**Course Title**: Subtitling: Issues in Audiovisual Translation and Culture  
**Course Code**: CLA9011  
**Recommended Study Year**: 1-4  
**No. of Credits/Term**: 3  
**Mode of Tuition**: Lecture-tutorial  
**Class Contact Hours**: 2-hour lecture per week  
                                          1-hour tutorial per week  
**Category**: Core curriculum: Creativity and Innovation Cluster  
**Prerequisite**: Nil  
**Co-requisite**: Nil  
**Exclusion**: Nil  
**Exemption Requirement**: Nil

**Brief Course Description:**  
This course examines subtitling from English to Chinese and Chinese to English. It discusses how translation in audiovisual media deals with the problems of taboo, gender and sexuality, race and nationality, politically ‘sensitive’ materials, humour, and culturally specific references. It also investigates the translation of different film and television genres, and explores subtitling issues, comparing, contrasting and evaluating ways in which comedy, tragedy, action, horror, documentary and/or historical films and television programmes are treated. In addition to analyzing how subtitles are created, structured and presented in various genres of audiovisual products, students will practise editing and writing their own subtitles based on excerpts of films or television programmes from Hong Kong or mainland China.

Language of instruction: English / Cantonese / Putonghua

**Aims:**  
This course aims to introduce students to translation through the practices and processes involved in subtitling audiovisual materials. The course discusses problems in audiovisual translation and provides students with the required knowledge, skills and understanding of how translation relates to popular culture. It examines how subtitling reflects while creating cultural differences, and investigates the similarities and differences of cultural values in the Chinese and the Western worlds. It discusses the technical and practical issues involved in subtitling, and provides ample opportunities for students to write and edit subtitles on their own and/or in teams or groups.

**Learning Outcomes:**  
Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:  
1. identify and evaluate how subtitles of different film and/or television genres deal with issues of humour, taboo, gender, politics, and culturally specific materials;  
2. identify and evaluate how subtitling is created, structured and presented in different genres of audiovisual products;  
3. demonstrate their ability to examine different cultural values in the Chinese and the Western worlds through subtitling;  
4. identify common mistakes or problems in subtitles of existing audiovisual products and make reasoned suggestions for how to improve them;  
5. apply their technical knowledge of space and other constraints in subtitling to their writing and/or editing of subtitles; and  
6. write and edit basic subtitling scripts in both the Chinese-English and English-Chinese directions based on excerpts of existing films and/or television programmes.
Indicative Content:
1. Examining how subtitles of different genres handle issues of humour, taboo, gender, politics, and culturally specific materials;
2. Studying and analysing subtitling practices in different film and television genres;
3. Studying and analysing how different aspects of subtitling reflect linguistic and cultural problems in translation;
4. Examining the relationship between translation and the construction of cultural values;
5. Studying and applying technical issues and other practical constraints in subtitling;
6. Identifying mistakes and problems in subtitles, including common causes for and types of mistakes.
7. Writing subtitles in both the Chinese-English and English-Chinese directions.

Teaching Method:
Lectures and tutorial discussions. Lectures will be used primarily to discuss analytical and theoretical issues in subtitling, while tutorials will be used for practice, discussion and group presentations. The course has an optional Service-Learning component which allows students to integrate hands-on service-learning experiences with theories concerning the writing and editing of subtitles. Details about the scheme and enrollment logistics will be introduced in the first lecture.

Measurement of Learning Outcomes:
Students’ progress towards the learning outcomes will be measured by means of:
1. A tutorial group presentation in which students choose a film and provide reasoned examples of how the subtitling deals with the issues discussed in this course (humour, taboo subjects, gender, culture, etc); identify mistakes or problems in the subtitling; and propose alternative versions of subtitles as deemed necessary and suitable; [LOs 1, 4, 5]
2. A written essay in which students study and analyse a film or other audiovisual product of their choice and apply, with examples, the issues discussed in lectures that are relevant to that genre. [LOs 1, 2, 3, 5, 6]
3. A final exam that includes both essay questions based on material taught in lectures, and practical subtitling exercises which could include editing and/or writing subtitles in either the Chinese-English or English-Chinese direction. [LOs 1, 4, 5, 6]

Service-Learning Teaching Method/Class Activities (Optional):
Students can choose to replace the tutorial group presentation with an optional Service-Learning component, which includes a service-learning project presentation. Through the SL component, students can learn to increase their personal and social responsibility by helping the society with their knowledge of translation. They can increase their communication, organization and problem solving skills by working closely with their classmates, teacher(s) and service target(s). For the project, students are required to translate and edit the subtitles for the film(s) assigned by the Office of Service-Learning. They also need to:

(a) Attend the first class orientation;
(b) Attend training sessions to learn about the aims and purposes of service-learning;
(c) Attend consultation sessions concerning translating, writing and editing subtitles;
(d) Participate in an agency orientation to familiarize themselves with their service target(s);
(e) Attend a reflective workshop to examine their service-learning experience; and
(f) Fulfil a minimum of 30 service hours through their contribution to the project(s).
At the end of the course, students are required to do a presentation to their fellow classmates on their service-learning project(s), the translation problems and difficulties they encountered and their service-learning experience. They need to submit their final product(s) which will then be sent to the relevant organization(s) for its/their future use.

**Assessment**

**For Non Service-Learning participants:**
Examination: 40% (One 2-hour paper)
One group presentation: 30%
One written essay: 30%

**For Service-Learning participants:**
Examination: 40% (One 2-hour paper)
Service-Learning project: 15% (including the quality of participation, and the quality of translation and subtitling in the films)
Reflective workshop: 5%
Service-Learning presentation: 10%
One written essay: 30%

**Readings:**

- 陳琦〈電影譯名的特點及其翻譯規範化問題〉in 《翻譯季刊》No. 20 (2001) pp.100-120