

## Modern Language Center (MLC) (AM/LANG 330) The Art of Translation

**Total Hours:** 45

**Recommended Credits:** 3

**Primary Discipline / Suggested Cross-Listings:** Arabic Language / Linguistics / Applied Linguistics / Translation Studies

**Language of Instruction:** Arabic & English

**Prerequisites:** ACTFL Novice High or equivalent; final placement at discretion of the Academic Director.

### Course Description

This course provides a comprehensive and academically rigorous introduction to the art and science of translation between Arabic and English. Translation in this course is approached not merely as a technical process, but as a dynamic intellectual practice that requires sensitivity to language, culture, context, and intention. Students explore how translation functions as a bridge between two linguistic worlds—each with its own structural rules, idiomatic traditions, rhetorical norms, and cultural assumptions.

The course examines key contrasts between Arabic and English across phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics, and pragmatics. Students learn how to navigate structural asymmetry between the two languages, including differences in sentence architecture, word order flexibility, metaphorical density, idiomatic frequency, and stylistic ornamentation. Through these explorations, learners begin to understand how deeper cultural and historical forces shape linguistic expression and influence translation choices.

Emphasis is placed on developing the ability to distinguish between literal translation, free translation, interpretive translation, and communicative translation. Students gain hands-on experience analyzing texts across genres—including news, literature, political commentary, legal documents, academic prose, advertising, and social media—learning how context determines appropriate translation strategies. The course also introduces basic theories of translation, including equivalence, skopos theory, cultural translation, and contrastive analysis.

Through guided practice, peer collaboration, and instructor feedback, students build accuracy, linguistic flexibility, and critical awareness. By the end of the term, students will have developed the skills necessary to produce translations that are faithful, readable, and stylistically appropriate, while also gaining deeper insight into how Arabic and English encode meaning in different ways.

### Objectives

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

- Identify linguistic, stylistic, and cultural differences that shape translation choices between Arabic and English.
- Apply core translation strategies—literal, semantic, communicative, and adaptive—based on textual purpose and audience.
- Distinguish between written translation and oral interpretation and practice each effectively.

Analyze the structural grammar differences between both languages and negotiate meaning across different.

sentence forms.

- Build thematic and specialized translation abilities in fields such as politics, media, economics, literature, and social sciences.
- Demonstrate the ability to translate with precision, coherence, and stylistic appropriateness across multiple genres.
- Interpret idiomatic expressions, figurative language, metaphors, and culturally embedded expressions with contextual accuracy.

Produce analytical commentary explaining translation decisions using academic terminology.

## Course Requirements

Students must complete all assigned readings and translation tasks before class. Success in this course depends on active participation, engagement with peer work, and consistent practice.

### Assignments include:

- **Weekly Homework:** Translation exercises (Arabic → English and English → Arabic), reflective notes, and vocabulary reviews.
  - **Interpretation Tasks:** In-class oral interpretation assignments to build spontaneous comprehension and rapid transfer of meaning.
  - **Midterm Exam:** A structured written translation examination and a short interpretation component.
  - **Final Project:** A 5-page written translation of a selected text, accompanied by an oral presentation analyzing translation choices.
  - **Participation:** Active involvement in discussions, peer review sessions, and vocabulary workshops.
- Students must maintain communication with the instructor regarding challenges and academic needs, using difficulties as learning opportunities for the entire class.

## Grading

**Participation:** 20%

**Homework:** 20%

**In-class Interpretation Tasks:** 20%

**Midterm & Final Exams:** 20%

**Final Translation Project & Presentation:** 20%

## Readings

Representative readings include foundational works in translation studies, Arabic linguistics, and contrastive analysis. Assigned texts support both theoretical understanding and practical skill-building.

### Primary Texts:

- Farghal, Mohammed — *Literary Translation: A Schema-Theoretic Model*.
- Shammas & Naama — *Semantics and Syntax*.
- Yahya Al-Aridi & Ramez Al-Bainy — *A Coursebook on Translation English-Arabic-English*.
- Ramez Al-Bainy — *Political Terminology and Translation*.
- Merhi & Ramadan — *Commercial Studies in English*.
- Shammas — *Written Translation Theory and Practice*.
- Salma J. Haddad — *Interpreting: Confidence-Building Strategies*.
- Maysoon Zahri — *A Workbook in Contrastive Analysis*.
- Biguenet & Schulte — *Theories of Translation*.
- Munday, Jeremy — *Introducing Translation Studies*.

### Additional Resources

Supplementary materials include:

- Excerpts from modern translation theory anthologies
- Articles on idiomatic translation and metaphor interpretation
- Practical exercises from student internship placements
- Comparative analyses of news translation, political discourse, and literary style

Additional resources support specialization in areas chosen by students toward the end of the semester

### Outline of Course Content

#### Topic 1 – Foundations of Translation (2 weeks)

- Nature of translation as science and art
- Pragmatics and cultural influence

#### Topic 2 – Building a Structural Base (2 weeks)

- Grammar contrasts between Arabic and English
- Core interpretation skills

#### Topic 3 – Types of Translation (2 weeks)

- Written vs. simultaneous translation
- Literal vs. idea-based translation
- Meaning extraction and text logic

#### **Topic 4 – Contextual Translation Practice (2 weeks)**

- Moving beyond dictionary dependence
- Spirit and tone of the text
- Interpretation drills

#### **Topic 5 – Style & Register (2 weeks)**

- Managing Arabic stylistic density and English conciseness
- Handling figurative language, metaphors, and rhetorical devices

#### **Topic 6 – Applied Translation (2 weeks)**

- Translation tasks based on internship texts
- Peer feedback and collaborative processing

#### **Topic 7 – Specialization (1 week)**

- Students choose a field (politics, literature, news, economics, poetry)
- Final presentations on translation strategies within chosen field

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