WRCT 223: Translating a Story  
Spring 2016

Class time: Fridays 1:10-4 PM

Instructor: Sara Nović  
Contact: novicsara@gmail.com  
Office Hours: Fridays 11:30 to 1, and by appointment

Course Description:

Texts
The following books are available for purchase at Broad St. Books:
- *A Long Way Gone*, Ishmael Beah
- *Why Be Happy When You Could Be Normal?* Jeanette Winterson
- *Oranges are not the Only Fruit*, Jeanette Winterson
- *Youngblood*, Matt Gallagher (available in early February)

All other course readings will be given to you in a course packet. Please bring assigned reading material with you to class on the day it will be discussed.

Assignments
We will do several kinds of writing for this class, including:

**Reading Responses (about a page):** A written response to an assigned reading. Choose an aspect of the reading and examine it closely. How do the author’s writing techniques (his/her use of language, tone, structure, patterns, rhyme, rhythm, etc.) inform the meaning of his/her work? Push beyond “to make it interesting” or “to add emphasis” and work to discern the real link between form and content. **OR** Write a creative piece inspired by an exercise, and include a one paragraph explanation of how your creative work was inspired/informed by the reading.

**Short Exercises (about a page):** Writing and translation exercises will be assigned both in and outside of class; these assignments are designed to allow you to experiment, play and push the boundaries of your normal writing style. You should choose one or two of these exercises to include in your portfolio to receive feedback.

**Workshop Submissions (approx. 10 pages):** You will have the opportunity to submit your work for class-wide discussion twice during the semester. You can submit fiction or creative nonfiction (personal essay). **The week before** your workshop is scheduled, **you will be required to bring enough copies of your submission for the class**, as well as upload your submission to Wesfiles. I will give you comments on your stories/essays, but not assign letter grades. Your “workshop submission” grade will be based on the timely completion and effort put into your submission; your “final portfolio” grade will reflect the letter grade for your revised creative work.

**End Comments:** As a participant in the workshop, you will have a week to read the submission carefully and **type up written end comments** for each student. I will randomly check these notes for completion throughout the course of the semester.
Grading Breakdown
Class Participation ........................................ 40%
Critical Responses, Exercises, Peer Feedback...... 20%
Workshop Submissions....................................... 15%
Final Portfolio................................................... 25%

Plagiarism
Plagiarism is a serious academic offense and will not be tolerated. Also, plagiarism is a really silly thing to do in a creative writing class. Here’s what Wesleyan has to say about plagiarism: (Page 5) http://www.wesleyan.edu/studentaffairs/studenthandbook/20152016studenthandbook.pdf
Here are some examples of what counts as plagiarism in creative writing class:
- Submitting stories, poems, exercises, (or portions of them) written by other people as one’s own.
- Submitting work written for one course to another course without the prior permission of both instructors.

Attendance
This is a workshop and discussion-based class, so your attendance is imperative and absences cannot be made up. Because we only meet once a week, more than one absence will negatively impact your grade. If you do have to be absent due to illness, etc., you are expected to make up the work and come prepared the following week.
What to do if you are absent:
For a regular class:
- Speak to a classmate or email me to find out what you missed
- Leave a printed copy of your homework in my mailbox ASAP
- Pick up the workshop submissions for the next week from my mailbox (or get them on Wesfiles and print them out)
- Bring any workshop comments for your peers from the previous class to the next class
When your workshop submission is due:
- Let me know as soon as possible!
  - Submit the correct number of copies to my mailbox before class meets. Also upload your file to Wesfiles.

Lateness
Lateness is disruptive to your peers; if you arrive after class has started or leave before it is finished you will be marked as late. Three latenesses count as half an absence.

Participation, Cell Phone Fondling, etc.
To do well in this course, you will be graded on both the quality of your work and the effort you put in. In your written work, this entails being prepared for class, completing readings and assignments, and presenting them in a professional manner (typed, proofread and stapled.)

In class time, it is imperative that you participate actively in discussions and workshops. This means paying as much attention to your peers’ ideas and workshops as your own. Because it is important for us to see one another’s faces while we talk, electronics, including laptops and tablets, will not be allowed unless you have a disability that requires the use of assistive technology. Cell phone fondling is also prohibited—repeat phone offenders may be marked as “late” for that class.
**Weekly Calendar**—Work is due on the day listed

**22 January**: First day of class (don't forget to order your books!)

**29 January**: Translation as a microcosm for creative writing
   - **Reading Due**: Walter Benjamin “The Task of the Translator”; Jhumpa Lahiri “Teach Yourself Italian” (packet)
   - **Writing Due**: Translation Exercise Due

**5 February**: Nonfiction Overview/ Share Translation Exercises
   - **Reading Due**: Ishmael Beah, *A Long Way Gone* (text)
   - **Writing Due**: Workshop Group 1 Submits

**12 February**: Frey and Beah—Where’s the Line in nonfiction? / Workshop
   - **Reading Due**: *The Australian* “Inconvenient Truths of a Child Soldier”; *The Smoking Gun* “A Million Little Lies”; Laura Barton “The Man Who Rewrote His Life” (packet)
   - **Writing Due**: Workshop Group 2 Submits; Reading Response 1 Due

**19 February**: Where words fail: Trauma, Fragmentation and Antimorphosis/ Workshop
   - **Reading Due**: Susan Gubar “Antimorphosis”; Wislawa Szymborska “Photograph from September 11”; excerpt Art Speigelman *Maus*; excerpt Primo Levi *The Periodic Table* (packet)
   - **Writing Due**: Workshop Group 3 Submits

**26 February**: Genre-bending memoir continued / Workshop
   - **Reading Due**: excerpt Heidi Julavits *The Folded Clock*; excerpt Lauren Slater *Lying* (packet)
   - **Writing Due**: Workshop Group 4 Submits; Creative Writing Exercise Due

**4 March**: Winterson, Autobiographical fiction / Workshop
   - **Reading Due**: Jeanette Winterson *Oranges are not the Only Fruit* (text)
   - **Writing Due**: Workshop Group 5 Submits

**25 March**: Winterson, the memoir version / Workshop
   - **Reading Due**: Jeanette Winterson *Why be Happy when you Could be Normal?* (text)
   - **Writing Due**: Workshop Group 1 Submits; Reading Response 2

**1 April**: O’Brien, Gallagher, Klay the Facts of War / Workshop
   - **Reading Due**: Tim O’Brien “How to Tell a True War Story”; excerpt Matt Gallagher *Kaboom*; Phil Klay “OIF” (packet)
   - **Writing Due**: Workshop Group 2 Submits

**8 April**: Gallagher, the Truth of War / Workshop
**Reading Due:** Matt Gallagher, *Youngblood* (text)
**Writing Due:** Workshop Group 3 Submits

**15 April:** Translation/ Workshop
   **Reading Due:** excerpt, Salman Rushdie “Imaginary Homelands”; Richard Rodriguez “Aria”; Amy Tan “Mother Tongue” (packet)
   **Writing Due:** Workshop Group 4 Submits

**22 April:** Translation Take 2 / Workshop
   **Reading Due:** N/A
   **Writing Due:** Workshop Group 5 Submits; Translation Exercise Due

**29 April:** Last Day of Class—Matt Gallagher Guest Speaker / Workshop

Final Portfolio to be uploaded to WesFiles
**Wednesday 4 May, Last Day of Classes for Undergraduates **