

Translation Studies

The secondary field in Translation Studies offers students the opportunity to undertake a sustained study of the theory and practice of translation. More than simply examining how meaning is transferred from one language to another, Translation Studies opens up a space to examine linguistic encounter and exchange across languages, as well as across multiple cultures and disciplines. Students who pursue a secondary field in Translation Studies will root their translation work within language study, but they will be able to expand their engagement with the art and craft of translation to encompass questions raised by different genres, media, and disciplinary questions and practices.

Housed in the Department of Comparative Literature, the secondary field in Translation Studies allows students to deepen their interaction with a non-English language, to take courses across departments that consider a range of theoretical issues raised by the process of translation (for example, problems of language and style, issues of power dynamics in the uneven global landscape, and strategies for re-inscribing elements of a non-English text within an American or Anglophone context), and to engage in a capstone translation project.

Students who pursue a secondary field in Translation Studies must be sufficiently proficient in a non-English language to translate a non-English work into English. This proficiency can be demonstrated through (1) the completion of one upper-level language course or (2) an hourlong translation exam administered by the Department of Comparative Literature. If a student wishes to work in a non-English language not offered at Harvard, every effort will be made to find local resources to support the interest.

The secondary field in Translation Studies will likely be of particular interest to students concentrating in the humanities; however, the participation of students from outside of the humanities who are interested in translation and intercultural communication is strongly encouraged as well.

REQUIREMENTS

Translation Studies: 5 courses (20 credits)

1. One to two foundational courses offered in the Department of Comparative Literature on the history and/or theory of translation or the transnational intersection of languages and literatures (for example, COMPLIT 108: Translating World Literature, COMPLIT 109: On Translation, COMPLIT 264: Thinking and Writing Transculturally, and COMPLIT 281: Rhetoric, Imitation, Translation).
2. One to two upper-level language courses focusing on translation into and/or from a non-English language.
3. One to two courses that consider translational issues from a variety of subjects or disciplines (for example, COMPSCI 287R: Deep Learning for NLP, First-Year Seminar 36G: The Creative Work of Translating, SP 150: Migration and Border Crossing in Film and Photography, and TDM 147L: The Process of Inter-Media and Choreographic Exchange).
4. One capstone project involving the translation of a non-English work into English, with critical commentary and introduction. Students may either participate in a four-credit semester-long workshop led by members of the Comparative Literature faculty in which

they will develop their project and present their work in progress or in one of the translation courses offered in Comparative Literature that does not fulfill another requirement.

5. In addition to the required course work, students pursuing a secondary field in Translation Studies will be encouraged to participate in various local co-curricular seminars, workshops, and presentations addressing issues in the field (for example, the Rethinking Translation Seminar at the Mahindra Humanities Center, the Boston University lecture series on translation, and Woodberry Poetry room events).

OTHER INFORMATION

All courses, with the exception of First-Year Seminars, which are graded SAT/UNS, must be taken for a letter grade and passed with a B- or better. Students pursuing a secondary field in Translation Studies may take one First-Year Seminar for credit.

Harvard-approved study abroad courses taken either during term time or through a Harvard Summer School study abroad program may count toward the secondary field in Translational Studies with approval from the Director of Undergraduate Studies.

Students may double-count one course for concentration credit and for secondary field credit.

ADVISING RESOURCES AND EXPECTATIONS

The Director of Undergraduate Studies (DUS), Dr. Sandra Naddaff (snaddaff@fas.harvard.edu), will oversee the secondary field in Translation Studies, and students are encouraged to consult her for advice and information. They should also consult the Translation Studies link on the Comparative Literature Department website, which lists relevant courses and other information and events of interest.

Students should declare a secondary field in Translation Studies through the “My Program” section of my.harvard.edu as soon as possible, but no later than the course registration deadline of the first semester of senior year. All students pursuing a secondary field in Translation Studies should meet with the DUS in the semester before graduation to ensure that they are on track to fulfill the necessary requirements.