

HNRS 400:

The Multilingual Subject
THE MULTILINGUAL SUBJECT COURSE

Monday and Wednesday, 4pm-5:15pm

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Department of German Studies

Web site: livelongday.info

The University of Arizona, Spring 2012

Classroom: Psychology 206

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What does it mean to live in more than one language? Is “being multilingual” a personal talent, a burden of circumstance, a political necessity, a source of pleasure and knowledge, or a curse of history? In this interdisciplinary honors seminar, we will work with a range of philosophical, literary, historical, linguistic, and filmic texts in order to gain a richer understanding of the human condition in multiple-language settings and situations. We will seek to discover how competence in more than one language has enriched intellectual traditions, given rise to new aesthetic forms, and changed the course of history. Considering how many University of Arizona students engage in spontaneous translation and “code-switching” on a daily basis, the goal of this course is to provide you with a conceptual vocabulary through which to identify and analyze the many benefits—and dilemmas—of living beyond monolingualism.

Course Pre-Requisites:

- Membership in the UofA Honors College
- Working familiarity with one or more language, broadly conceived (though English will be the primary language of communication).

Course Materials:

- Daily readings and discussion / blog questions available [here](#) at livelongday.info .
- Miguel Syjuco, *Ilustrado: A Novel*, 2010.
- Anton Shammas, *Arabesques*, 1986. Translated from the Hebrew by Vivian Eden.
- Franz Kafka, *Amerika*, circa 1913. Translated from the German by Michael Hofmann.
- Films TBA, or at home.

Course Requirements

i. e., what you will need to do, in chronological order. (Note: Physical attendance at all but two of the class meetings throughout the semester is a precondition for the following requirements.)

- 1) **Check-in and Participation:** For each class, prepare a 30-second to one-minute opening observation about one idea, concept, detail, problem, or discovery that the material assigned for that day’s class has led you to. Respond respectfully and insightfully to the contributions of your colleagues.
- 2) **Rotating Class Blogger:** Take turns being the class blogger for our Web site. This means that you write a summary of the issues and questions discussed, post links to

- any materials that came up during the discussion, and add questions for further exploration. Post responses to your colleagues' blog entries.
- 3) **Weekly Reaction Blog:** Blog at hnrs400.wordpress.com at least once a week (250 words, plus multimedia elements) on some specific aspect of the materials you've engaged with for that day's class. I will give you questions on each reading, but feel free to substitute your own analytical question as a springboard for each blog you submit. These blog entries are to be analytical-critical pieces, rather than moral-political statements of judgment. When in doubt, err on the side of nuance and detail, rather than generality and pronouncement. While using your own style and voice. Stay as close to the assigned materials as possible (short quotations with page numbers are helpful), but feel free to engage with contemporary / historical issues in the news or elsewhere. As you write, assume that your readers have **not** read the pieces you're discussing. This does not mean, however, that you ought to recapitulate the essay for them. As always, standard MLA citation practices obtain. Creative blog entries are also an option, and you may use the blog to pursue ideas for your final project. [Note: If you want to keep any of your blog entries private, i.e. between yourself and the instructor, you may submit them directly via email.] Blog entries are due at 6am on the day of class, and no later.
 - 4) **Short Talks:** (Two per semester, 5-7 minutes each, as befits your schedule) on a discovery or theme related to the course. Let me know the day before class whether you would like to give a Short Talk on that day.
 - 5) **Final Project:** You will produce a 4000-word analytical, creative, or translation project on a topic of your choosing related to the course. Abstracts of 300 words, detailing your proposal for the piece, are due on Monday, Mar. 19. You will receive detailed feedback on this proposal shortly thereafter. Final drafts are due on Monday, May 7 and no later. In the case of a translation project, you will need to write an additional 1000-word reflective analysis about the process, rationale, and potential impact of your translation. Word counts for the projects include references, footnotes, front and back matter.
 - 6) **Attendance and Participation in the Multilingual, 2.0? Symposium** on Friday-Sunday, April 13-15. See multilingual.arizona.edu for details. As you will notice, many of the authors and theorists we will be engaging with over the semester in this seminar will be here on campus for the April symposium, and you will be able to dialogue with them directly.

Grading

Each of the above requirements represents, in essence, one letter grade. Excellent performance on each requirement results, quite predictably, in an A for the course. Feel free to check in with the instructor early in the semester, if you have particular grade constraints, i.e. scholarships with minimum GPA's, etc.

Academic Integrity

Examples of academic dishonesty include: Copying or paraphrasing from assigned readings or any other sources without citing the source of information or ideas. If you paraphrase

from an assigned reading or another source, cite the source”¹ (as in this example) using the style of the Modern Language Association (MLA), which you can find online: <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/557/01/> .

Students engaging in academic dishonesty diminish their education and bring discredit to the academic community. Students shall not violate the Code of Academic Integrity and shall avoid situations likely to compromise academic integrity. Students shall observe the provisions of the Code. Failure of faculty to prevent cheating does not excuse students from compliance with the Code. For the complete Code, refer to <http://dos.web.arizona.edu/uapolicies/scc5308abcd.html>

Universal Access:

If you anticipate issues related to the format or requirements of this course, please meet with me. I would like us to discuss ways to ensure your full participation in the course. If you determine that formal, disability-related accommodations are necessary, it is very important that you be registered with Disability Resources (621-3268; drc.arizona.edu) or The Strategic Alternative Learning Techniques (*SALT*) Center² and notify me of your eligibility for reasonable accommodations. Once you have your letter of accommodations, please bring it to my attention as soon as possible. For further information, please see: <http://drc.arizona.edu/ada/index.html>.

We will be reading texts and watching films that deal with sensitive issues, and may therefore encounter hateful language, xenophobia, sexism, racism, trans/homophobia, adult content, and painful recollections from the authors' direct experiences. Should you feel uncomfortable discussing the required readings/films, and should you find that the content is too disturbing, you may want to enroll in another course. But I am always happy to help you find another solution.

I reserve the right to make changes to this course syllabus, with reasonable advance notice, and based on student needs.