

COLT 510

## Introduction to Translation Studies

Spring 2025

Professor Peggy Kamuf



*Pieter Bruegel the Elder, "The Tower of Babel" (1563)*

"What to think of translation?" Some form of this question has been asked non-stop for many centuries, but it found new resonance in the past century, after Walter Benjamin's now canonical essay, "The Task of the Translator" (1923). This seminar is going to reflect on a small selection of work on translation in the wake of this famous essay. Besides Benjamin, we'll read texts by, among others, Jakobson, Derrida, and Blanchot, as well as eminent translation studies scholars Antoine Berman and Lawrence Venuti. For background to these more contemporary theories, we will also probe the German tradition out of which Benjamin's thinking emerges, beginning with Martin Luther and the Romantics, especially Schleiermacher. Students will engage with the seminar topic in their papers and in-class presentations. And they will be enjoined to think about how their own future research will have to remain engaged with issues of translation. The seminar will be conducted in a confusion of tongues.