

Language, Media and Translation in PAAS

Spring 2025

PAAS215, Dept of Pacific & Asian Studies
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CRN 22436 | 1.5 units
Mon & Thurs 10-11:20am
Location: MAC D016
Pre/co-requisite: PAAS100



Roadside graffiti in Yogyakarta, Indonesia (photo: rpf)

This class will challenge you to think critically about language, media and translation by staging a critical dialogue between (predominantly) EuroAmerican scholarship and a range of literary, media and other materials from Asia, the Pacific and their diasporas. One of our central aims will be to problematize the relationship between scholarly analysis and the texts, persons and practices it presumes to objectify. We will begin with the problem of translation, as this common practice throws into relief many of our unexamined presuppositions regarding the nature of language, media and cultural difference. Our discussion of translation will raise a series of questions that we'll consider from various angles through the course of the semester.

Learning outcomes

Primary learning outcomes for this course include **the ability to:**

1. Read critically across a range of media for meaning, style, genre and context;
2. Demonstrate a practical awareness of language, media and translation in their various literary, cultural and philosophical senses;
3. Write a persuasive 2000-word essay in response to a prompt; and
4. Present an argument orally to your peers and discuss critically their questions and comments.

Responsibilities and resources

- **Attendance.** Students are expected to attend and participate actively in all regularly scheduled class sessions. (This is part of your grade; see below.) You are also expected to arrive on time and stay till the end of the class session. Students who are absent, late or cannot attend an entire class because of illness, an accident or family affliction should email the instructor as soon as possible (see [Academic Concessions](#)). If absent, it is your responsibility to obtain notes from another student; ppt slides won't be posted.
- **Civility.** Everyone in the class deserves respect. Differences of opinion are valued, and this class encourages lively debate. However, the debate must be civil and respectful. Details are laid out in the [Student Code of Conduct](#). A knowledge of these expectations is each student's individual responsibility.
- **Resources.** All reading will be [on Brightspace](#); additional resources are listed at the end of the syllabus.
- **Etcetera.** It is your responsibility to know and follow [UVic's policies as laid out in the Calendar](#).

Evaluation, overview

Your final grade is determined by a series of marked assignments and other forms of evaluation. A brief description of each component is provided below. Assessment follows UVic's policy on grading. Please read the policy closely. Detailed instructions and grading rubrics will be circulated in class. In cases of discrepancy, it is the instructions circulated at the time of the assignment that take precedent. Out of fairness to students who submit their work on time, late work will normally drop a full letter grade for every day past the due date.

Article analysis worksheet (10%)

This is a short take-home assignment in which you'll analyze a piece of academic writing. You will be asked to summarize briefly in a few sentences each of the following: (i) the author's argument; (ii) the question their argument answers; (iii) the evidence marshalled in support of the argument; (iv) rhetorical style (i.e., how the author sets about persuading their reader); and (v) the broader 'conversation' in which the author imagines they are engaged. We'll do a 'practice run' of the assignment in the session before it falls due.

Mini essay (15%)

This, too, is a take-home assignment. You will be asked to write a 'mini essay' of 500 to 750 words (approximately 2 to 2½ pages) responding to a question about a short fictional story.

Group presentation (15%)

This assignment has two main parts: a 15-minute group presentation and an individual reflection paper. In the group presentation, you and a small group of other students will work together researching a 'keyword' or phrase pertaining to the history/culture/society of Asia, the Pacific and/or their diasporas. The format of your presentation will be up to you and your group. But it must address a pertinent word or phrase in a manner that fulfils the criteria outlined in the grading rubric that will be circulated with the assignment later in the semester. Following your group's presentation, you will be asked to write a short paper (500 to 750 words) reflecting on your individual contribution to the group's work, what you learned, which parts of the presentation went well, and which might have been improved.

2000-word essay (25%)

You will write a 2000-word take-home essay (= approximately 8 pages in double-spaced, 12pt Times New Roman font with 1-inch margins) responding to a prompt that will require drawing on what you've learned in the class to this point. An entire class session will be dedicated to helping you prepare to write the essay. No additional reading or research is required for this assignment.

Oral exam (14%)

Students will meet with the instructor for a 10-minute oral exam, in which they'll answer questions about (1) their 2000-word essay and (2) the reading/in-class discussion following the submission of the essay.

Attendance, Participation, Progress (21%)

Students must attend class sessions in order to achieve the learning outcomes for the course. This portion of the grade recognizes the importance of active participation—including, but not limited to, coming to class prepared with questions and comments on the reading, and actively contributing to in-class discussion. Demonstrating progress and scholarly development is also recognized in this component.

Academic Integrity

This course follows the University's policy on academic integrity—including, but not limited to, plagiarism, cheating and the misuse of editors (e.g., Grammarly; see below). University policies, definitions and procedures pertaining to violations of academic integrity can be found online here.

AI and online editors

You have permission to use AI in thinking through ideas for your essays and presentations. You may not use language directly generated by AI – in any form – in any work done for a grade. So, for instance, you might ask Gemini or ChatGPT to propose some interesting lines of argument for an essay on media theory. But you

cannot use phrases or sentences generated by AI in responding to the essay prompt. The language must be your own. Much as you would cite a scholarly source (e.g., with a footnote or in-text reference), please make a proper citation for any ideas sourced from AI. See below for details on AI misuse.

