Proposal
Copeland Colloquium

[1] **Title:** The Future of Translation: A Global Multimedia Conversation

[2] **Description:** For the academic year 2014-15, we propose a Copeland Colloquium that seeks to foster a global and globalized multimedia dialogue on the role translation plays in contemporary culture. Our intention is to explore the art of translation as an effort across languages and literatures, and also, more broadly, as a medium for understanding and interpreting cultural encounters, political exchanges, and the fostering of technology in facilitating human thought – in short, as a vital intellectual enterprise that challenges commonplace assumptions about culture, society, and politics.

At a time when the Humanities are under threat, the objective is for the Colloquium to utilize cutting-edge technological resources (Facebook, Twitter, Skype, digital books, etc.) to create a truly broad and encompassing Humanities dialogue that is global, e.g., connecting our campus with scholars, translators, politicians, activists, journalists, and other internationally-known figures and vice versa.

Our focus on the uses of technology and short visits by major figures means that, unlike previous years, this iteration of the Colloquium does not intend to bring semester- or year-long Copeland fellows to campus. This experiment should not only match the needs of our specific program, but also be of value to the Colloquium’s continual adjustment to new modes of intellectual exchange. The goal will be on the intensity of the visit and the possibilities opened up by new media distribution and conversation.
The Colloquium will have the following five components: (a) a series of six Town Hall-type multi-media conversations; (b) translation-related courses taught during the academic year; (c) a film series; d) short residencies for visitors; and (e) an edited multimedia book.

(a) At the heart of the Colloquium will be a series of between four and six Town Hall-like conversations, two to three each semester, hosted at Amherst College and linked to sites all over the globe, from Buenos Aires to New Delhi, from Moscow to Kingston. Each of these conversations will feature three major figures plus the host, who will be a member of the Organizing Committee. One or two of those major figures will be invited to spend a week or more in residence at Amherst College and give a public lecture and a short seminar for students and faculty.

Some of the topics we intend to explore include the versatility of the English language worldwide, cultural icons including Shakespeare as a point of arrival and departure for readers in various habitats and trajectories, translation and nationalism in the Caribbean Basin, translation as an educational incentive in today’s classroom, translation in the U.S.-Mexican border, translation and war, translation and ethnicity; translation and philosophy, translation and the law, and so on. These dialogues will be broadcast internationally. They will also be taped for future pedagogical use.

The Town Hall-like conversation themes and participants will be selected from a pool assembled by the Organizing Committee from suggestions offered by the entire Amherst community.

(b) We will encourage our College colleagues across disciplines to (co)teach translation-related courses during the Copeland Colloquium year. We will
publicize such courses through the College website and by additional outreach to students during pre-registration periods via brochures.

(c) We will also organize a year-long translation-related film series that will connect with the courses being taught as well as with the public conversations. The films will be followed by a discussion, where possible with directors or performers. Amherst Cinema will screen them.

(d) One or two of the major figures participating in the Town Hall-like conversations will be invited to spend a week or more in residence at Amherst College and give a public lecture and a short seminar for students and faculty.

(e) Finally, the six Town Hall-like conversations will be shaped into a digital book, to be produced once the entire academic-year events are over. The book will be published by a trade publishing house such as Farrar, Straus, and Giroux or W.W. Norton.

“The Future of Translation: A Global Multimedia Conversation” will work with a number of local sponsors in order to have an impact in the Five Colleges and well as the local community. The College partners are the Departments of Asian Languages and Civilizations, English, French, German, LJST, Religion, Russian and Spanish; the Programs in Architecture and European Studies; the Center for Community Engagement; The Common; and Information Technology. Outside the Amherst campus, they are Amherst Cinema; New England Public Radio; PBS-WGBH Boston; the Jones Library; the UMass-Amherst Translation Center; the Five College Faculty Seminar on Translation, and the Massachusetts Review.
Core Organizing Committee:

Anston L. Bosman, Associate Professor of English
Catherine A. Ciepiela, Professor of Russian
John E. Drabinski, Professor of Black Studies
Ilan Stavans, Lewis-Sebring Professor in Latino and Latino American Cultures

Adjunct Organizing Committee:

Heidi Gilpin, Associate Professor of German
Maria R. Heim, Associate Professor of Religion
Tariq Jaffer, Assistant Professor of Religion
Adam Sitze, Assistant Professor of Law, Jurisprudence, and Social Thought
Boris Wolfson, Assistant Professor of Russian