Master of Arts in Audiovisual Translation

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A two-year full-time (or three-year part-time) specialist program designed to train specialists in the mediation of audiovisual texts.

Launched in September 2014, the MA in Audiovisual Translation (MAAT) is a two-year full-time (or three-year part-time) program designed to train specialists in the mediation of audiovisual texts, both for foreign-language viewers and sensory-impaired audiences.

The flourishing field of audiovisual translation opens itself to fundamental and applied research in a wide range of domains. Taking the audiovisual text as its focal point, research can address technical and technological issues, linguistic and/or cultural and ideological issues. In audiovisual translation, socially oriented scholars will find ample space for applied research with an impact in domains such as television and the arts, as well as cultural and educational contexts.

Graduates of the program are equipped to

- Master the practical and technological skills required for a career in subtitling, dubbing, voice-over, subtitling for the hard-of-hearing and audio description.
- Use their enhanced analytical skills in a practical setting.
- Work as audiovisual translators at national and international level for the media, culture, tourism, education or any other sector where linguistic and cultural mediation is bound to multimedia contexts.
- Pursue careers in teaching or opt for advanced research at PhD level.

Outline for the Master of Arts in Audiovisual Translation Program (MAAT)
Structure:

- A two-year full-time program, or a three-year part-time program that requires 42 credits with eight required courses, three electives, an internship and a thesis.
- All courses are conducted face-to-face and classroom based, taught in English and take place at HBKU in Doha, Qatar

Curriculum:

A 42-credit program, taught in English over two years, which includes:

- Core Courses
- Elective courses
Core Courses

Introduction to Translation Studies

This course introduces students to the main approaches that have developed in the field of Translation Studies. Beginning with an overview of pre-20th century translation theory, the course follows a chronological trajectory of the development of the major theories in the field, including theories of equivalence, translation products and processes, functionalist approaches, discourse and register analysis, systems theories, norm theory and descriptive translation studies.

Students will be required to critically engage with theory in order to discuss the complex implications of the choices they have to make as translators and scholars.

Research Methods

This course will enable students to participate in the conversation on academic writing (especially in English) by introducing them to the shape, scope, and process of conducting research projects in the field of Translation Studies.

Pragmatic Translation

Pragmatic Translation is a foundational, practice-oriented course designed for students with little or no background in translation. It aims to develop the basic skills and knowledge to perform translation tasks to the required standard in this class, in classes running concurrently and later in other more advanced classes.

Translation practical work focuses on various text types: legal, financial, literary and media (audiovisual) texts.

Arabic Stylistics

This is designed to engage students in examining and applying the grammar and stylistics of Arabic discourse in written and oral forms. It will enhance students’ competence in manipulating various grammatical, stylistic and rhetorical features of Modern Standard Arabic (MSA).

Students are taught to compose and comprehend prose in MSA. Special emphasis is placed on key linguistic features within different genres of MSA. Through practical exercises, students will learn to apply relevant analytical tools and use relevant textual conventions in their own writing. Oral communication is also practiced in informal class discussions and formal presentations.
Current Trends in Audiovisual Translation

This course introduces scholarly approaches to the study of Audiovisual Translation, which have been developed over the last two decades.

Students will think critically and reflectively about the community of translators and interpreters. They will engage with the complexity and implications of the choices that translators have to make on a daily basis.

Subtitling

This is a largely practical course that introduces students to the technique of interlingual subtitling. Students will be introduced to the specific formal and discursive features of subtitles: the temporal and spatial constraints, timing, condensation and synthesis, verbal and non-verbal cues, appropriate punctuation, positioning and segmentation. Students will analyze how subtitles function as a form of inter-semiotic communication and inter-linguistic mediation and reflect on the implications of choosing the most appropriate strategies.

Students will employ methods of handling culture-specific difficulties of audiovisual texts in interlingual subtitling, such as register, dialects, sociolects, accents and pronunciation, as well as taboo words and interjections.

Dubbing

This course introduces students to the translation and adaptation of dialogue in preparation for either non-lip-synched dubbing or voice-over.

Students will learn to work with scripts and to deal with the wide range of linguistic, cultural, semiotic and technical issues faced when producing a dubbing script. This will include the re-segmentation required when adapting a script and the use of standard dubbing symbols. Students will work with a range of different media products including: documentaries, interviews, cartoons.

Audiovisual Translation for Access
In this course, students will cover two of the main audiovisual translation genres used for providing access to audiences with sensory impairment: Subtitling for the deaf and hard-of-hearing audiences (SDH), and audio description (AD). Throughout the course, students will use appropriate professional software to carry out their SDH and AD tasks.

Students will also be introduced to academic discourse on disability and on AVT for access and will be invited to think critically about ethical issues of audiovisual translation for access.

