



Exchange programme Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam

Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam - Exchange programme Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam - 2024-2025

Exchange

Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam offers many English-taught courses in a variety of subjects, ranging from arts & culture and social sciences, neurosciences and computer science, to economics and business administration.

The International Office is responsible for course approval and course registration for exchange students. For details about course registration, requirements, credits, semesters and so on, please [visit the exchange programmes webpages](#).

Bible Translation and Digital Humanities

Course Code	G_BATRSAL060
Credits	6
Period	P2
Course Level	300
Language Of Tuition	English
Faculty	Faculty of Religion and Theology
Course Coordinator	prof. dr. W.T. van Peursen
Examiner	prof. dr. W.T. van Peursen
Teaching Staff	prof. dr. W.T. van Peursen
Teaching method(s)	Seminar, Lecture

Course Objective

After finishing this course, the student

- has got acquainted with and learned how to apply translation practice in the early twenty-first century;
- has learned the application of digital resources for editing and comparing texts and translations, as well as for groundbreaking computational linguistic research supporting the Bible translators.

Course Content

The emergence of digital tools and methods has profoundly changed theory and practice of Bible translation studies. The analysis of parallel digital corpora facilitates the study of Bible translations, both ancient and modern, to discover translation tendencies, linguistic features, consistency and other structural phenomena. Parallel Bible translations in thousands of languages also an extremely rich corpus for contrastive linguistic analysis. However, digital tools are not only used in researching Bible translations, but also in creating them. Nowadays, each step in the translation process, from textual analysis of the sources text till the final publication of a translation is facilitated by the computer. What are the potential and the challenges of this development? And to what extent can pattern recognition, artificial intelligence and machine translation produces translation suggestions?

In this course we will discuss the application of digital resources for editing and comparing texts and translations, as well as for groundbreaking computational linguistic research supporting the Bible translators. The course will cover both theoretical hermeneutical aspects and a discussion of some concrete case studies taken from ongoing translation projects.

The student will develop the academic skill to read and assess scholarly literature about Bible translation studies and Digital Humanities, the methodological skills needed to perform digital analysis of texts and translations, the hermeneutical skills to evaluate these tools and their usage critically, and the communicative skills to give written reports about their findings.

Additional Information Teaching Methods

Lectures and seminars.

Method of Assessment

Small assignments during the course (50%) and written final exam (50%).

Literature

- Christos Christodouloupoulos, "A massively parallel corpus: the Bible in 100 languages", *Language Resources and Evaluation* 49 (2015), pp. 375–395.

- Maeve Olohan, *Introducing Corpora in Translation Studies* (London and New York: Routledge), pp. 1–44 (=chapter 1–4).
- W.Th. van Peursen, *Language and Interpretation in the Syriac Text of Ben Sira. A Comparative Linguistic and Literary Study* (Leiden: Brill, 2007), pp. 137–158 (= Ch. 7).
- Jon Riding “Statistical Glossing - Language Independent Analysis in Bible Translation” 2008)
http://lc.bfbs.org.uk/e107_files/downloads/ridingaslib08.pdf
- Jon Riding and Gerrit J. Van Steenbergen, “Glossing technology in Paratext 7”, *The Bible Translator* 62/2 (2011), pp. 92–102; DOI:
10.1177/026009351106200206
- Thomas Tracey, “Language Translation with RNNs” <https://towardsdatascience.com/language-translation-with-rnns-d84d43b405>

Further literature announcements will be made in Canvas.

Additional Information Target Audience

This course forms part of the minor Bible Translation in a Digital Age. It can also be chosen as elective by students Theology and Religious Studies, Linguistics or Classical languages and anyone interested in translation studies, the Bible, Digital Humanities and contextual theology.

Recommended background knowledge

Knowledge of one or more biblical languages (Hebrew, Aramaic, Greek) is useful, but not required. In the course assignments there is some room for tailor-made options depending on the student's interests and linguistic skills.