

University of Cyprus

Department of English Studies

ENG 586 - Image and Text: Semiotics and Translation

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Office Hours: On Thursdays from 9:00-11:00 and on Fridays from 12:00 to 14:00

Office Hours Venue: B204 (Special Scientists' office), Building OEA 02 (Department of French and European Studies)

ECTS: 7,5

A. Course Description

This course is an introduction to semiotics, the study of signs and to semiotic (socio-semiotic and multimodal) approaches to translation. It aims to offer students the basic theoretical background required for the comprehension and analysis of multimodal texts and the transformations they may go through in the translation process. Initially, students will be exposed to the works of some of the most important and influential semioticians (Saussure, Peirce, Barthes, Greimas, Eco) and will be acquainted with various branches of the discipline (e.g. visual semiotics, social semiotics, multimodal semiotics). Particular attention will be paid to the intersemiotic and interlingual translation of theatre and film posters, advertisements, cartoons, comics, etc. by examining verbal (written or oral messages), iconic visual (iconic representation) and plastic visual (such as colour, size, emboldening) signs which compose such multimodal texts. In this sense, the course will investigate how such features interact in multimodal texts both in the original and translated texts. Isotopy, sign or resource, semic components (with the use of componential analysis), transmutation, semiosis, intersemiosis, intertextuality or intratextuality are some of the key concepts and tools that will help students understand how meaning is articulated and perceived but also reproduced/transposed in other verbal and non-verbal systems. The course will also consider and discuss cultural factors, which may affect choices in intersemiotic and interlinguistic translation.

B. Intended Learning Outcomes

At the end of the course, students are expected to:

- understand the importance of signs in their everyday communication;
- recognise signs, name and classify them according to the theoretical models that will be presented in this course;
- comprehend the interaction between texts and images and the impact of this relationship on translation;



- be able to do a semiotic analysis of multimodal texts (from a contrastive perspective) by using concepts and tools from semiotics.

To achieve these specified learning outcomes, students along with the instructor's notes will be asked to study various research papers (both articles and book chapters) within Semiotics and Translation Studies and do a research project following the teacher's instructions.

C. Educational Material Types

- Slide presentations
- Multimedia: mainly YouTube videos
- Book chapters and articles

D. References

- Barthes, Roland. (1967). *Elements of Semiology*. (trans. Annette Lavers & Colin Smith). London: Jonathan Cape.
- Barthes, Roland. (1977). *Image-Music-Text*. London: Fontana.
- Chandler, Daniel. (2001). *Semiotics: The Basics*. London: Routledge.
<http://www.wayanswardhani.lecture.ub.ac.id/files/2013/09/Semiotics-the-Basics.pdf>
- Borodo, Michał. (2015). Multimodality, translation and comics. *Perspectives*, 23:1, 22-41, DOI: 10.1080/0907676X.2013.876057
<http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/0907676X.2013.876057?needAccess=true>
- Eco, Umberto and Nergaard, Siri. (2001). Semiotic approaches. *Routledge Encyclopaedia of Translation Studies*. Ed. Mona Baker. London and New York: Routledge, 218-22. Print.
- Hodge, Robert and Kress, Gunther. (1988). *Social Semiotics*. Cambridge: Polity.
- Greimas, Algirdas. (1987). *On Meaning: Selected Writings in Semiotic Theory* (trans. Paul J Perron & Frank H Collins). London: Frances: Pinter.
- Kourdis, Evangelos. (2012). Semantic Isotopies in Interlingual Translation: Towards a Cultural Approach. *Gamma/Γράμμα* 20: 105-116. <http://www.enl.auth.gr/gramma/gramma12/C.2.pdf>
- Kourdis, Evangelos. (2013). Intersemiotic translation in shop signs. A proposal for marketing semiotics in the context of globalisation? *Acta Translatologica Helsingiensia* 2: 101-115.
- Kourdis, Evangelos and Yoka, Charikleia. (2014). Intericonicity as intersemiotic translation in a globalized culture. In Wang, Yongxiang, & Ji, Haihong (eds.), *Our World: A Kaleidoscopic Semiotic Network*. Proceedings of the 11th World Congress of the IASS/AIS, 5-9 October 2012, Nanjing Normal University, volume 3. Nanjing: Hohai University Press, 162-176.
https://ikee.lib.auth.gr/record/265113/files/Intericonicity_as_intersemiotic_translation_in_a_globalized_culture-libre.pdf
- Kourdis, Evangelos. (2015). Semiotics of Translation: An Interdisciplinary Approach to Translation. *International Handbook of Semiotics*, 303-320.
- Kourdis, Evangelos and Kukkonen, Pirjo. (2015). Introduction. Semiotics of Translation, Translation in Semiotics. *Punctum. International Journal of Semiotics* 1 (2): 5-10, <http://punctum.gr>.
- Kourdis, Evangelos. (2016). Colour as Intersemiotic Translation in Everyday Communication: A sociosemiotic approach. In Kristian Bankov (ed.), Proceedings of the 12th World Congress of the IASS/AIS: *New Semiotics. Between Tradition and Innovation*, 16-20 September 2014, New Bulgarian University of Sofia. Sofia: IASS Publications & NBU Publishing House.



