

Cinema and Translation
048:110
Spring 2008

Mo 8-10PM
Tue/Thur 9:30-10:45AM
E205 AJB

Instructor:

Nataša Durovićová

Office hours:

Mo 1-3PM (100 Shambaugh House)

Thurs 10:45-11:45 (W235 AJB), and by appt.

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• **Course description:**

This course takes its point of departure from a three-way contradiction: (a) cinema gained its central place in the modern media systems because it seemed to fulfill the ancient dream of a ‘universal language,’ yet b) to circulate globally it did in fact always also require some form of adaptation to local conditions, most often in the form of translation, and (c) it is in the nature of translation to remain invisible or unnoticed. We will track this “invisible-but-indispensable” supplement of cinema through its various manifestations, from early cinema’s intertitles in relation to speech, through strategies developed to make a film produced in one country accessible in another (dubbing, subtitling, multilingual production, remakes), to the most recent digital resources for making a film’s DVD avatar speak any language on earth. Along the way we will also take up more traditional translatorial concerns, such a faithfulness to the original, and translation of cultures. Among topics considered will be cinema and the search for a universal language, the problem of the body-voice divide, cognitive approaches to reading words vs. reading images, authorship and remakes, the politics of exhibition in border regions and at film festivals, blockbuster “localization” in global DVD distribution, etc.

• **Evaluation:**

(a) (Very) active class participation: **25%**, Sign-in sheet to each class with a question, comment or idea you wish discuss in class. Each student will be responsible for reporting on one reading assignment. Class and screening absence not cleared beforehand will affect the grade.

(b) An in-class presentation week 10 (?) discussing 1 film and some aspect of its translation. **25%**

(c) A final paper (10-12 pages) **50%** (of which 10% for presentation of outline in week 15)

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• Course readings are posted on ICON

• **Reserve texts:**

Balfour, Ian and Atom Egoyan, eds: *Subtitles: On the Foreignness of Film* (MIT: 2004)

Cronin, Michael, *Globalization and Translation* (Routledge, 2003)

Kahn, Douglas: *Noise, Water, Meat : A History of Sound in the Arts* (MIT, 1999)

O’Brien, Charles: *Cinema’s Conversion to Sound: Technology and Film Style in France and the US* (Indiana UP, 2005)

ACADEMIC PROCEDURES:

Academic Fraud

Plagiarism and any other activities that result in a student presenting work that is not his or her own are academic fraud. Academic fraud is reported to the departmental DEO and then to the Associate Dean for Academic Programs and Services in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences who deals with academic fraud according to these guidelines:

www.clas.uiowa.edu/students/academic_handbook/ix.shtml

Making a Suggestion or a Complaint

Students have the right to make suggestions or complaints and should first visit with the instructor, then with the course supervisor if appropriate, and next with the departmental DEO. All complaints must be made within six months of the incident.

www.clas.uiowa.edu/students/academic_handbook/ix.shtml#5

Accommodations for Disabilities

A student seeking academic accommodations should first register with Student Disability Services and then meet with a SDS counselor who determines eligibility for services. A student approved for accommodations should meet privately with the course instructor to arrange particular accommodations. See www.uiowa.edu/~sds/

Understanding Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment subverts the mission of the University and threatens the well-being of students, faculty, and staff. See www.sexualharassment.uiowa.edu/

Reacting Safely to Severe Weather

If severe weather is indicated by the UI outdoor **warning system**, class members will seek shelter in the innermost part of the building, if possible at the lowest level, staying clear of windows and of free-standing expanses which might prove unstable. The class will resume after the severe weather has ended. See the Operations Manual section **16.14. i**.

CLAS recommends that instructors include relevant resources for students on the syllabus. The following are examples of such resources that might be included:

- **Writing Center** 110 English-Philosophy Building, 335-0188, www.uiowa.edu/~writingc
- **Speaking Center** 12 English-Philosophy Building, 335-0205, www.uiowa.edu/~rhetoric/centers/speaking
- **Tutor Referral Service** Campus Information Center, Iowa Memorial Union, 335-3055, www.imu.uiowa.edu/cic/tutor_referral_service

University Examination Policies

Missed exam policy. University policy requires that students be permitted to make up examinations missed because of illness, mandatory religious obligations, certain University activities, or unavoidable circumstances. Excused absence forms are available at the Registrar web site:

www.registrar.uiowa.edu/forms/absence.pdf

WEEKLY SCHEDULE
DRAFT 3

week 1

Mo: No screening (holiday)

Tues: *Introduction: the course topic at the intersection of three disciplines.*

What elements go into this course?

1. Cinema history and film studies [prosthetic machine for 'world vision'/ technology of self/of data/distribution/media landscape] [*Singing in the Rain, Second Current*]
2. Globalization: geopolitics, transnational formations, political economy [*youTube subtitles clip*]
3. Translation studies: a) problems of language equivalency, b) problems of communication [*Lost in Translation, Click*]

--interdisciplinary

--comparative (always 2 films/drafts/version)

--"from the margins": invisibility made visible.

Thurs: cinema's globalization

Read: Shohat and Stam, "Cinema After Babel"

week 2: Globalization + Translation + Cinema

Mo: *The Passion of the Christ (USA, Gibson, 2004)*

Tues: translation and globalization: some keywords.

Read: Bielsa, "Globalisation as Translation"

Thurs: cinema, translation, and spreading the word.