For those who wish to check their written work with an online text editor (e.g., Grammarly), you are welcome to do so. However, you must write an additional mini-essay of between 200 and 400 words – due at the same time as the main assignment – explaining why you felt this was helpful—providing specific examples of where it improved your writing. This additional mini-essay cannot be checked by Grammarly. It must be all your own writing. It also figures into the overall grade for your assignment.

If you are caught using AI or an editor in any way other than that described above, the adjudicator of the case will be encouraged to issue the strongest penalty allowed by UVic policy. Please be aware that multiple violations – e.g., unacknowledged use of an editor + disallowed use of AI – could potentially be treated separately—with the second violation carrying a significantly weightier penalty.

Semester at a glance

Class sessions

Jan 6	Course intro	Feb 20	Reading week
Jan 9	Graffiti and the politics of genre	Feb 24	Practicum: What makes for a good presentation?
Jan 13	Social media, modesty, fashion	Feb 27	Group presentations
Jan 16	What is this thing called translation?	Mar 30	Group presentations
Jan 20	Silence across languages	Mar 6	Doing things with words
Jan 23	Reading between the lines	Mar 10	Practicum: How to essay
Jan 27	Translation, power, colony	Mar 13	The conduit metaphor
Jan 30	La busca de Averroes	Mar 17	On the importance of being misunderstood
Feb 3	The idea of structure	Mar 20	Shifting registers: Chinese, English, Malay, Tamil
Feb 6	остранение, Japan and Germany	Mar 24	Orality and literacy
Feb 10	Mythologies	Mar 27	Cultural studies and the ideology of ideology
Feb 13	Keywords and the history of usage	Mar 31	Of audiences and other impossible objects
Feb 17	Reading week	Apr 3	Oral exams

Due dates

Mon, Jan 13 at 9am – article analysis assignment due
 Thurs, Jan 30, at 9am – mini essay assignment due
 Thurs, Feb 27 & Mon, Mar 3 – group presentations in class
 Fri, Mar 7 at 5pm – individual reflection paper (on group presentation) due
 Fri, Mar 21 at 5pm – 2000-word essay due
 Thurs, Apr 3 – individual oral exams

Reference guides for key terms and concepts

If you encounter a word or concept that you don't understand, look it up. The following links provide a number of helpful resources.

- UVic Subject Guide in Pacific & Asian Studies <https://libguides.uvic.ca/?b=s>
- The Johns Hopkins Guide to Literary Theory and Criticism, <https://litguide.press.jhu.edu>
- Castle, G., ed. (2007) *The Blackwell Guide to Literary Theory*. London: John Wiley & Sons, Incorporated.
- The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, <http://plato.stanford.edu/>
- The Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy, <http://www.iep.utm.edu/>
- Williams, R. (1983) *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society*. London: Fontana. [Online here](#).
- Oxford English Dictionary, <https://www.oed.com>

Semester schedule

NB: Every effort has been made to ensure all aspects of the syllabus are correct and up to date. It may need to be adjusted due either to oversight or changing circumstance. Students will be notified in such cases.

Week 1

Course introduction

Mon, Jan 6

Most of us think we know what we're talking about when we use words like *language*, *media* and *translation*. But it can be difficult to specify the meaning of these terms without using other words that are equally complex and/or hard to define. Today's discussion will set the stage for our work over the next 13 weeks, in which we'll interrogate academic accounts of language, media and translation with reference to materials from Asia and the Pacific (e.g., films, short stories, plays, YouTube videos, poetry). Our point of departure will be a classic statement of the problem—namely, Schleiermacher's 1813 address 'On the different methods of translating' (*Über die verschiedenen Methoden des Übersetzens*): 'Either the translator leaves the author in peace as much as possible and moves the reader toward the author, or [the translator] leaves the reader in peace as much as possible and moves the author toward the reader'. As we'll see over the course of the semester, this account of translation – and its (largely Eurocentric) assumptions regarding the nature of language – set the terms of debate in Translation Studies for the next 200 years. Our job is to find out whether it's time to begin thinking differently about language, media and translation—and whether an engagement with materials from Asia and the Pacific might support us in this effort. Today's session will conclude with a review of the syllabus; students will be given a worksheet to guide their reading of Kurniawan (2008) and Downes (2019) for Thursday's class session.

Required reading

- The syllabus.

Graffiti and the politics of genre

Thurs, Jan 9

Using the example of Indonesian author, Eka Kurniawan, we will begin by examining the idea of *genre*—and how the international 'discovery' of this author transformed the reception of his work in his own country (on which, see today's article from Downes). We will do a close reading of his short story entitled 'Graffiti in the toilet' to reflect critically on what writing *does*, and how genre plays out in so-called global literature. Students will be given a short take-home writing assignment in which they will analyze the reading for next Monday in terms of its argument, research question, evidence, rhetorical style and the broader 'conversation' in which the author is engaged.

Required reading

- Kurniawan, E. & B.R. O'G. Anderson (2008) 'Graffiti in the Toilet'. *Indonesia*. 86: 55-61.
- Downes, M. (2019) 'Found in Translation: Eka Kurniawan and the Politics of Genre'. *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde*. 175: 177-95.