- Kourdis, Evangelos. The notion of code in Semiotics and semiotically informed Translation Studies. A preliminary study. https://link.springer.com/content/pdf/10.1007/978-3-319-66914-4_21.pdf
- Kourdis, Evangelos and Damaskinides, Georgios. (2016). (Un)predictability in Verbal-Visual Interactions of English and French Caricatures Translated in the Greek Press. *Language and Semiotic Studies*. 2 (3).
- Kourdis, Evangelos and Loukia Kostopoulou. (2017). The Seduction of Translating Film Posters as imagetexts. In Evripides Zantides (ed.) *Semiotics and Visual Communication II: Culture of Seduction*. Publisher: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, Editors. https://ikee.lib.auth.gr/record/293714/files/The_Seduction_of_Translating_Film_Poster.pdf
- Kress, Gunther. and Van Leeuwen, T. (2002) Colour as a Semiotic Mode: Notes for a Grammar of Colour. *Visual Communication* 1(3): 343-368.
- Kress, Gunther and Van Leeuwen, Theo (2006). *Reading Images: The Grammar of Visual Design*. 2nd ed. London: Routledge.
- Seoboek, Thomas. (2001). *Signs: An Introduction to Semiotics*. https://monoskop.org/images/0/07/Sebeok_Thomas_Signs_An_Introduction_to_Semiotics_2nd_ed_2001.pdf
- Simpson, Paul. (2003). *On the Discourse of Satire: Towards a Stylistic Model of Satirical Humour*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Sonesson, Göran. (2014). Translation and other acts of meaning: In between cognitive semiotics and semiotics of culture. *Cognitive Semiotics* 7(2): 249-280.
- Torop, Peeter. (2000). Towards the semiotics of translation. *Semiotica* 128 (3): 597-609.
- Tryfonas, Peter-Pericles (ed.) (2015). *International Handbook of Semiotics*. Dordrecht: Springer.
- Van Leeuwen, Theo. (2005). *Introducing Social Semiotics*. London; New York: Routledge.
- Van Leeuwen, Theo. (2011). *The Language of Colour*. London and New York: Routledge.

E. Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is central to the ideals that define this course. Cheating such as looking at someone else's answers, misrepresenting your identity in the final exam, using someone else's ideas or words without appropriate acknowledgment (plagiarism) in your assignments or submitting someone else's work or even your own work in more than one course without the permission of the instructor are considered serious academic offences and are strictly forbidden. Moreover, making up sources or facts or obtaining or providing unauthorized assistance on your assignments do not comply with the academic code and are also seriously punished.

F. Attendance and participation Policy

Attendance and punctuality are very important for this course. Your attendance and quality of contribution to the class discussion will be assessed and reflected in the class participation score (10% of the final score). In case you are not able to attend a class, you should email and inform your instructor in advance. If you miss a class, it is your responsibility to find out what was delivered in class that day and if there were any assignments / instructions given by the course instructor. Note that excessive unexcused absence will result in my recommending that you withdraw from the course. Note also that the use of cell phones is strictly prohibited during class time: unless there is an emergency, you must switch off your cell phones before entering the classroom.

G. Office Hours and Availability

If you have any questions or wish to talk about course progression, course material or any other general methodology or literature question, you can come by my office (for office hours venue see page 1) on Thursdays from 9:00-11:00 and on Fridays from 12:00 to 14:00. If deemed necessary, you can email me at mariacon@ucy.ac.cy so as we schedule an appointment.