Read: Poses, "Your Own Personal Jesus" esp 18-45; visit www.jesusfilm.org

• **Presentation:** Scott Cordts on Eugene Nida "Toward a Science of Bible Translation"

week 3 Cinema and the dream of universal language

Mo: *Intolerance: A drama of Comparisons* (USA. D.W. Griffith, 1916)

Tues: Early cinema and mobility

Read: Bordwell & Thompson on early cinema

Gunning, "The Whole World Within Reach: Travel Images Without Borders", Skaff on Polish border cinemas

• **Presentation:** Michael Kostka on early cinema's worldwide distribution and exhibition.

Thurs: Cultural paradigm: cinema and universal language(s)

Read: Hansen, "Hieroglyphics, Figurations of Writing", Rossholm, 36-44

week 4: Grounding silent cinema: transition to sound.

Mo: clips from *The-Jazz Singer, Prix de Beauté, Masterpieces of Japanese Silents, Keaton*

Tues: late silents, early sound.

Read : Rossholm 77-97, Altman "Moving Lips: Cinema as Ventriloquism," (Durovicova Local Ghosts)

Thurs: Japan and the benshi

Read: Mahleb, "The Art of Katsuben in Early Japanese Cinema" Recommended: Freiberg, "Transition to Sound in Japan"

week 5 : Foreign language versions, translation through seriality

Mo: *Der blaue Engel/ Blue Angel* (Germany: von Sternberg, 1930)

Tues: Language as performance.

Read: Rossholm pp. 51-76

Thurs: Comparing two versions

Read: Petro, “*The Blue Angel* in Multiple-Language Versions: The Inner Thighs of Miss Dietrich”
Garncarz, “Making Films Comprehensible and Popular Abroad”

week 6: Remakes: Translation as adaptation

Mo: *Pepé le Moko* (Duvivier, France, 1937) and *Algiers* (Cromwell, USA, 1938)

Tues: (finish the screening)

Read: D. Grossvogel, “Pepe le Moko/Algiers”

Thurs: T. Leitch, « Twice-Told Tales: Disavoval and the Rhetoric of the Remake »

week 7: Dubbing (1): Politics of voice replacement. Censorship and post-synch.

Mo: *La vita e bella* (Italy, R.Benigni, 1997)

Tues: Nuts and bolts of dubbing.

Read: Paolinelli, “Dubbing at the Gates of 3rd Millennium”, Meyer-Dinkgrafe, “Dubbing Practice in Germany”

Thurs: Politics of voice replacement

Read: Ferrari, “*The Nanny* in Italy,” McNamara, “Dubbing Key to Foreign Sales”, and Maluf, “Why Dubbing Has Not Caught on in the Arab World” and Baumgarten pp. 239-242 (ch. 11/sect. 1).
Shaochan, “Dubbing in China” is optional.

week 8: Dubbing (2): other ways of matching body and voice

Mo: *Anniyan* (S.Shankar, India, 2005)

clips : *On connaît la chanson* (A. Resnais, France 1997) and TBA

Tues/Thurs: alternative models of sound and synchronization

Read: Borges, “On Dubbing,” Chion, “Projections of Sound on Image”,

• **Presentation:** Brock Swanson on M. A. Doane, “Voice in Cinema: the Articulation of Body and Space”

Thurs: Creekmur, “Popular Hindi Cinema and the Film Song”

• **Presentation:** Ben McClintock on Antje Aschied “ Speaking in Tongues: Dubbing as Cultural Ventriloquism”

week 9 Subtitles: speech-as-picture

Mo: *Night Watch* (Russia: T Bekmambetov, 2005), *Second Current* (USA, Peter Rose, 1998)

Tues/Thur: projection of text on image.

Read: Hajmohammadi, “Viewer as the Focus of Subtitling”, Carroll, “Subtitling and Directions in New Media”

Thurs: Read: Sinha, “Use and Abuse of Subtitles” (possibly Cazdyn, “A New Line in the Geometry”)

• **Presentation:** Adam Jespersen on Nornes, “For an Abusive Subtitling”

week 10: Student presentations**Mo: *Crouching Tiger Hidden Dragon* (USA, Ang Lee, 2000)**

student film presentations (either film pres or subtitling/dubbing hands-on, or country study)

week 11: Polylinguals (1) : a new genre?**Mo: *Le grand Voyage* (France, I. Ferroukhi, 2005)**clips: *HBIP, Cuckoo, Divine Intervention*Tues/Thurs: transnational geographies, border spaces

Read: Ferroukhi Interview, C. Wahl, "Discovering A Genre", B. Schaber, "Found in Translation," Heiss, "Dubbing Multilingual Films"

week 12: Polylinguals (2): translation--resistant films; the accented voice**Mo: *Russian Ark* (Russia: A. Sokurov, 2001) or TBA**clips : *Knoflikari, Prenom Viet Given Name Nam* (USA, Trinh T. Minh-ha, 1983)Tues: new acoustic and political spacesRead: Halligan, "The Remaining Second World: Sokurov and *Russian Ark*", Naficy "Epistolarity and Textuality in Accented Cinema," Lu, "Dialect and Modernity in 21st Century Sinophone Cinema" and TBA-----
week 13: Cinema and 'World English'**Mo: *Dancer in the Dark* (Denmark, L. von Trier, 2000)**

Read; Hjort and Mackenzie, TBA

• **Presentation:** Alison Voshell on John Mowitt, "The Hollywood Sound Tract"**week 14: State of the Art: translation in the age of digital cinema****Mo:** TBA

Possible topics:

New countries' cinemas and their language policies.

DVDs and localization: the case of *Lord of the Rings*

Translation in the context of piracy. Fan subbing/Anime.

New technologies of translation/morphing.

Terrorism and the foreign voice.

week 15: Student paper presentations**Mo: *Babel* (USA, Iñaritu, 2006)**

Read: Patricia Pistors, "The Mosaic Film"