Further reading (not required)

- Morson, G. & S. Emerson (1990) 'Theory of Genres'. *Mikhail Bakhtin: Creation of a Prosaics*. Stanford: SUP. Pages 271-305

Article analysis assignment due Mon, Jan 13 at 9am

Social media, modesty, fashion

Mon, Jan 13

Using the 'article analysis' assignment as our point of departure, we'll discuss Carla Jones' essay on social media and modest fashion in Islamic Southeast Asia. Analysis will focus on:

- the argument Jones presents in her essay;
- the question(s) this argument answers;
- what those questions presuppose;
- the evidence marshaled in support of her argument/answers;
- the rhetorical strategies she employed to persuade her reader; and
- the broader 'conversations' (see Graff & Birkenstein) in which Jones was engaged.

This exercise provides a template students can use for reading other scholarly texts this semester. Stepping back from our analysis, we will then consider the broader implications of Graff & Birkenstein's (2010) remarks on the importance of 'reading for the conversation'. Using Jones as an example, we will reflect on how scholars address their argument to others in their field and beyond—and why this might matter for an assessment of their work.

Required reading

- Graff, G. & C. Birkenstein (2010) 'What's Motivating This Writer? Reading for the Conversation'. *"They Say, I Say." The Moves That Matter in Academic Writing*. Second Edition. London: Norton. Pp 145-55.
- Jones, C. (2017) 'Circulating Modesty: The Gendered Afterlives of Networked Images'. In: Slama, M. & C. Jones (eds.) 'Piety, Celebrity, Sociality: A Forum on Islam and Social Media in Southeast Asia'. *American Ethnologist* website. (2 pages.)

Further reading (not required)

- Graff, G. (2003) *Clueless in Academe: How Schooling Obscures the Life of the Mind*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Jones, C. & M. Slama (2017) 'Introduction: Piety, Celebrity, Sociality'. *American Ethnologist* website. [Online here](#).

What is this thing called translation?

Thurs, Jan 16

Much of the work we do in Pacific and Asian Studies presupposes an act of translation. From analyzing Manga and K-pop to studying grammar and reading film subtitles, we tacitly assume there to be an equivalence between languages. But what is this thing called translation? How does it work? And what can this tell us about our understanding of language? In today's session, we'll use a series of excerpts from Bellos' (2012) book, *Is That a Fish in Your Ear?*, to reflect on the idea of translation—and what we think we know about it. In keeping with our pragmatic orientation, we will do an in-class exercise examining the differences between four translations of a single passage from the *Bhāgavadgītā* published between 1896 and 1994. The question is how to account critically for the difference between translations separated in time and space. (The original passage and translations will be distributed in

class.) In addition to your reading for today's session, please view the sketch from *Monty Python's Flying Circus* (YouTube link below) and reflect on how the 'dirty Hungarian phrasebook' figures in the conversation between the shopkeeper and his customer. Specifically, what might *Monty Python's* teach us about Quine's oft-cited observation that 'manuals for translating one language into another can be set up in divergent ways, all compatible with the totality of speech dispositions, yet incompatible with one another' (1960: 27).

Required reading/viewing

- Bellos, D. (2012) Excerpts from *Is That a Fish in Your Ear? The Amazing Adventure of Translation*. New York etc: Penguin. Pages 1-33.
- Monty Python's Flying Circus (1970/71) 'Dirty Hungarian Phrasebook'.
<https://youtu.be/G6D1YI-41ao?si=i-g3hMxHKsLIQk7o>

Further reading (not required)

- Venuti, L. (1995) *The Translator's Invisibility: A History of Translation*. New York: Routledge.
- Quine, W.v.O (1960) 'Translation and Meaning'. *Word and Object*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press. Pages 26-30.
- Fox, R. (2018) 'Translational Indeterminacy'. *More than Words: Transforming Script, Agency and Collective Life in Bali*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press. Pages 153-72.

Week 3

Silence across languages

Mon, Jan 20

Continuing our enquiry into translation, your reading from Pete Becker cites the Spanish philologist, José Ortega y Gasset, who noted that, 'each language represents a different equation between manifestations and silences. Each people leaves some things unsaid *in order* to be able to say others. Because *everything* would be unsayable. Hence the immense difficulty of translation: translation is a matter of saying in a language precisely what that language tends to pass over in silence'. For instance, in both German and French, we must choose between a formal (*Sie, vous*) and informal (*du, tu*) second-person singular pronoun in addressing an interlocutor—and, with this, commit to a formal or informal mode of address and comportment. When we try to translate these pronouns into English, we must pass over in silence that formal/informal distinction or find some other way to represent it. Translation becomes even more complex with several of the languages spoken in Asia and the Pacific, as for instance with Japanese (see webpage and YouTube video linked below). In class we'll consider these issues more closely in the context of a short comic film ('KTP') that explores the political and religious implications of translating between Indonesia's national language (Bahasa Indonesia) and the regional language of Javanese.

Required reading/viewing

- Becker, A.L. (1995) 'Silence Across Languages'. *Beyond Translation: Essays Toward a Modern Philology*. Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press. Pages: 283-94.
- Webpage: Personal pronouns in Japanese. [Online here](#).

- YouTube video: *Your Name* sub vs dub lunch scene (Japanese).^{*}
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iowh6UxahKs>

Further reading (not required)

- Ortega y Gasset, J. (1957) 'What people say: Language. Toward a new linguistics'. *Man and people*. (Trans. W.P. Willard.) New York: W.W. Norton.
- Benjamin, W. (1992 [1923]) 'The Task of the Translator'. In In Schulte, R. & J. Biguenet (eds.) *Theories of Translation; An Anthology of Essays from Dryden to Derrida*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Pages 71-82.

