Course description and objectives

The aim of this course is to provide an in-depth analysis and intensive practice of most representative translation techniques and specialized terminology when translating texts of legal nature—in its broadest sense—from English into Spanish and vice-versa.

Several text typologies will be entertained, including an analysis of legal language in English and Spanish.

Students will scrutinize different types of legal translations, including contracts, international organizations, civil law, and criminal law. An advanced command of terminological research techniques will be developed.

Also, students will learn how to research about specialized legal text and will develop criteria for legal writing both in English and Spanish.

Student Learning Outcomes

The above objectives are aligned with the following program’s Student Learning Outcomes

1. Students will develop critical reading skills, both in English and Spanish, by learning to differentiate stylistic, formal, denotative and connotative aspects within a text.
3. Students will translate specialized texts from English into Spanish and Spanish into English in the areas of legal, commercial, scientific, medical and technical translation at a professional or quasi-professional level.

4. Students will be able to apply the latest field-related technologies to their production of translated texts.

Course structure

This course is structured in six main units or areas dealing with specific issues of legal translation (topics). TWO WEEKS will be devoted to each topic. Each topic consists of two halves: theory and practice. EVERY WEEK, the instructor will welcome you with special instructions for the week.

Each topic will be introduced with an announcement by the instructor commenting on its main characteristics. The six topics will be introduced according with the following schedule.

Course schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Dates for every unit: From Mon. through Sun.</th>
<th>Deadlines (all at 11:59 pm)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Course introduction</td>
<td>16 – 21 Jan</td>
<td>Reading of syllabus: 1/19 (Fri.) Board (introduction): 1/21 (Sun.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Legal systems</td>
<td>22 Jan – 4 Feb</td>
<td>Quiz: 1/26 (Fri.) Theory Board: 1/28 (Sun.) Draft: 1/28 (Sun.) – Exercise 1 only! Practice Board: 2/4 (Sun.) Final Translation: 2/4 (Sun.) – Exercise 1 only!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Method in Legal Translation</td>
<td>5 – 18 Feb</td>
<td>Quiz: 2/9 (Fri.) Board: 2/11 (Sun.) Draft: 2/11 (Sun.) Practice Board: 2/18 (Sun.) Final Translation: 2/18 (Sun.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Criminal law</td>
<td>19 Feb – 4 Mar</td>
<td>Quiz: 2/23 (Fri.) Board: 2/25 (Sun.) Draft: 2/25 (Sun.) Practice Board: 3/4 (Sun.) Final Translation: 3/4 (Sun.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Business law</td>
<td>26 Mar – 8 Apr</td>
<td>Quiz: 3/30 (Fri.) Board: 4/1 (Sun.)</td>
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</table>

(Note: Mar 12 – 17 is Spring Break. Students are not expected to participate in class that week, but may do so.)
### Course outline and assessment

Every topic consists of the following steps:

- **a) Readings.** Before starting the translation assignments, please make sure you read the documents included in the “Teoría” section. After every reading, you need to complete a short test/quiz (“Pruebas”) in order to make sure you are ready to start translating.

- **b) Discussion Boards.** This space is intended to be a clearinghouse for doubts, consultation, research, and debate.

There will be two boards for each topic. Every student must, **for each board:**

1. post at least two original messages, either on the readings or on the translation. Doubts, comments, additional research are welcome.
2. post a reply to at least two messages by other students.

The instructor will moderate/add comments and will try to address concerns and doubts.

**Posted messages will be graded and will count as participation.** Please note that the instructor will consider both the amount and the quality of each student’s comments. The two/two requirement is a minimum requirement not to fail the board. It represents a floor not a ceiling.
Please, write messages IN SPANISH, using complete sentences and proper spelling. If the message is about a doubt or a problem, do not just say “¿Qué significa X?” Please, provide what you found out, your options, your preferred solution, and why you are not happy with what you have so far. When replying to somebody else’s doubts, please provide supporting information for your options and solutions.

c) Quiz on the readings.
At the end of every reading, there is a short quiz. Students must take it in order to make sure they are ready to start translating. In order to get any credit for the quiz, students must earn a perfect score. Student may take the quiz as many times as necessary in order to get the perfect score.

MAKE SURE YOU USE A STABLE INTERNET CONNECTION WHILE TAKING THE TEST. IF YOUR CONNECTION BREAKS, USE THE “BACK” ARROW OF YOUR BROWSER IN ORDER TO TRY TO RE-ESTABLISH IT.

d) Translation submittal.
All 6 translations need to be done in the order posted. It is absolutely necessary that full translations be provided for the passages assigned, even in the draft. Please produce translations in an “as if real” basis: do not leave blanks or unfinished sentences.

