

Classics 15, R. V. Munson
 DANTE, DIVINE COMEDY
 A FYS and a Writing Course

Fall 2007
 T, R 11.20-12.35
 Office: Trotter 113,
 T 10-11, W F 11.30-12.30
 and by appointment

We shall read the *Commedia* with the special intent to tease out the different levels of meaning. Special attention will be devoted to Dante's connection to previous texts, from the Latin classics to the burgeoning vernacular literatures of his own time. We shall also attempt to reconstruct Dante's world view in the context of Medieval culture: his thought on life, death, love, art, politics, history and God.

Required text: Dante Alighieri. *The Divine Comedy*, trans. Allen Mandelbaum, notes by Allen Mandelbaum and Gabriel Maruzzo. 3 vols. 1980. rpt. New York 1982.

Recommended source:

Virgil, *Aeneid*. Translated by Mandelbaum. New York.

Supplementary material is available in the library on reserve and directly from me.

Requirements:

Presence, preparation and participation in class.

Several papers (see below under rubric 'Papers')

Assigned oral reports.

Two tests, at the end of *Inferno* and *Purgatorio* respectively CHECK

A two-hour final examination.

Papers:

1) Short papers. You will be asked short two-page paper each week, except for the last three weeks. Six students will turn in a paper every Tuesday and six will turn in a paper every Thursday. The topic will consist in answering questions posed by me or interpreting individual cantos of the *Commedia* according to the honored tradition of the *Lectura Dantis*. (Different cantos and different questions will be assigned to different students).

2) Longer paper. The final paper will be about 8-10 pages long and composed in two drafts. I will meet with each student for a preliminary discussion of their chosen topics. Students will then turn in their first draft to a Writing Assistant for consultation and rewriting. While this process is going on, they will be presenting their topics and a summary of their argument in class. I will read and comment on the second draft, which will be due at the end of the semester.

Reading Schedule

(INCOMPLETE and provisional: other readings from primary and secondary sources will be added in the course of the semester. Please, come to class prepared, especially on the assigned cantos of the *Commedia*)

		WEEK 1
Sept.	4	Introduction: history and representation
	6	Assignments: <i>Inferno</i> 1*, 2*, 3*. Virgil, <i>Aeneid</i> Book 6 Topics: Allegory. Classical sources, Scriptures and the modern world. Aeneas, St. Paul and Dante. Beatrice
		WEEK 2
Sept.	11	Assignments: <i>Inferno</i> 4*, 5*, 6, 7, 8. Guinizzelli, Cavalcanti,

- Dante** (hand-out).
Topics: The Classics in Limbo. Francesca, Dante and Vernacular love poetry
- 13 Assignments: ***Inferno* 9, 10*, 11, 12.**
Topics: the political theme in the *Commedia*.
- WEEK 3
- Sept. 18 Assignments: ***Inferno* 13*, 14, 15*, 16. *Aeneid* III, lines 19-89 in Mandelbaum translation; Statius, *Thebaid* 10. 860-939(hand-out)**
Topics: the *Commedia* and the Bible.
- 20 Assignments: ***Inferno* 17, 18, 19**
Topics: The credibility of the *auctor*
- WEEK 4
- Sept. 18 Assignments: ***Inferno* 20*, 21*, 22, 23*, 24*, 25***
Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, on Cadmus (3.7-130, pp. 51-54 in Melville), Arethusa (5.570-641, pp. 116-8), Hermaphroditus (4.285-88, pp. 83-5). ***Aeneid* VIII 242-367.**
Topics: Virgil and Ovid
- 20 Assignments: ***Inferno* 26*, 27*. *Aeneid* II.**
Topics: Odysseus, Ulysses, Ulisse...and Guido.
- WEEK 5
- Oct. 2 Assignments: ***Inferno* 28, 29, 30, 31; Lucan *Pharsalia* 2. 234-390 (hand-out).**
- 4 Assignments: ***Inferno* 32, 33*, 34***
Topics: Lucan in the *Commedia* and Roman history
- WEEK 6
- Oct. 9 Assignments: ***Purgatorio* 1*,2*,3,*4. Lucan, *Pharsalia* 2.368-410 (hand-out).**
Reread ***Aeneid* VI, 442-505**
Topics: Cato, Lucan and the ethics of *Purgatorio*
- 11 Assignments: ***Purgatorio* 5*, 6*, 7, 8**
- WEEK 7
- Oct. 16 and 19: SEMESTER BREAK
- WEEK 8
- Oct. 23 Assignments: ***Purgatorio* 9*, 10*, 11*, 12, 13 Luke 1.26-56; II Samuel 2-23** (in connection with *Purg.* X 34-69). **Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, Arachne and Niobe (6.1-316, hand-out)**
- 25 Assignments: ***Purgatorio* 14, 15, 16, 17, 18;**

Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5-7

WEEK 9

Oct. 30 Assignments: ***Purgatorio* 19*, 20, 21*, 22*, 23*, 24***
 Topics: the role of Statius

Nov. 1 Assignments: ***Purgatorio* 25, 26*, 27, 28***;
Virgil, *Eclogue IV* (hand-out); **G. Cavalcanti's *Pastorella*** (hand-out)
 Topics: The pilgrim's past. The problem of the body

WEEK 10

Nov. 6 Assignments: ***Purgatorio* 29, 30***;
Apocalypse of John
 Topics: Women in the Commedia
 8 Assignments: ***Purgatorio* 31*, 32, 33**

WEEK 11

Nov. 13 Assignments: ***Paradiso* 1*, 2, 3*, 4***. ***Letter to Cangrande*** (in Minnis, *Medieval Criticism*, pp. 458-469, hand-out);
Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, story of Marsyas (6.382 ff.) and Glaucus (13.904-959)
 15 Assignments: ***Paradiso* 5, 6*, 7*, 8**

WEEK 12

Nov. 21 Assignments: ***Paradiso* 9*, 10*, 11*, 12***;
St. Francis, *Canticle of Creatures* (hand-out)

Nov. 23 THANKSGIVING

WEEK 13

Nov. 27 Assignments: ***Paradiso* 13, 14; 15*, 16*, 17***
 Topics: the self-identification of the Pilgrim

Nov. 29 Assignments: ***Paradiso* 18, 19, 20*, 21**

WEEK 14

Dec. 4 Assignments: ***Paradiso* 22, 23*, 24, 25**

Dec. 6 Assignments: ***Paradiso* 26, 27, 28, 29**

WEEK 15

Dec. 11 Assignments: ***Paradiso* 30, 31, 32, 33***