Reading between the lines

Thurs, Jan 23

On Monday we discussed Ortega y Gasset's notion of 'silence between languages', exploring the 'exuberances' and 'deficiencies' encountered in the process of translation (Becker). Today we will continue this line of enquiry, focusing on a case study of Qur'anic interlinear translation in which Malay scribes have endeavored to make those silences 'speak'. In class, students will analyze Ronit Ricci's essay in terms of its argument, rhetorical style and presuppositions. An exercise in 'internal translation' – moving between various styles of English – will offer an opportunity to reflect critically on the terminology and assumptions underpinning her argument.

Required reading

- Ricci, R. (2020) 'Sound across Languages'. *Philological Encounters*. 5(2): 97-111 (= 1-15).

Further reading (not required)

- Hunter, T.M. (2011) 'Translation in a World of Diglossia'. In Ricci, R. & J. van der Putten (eds.) *Translation in Asia: Theories, Practices, Histories*. Pages 9-26.
- Keeler, W. (2006) 'The Pleasures of Polyglossia: Translation in Balinese and Javanese Performing Arts'. In Lindsay, J. (ed.) *Between Tongues: Translation And/of/ in Performance in Asia*. Singapore: Singapore University Press. Pages 204-23.

Week 4

Translation, power, colony

Mon, Jan 27

To this point, we have mostly focused on conceptual questions pertaining to translation. However, like other social practices, translation does not occur in a vacuum. In today's session, we will consider colonial uses of indigenous terminology in Timor-Leste, tracing the history of the term *lulik*—from missionary appropriation in the colonial era to its postcolonial redeployment in the context of Timorese indigenous resurgence. Our in-class exercise will focus on an open letter written by a Timorese scholar to Pope Francis on the occasion of the 2024 papal visit to Timor-Leste. We will reflect in particular on the letter's contention that 'the Church's selective use of the term [*lulik*] reveals

^{*} As Dr. Hatakeyama explained in sharing the link with me: "In this scene where the girl went to the boy's high school for the first time and was about to have lunch with the boys' friends, she uses **watashi** (more feminine) initially then switches to **watakushi** (neutral, more formal), **boku** (male, usually associated with younger boys), then finally **ore** (male, more masculine and rough) to fit in with the boys at the school."

an attempt to co-opt and control indigenous concepts while simultaneously undermining and demonizing them'. Students will be given a prompt for the 'mini essay' assignment at the end of class.

Required reading

- Tsuchiya, K. (2019) 'Converting Tetun: Colonial Missionaries' Conceptual Mapping in the Timorese Cosmology and Some Local Responses, 1874–1937'. *Indonesia*. 107: 75-94.

Further reading (not required)

- Francisco, J.M.C. SJ (2011) 'Translating Vice into Filipino: Religious, Colonial and Nationalist Discourses on Sloth.' In Ricci, R. & J. van der Putten (eds.) *Translation in Asia: Theories, Practices, Histories*. Pages 104-18.
- Friel, B. (1980) *Translations*. [A play in three acts.] New York etc.: Faber and Faber.
- Said, E. (1994) *Culture and Imperialism*. London: Vintage

Averroës mini essay assignment due Thurs, Jan 30, at 9am

La busca de Averroes Thurs, Jan 30

In preparation for today's session, you will have written a brief essay about Jorge Luis Borges' short story, *La busca de Averroes* ('Averroës search'). Your essay will use the reading, discussion and other materials that we've covered in class to respond to the prompt. (Students with pertinent accommodations should speak with the instructor at least one week before this class session to make appropriate arrangements to complete the assignment.) Students are advised to read the story twice, and to take careful notes—which may also be of use later in the semester. The focus will be on Averroës' failure to translate, and what the story teaches us about the nature of language and its relation to human experience. In class, we'll discuss the essay prompt and your responses as a first step in preparing for the longer essay assignment that you'll be doing later in the semester.

Required reading

- Borges, J.L. (2004 [1947]) "Averroës' Search" (*La Busca de Averroes*). *The Aleph and Other Stories*. New York etc.: Penguin. Pages 69-78.

Further reading (not required)

- Jorge Luis Borges, 1899—1986. Website for The Poetry Foundation.
<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poets/jorge-luis-borges>

Week 5

The idea of structure Mon, Feb 3

'If language were simply a nomenclature for a set of universal concepts, it would be easy to translate from one language to another. One would simply replace the French name for a concept with the English name. [However, each] language articulates or organizes the world differently. Languages do not simply name existing categories; they articulate their own' (Culler 1986: 31, commenting on Saussure). Extrapolating from our analysis of Averroës' failure to translate, we will now turn to one of the most important theoretical developments of the early twentieth century, namely the structural

linguistics of Ferdinand de Saussure. Using Jonathan Culler's reconstruction of Saussure's *Course in General Linguistics*, we will trace the development of his argument and key concepts (e.g., language as an object of study; synchronic analysis; diachronic analysis; signifier; signified; sign; langage; langue; parole; the arbitrary nature of the sign), which would later provide foundations for structural analysis in fields as diverse as literature, anthropology, psychoanalysis, sociology, cultural studies and economics.

Required reading

- Culler, J. (1986) 'The Man and the Course' & 'Saussure's Theory of Language'. *Ferdinand de Saussure*. Revised Edition. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press. Pages 21-64.