Detailed submission instructions are found in the “Prácticas” tab.

e) Revisions.
Submitted draft translations will not be graded. Students at this level are expected to be able to revise their own drafts. Final translations will be reviewed by the instructor and retuned via the Blackboard messaging tool (under the tab “Devoluciones,” as Word Documents) with specific comments.

Feedback on final translations will take the form of underlining the word or phrase that needs further work and in indicating with the following codes what type of an error is being underlined, as follows:

- **O – Orthography:** This is in essence a spelling mistake. For example: asess (should be: assess)
- **P – Punctuation:** This is a punctuation mistake. For example: placing the period outside the quotation marks, when using American English.
- **G – Grammar:** This is a grammatical mistake, which may include mistakes in tense, number, gender, etc. For example: writing “the people is” instead of “the people are.”
- **S – Style:** This is used to signal that the sentence somehow sounds awkward, even if there is no specific error in orthography, punctuation, grammar, or meaning. For example: writing “I bought me something to eat” instead of “I bought something for me to eat.”
- **M – Meaning:** This is the most serious type of mistake, since it means that something was either lost or added in the translation; in other words, the source text and the target text do not mean the same thing. For example: the source text reads “Lo internaron porque estaba
intoxicado” and the target text reads “He was hospitalized because he was intoxicated” instead of “He was hospitalized due to food poisoning.”

REVIEWS ARE DONE IN ORDER TO AVOID SIMILAR PITFALLS IN THE FUTURE, SO MAKE SURE YOU UNDERSTAND WHAT THE PROFESSOR IS SIGNALING VIA HIS MARKUP AND COMMENTS. You will have a chance to revise your final translations when you submit your final portfolio (see below).

**Non-use of machine translation**: One of the purposes of this course is to help each student develop his or her own translation skills. This means that the translations of necessity must be to be carried out by each student individually. Consequently, **students are strictly prohibited from running their source texts through machine translation engines such as Google Translate, Bing Translator, DeepL, BabelFish, and others.** Students who turn in a translation that has been partially or fully translated by a machine are in fact plagiarizing, cheating, and turning in someone or something else’s work (see section on scholarly dishonesty below). If the professor believes that machine translation was employed in the process of translating a text, the student will automatically receive a zero for that assignment. Disciplinary measures may be initiated in the case of repeated violations.

Exceptions to this rule prohibiting the use of machine translation will be clearly signaled by the professor, should there be any.

**Glossaries**

Every student must turn in a set of 6 topic-specific, bilingual glossaries (one for each of the course’s topics), including the Spanish / English equivalency and a monolingual definition for each term. Each glossary must include ten legal terms found in that topic’s translation assignment. Please see Blackboard for a sample glossary entry. These glossaries will be turned in at the end of the semester (see Course Schedule, above).

**Final Portfolio**

Students will need to submit **one set of all six** translations. These translations must be reviewed and polished according to the instructor’s comments after grading. This will need to be accompanied by a single **two-page** commentary (covering all translations) in which the student reflects generally on the revisions by the instructor and analyzes areas that need improvement, terminological issues, as well as specific legal concepts, sentence construction in English and Spanish, etc. The language of the commentary will be **each student’s non-native (or B) language**. Please submit your final portfolio via e-mail as a single document.
Final exam

Every student will take the final exam on a specific day, which will be announced in advance. The exam needs to be returned within 24 hours of posting. All exams turned in after the deadline will NOT be graded.

The exam will include:
- A 300-to-400 word translation.
- A Two-to-three page essay based on the readings and board discussions.

Extra Credit

Students who wish to receive up to an additional 5% on their final grade may do so by doing an extra credit project. This project will require each interested student to read a book and provide a written summary of it.

For this project, each student will read ONE of the following two books:


The length of the summaries should be roughly equivalent to one paragraph per chapter in the book, plus one or two paragraphs where the student provides personal insights gained from the reading.

Grading

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Weight</th>
<th>Requirements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Debate and participation in discussion boards</td>
<td>15 %</td>
<td>At least two original queries / comments must be posted and two replies to somebody else’s comments (per board)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quizzes/tests on readings</td>
<td>11 %</td>
<td>To be completed before submitting translations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Translation assignments</td>
<td>40 %</td>
<td>All 6 assignments must be done and submitted.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final exam</td>
<td>20 %</td>
<td>Date to be assigned and announced.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specialized glossaries</td>
<td>9 %</td>
<td>One per translation. Must contain all legal terms in the text, a definition and a translation of the term.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final portfolio</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>Final reviewed versions and commentary on all 6 translations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extra credit</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total:</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>(105%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This syllabus is subject to change
Course materials

Students are required to purchase a legal, bilingual dictionary, and a general, bilingual dictionary with CD-ROM (see below). The best monolingual, general dictionaries are also available online (see below).

