

Dr. David Lee Garrison, Professor Emeritus of Spanish and Portuguese, delivered the spring 2014 Modern Languages lecture, on “The Art of Translation.” Dr. Garrison outlined his experience as a translator of literature from Spanish, as a translator for Dayton area businesses, as a court interpreter, and as a professor who taught translation throughout his thirty-year career at Wright State.

During the course of his talk, he stressed the importance of translation in the West, exemplified by the central place of the Bible—a translation—in our culture. He focused first on translations of short poems by Goethe and Ronsard, asking Dr. Renate Sturdevant and Dr. Marie Hertzler, respectively, to read the originals. He then read his translations of Juan Ramón Jiménez, Juan Antonio González-Iglesias, and Luis de Góngora, asking Dr. Anna Casas to read several of the original texts in Spanish.

Stressing the need for an original approach to each poem, Dr. Garrison showed how some of his translations manage to stay relatively close to an equivalent of the language in Spanish, while in others he chooses to take some liberties in order to express the nuances. Through the Góngora work, he demonstrated techniques he uses in translating form-to-form, in this case creating a sonnet in English of the sonnet in Spanish.