Further reading (not required)

- de Saussure, F. (1983) *Course in General Linguistics*. Trans. R. Harris. Chicago & La Salle, IL: Open Court Publishing Company.
- Dosse, F. (1997, 1998) *The History of Structuralism: The Rising Sign: 1945-1966* (Vol 1) & *The Sign Sets: 1967- Present*. (Vol. 2) Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

остранение, Japan and Germany

Thurs, Feb 6

Much of day-to-day life is routine. We get up in the morning and drink our coffee or tea, perhaps have something to eat and then head off into the day—where we'll wear the same shoes, carry the same bag, walk the same route, board the same bus, hear the same sounds and exchange pleasantries with the same people. According to the early twentieth-century Russian critic, Viktor Shklovsky, such repetition breeds habituation, and so an uncritical acceptance of the circumstances in which we live. Focusing on the formal characteristics of literary language, he argued that 'the essential function of poetic art is to counteract the process of habituation encouraged by routine everyday modes of perception. [...] The aim of poetry is to reverse that process, to defamiliarize that with which we are overly familiar, to "creatively deform" the usual, the normal, and so to inculcate a new, childlike, non-jaded vision in us' (Hawkes 1997: 47). In today's session, we'll reflect on the idea of *defamiliarization* (остранение) in the context of a short story by the Japanese-German author, Yoko Tawada ('The Talisman'). An in-class literary exercise will offer students the opportunity to defamiliarize an habitual aspect of their daily routine.

Required reading

- Hawkes, T. (1997) Excerpt on 'making strange'/'defamiliarization' (*ostranenie*). *Structuralism and Semiotics*. London: Routledge. Pages 44-56.
- Tawada, Y. (2002) 'The Talisman'. *Where Europe Begins: Stories*. New York: New Directions Books. Pages 91-6.

Further reading (not required)

- Shklovsky, V. (1991) 'Art as device'. *Theory of prose*. Kalkey Archive Press.
- Jameson, F. (1972) *The Prison-house of Language: A Critical Account of Structuralism and Russian Formalism*. Princeton: PUP.
- Jakobson, R. (1960) 'Concluding statement: linguistics and poetics'. In *Style in language*. ed. T. Sebeok. Cambridge, Mass.: M.I.T. Press.

Mythologies

Mon, Feb 10

In a series of essays written for a popular Parisian magazine in the mid-1950s, the French critic Roland Barthes offered a humorously scathing critique of everything from wine and soap to professional wrestling. His analysis of 'bourgeois mythology' drew at once on the structuralist sensibilities of Saussure and a Formalist insistence on the emancipatory potential of defamiliarization. As Barthes explained in his preface to the book, "The starting point of these reflections was usually a feeling of impatience at the sight of the "naturalness" with which newspapers, art and common sense constantly dress up a reality which, even though it is the one we live in, is undoubtedly determined by history. In short, in the account given of our contemporary circumstances, I resented seeing Nature and History confused at every turn, and I wanted to track down, in the decorative display of what-goes-without-saying, the ideological abuse which, in my view, is hidden there" (1972: 10). A collection of these essays would later be published under the title *Mythologies*, accompanied by an essay on 'Myth today', which provided some of the general principles underpinning his approach to analysis. *Mythologies* inspired a wide array of work in cultural and media studies over the next several decades. This week we will read a series of selections from Barthes' book together with excerpts from the concluding essay on 'myth today'. Drawing on his 'seven figures of bourgeois myth', we will do an analytic exercise in class, subjecting one or more aspects of UVic mythology to defamiliarizing scrutiny.

Required reading

- Excerpts from: Barthes, R. (1972) 'Wine and milk'. *Mythologies*. New York: Hill and Wang.
 - Preface + Preface to the 1970 edition
 - 'Novels and children' (50-2)
 - 'Wine and milk' (58-61);
 - 'Steak and chips' (62-4);
 - 'The Great family of man' (100-2);
 - *Myth Today*: 'Myth is a type of speech' & 'Myth as a semiological system' (107-15);
 - *Myth Today*: 'the 7 figures' of bourgeois mythology (150-55).

Further reading (not required)

- Culler, J. (2002) *Roland Barthes; A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford: OUP.
- Hawkes, T. (1997) *Structuralism and Semiotics*. London: Routledge.
- Young, R. (1981) 'Post-structuralism: An Introduction'. *Untying the Text; A Post-structuralist Reader*. Boston, London and Henley: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

Keywords and the history of usage

Thurs, Feb 13

The Oxford English Dictionary (OED; www.oed.com) is an extraordinary document, and an extremely useful tool for research. (This is the 20-volume behemoth, not to be confused with any number of other dictionaries published by the Oxford University Press.) Unlike many of the dictionaries you may be accustomed to using, the OED does not tell you what a word means (at least not in the conventional sense); nor does it tell you how to use a given word correctly. Rather, the OED is historical—it tells you what words have *meant* on specific occasions. It is *descriptive*, as opposed to *prescriptive*. And, as such, the OED provides a record of how the English language has changed through time. (As you may recall from Saussure, language is always changing.) This week we will be

thinking about words, the history of usage and why it matters for a critical approach to Pacific and Asian Studies. We'll begin with excerpts from Raymond Williams' *Keywords*, a book he described as 'the record of an inquiry into a vocabulary: a shared body of words and meanings in our most general discussions, in English, of the practices and institutions which we group as *culture and society*' (1976: xxvii). In class, we will use both our reading from Williams and examples from the OED to explore the transformation of several keywords for Pacific and Asian Studies—what they have meant in past, what they mean today, and what we might want to do with them going forward. This will provide the foundation for a group presentation assignment, in which students will work collaboratively on the history of a 'keyword' for Pacific and Asian Studies (or a related field), which they will present to the class for discussion on February 27 and March 3. For insight into some key terms that you might wish to consider, see *the critical dictionary of south-east asia* linked below.

