Meeting Time: TTh 12:30pm - 2:20pm

Location: CMU 228

SLN: 21861

Instructor: Richard Watts

Additional Details:

Course description: FRENCH 222 “Human and Machine Translation” offers an introduction to a cross-cultural communicative process, translation, that has existed in some form or other as long as languages have, but has been fundamentally disrupted over the last 70 years, and especially in the last decade, by Machine Translation (MT). The use of MT—aka automated translation, whereby a computer algorithm translates text from one language to another without visible human involvement typically using large, parallel source- and target-language data sets that are compared and matched against each other—has accelerated dramatically in the past 10 years with the advent of so-called Neural Machine Translation. Google Translate touted 200 million users in 2012; today, that figure has risen to 500 million daily users, and new entrants into the field arise regularly to serve individual and institutional users (DeepL, Amazon Translate, Yandex.Translate, etc.).

As with any technological leap of this magnitude with impacts across so many domains, it is important to understand the practical, material, and intellectual means by which those advances have taken place and the cultural and political implications of the use of the technology in question. We will therefore explore the means of MT’s development and the implications of its use with an emphasis on the role of humans in machine translation (for example, the obscured human translational labor embedded in the parallel corpora) and how machine translation is changing the way all of us—immigrant communities, tourists abroad, content creators, even translators of poetry—approach translation today.

Note: Pre-approved for Data Science Minor (Cross-Cutting On Ramp course) and the French Major and Minor; satisfies I&S Area of Knowledge graduation requirement; no pre-requisites, but one year of university-level language instruction
(or the equivalent) or basic proficiency in a heritage language is recommended.

Richard Watts is associate professor in the Department of French and Italian Studies, director of the Canadian Studies Center, and co-director of the Translation Studies Hub.

**Catalog Description:**
Machine translation's development and implications of its use with an emphasis on the role of humans in machine translation. How machine translation is changing the way translation is approached today. Recommended: one year of college-level language instruction, proficiency in a heritage language, or equivalent.

**GE Requirements:**
Individuals and Societies (I&S)

**Credits:** 5.0

**Status:** Active

**Last updated:** October 22, 2021 - 1:25pm

Department of French & Italian Studies
University of Washington
c-254 Padelford Hall
Box 354361
Seattle, WA 98195-4361

Phone: (206) 616-3486
Fax: (206) 616-3302
frenital@uw.edu

**Source URL:** https://frenchitalian.washington.edu/courses/2022/winter/french/222/a