Lauren Wolfe, 32, holds degrees from both Grinnell College (BA 2001, German language and literature) and the School of the Art Institute of Chicago (MFA 2008, creative writing). By day, Wolfe is a project manager for Burg Translations, Inc. in Chicago, a commercial translation agency. At night, Wolfe dons her student cap once more—without the commute to campus, this go-around—as she examines novels submitted to her for review and sample translation.

Wolfe is one of only three students accepted for enrollment this year in the Center for Translation Studies and Dalkey Archive program to earn the online certificate in applied literary translation. The program is designed for beginning translators who are ready to begin professional work but have not yet published a book-length translation. Students gain practical experience along with individual feedback from both professional editors and experienced faculty who will nurture the students’ growth.

Dalkey Archive Press, an important partner for the Center for Translation Studies (CTS) in providing opportunities for students to practice their developing skills, has given Wolfe three novels to review and determine their publishing potential. Wolfe analyzes the texts “first objectively, then subjectively,” she said, and then she writes a sample translation of 10-15 pages.

Jeremy Davies, editor at Dalkey, said he corresponds with each student reviewer in a text-to-text fashion. “We try to give students the room to come to their own conclusions and see where our comments and suggestions originate,” he said. “We provide options more than strict critiques.”

Students in the online program are guided through this back-and-forth process by CTS faculty. Reinhard Mayer serves as Wolfe’s mentor.

“We Skype once a week, and Professor Mayer gives me input on the work I do for Dalkey,” said Wolfe. “He also adds informal assignments—exercises to make me more conscious of issues in translation that I may not otherwise see so clearly in my work for Dalkey. We also read together, which is giving me a nice theoretical base to work from.”

Wolfe’s current job has married her fluency in German with her talent for writing in the field of translation. But while the commercial translation work pays her bills, “it would be fantastic to work as a literary translator,” she said.

“I had been looking at complete master’s programs in literary translation, but I just didn’t want to be a full-time student anymore,” Wolfe said. “Yet I still love learning and new challenges.”

There’s no doubt that Dalkey Archive Press also benefits from the partnership with students from the Center for Translation Studies. “These students are focused, driven, opinionated, and have excellent taste to boot, which is all we can really ask for,” said Davies. “The future of foreign literature in English translation is in very good hands, if this sampling is any indication.”

Learn more about the online certificate program on the CTS website at www.translation.illinois.edu/programs/certificate2.html.
Importing a Translation Culture to the Illinois Cornfields

Translation at Illinois must seem like an oxymoron to those whose image of the Midwest is a bland homogenous mix of people, landscape, and culture. Yet a surprise for skeptics waits in the middle of the corn and soybean fields: The University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign houses a School of Literatures, Cultures and Linguistics (SLCL) that contains nine academic departments with established interests in translation practice and research.

Here, we capitalize on the University’s fantastic library system, which has a robust acquisition program to continuously build on translation resources, both print and online, including a rare book and manuscript library. The University is also the home of Dalkey Archive Press, the foremost publisher of translations in the United States and an educational partner with the Center for Translation Studies (CTS). We are fortunate to have the newly established Lemann Institute of Brazilian Studies as a partner, as well as a dynamic creative writing department. The University has nine funded Title VI National Resource Centers, which have been highly supportive of contributing to the start-up of CTS. Our European Union Center recently was awarded the prestigious designation of “Centre d’Excellence,” and CTS will participate in a three-year grant associated with this program.

The Midwest and the University of Illinois offer fertile soil for growing a translation program. Many multinational corporations located in the state, including Caterpillar, McDonald’s, Kraft, Archer Daniels Midland, John Deere, and Abbott, need language specialists with knowledge of terminology and localization practices. The large immigrant population in Illinois has created a demand for translators and interpreters in the courts, hospitals, and social agencies. The Illinois state educational system needs the help of multilingual and multicultural experts to make their materials available to parents and students from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Indeed, the field of translation studies seems to be growing even as other areas of the humanities show some decline.

CTS has endeavored to create a flexible and robust program that meets the interests and career goals of its talented multilingual student body and that also is aligned with trends in the translation and localization job market. Our curriculum includes instruction in computer-assisted translation tools and localization software. We are forming educational partnerships with a variety of businesses, community agencies, NGOs, and government agencies.

Currently available are graduate and undergraduate certificates in translation studies and an online program in applied literary translation (www.translation.illinois.edu/programs/certificate2.html), which prepares participants for careers in translation publishing and editing. The master’s in translation and interpretation should be launched in 2012 and will offer tracks in translation for the professions, technical and commercial translation, interpreting, and applied literary translation.

Courses under development include “Translation of Sacred Texts” and “Translation of the Classics.” This fall semester we are partnering with the Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures to pilot a course in “History of Translation” taught by David Cooper. The Department of French has offered a graduate course developed by Marcus Keller, “The Oriental on the European Stage from Shakespeare to Voltaire,” which focuses on texts in Spanish, French, and German side by side with English translation. We recently offered a course in Arabic translation in collaboration with the SLCL Summer Institute for the Languages of the Muslim World and plan to add more translation courses in these critical languages.

