

## Important document!

Keep this someplace where it's easy to refer to.

WOC207 / CHINESE408

Translation Workshop: The Reflection of Meaning

INSTRUCTOR: AUSTIN WOERNER

## Course Handbook

*How Class Works:*

*Questions and Answers*

### **Q: How do I contact Austin?**

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A: WeChat. I much prefer WeChat to email. You may message me any time of day and I'll respond to you as soon as I can. (*Please note the **time difference**. I'm on U.S. Eastern time.*)

If you don't hear back from me within 24 hours, message me again saying, "Just checking, did you get my message?"

### **Q: How do I meet with Austin outside of class?**

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A: If you would like to meet with me, all you have to do is message me on WeChat and we'll find a time! My Zoom ID is **721 869 9461**, passcode **austin**. In general I'm able to accommodate students quite quickly, usually within 48 hours of the time I get the request. So please don't be shy about making an appointment!

### **Q: How will I know what the homework is?**

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A: In most cases I will explain the homework in class. In addition, I will always post homework instructions on the course website, <https://www.awmemorypalace.com/woc207>.

Even if I've already talked about the instructions in class, please **read** the instructions online carefully. It's important that you read them because there may be details there I didn't have time to mention in class. If you don't read them, you might miss important information.

If I need to make any last-minute changes or have any last-minute announcements to make, I will do so in our **class WeChat group**.

### **Q: I'm already in soooooo many WeChat groups! Can I just mute our class group and ignore it?**

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A: Sure, you can mute it, but don't ignore it. I may send out important announcements over WeChat!

**Q: What if I'm confused about something but I think it's a stupid question and I don't want to bother you about it?**

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A: Ask me anyway. There is **no such thing** as a stupid question! I like getting questions from students. I'd much rather you ask me directly than ask your classmates. Your classmates might not have accurate information – but I do!

**Q: When is the homework due?**

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A: Usually homework will be due **next class**. (If there is no due date given, you can assume it's due next class.) If a piece of homework is due at some other time, I will say so explicitly in the homework instructions.

**Q: How do I hand in homework?**

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A: For some assignments, I will ask that you submit homework on **Sakai**. This is because for many assignments I would like you to submit work without being able to see what your classmates wrote.

For other assignments – those where it's important to be able to see what your classmates wrote – I may ask that you upload your work directly to our **SharePoint folder**.

In all cases I will state explicitly in the homework instructions how I want you to submit it – so please read those instructions carefully!

**Q: What happens if I hand in an assignment late?**

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Handing in an assignment late won't affect your grade on the assignment itself. But if I see an **overall pattern** of late assignments from you, it may lower your final grade for the course.

**Q: The syllabus says this is a “bilingual” class. What does that mean?**

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For EAP-track students (mostly mainland Chinese students), this counts as an English writing course. For CSL-track students (mostly international students) this counts as a Chinese course. If we have enough international students enrolled, we will **alternate** speaking Chinese and English every other class period – on Tuesdays we will speak English, on Thursdays we will speak Chinese. This will enable CSL-track students to learn not just how to translate, but also how to *talk about* translation in Chinese.

However, if no (or very few) international students enroll, we may revert to having every class in English. We will decide this by **vote** the first day of class.

**Q: What kinds of things will we translate?**

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As many different kinds of writing as possible: literature, poetry, journalism, advertising, political speeches, art criticism... you name it. I want us to try our hands at translating many different **genres** of writing that a translator might actually be asked to translate, so as to get a taste of what it's like to think like a translator.

**Q: And how will these translation assignments work?**

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There will be two kinds of assignments: **translation exercises** and **translation challenges**.

Translation **exercises** will be **ungraded**: as long as you do them (and take them seriously), you'll get full credit for them. I'll give translation exercises for homework almost every single day, and usually they'll be due the following class.

In addition, over the course of the session you'll do three **translation challenges**. These are longer, more substantial assignments in which you'll **work together** with a small group of classmates to translate an interesting, challenging text, and share it with the class.

The translation challenges are **graded** and it's your performance on these assignments, combined with completion of ungraded assignments, attendance, and punctuality, that will determine your final grade.

**Q: How will the translation challenges be graded?**

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I'll distribute a handout next week describing in detail how the grading will work.

In brief, though, after each translation challenge I'll ask you to write a **translator's note** (reflection essay) explaining the difficulties your text presented and what your group's translation was trying to achieve. Your grade on the challenge will be based on: **a)** how effectively I think your group translated the text; and **b)** how well your translator's note is written, and whether it shows me you can use the ideas we explore in this class as a tool to think about how to translate more effectively.

There are **three key things** here I want to emphasize:

- The challenges are not “tests” and there is no single “correct way” to translate them. What I care about is learning to think in a more mature and nuanced way about translation—not “getting the right answer.”
- Though you'll be working a lot with your classmates, your grade is **not** based solely on assignments produced as a group. All the reflection essays will be done individually, and in the final translation challenge you'll have the choice to work individually if you wish.
- Your grade for the class is **not** a simple average of your performance on all challenges. Doing well on the first two challenges can help you achieve a good grade, but doing poorly on them **cannot** prevent you from getting an A in the course, provided your final project shows me you've met our learning goals. However, that means it's important to plan enough time to do a good job on the final project!

**Q: Will I be graded on “participation”—how much I talk in class?**

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No! As much as possible I try to structure class so that everybody talks roughly the same amount. Just come to class, come on time, do all the work, and you’re good.

**Q: When are the major deadlines?**

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Roughly speaking, the major assignments will be due at the following times:

- **Challenge 1:** due at the beginning of **Week 3 or Week 4** (depending on which group you’re in)
- **Challenge 2:** due at the beginning of **Week 5 or Week 6** (depending on which group you’re in)
- **Final challenge:** due during final exam week (exact date TBD)