### **Dante's Divine Comedy:**

to love from justice

Prof. (nome e cognomen)

Winter Quarter 2019

#### **Information and contacts**

Time and location of meetings:

Monday and Wednesday: 10-10:50am – Locy Hall room 301 Friday (Discussion Section): 10-10:50am — Parkes Hall room 223

Discussion Sections will be led by (nome e cognome).

Appointments and contacts:

I am available for students: Mondays and Fridays 2:00-3:00 pm; or on appointment.

Email:

# **Course description**

Dante is the greatest religious poet of Western culture, and his great epic poem, the *Divine Comedy*, offers a remarkable and original synthesis of his views on the fundamental relationship between humans as well as on their understanding of a meaningful existence. The course offers an introduction to Dante's *Comedy* by focusing on a selection of cantos from the three parts that compose the work, *Inferno*, *Purgatorio*, and *Paradiso*. Following a series of introductory lectures, classes principally concentrate on providing readings of individual cantos. At the same time, broader issues central to Dante's masterpiece will be discussed. In particular, attention will be paid to Dante's ties to classical and Christian culture, his political views, his involvement in contemporary intellectual debates, his efforts to use poetry for ethical and religious ends, and his literary experimentation.

#### **Course goals**

- 1. Learn to read a great text closely, interpret it deeply, and write incisively about it.
- 2. Understand key elements of the Western cultural tradition the poem synthesizes, and of the vibrant historical-cultural-spiritual context that spawned the poem, and that it responds to.
- 3. Reflect on and discuss about the spiritual, philosophical, moral, political, and existential issues raised by this most profound of literary texts.

### **Required Texts**

Dante Alighieri. *Inferno* and *Purgatorio*, translated by Robert and Jean Hollander (New York, Anchor Books). This can also be accessed on: http://etcweb.princeton.edu/dante/pdp/

You can also use the translation and commentary by Durling and Martinez.

Dante Alighieri. *Inferno* and *Purgatorio*, translated by Robert Durling, commentary by Ronald Martinez (Oxford, New York, Oxford University Press)

#### **Course Format**

This course will depend upon both lectures and discussions. Most lectures will be interactive and sometimes they will depend heavily on discussion among all participants, students' engagement is key to the success of our classes.

**Lectures:** For each lecture you have a **Study Task**, this usually requires the reading of select cantos from the *Comedy*. Study the text closely, with the commentary. Since we only read a selection of cantos you are advised to read the summaries of those cantos which are not comprised in our syllabus to be able to follow the development of the story. I also list <u>suggested readings</u> for each lecture: while not required, browsing these critical articles for each class can be stimulating and will help you prepare for assessment. All texts and extracts not included in your textbooks will be provided on Canvas.

**Discussions:** The discussions will focus on the primary sources as indicated in the syllabus. Students are expected to provide a forum for the discussion of the set texts/topics. Discussions generally concentrate on the analysis of several chosen cantos, but this should ultimately serve as the basis for the discussion of broader issues. Suggestions on the issues to discuss in the seminars are offered on Canvas, but the choice of topics belongs to the study groups.

**Reading Suggestions:** please see the suggested reading for each week as well as the general bibliography. You can contact me for further guidance.

### **Course Requirements**

1. **One Paper/Project/Final Exam.** Worth 50% of your final mark.

<u>Paper.</u> A 2000-word final paper, containing at least 5 references to valid secondary sources. This paper cannot cover substantially the same cantos/topics you treated in your **Forum Entries**. It can be helpful to meet with me, hand me a thesis statement, outline, and bibliography by week 7 at the latest; I can also help with drafts. **Submit the paper by email by 22 March 2019 at 9.00 am, in Word, in a consistent academic style.** 

<u>Exam:</u> You have the option of substituting a <u>final exam</u> for a final paper. The final exam consists of a set of questions on *Inferno* and *Purgatorio*. Please inform me whether you wish to take a Final Exam: **Exam day and Time: Thursday, 03/21/2019: 3PM-5PM** 

<u>Project</u>: You have the option of substituting <u>a project</u> for the final paper. This needs to be discussed by week 6 at the latest with me, please send me an email and book an appointment. Examples of projects that you can undertake:

- 1. Setting up an exhibition/show on Dante (**deadline to be decided with the student**)
- 2. Digital Projects. These need to be submitted on Canvas and by email to me on 21 March 2019 at 12.00 am.