We have collaborated with consulates and cultural agencies in Chicago to create opportunities for our students, including participation in the annual translators’ workshop at the Goethe Institute. The Brazilian Consulate in Chicago co-sponsored a conference titled “Brazilian Writers and their Translators” in 2009.

As incongruous as it might seem, the Land of Lincoln offers a wealth of opportunities to rising translators and translator scholars. We aspire to build on the tradition of great translators who have practiced in this state, including Samuel Putnam and William Gass, to create a culture of translation in the cornfields, as diverse and accented as the ever-changing skyscape of the prairie.

For the full article, please see the American Literary Translators Association blog: http://literarytranslators.wordpress.com/2011/09/15/importing-a-translation-culture.
Faculty News and Publications

Wail Hassan’s book, Immigrant Narratives: Orientalism and Cultural Translation in Arab American and Arab British Literature, was recently published by Oxford University Press.

Elizabeth Lowe is working with U of I European Union Center colleagues on teaching and research initiatives in the area of “Embracing Change: Languages, Cultures and Identities.” The European Union Center was recently awarded two grants from the European Union for research and outreach intended to enhance regional studies. Find more information at the EU Center website: www.euc.illinois.edu.

Lowe was elected vice president of the American Literary Translators Association. She will serve as VP for two years and then will become president of the organization for another two years. Lowe participated in a panel at ALTA in Kansas City (November 16-18, 2011) on teaching and producing translation in the Midwest.

Elizabeth Lowe, Joyce Tolliver (Spanish, Italian, and Portuguese), and Karen Fresco (French) attended meetings in Paris at the Université Denis Diderot (Paris VII) to discuss future collaboration under the Memorandum of Agreement signed by the two institutions, including plans for a 2012 conference in Paris and student and faculty exchanges.

Reinhard Mayer organized a panel for the American Literary Translators Association conference (www.utdallas.edu/alta/conference/current-conference) in Kansas City in November 2011 called “Rethinking the Translation Studies Curriculum: Shifting the Focus of the Academy from Avocation to Profession.” Mayer has also coordinated a panel for the Modern Language Association conference (www.mla.org/convention) in Seattle in January 2012 entitled “Keeping the Lights On in the Corporate University.”

Mayer completed the translation of a book by Christian Gasser, animation.ch, Variety and Vision in Swiss Animated Film, which was launched in September as a bilingual book by Benteli Verlag. CTS alumnus Dustin Levitt also participated in the project, a book about contemporary animated film in Switzerland.

CTS Director Elizabeth Lowe recommended that Castle take on more (paid) endeavors through Fox Translate, an online translation service company based in San Francisco that matches freelance translators with unique projects submitted to the company from a variety of sources. Fox Translate is just one of CTS’s educational partners through whom students practice their growing skills and build a solid portfolio of work.

“Fox Translate offers small projects like translating birth certificates, diplomas, or magazine articles,” said Castle.

Castle’s technical vocabulary has certainly expanded through work on topics as offbeat as laser defraction.

“There’s a way you say things, and a [different] way you do them in translation,” he said. “I’m learning specialized vocabulary and terms for agencies in German. I’m developing a template for my work, and then it gets easier.”

Castle, who hopes to pursue translation work after graduation, selected the University of Illinois for graduate study on the basis of its strong languages program but has come to appreciate even more opportunities upon enrolling.

“CTS was a nice surprise after choosing Illinois,” he said. “I like the practical focus. It sets you up well.”

Jeff Castle, 25, a graduate student in Germanic languages and literatures who is working toward a certificate in translation studies, is a transplant to the Midwest from Charlottesville, Va. Castle earned his undergraduate degree in 2009 in music—piano performance, specifically—at Virginia Commonwealth University. Upon meeting Castle at a café in the heart of campus this fall, he said his transition to a campus in a smaller-scale city setting has been one he’s enjoyed. Here, he’s been able to take advantage of professional opportunities set up especially for students in the Center for Translation Studies (CTS).

Last school year, Castle worked under the tutelage of Professor Reinhard Mayer to publish a translation of ANIMATION.CH: Variety and Vision in Swiss Animated Film by Christian Gasser, which was launched in September as a bilingual book by Benteli Verlag. CTS graduate Dustin Levitt also participated in the project, a book about contemporary animated film in Switzerland.

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Jeff Castle at a pub in Prague.
Campus Hails Winners of Illinois High School Translation Competition

The Center for Translation Studies and the European Union Center at the University of Illinois welcomed winners of the Illinois High School Translation Competition in European Union languages to campus on November 4. Accompanied by their teachers, students from 16 Illinois high schools spent the day on campus learning about the EU, translation and interpretation as professions, and translation-related programs at the University of Illinois. Anna Holmen, a staff member at the directorate-general for translation at the European Commission in Brussels and coordinator of the EU translation contest Juvenes Translatores, gave a keynote address: “Multilingualism in the EU and Careers in Translation and Interpretation.”

