UBC Continuing Studies Course Aims to Help Chinese Speakers Translate and Interpret for Business

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Vancouver, BC | Sep 8, 2009: A new course offered by UBC Continuing Studies this fall aims to address an issue commonly encountered in the workplace by employees who speak both Mandarin and English. In Vancouver, where Chinese is the second most commonly spoken mother tongue behind English, it is not surprising that Mandarin or Cantonese language skills are a desired or required qualification in so many Vancouver employment ads. Once hired, employees bilingual in both Mandarin and English are often called upon to use those skills to act as their company’s interpreter or translator. But in the world of work, when unintentional miscommunication can mean you lose a sale, lose out on an opportunity or simply lose face, just having an advanced level of both English and Mandarin may not be a sufficient qualification to provide effective translation and interpretation. That is the rationale behind a new UBC Continuing Studies language course that aims to enhance bilingual Mandarin/English fluency as well as cross-cultural abilities while introducing the basic theories of translation and interpretation for business with a focus on putting those theories into practice. The Thursday evening course, which runs September 24-November 19, is designed to give advanced level Mandarin speakers added confidence and competence in using their bilingual language skills within the work environment.

Lang Sun, Director of Asia Pacific Languages for UBC Continuing Studies, has added this course to the lineup of part-time courses in 18 languages offered through Continuing Studies in response to feedback from former Mandarin language students. “Students have told us that at work, because of their language abilities, they are often asked to act as a liaison or as a de facto translator or interpreter, at times in some pretty high pressure situations. We felt we could design a course that would help to alleviate that pressure, to give students the tools that would help them conduct themselves confidently in those business situations.” Says Sun, “Backing up your language skills with some formal training in translation and an understanding of cross-cultural communication just makes good economic sense for yourself and for your company.”

Through hands-on practice, students will gain fundamental skills in note-taking, number conversion, sight translation, summarization, consecutive interpretation, timed translation and contrastive analysis of English and Chinese syntaxes. The course also gives an overview of market assessment and case management for freelancers, and benefits those who want to pursue a freelancing career in translation and interpretation. Applicants must be fluent in Mandarin Chinese and possess intermediate to advanced reading and writing proficiency in both Chinese and English and be able to typeset Chinese characters on a computer.

MEDIA CONTACT:
Lang Sun
UBC Continuing Studies
Tel: 604-822-1321
Email: lang.sun@ubc.ca

-30-