H. Course Assessment

Midterm: 40% (date TBA)

Hand-in Assignment: 50%

Attendance and Participation: 10%

I. Syllabus

Week 1-2: Introduction to semiotics:

- What is Semiotics? Semiotics vs Semiology;
- Introduction to important semioticians (Saussure, Greimas, Peirce, Barthes)
- Fundamental concepts of Semiotics
 - What is a sign?
 - The parts of a sign (signifier/ signified) according to Saussure
 - Sign and its composition according to Peirce / semiosis
 - Semiosis and representation
 - Classes of signs/ types of signification: icon, index, symbol (Peirce)
 - Distinction between different types of signs (verbal, iconic visual and plastic visual signs) (R. Barthes)
 - Denotation vs connotation (examples from advertisements) (R. Barthes) / connotations and myths
 - Paradigms and syntagms
 - 'Empty' or 'floating' signifiers
 - Intertextuality, intratextuality, isotopy

Reading materials:

- Chandler, Daniel. Semiotics for Beginners (electronic version) <http://visual-memory.co.uk/daniel/Documents/S4B/sem0a.html>
- Seboek, Thomas. (2001). Basic Notions. In : Thomas Soeboek Signs: An Introduction to Semiotics, 1-22
https://monoskop.org/images/0/07/Seboek_Thomas_Signs_An_Introduction_to_Semiotics_2nd_ed_2001.pdf

Week 3-4: Multimodality and social semiotics

- Differences between traditional semiotics and multimodal social semiotics
- Multimodality and its importance in everyday communication
- Arbitrariness vs motivated sign

- Sign vs semiotic resource/ semiotic affordance/ potential
- Four codes according to Asa Berger (metonymic, analogical, displaced and condensed codes)

Reading materials:

- Van Leeuwen, Theo. (2005). Part I. Semiotic principles. In Van Leeuwen, *Introducing Social Semiotics*, 1-24. London; New York: Routledge.
- Lester, Paul, M.. (2003). The Sensual and Perceptual Theories of Visual Communication. In *Visual Communication : Images with messages* (3rd edition) , 47-61 Belmont, CA: Thomson Wadsworth.

Week 5-7: Intersemiotic translation of multimodal texts

- Intersemiotic translation in mass media and everyday communication (advertisements, commercial signs, pictures, course books, shop signs, etc.)
- Colour as a semiotic resource/ metafunctions of colours
- Symbolic values of colours (in advertisements, photos of politicians etc.)/ textual cohesion and colour coordination
- Intericonicity and intersemiotic translation

Reading materials:

- Kourdis, Evangelos. (2016). Colour as Intersemiotic Translation in Everyday Communication: A sociosemiotic approach. In Kristian Bankov (ed.), *Proceedings of the 12th World Congress of the IASS/AIS: New Semiotics. Between Tradition and Innovation*, 16-20 September 2014, New Bulgarian University of Sofia. Sofia: IASS Publications & NBU Publishing House.
- Kress, Gunther. and Van Leeuwen, T. (2002). Colour as a Semiotic Mode: Notes for a Grammar of Colour, *Visual Communication* 1(3): 343-368.

Week 7-9: Intersemiotic and interlinguistic translation of multimodal texts I

- Translating theatre and film posters: investigating intersemiotic and interlinguistic shifts (examples will be taken from previous studies but also from online sources)

Reading materials:

- Kourdis, Evangelos. (2013). Intersemiotic translation in shop signs. A proposal for marketing semiotics in the context of globalisation?. *Acta Translatologica Helsingiensia* 2: 101–115,
- Kourdis, Evangelos and Loukia Kostopoulou. (2017). The Seduction of Translating Film Posters as imagetexts. In Evripides Zantides (ed.) *Semiotics and Visual Communication II: Culture of Seduction*. Publisher: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, Editors.
https://ikee.lib.auth.gr/record/293714/files/The_Seduction_of_Translating_Film_Poster.pdf

Week 10-13: Intersemiotic and interlinguistic translation of multimodal texts II

- Translation of comics, (political) cartoons, placards/ protest signs
- Complexity of translating humour and irony (both verbal and visual)/ cultural factors impeding both interlinguistic and intersemiotic translation (examples will be taken from previous studies but also from online sources)



Reading materials:

- Borodo, Michał. (2015). Multimodality, translation and comics. *Perspectives*, 23:1, 22-41, DOI: 10.1080/0907676X.2013.876057
<http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/0907676X.2013.876057?needAccess=true>
- Constantinou, Maria. (2017). 'Drawing cartoons on the dead' ... 'This is not satire!' Charlie Hebdo and the Other through narratives of translation". Paper presented at the international conference *Intersemiotic Translation, Adaptation, Transposition: Saying almost the same thing?*, held at the University of Cyprus, 10-12 November 2017.
- Kourdis, Evangelos and Damaskinides, Georgios. (2016). (Un)predictability in Verbal-Visual Interactions of English and French Caricatures Translated in the Greek Press. *Language and Semiotic Studies*. 2 (3): 140-156.