Last fall, the European Union Center worked with the Center for Translation Studies to obtain a public engagement grant to start this program.

Former Student’s Capstone Project Serves Urbana High School

Word of mouth pointed Urbana High School staff toward the Center for Translation Studies (CTS) last spring when thinking of ways they might better serve the growing population of Spanish-speaking families in the local school district. In particular, they needed help translating their course description guidebook for students and their parents from English into Spanish. CTS alumna Dámaris Mayans-Ramón of Alicante, Spain, who is currently furthering her studies at the University of Florida, was tapped to work on this as her capstone project for completion of her certificate in translation studies.

We recently caught up with Professor Patricia Phillips-Batoma to discuss the impact of this capstone project, which was completed in time for use this fall.

“We have a community-wide shortage of this type of information,” said Phillips-Batoma. “Families need the basic info a guidebook like this provides to learn how things work in their child’s school.”

While Mayans-Ramón was able to complete most of the technical translation on her own with the help of translation software, there were other areas in which teacher and student collaborated. Because Mayans-Ramón did not attend American elementary or high schools, she was not familiar with all of the terms covered in the guidebook, such as “bell schedule.” In some cases, Mayans-Ramón needed to find ways to translate words, like “marching band,” for which there is no equivalent name in the Spanish language. Phillips-Batoma was able to explain these culture-specific terms and customs.

CTS will reach out to other high schools in the area to see if what they’ve produced can be tailored for their use as well, said Phillips-Batoma. “A lot of the language in these types of documents is the same,” said Phillips-Batoma. “You end up with what is called a ‘translation memory’ after you’ve worked with the text using translation software. Now we can leverage the work we’ve already done to help other high schools and, at the same time, show our students how this process works.”

Events

November 14 - The Center for Translation Studies co-sponsored a symposium at the Americas Society of New York. “Cityscapes of Rio and Bahia, Brazil” featured contemporary Brazilian writers and translators, as well as scholars of Brazilian literature, who discussed current trends in poetry, fiction, essays, and song lyrics from the two cities. Elizabeth Lowe, director for the Center for Translation Studies, moderated the panel on Rio de Janeiro. Lowe is the guest academic editor of Review 83, which launched on November 15.


November 19 - The Center for Translation Studies welcomed Jean Anderson from the University of Wellington in Victoria, New Zealand, for a special visit. Anderson is a professor in Wellington’s School of Languages and Cultures and is the founding director of the New Zealand Centre for Literary Translation. Her research for literary translation, particularly of Pacific writing, focuses on late 19th-century women writers, 21st-century women’s writing, and the short story.
Illinois Student Translation Association

Report

Illinois Student Association for Translation is now an officially registered student organization. Patrycja Kandefer, a senior in mathematics and a student in the Undergraduate Certificate in Translation Studies Program, is president. Klaudyna Kawula, a sophomore in business, is treasurer. Anastasia Lakhtikova is the group’s faculty advisor.

The association will take part in projects associated with multilingual campus life, such as multilingual library tours, as well as translation-related events. Members played an important role in helping to coordinate cultural programs at the Illinois High School Translation Competition earlier this month. They plan to attend the forthcoming American Literary Translators Association Conference that will take place this year in Kansas City, Mo.

Translation Per Se

Brazilian poet Claudia Roquette-Pinto was a recent visitor to the University of Illinois campus courtesy of the Lemann Institute. Her poems, which celebrate both the landscape of her native Rio de Janeiro and the poet’s emotional topography, have been translated into several languages. She won the prestigious Jabuti Prize for poetry in 2002. This sonnet was translated into English by Marcello Sorrentino and Paulo Henriques Britto. Reprinted by permission of the author and translators.

From Os Dias Gagos (edição de autora, 1991)

Bluff

this is the bastard month, where verdigris will swallow what is sweet in every metal and silence dulls the skin of diaries and sheets take on the hue of arid sheets

there is a blue, but it’s an asthma blue that the sharpness of noon turns into a capsule mirrors return just baggy eyes and curses in a gesture so simple that it shatters so cathodic, this luminosity ignores the sun repels the sun. intact

the tic that twitched an stuck my stuttering days

the rhyme remains quite livid on the lips and voiceless pain parades its epidemic a cat electrifies. I venture may

It’s Time to Register!

SPRING 2012

LAS 490: Special Topics in Linguistics, Practice of Russian Translation
LAS 490: Translation in the European Union
TRST 404: Bilingualism and Translation
TRST 405: Commercial & Technical Translation
TRST 410: Translation Theory & Practice
TRST 430: Chinese Poetry and Translation
TRST 440: Translation Studies Capstone

SUMMER 2012

TRST 401 (LAS490): Translation Study Abroad in the European Union
Experience behind-the-scenes visits to international agencies and cultural sites relevant to language and culture studies. Cities visited include Paris, Brussels, and Strasbourg. Estimated program cost is $2,500. Financial aid is available. Applications are available at www.studyabroad.illinois.edu. For more information, contact Elizabeth Lowe (elowe@illinois.edu) or Patricia Phillips-Batoma (pphillip@illinois.edu).