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.


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: Inferno 1*, 2*, 3*. Virgil, Aeneid Book 6**

**WEEK 2**
Sept.  11  Assignments: *Inferno 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
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
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;
### 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

**Nov. 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)

**Nov. 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*