All projects need to include a written component, this can be, to give an example, in the form of catalogue or libretto. Students can discuss this with me during preparation.

# 2. **One short presentation.** Worth 30% of your final mark.

From the second week of the quarter, students will be involved in one 7 to 10 minutes individual or group presentation. This presentation will be linked to a specific canto/theme during Friday **Discussions** (a calendar for presentations will be prepared in week 1). Every week, one student/group will read the canto(s) for discussion and at least one article in relation to the canto(s), and present its main ideas to the class in a logical, succinct way. Remember to outline the general context of the canto/cantos you deal with as well as their main ideological, philosophical, theological, and rhetorical features. Students can use the material prepared for this presentation towards the preparation of their written work. This work is assessed by both your peers and your lecturer (the lecturer moderates the peers' mark for fairness and precision).

### 3. Participation: 20%

Participation in class is key to the success of this module. A rubric to understand how we will be assessing this is available on Canvas. Generally, we will consider frequency of your intervention and your attitude in the context of the debate, more than correctness. We will also consider your listening skills. To assess this skill, students will be asked, in turn, to take a journal of the Friday class discussion. The journal will be emailed/given to me on Mondays. There is no need to edit or rewrite the entries, and notes can be taken on paper or on a Word document. When in charge of the journal students can abstain from intervening. If you feel uneasy about talking in public please come and talk to me, you could write **Forum Entries** instead.

**RUBRICS** that explain how most these assessment tasks are assessed are/will be available on Canvas, if you have doubts about how you will be assessed please come and talk to me.

### **Important Dates and deadlines for Assessment**

**Monday of Week 6**: latest date to signal your interest in an 'alternative project' by email. A meeting must take place in week 6 to discuss details.

21 March 2019, 3pm-5pm: FINAL EXAM

**22 March 2019, 12.00 am**: submit one 2500-words paper/project on Canvas and one copy to me by email.

# **Syllabus and Calendar**

Please familiarize yourself with the program structure and calendar.

### Week 1

7 Jan Lecture: From Darkness to Light (with a brief Intro to the Syllabus and Dante Studies)

Study task: read Peter S. Hawkins, "Dante's religion," in P.S. Hawkins, *Dante. A Brief History*, Oxford: Blackwell, 2006, pp. 98-130.

9 Jan Lecture: Lost and Found: the Birth of a Prophetic Voice

Study task: *Inferno*1-2

### Suggested readings:

- Anthony K. Cassell, 'The first terzina', in A. K. Cassell, *Lectura Dantis Americana*. *Inferno I*, edited by A. Mandelbaum *et al.*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1989, pp. 1-18;
- Robert Hollander, 'Dante's Virgil: A light that failed', *Lectura Dantis* 4, 1 (1989), pp.3–9;
  - https://www.brown.edu/Departments/Italian\_Studies/LD/numbers/04/hollander.html
- Zygmunt Baranski, 'Dante and Medieval Poetics', in *Dante Contemporary Perspectives*, ed. by A. Iannucci, Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1997, pp. 3-22:
- John A. Scott, "Dante and his contemporary world," in J.A. Scott, *Understanding Dante*, Notre Dame, University of Notre Dame Press, 2004, pp. 309-336.

#### 11 Jan **Discussion section:**

Discussion continues on *Inferno* 1 and 2 and instructions on Presentations are given.

### Week 2

14 Jan Lecture: The Order of Justice in the City of God

Study task: *Inferno*1-2-3

- John Alcorn, 'Suffering in Hell. The psychology of emotions in Dante's "Inferno", in *Critical Approaches to Teaching Literature, Language, Composition, and Culture*, XIII, (2013), 1, pp. 77-85;
- Teodolinda Barolini, "Infernal Incipits," in *The Undivine Comedy*, Princeton, Princeton University Press 1992, pp. 21-47;
- George Ferzoco, 'The "Sin" and "Sinners" of "Inferno" III', in *Dante and the Seven Deadly Sins. Twelve Literary and Historical Essays*, edited by John C. Barnes, Daragh O'Connell, Dublin, Four Courts Press, 2017, pp. 303-318;
- Giuseppe Mazzotta, '*Inferno*1-4', in Giuseppe Mazzotta, *Reading Dante*, New Haven-London, Yale University Press, 2014, pp. 23-37.