Required reading/viewing

- Williams, R. (1976) Introduction (pp.xxiii-xxxvii) + entry for 'culture' (pp.87-93). *Keywords: A vocabulary of culture and society*. London: Fontana Paperbacks.
- Please view: 'The OED in 5 minutes'. [A video introduction](#) to *The Oxford English Dictionary*.
- Please explore: *the critical dictionary of south-east asia* <https://cdosea.org/#video/c>

Further reading (not required)

- Williams, R. (1958) *Culture and Society 1780-1950*. Middlesex, etc.: Pelican Book.
- Hall, S. (1996) 'Cultural studies and its theoretical legacies'. D. Morley and K.H. Chen (eds.) *Stuart Hall; Critical dialogues in cultural studies*. London & New York: Routledge. Pp. 262-75.

Week 7 - Reading week

No class Feb 17

No class Feb 20

Week 8

Practicum: What makes for a good presentation?

Mon, Feb 24

Today we will do a practical exercise on presentation skills; groups will use the remaining time to prepare for their presentations.

No reading for today's session

Bring your group's work-in-progress to class.

Group presentations

Thurs, Feb 27

Required reading

- OED entries/other materials circulated by groups for today's presentations.

Group presentations
Mon, Mar 3

Required reading

- OED entries/other materials circulated by groups for today's presentations.

Doing things with words
Thurs, Mar 6

If you were sitting indoors next to an open window on a snowy day and I said to you, 'It sure feels cold in here, eh?', you'd likely interpret my remark as a request to shut the window—and not simply a report on how I was feeling. In saying I was cold, I *did something*. I made a request. And, in doing so, I persuaded you to close the window. This is how language works much of the time. We do things with words. Unfortunately, professional academics are too often preoccupied with *what* was said ('I'm cold'), while overlooking what people are *doing* when they speak or write (e.g., requesting, instructing, misleading, promising, insisting, complaining). Translation offers a useful opportunity to explore the implications. When translating a poem or short story, what sort of thing is it that we are translating? Is it a statement or set of sentences, the 'content' of which may be repeated—say, 'in' another language? (*I am cold. J'ai froid. Aku kedinginan. Tôi lạnh.*) Or is it an utterance – a speech act – that is unique and unrepeatably situated in the time and place it was spoken, written or performed? (E.g., indirectly asking someone to close a window.) Today we'll reflect on J.L. Austin's discussion of what he called the locutionary, illocutionary and perlocutionary force of speech acts—with specific reference to (i) what is said, (ii) what is done, and (iii) what is accomplished by performing a text-message breakup (see WikiHow link). In small groups, we will also compose brief dialogues exemplifying the locutionary, illocutionary and perlocutionary force of utterances.

Required reading

- Culler, J. (1997) 'Performative Language'. *Literary Theory: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford: OUP. Pages: 94-107.
- Austin, J.L. (1962) *Lecture VIII. How to do things with words*. Pages: 94-107.
- WikiHow: Text-message breakup: <https://www.wikihow.com/Break-Up-with-Someone-Gently-over-Text>

Further reading (not required)

- Osborne, P. And L. Segal (1993) 'Gender as Performance: An Interview with Judith Butler.' *Radical Philosophy*. 67: 32-9.

Individual (written) portion of 'keyword' assignment due Fri, Mar 7 at 5pm

Practicum: How to *essay*
Mon, Mar 10

Today we will review the 2000-word essay assignment and do an in-class exercise on brainstorming and producing outlines for essay-writing.

Required reading

- Reading TBA

The conduit metaphor **[ONLINE. SEE BRIGHTSPACE SITE]**

Thurs, Mar 13

We are in the habit of thinking that language mirrors the world and that words represent things in a stable and determinate way. But, as we learned with Saussure, the relationship between linguistic signifiers and the concepts they signify is arbitrary—to say nothing of how these signs may, in turn, relate to things ‘out there’ in the world. Our reading of J.L. Austin on speech acts helped us to see that language is more than a set of propositions or statements. We do things with words. And one of the most important ‘things’ we do with language is to communicate with one another. But what is communication? Is our language about language any less arbitrary than our language about rivers, dogs and dreams? As it turns out, when we talk about language (at least in English), we have a remarkably consistent series of metaphors for how communication works—a conceptual framework that Michael Reddy called the ‘conduit metaphor’. He explained, ‘the major framework [of the conduit metaphor for communication] sees ideas as existing either within human heads or, at least, within words uttered by humans. The “minor” framework overlooks words as containers and allows ideas and feelings to flow, unfettered and completely disembodied, into a kind of ambient space between human heads’ (1979: 170). So, for instance, we speak of words ‘filled’ with emotion. And we ask whether our ideas ‘came across’ clearly? Returning to translation, we find that the word ‘translate’ itself is also a metaphor—quite literally taken to be a ‘carrying across’ (Latin *trans-latus*). This week’s session will be run online. Your marks for participation will be determined by your engagement in the conversation on BrightSpace—in which students will respond to the question: *How does Reddy’s critique of the conduit metaphor affect your understanding of translation?*

Required reading

- Lakoff, G. & M. Johnson (1980) *Metaphors we live by*. Chicago: UCP. Chapters 1-3 (pp3-13).
- Excerpt from: Reddy, M.J. (1979) ‘The Conduit Metaphor: A Case of Frame Conflict in our Language about Language’. A. Ortony (ed.) *Metaphor and Thought*. Second edition. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Pages 164-71.

