

MGCS 5033

Accommodating the Provocative Others: Translation and Cultural Encounters between China and the West

Professor Shengqing Wu

Course Description

The course will delve into concepts of translation and travel as complex literary and cultural practices, examining them against the backdrop of cross-cultural exchanges between China and its foreign “others.” Some specific topics for discussion would include how translations of Western literature left a strong imprint on modern Chinese literature and culture and how Western canonical writers were received and reinterpreted in China. Also on the agenda will be discussions on the translation and appropriation of Chinese culture into the Western context. The cases used as examples would include the classical Chinese poetry, creatively “translated” by Ezra Pound, and its relationship with the development of Anglo-American imagist poetry and poetics, and Chinese diasporas’ complex ties to their native ethos and the resulting evolution of new cultural forms. Students will be guided to engage in critical thinking on the following issues: whether the commonsensical understanding of translation as a mode of finding conceptual equivalents in different cultural and linguistic contexts is sufficient or misleading; how the cultural encounters between China and the West led to new techniques of translation and forms of cultural representation; how to understand and resolve the issue of (un)translatability and (in)communicability in the present age of globalization and cultural hybridity.

Class Schedule

NO. THEME

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| L1 | Introduction to the course: the politics of cross-cultural reading & Translation theory |
| L2 | Translation and Adaptation |
| L3 | Translation and Key Concepts |
| L4 | Science, Travel and World Imagination |
| L5 | Translation and Literary Form (short stories) |
| L6 | Translating Modernity |
| L7 | Translating Chinese Poetry into English: Wang Wei and Ezra Pound |
| L8 | Representing China: The Last Emperor |
| L9 | Asian American Literature and Film |
| L10 | From Translation to Hybridity |

Grading and Evaluation:

1. Attendance, class participation, presentation, and short assignments: 40%
2. Group project: 10%
3. Final paper: 50%

Major Readings:

Susan Bassnett: *Translation Studies* (Routledge, 3rd edition), p.22-46.

Lawrence Venuti: *The Translator's Invisibility*, chap. 1.

Lydia Liu: *Translingual Practice: Literature, National Culture, and Translated*

Monderity-China, 1900-1937 (Stanford UP, 1995), chap 1.

林紓 《巴黎茶花女遺事》；王振孫 《茶花女》

嚴復 《天演論》

吳趸人 《新石頭記》