKLY SYLLABUS

Week 1 (January 29) Course Introduction: Our Linked World

Schedule a meeting in the library.

Class Guest: Elias Tanyus

Week 2 (February 5) Literature and the politics of Representation

Returning to Haifa by **Ghassan Kanafani**

[Recommended reading: **Jean Paul Sartre**]

Week 3 (February 12) The Politics of Translating Lost Causes

Reception history: Research by students on the reception of Edward Said

“Reading Edward Said in Hebrew” **Ella Shohat**

“Changing the Subject” from *Women Claim Islam* **miriam cooke**

[submission of homework]

Week 4 (February 19) Worlding Arabic Literature between Solidarity and the Market

“Translator vs Author” **Marilyn Booth**

Rigoberta Menchu in Print (Chapter 8) **David Damrosch**

“A Critique of Solidarity” **Yassin Haj Saleh**

Week 5 (February 26) Poetry and Representation

Selections from *Modern Poetry in Translation* **Golan Haji**

Selected translations of Arab women poets **Marilyn Hacker**

Selections from *The Sound of Listening* **Philip Metres**

A New Research Agenda: Exploring the Transglobal Hip Hop **Umma H. Samy**

Week 6 (March 5) The Politics of Translating the Idiosyncratic

Limbo Beirut **Hilal Shouman**

“What Is a Relevant Translation?” **Jacques Derrida**

Alim

Tarjamat Guest Lecture: Philip Metres at 4:00 pm

[Suggested reading: **Marilyn Hacker** on Moving Between Poetry and Translation]

Week 7 (March 12) Midterm Exam

March 14: Tarjamat Guest Lecture: Jeff Leong

March 15: Book Launch: The Anthology of the Arab Renaissance (and mini conf with Dartmouth group)

Week 8 (March 19) Translating the Arab Spring

Translating Egypt's Revolution **Samia Mehrez**

“Beyond the Spectacle ” **Mona Baker**

[Recommended reading: **Edward Said**]

Week 9 (March 26) Translating the Syrian War

We Crossed a Bridge and It Trembled **Wendy Pearlman**

Selections from *The Unmaking of the Arab Intellectual* **Zeina Halabi**

[Suggested reading: “Second Hand Time” **Svetlana Alexievich**]

Class Guest: Karam Nachar

Week 10 (April 2) The Politics of Translating the Arab Nahda

The Bilingual Anthology of the Nahda
On the Concept of History **Walter Benjamin**

Week 11 (April 9) Translation as Intervention
Reception of *Khirbet Khiza* (research by students on the English, Arabic and Hebrew receptions of this novel)

Week 12 (April 16) Translating the Enemy
Khirbet Khiza ~~Indicate if you will read the text in Arabic~~
“Translation after 9/11” **Emily Apter**

Week 13 (April 23) Solidarity and Breaking Stereotypes
“Ani min al-yahud” **Almog Behar**
[Recommended reading: **Nael al-Toukhi** Translator’s Intro to Teshhala w Hazkil]

Week 14 (April 30) Translation and Rewriting History
The Stillborn **Arwa Saleh**

Week 15 (May 7) *Wrap Up*