Further reading (not required)

- Burke, K. (1973) ‘Semantic and poetic meaning’. *The philosophy of literary form*. Berkeley: University of California Press. Pages 138-67.
- Ortony, A. (1979) ‘Metaphor, language, and thought’. In Ortony (ed.), *as above*. Pages 1-16.

Week 11

On the importance of being misunderstood

Mon, Mar 17

In today’s session, we’ll reflect on language and intimacy through an analysis of mutual (mis)understanding in Candra Aditya’s short film *Dewi pulang* (‘Dewi goes home’). The film follows

Dewi, a young Javanese woman, as she travels from Jakarta to her natal home in Central Java to attend her father's funeral. The tension between Dewi's multiple and often conflicting obligations is marked by the use of language—from the colloquial Indonesian she speaks with her friends in Jakarta to a brief exchange with her English-speaking boss on the telephone and the various forms of Javanese employed 'at home'. Juxtaposing dialogue in Indonesian and Javanese, we'll see that the film's use of language may be understood as a form of social commentary, reflecting critically on the complex and at times incongruous desires, expectations, and aversions at play in the lives of a growing number of young people across Southeast Asia and beyond.

Required reading

- Aditya, C. & R. Fox (2021) *Dewi Pulang*, Annotated Film Transcript and Translation. *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde*. 177: 183-207.
- Fox, R. (2021) 'Why Don't You Get It? Reflections on Language and the Idea of (Mis)Understanding in *Dewi Pulang*'. *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde*. 177: 243-53.

Further reading (not required)

- Meyer, V. (2021) 'Traces of the Other Form of Life: The Rural, the Urban, and Indonesians' Social Mobility in [...] *Dewi Pulang*'. *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde*. 177: 234-42.
- Aditya, C. & R. Fox (2021) 'A Conversation with Indonesian Filmmaker Candra Aditya'. *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde*. 177: 254-63.

Shifting registers: Chinese, English, Malay, Tamil

Thurs, Mar 20

To this point, we have (mostly) talked about languages as if they were unitary and bounded systems of signification—as if, for example, there were clear and stable boundaries between 'Chinese' and 'Korean', 'Japanese' and 'English', 'Indonesian' and 'Javanese'. Much of our theorizing about translation has taken this foundational assumption for granted. And, in making this assumption, we've been in good company. For, even the most radical critics (e.g., Quine on translational indeterminacy) have presupposed 'language' as a stable and bounded whole. While this approach is convenient for armchair theorizing and analysis, it turns out the real world is more complicated. As we'll see through a series of theatrical examples, the messiness of day-to-day communication in Singapore often entails 'shifting registers' mid-sentence—from Mandarin and Hokkien or Cantonese to various forms of English, Malay and Tamil.¹ Following a close reading of Kuo Pao Kun's play, *Mama looking for her cat*, we'll reflect on what Singapore's linguistic complexity can teach us about language and translation.

Required reading

- Kuo Pao Kun (2002) *Mama Looking for Her Cat*. [A play.] Sy Ren Quah & C J W -L Wee (eds.) *The Complete Works of Kuo Pao Kun; Vol. 4, Plays in English*. Singapore: The Theatre Practice; Global Publishing. Pages 81-98.
- Quah Sy Ren (2006) 'Performing Multilingualism in Singapore'. In Lindsay, J. (ed.) *Between Tongues: Translation And/ of/ in Performance in Asia*. Singapore: Singapore University Press. Pages 88-104.

¹ Shifting linguistic registers is often called 'code-switching' in the scholarly literature. For my part, I tend to avoid using the term 'code' in talking about language. Following the Russian critic, Mikhail Bakhtin, 'A context is potentially unfinalized; a code must be finalized. A code is only a technical means of transmitting information: it does not have cognitive, creative significance. **A code is a deliberately established, killed context**' (see Morson & Emerson's book, *Mikhail Bakhtin: Creation of a Prosaics*, p.290; emph. mine).

Further reading (not required)

- Liew, S. (2015) *The Art of Charlie Chan Hock Chye*. New York: Pantheon Books.
- Lindsay, J. (2006) 'Translation and/of/in Performance: New Connections'. In: Lindsay, J. (ed.) *Between Tongues: Translation And/of/in Performance in Asia*. Singapore: SUP. Pages 1-32.
- Maier, M.J. (1993) 'Heteroglossia to Polyglossia: The Creation of Malay and Dutch in the Indies'. *Indonesia*. 56: 37-65.

2000-word essay due Fri, Mar 21 at 5pm

Week 12

Orality and literacy

Mon, Mar 24

Marshall McLuhan, a Canadian theorist of media and communication, is widely known for having argued that *the medium is the message*—an aphorism commonly repeated, if perhaps less frequently understood. Through a series of oft-cited publications, McLuhan marshalled substantial literary, historical and ethnographic evidence to support his argument for the relationship between technology, experience and the senses. But does our understanding of language depend on whether it is spoken, written, printed or circulated digitally? Is human thought and experience shaped by its medium? And what might this mean for our broader understanding of technology? We will approach the problem by way of Amin Sweeney's study of 'orality and literacy in the Malay world', in which he traced the transformation of oral and literate tendencies in both written and spoken Malay, alongside social and cultural developments across the Malayophone region spanning what is now Malaysia, Singapore, Brunei, Indonesia and parts of Southern Thailand. As Sweeney noted in his Preface, in the late 1980s, Malay ranked 'no lower than sixth among the world's languages. More people speak Malay on a day-to-day basis than German, Japanese, French, or Arabic' (1987: vii).