**Advanced Research in Audiovisual Translation**

This course prepares students to write their thesis, whether research or practice-oriented. It leads students through the main areas of research and inquiry in Translation Studies and that in AVT studies, the principles of designing research projects, reviewing the literature and writing research proposals.

Students will also learn the skills and requirements for writing translation commentaries for the purposes of writing a practice-oriented thesis that consists of a translation accompanied by a theoretically-informed and evidence-based critical analysis.

**Internship**

The internship is a hands-on learning experience, where students will work on AVT projects in the college’s AVT Unit (or elsewhere if approved) under the supervision of a translation mentor.

**Thesis Seminar and Thesis**

This final independent study and research course is designed to support students writing their research or practice-oriented translation thesis. Seminars will act as teaching and workshop opportunities to guide, assist and advise students through the key stages and skills necessary for successful completion.

Students will utilize the research and writing skills developed over the MAAT program, culminating in a public presentation of their work and a quality thesis that will ideally serve as evidence of their master’s-level knowledge in translation studies, their postgraduate-level skills as practiced in the humanities, and their emergent competence as academic researchers and/or professional translators.
Two elective courses

A representative list of MAAT elective courses:

**Advanced Subtitling**

This course provides students with experience in subtitling in a wider range of genres and related challenges. Students will develop their professional practice further and reflect critically on prevailing standards.

Students will learn to subtitle material that poses serious cultural and linguistic challenges by carrying out appropriate research and gaining experience in the decision-making process.

**Advanced Dubbing**

This course introduces students to the actual recording and production of lip-synchronized and revoiced AV products. Students will complete more complex translation and adaptation tasks and learn to deal with a variety of cross-cultural issues, such as the rendering of dialect, slang, taboo language. They will also learn to adapt for closely lip-synched dubbing, and produce their own revoiced clip, thereby testing the validity of their dubbing script and gaining first-hand experience of the shift from the written to the voiced.

**Advanced Audiovisual Translation for Access**

In this course, students will refine their understanding of international norms in SDH and AD to consider their applicability to the Arab context. Students will also address AVT for access as “transadaptation,” in which multimodal communication strategies and multi-format materials are used to reinforce multisensory engagement with knowledge and culture. Students will also interact with local stakeholders in cultural settings, as well as in organizations working with people with special needs towards the development of collaborative projects.

**Commercial Translation**

This course equips students with the necessary skills for translating texts used in the commercial environment. Students will be introduced to the style, formats, and functions of commercial texts and will develop methods for dealing with them. Special emphasis will be placed on the difficulties encountered in translating commercial vis-à-vis other types of texts, especially as they require specific skills and techniques. Contrastive features of commercial texts in different languages are examined and related to the translation process.

The course also explores the importance of culture in commercial communication across languages, as well as within the same language.
Media Translation

This is a practice-oriented course that prepares students for a professional career in media translation. It deals with different forms, modes and genres of media texts, focusing in particular on political and economic texts.

Students analyze and critically assess various media texts, including hard news reports, investigative reports, interviews, editorialized commentaries, editorials and TV news scripts. Using linguistic skills and applying theoretical and practical insights, students will be trained to produce professional translations of texts generated by media outlets.

Translation Technologies

This course introduces students to a selection of language technology tools with a focus on professional practice. These will range from widely used open-access tools to the industry standard SDL TRADOS (Getting Started level).

Students will create and manage translation memories and terminological databases, and integrate corpora into their translation practice. They will also reflect on the role of machine translation and its application.

Literary Translation

This course will cover the following aspects of literary translation: features of literary texts: analysis and translation approaches; style in literary translation; approaches to translating literary genres: poetry, theater, fiction, speeches; translating titles; translating metaphors and figures of speech; culture, politics, ideology; the problem of linguistic variety: register, dialect, slang; using footnotes; the working translator: tools & resources, publication.

Intercultural Translation

This course examines intercultural issues that are central to translation studies today. Studying translation in different cultures and historical contexts, the course highlights the significant role that translators have played in enriching national languages, spreading religious creeds, and framing intellectual and political encounters across linguistic communities.
Students are introduced to current theoretical debates on translation and intercultural communication, including, among others, “foreignizing” and “domesticating” approaches, translation and globalization, translation in multicultural settings, immigrant literature, and postcolonial studies. Special emphasis is placed on the role of translation in the construction of the foreign as a primary tool of representing/misrepresenting cultural others.

**Special Topics in Audiovisual Translation**

In this course, students will further hone their theoretical grounding and be introduced to various genres and new developments in the field of Translation Studies. The focus will be on the convergence of various issues of Translation Studies main concentration areas i.e. translation proper, interpreting, and audiovisual translation. The main aim is to encourage and instill critical thinking, develop further understanding of central concepts of various translation studies approaches, implement these approaches and strategies, and broaden perspectives on a plethora of translation constraints.

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