REQUIRED

RECOMMENDED

Other, additional bilingual dictionaries are also welcome. Please consult the instructor for alternative dictionaries you may already possess.

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STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES:
Students with a documented disability (physical, psychological, learning, or other disability which affects academic performance) who would like to receive academic accommodations should contact Student Accessibility Services (SAS) as soon as possible to schedule an appointment to initiate services. Accommodations can be arranged through SAS at any time, but are not retroactive. Students who suffer a broken bone, severe injury or undergo surgery during the semester are eligible for temporary services. Brownsville Campus: Student Accessibility Services is located in Cortez Hall Room 129 and can be contacted by phone at (956) 882-7374 (Voice) or via email at ability@utrgv.edu. Edinburg Campus: Student Accessibility Services is located in 108 University Center and can be contacted by phone at (956) 665-7005 (Voice), (956) 665-3840 (Fax), or via email at ability@utrgv.edu.

MANDATORY COURSE EVALUATION PERIOD:
Students are required to complete an ONLINE evaluation of this course, accessed through your UTRGV account (http://my.utrgv.edu); you will be contacted through email with further instructions. Students who complete their evaluations will have priority access to their grades. Online evaluations will be available:

Spring 2018 Module 1 February 14 – February 20
Spring 2018 Module 2 April 11 – April 17
Spring 2018 (full semester) April 11 – May 2

ATTENDANCE:
Students are expected to attend all scheduled classes and may be dropped from the course for excessive absences. UTRGV’s attendance policy excuses students from attending class if they are participating in officially sponsored university activities, such as athletics; for observance of religious holy days; or for military service. Students should contact the instructor in advance of the excused absence and arrange to make up missed work or examinations.

SCHOLASTIC INTEGRITY:
As members of a community dedicated to Honesty, Integrity and Respect, students are reminded that those who engage in scholastic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary penalties, including the possibility of failure in the course and expulsion from the University. Scholastic dishonesty includes but is not limited to: cheating, plagiarism (including self-plagiarism), and collusion; submission for credit of any work or materials that are attributable in whole or in part to another person; taking an examination for another person; any act designed to give unfair advantage to a student; or the attempt to commit such acts. Since scholastic dishonesty harms the individual, all students and the integrity of the University, policies on scholastic dishonesty will be strictly enforced (Board of Regents Rules and Regulations and UTRGV Academic Integrity Guidelines). All scholastic dishonesty incidents will be reported to the Dean of Students.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT, DISCRIMINATION, and VIOLENCE:
In accordance with UT System regulations, your instructor is a "Responsible Employee" for reporting purposes under Title IX regulations and so must report any instance, occurring during a student’s time in college, of sexual assault, stalking, dating violence, domestic violence, or sexual harassment about which she/he becomes aware during this course through writing, discussion, or personal disclosure. More information can be found at www.utrgv.edu/equity, including confidential resources available on campus. The faculty and staff of UTRGV actively strive to provide a learning, working, and living environment that promotes personal integrity, civility, and mutual respect that is free from sexual misconduct and discrimination.
COURSE DROPS:
According to UTRGV policy, students may drop any class without penalty earning a grade of DR until the official drop date. Following that date, students must be assigned a letter grade and can no longer drop the class. Students considering dropping the class should be aware of the “3-peat rule” and the “6-drop” rule so they can recognize how dropped classes may affect their academic success. The 6-drop rule refers to Texas law that dictates that undergraduate students may not drop more than six courses during their undergraduate career. Courses dropped at other Texas public higher education institutions will count toward the six-course drop limit. The 3-peat rule refers to additional fees charged to students who take the same class for the third time.

STUDENT SERVICES:
Students who demonstrate financial need have a variety of options when it comes to paying for college costs, such as scholarships, grants, loans and work-study. Students should visit the Students Services Center (U Central) for additional information. U Central is located in BMAIN 1.100 (Brownsville) or ESSBL 1.145 (Edinburg) or can be reached by email (ucentral@utrgv.edu) or telephone: (888) 882-4026. In addition to financial aid, U Central can assist students with registration and admissions.

Students seeking academic help in their studies can use university resources in addition to an instructor’s office hours. University Resources include the Learning Center, Writing Center, Advising Center and Career Center. The centers provide services such as tutoring, writing help, critical thinking, study skills, degree planning, and student employment. Locations are:

- Learning center: BSTUN 2.10 (Brownsville) or ELCTR 100 (Edinburg)
- Writing center: BLIBR 3.206 (Brownsville) or ESTAC 3.119 (Edinburg)
- Advising center: BMAIN 1.400 (Brownsville) or ESWKH 101 (Edinburg)
- Career center: BCRTZ 129 (Brownsville) or ESSBL 2.101 (Edinburg)

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