Required reading

- Sweeney, A. (1987) Preface + 'Write as you speak: Audiences and Abstractions'. *A Full Hearing: Orality and Literacy in the Malay World*. Berkeley & Los Angeles: University of California Press. Pages vii-xi, 175-201.

Further reading (not required)

- McLuhan, M. (1962) *The Gutenberg galaxy: the making of typographic man*. Toronto: UTP.
- Havelock, E.A. (1986) *The Muse Learns to Write: Reflections on Orality and Literacy from Antiquity to the Present*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Ong, W.J. (1967) *The Presence Of the Word*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Cultural studies and the ideology of ideology

Thurs, Mar 27

Today we will continue our discussion of communication and technology, examining a foundational text for cultural and media studies—Stuart Hall's oft-cited essay on 'encoding and decoding'. Reinterpreting the 'sender-message-receiver' model of mass communication in broadly Marxian terms, Hall argued for the political potential of oppositional decoding—the possibility that audiences might deliberately interpret media 'messages' in ways contrary to their intention. Recalling our reading from Reddy, students should recognize this model as an iteration of 'the conduit metaphor'—with all the critical difficulties it entailed. In class, we will examine both Hall's text and its use in a study of the

Korean drama, *My Love from the Star*. We will consider both what Hall's model has enabled in Shao's analysis, and what critical difficulties it may engender. Of particular importance will be their assumptions regarding the nature of 'the audience' as an object of study.

Required reading

- Hall, S. (1980) 'Encoding/decoding'. In: *Culture, media, language; Working papers in cultural studies, 1972-1979*, eds. S. Hall et al. London: Hutchison.
- Shao, L. (2020) 'The returning of Hallyu in China: Transnational reception of the Korean drama *My Love from the Star*'. *Media International Australia*. 175(1): 79-92.

Further reading (not required)

- Nightingale, V. (1996) 'Encoding/decoding'. *Studying audiences: The shock of the real*. New York: Routledge. Pages 21-39.
- Fox, R. (2017) 'Religion, Media and Cultural Studies'. In King, R. (ed.) *Religion, Theory, Critique: Classic and Contemporary Approaches and Methodologies*. NY: Columbia U. Press. Pp.335-47.

Week 13

Of audiences and other impossible objects

Mon, Mar 31

As we saw with Sweeney's study of Malay narrative styles, written discourse is (usually) directed to an addressee, or reader, that is absent from the scene of writing. The writer must *imagine* their reader as they put pen to paper. Similarly, the practices of television production entail the imagination of an audience. As John Hartley noted, television audiences '...are the invisible fictions that are produced institutionally in order for various institutions to take charge of the mechanisms of their own survival [e.g., generating ratings and advertising revenue]. Audiences may be imagined empirically, theoretically or politically, but in all cases the product is a fiction that serves the need of the imagining institution. In no case is the audience "real," or external to its discursive construction. There is no "actual" audience that lies beyond its production as a category, which is merely to say that audiences are only ever encountered *per se* as representations' (1992: 105). This does not mean that there aren't 'real people' out there watching television—or visiting websites, posting to social media, etc. Rather, the critique of the audience (Ang, Hartley) called into question a key concept for both commonsense and scholarly accounts of mass mediated communication. Today we will examine this early critique of the audience and do an in-class exercise analysing several ways in which viewers and other media users are 'hailed' or addressed—as students, as voters, as citizens, as consumers, as Canadians, and so on.

Required reading

- Ang, I. (1991) 'Institutional knowledge: the need to control'. *Desperately seeking the audience*. London: Routledge. Pages 17-25.
- Hartley, J. (1992) 'Invisible fictions'. *Tele-ology: Studies in television*. NY: Routledge. Pp.101-18.

Further reading (not required)

- Hobart, M. (2006) 'Just Talk? Anthropological Reflections on the Object of Media Studies in Indonesia'. *Asian Journal of Social Science*. 34(3): 492-519.

Oral exams

Thurs, Apr 3

Additional resources for students

General

1. [UVic Learn Anywhere](#). UVic Learn Anywhere is the primary learning resource for students that offers many learning workshops and resources to help students with academics and learning strategies.
2. Library resources ([Library](#))
3. Indigenous student services ([ISS](#))
4. Centre for Academic Communication ([CAC](#))
5. Learning Strategies Program ([LSP](#))
6. Community-Engaged Learning ([CEL](#))
7. [Academic Concession Regulations](#)
8. [Academic Concession and Accommodation](#)
9. Academic Accommodation – [Policy AC1205](#)

University statements and policies

1. University Calendar - Section "[Information for all students](#)"
2. [Creating a respectful, inclusive and productive learning environment](#)
3. [Accommodation of Religious Observance](#)
4. [Student Conduct](#)
5. [Non-academic Student Misconduct](#)
6. [Accessibility](#)
7. [Diversity / EDI](#)
8. [Equity statement](#)
9. [Sexualized Violence Prevention and Response](#)
10. Discrimination and Harassment [Policy](#)

Further links

1. [Student groups and resources](#)
2. [Student wellness](#)
3. [Ombudsperson](#)