### 16 Jan Lecture: **To Hell with Love**

Study task: *Inferno* 5 and *Vita nova* extracts (online).

### Suggested readings:

- Mark Musa, 'Behold Francesca who speaks so well (*Inferno* V)', in *Dante's* "*Inferno*." *The Indiana Critical Edition*, ed. M. Musa, Bloomington & Indiana University Press, 1995, pp. 310-324;
- Michelangelo Picone, 'Poetic discourse and courtly love: An intertextual analysis of *Inferno5*', in *Lectura Dantis Newberryana*, vol. 2, edited by P. Cherchi & A.C. Mastrobuono, Evanston, Northwestern UP, 1990, pp. 173-186;
- Teodolinda Barolini, Dante e Cavalcanti '*Inferno5* in Its Lyric and Autobiographical Context,' *Dante and the Origins of Italian Literary Culture*, New York Fordham University Press, 2006, pp. 70-101.

18 Jan **Discussion section:** Presentations Cycle starts

**Presentation 1 (see schedule for details)** followed by Discussion on **Love Death and Literature** 

### Week 3

### 21 Jan MLK day

23 Jan Lecture: A passion for Earthly Matters (*Inferno* 10)

Study task: Inferno 10

- Robert M. Durling, 'Canto X. Farinata and Cavalcante', in *Lectura Dantis. Inferno*,
  A. Mandelbaum *et al*(eds.), Berkeley, University of California Press, 1998, pp. 136-149:
- JohnNajemy, 'Dante and Florence', in *The Cambridge Companion to Dante*, ed. by R. Jacoff, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2007, 236-256;

- Erich Auerbach, 'Farinata and Cavalcante', in Kenyon Review, XIV (1952), 207-242;
- Glauco Cambon, '*Inferno*X' https://www.brown.edu/Departments/Italian\_Studies/LD/numbers/02/cambon.html
- Angelo M. Mangini, Pride and Friendship: on Cavalcanti's Role in the "Commedia", in Dante and the Seven Deadly Sins. Twelve Literary and Historical Essays, edited by John C. Barnes, Daragh O'Connell, Dublin, Four Courts Press UCD Foundation for Italian Studies, 2017, pp. 47-71.

### 25 Jan **Discussion section:**

**Presentation 2 (see schedule for details)** followed by Discussion *Inferno* on **Dante, Florence** and **Florentines.** 

#### Week 4

28 Jan Lecture: **Imagining Hell: Ancients Ethics and Christian morality** 

Study task: Inferno 11

# Suggested readings:

- Pier Massimo Forni, "XI," in *Dante's "Divine Comedy." Introductory Readings. I.* "*Inferno"*, ed. by T. Wlassics, Charlottesville, Printing Office University of Virginia, 1990, pp. 139-148;
- Lorenzo Minio-Paluello, 'Dante's Reading of Aristotle', in *The World of Dante*, ed. By Cecil Grayson, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1980, pp. 61–80;
- Peter Armour, 'Dante's Contrapasso: Context and Texts', *Italian Studies*, 55 (2000), 1-20;
- Justin Steinberg, 'Dante's justice? A reappraisal of the *contrapasso*', in *L'Alighieri*. *Rassegna dantesca*, 55, n.s., XLIV, (2014), pp. 59-74.

### 30 Jan Lecture: **Dante the Prophet, the Church and the Corrupted Popes**

Study task: Inferno19

### Suggested readings:

- Stanley Benfell, 'Prophetic Madness: The Bible in Inferno XIX', MLN, 110, (January 1995), pp. 145-163;
- Joan Ferrante, 'Church and State in the *Comedy*, *The political vision of the Divine Comedy*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1984, pp. 76-131;
- Charles Davis, 'Poverty and Eschatologyin the *Commedia*', in *Dante's Italy, and Other Essays*, Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 1984, pp. 51–69;
- Kenelm Foster, 'The canto of the damned popes: *InfernoXIX*', *Dante Studies*87 (1969): 47-68.

#### 1 Feb **Discussion section:**

**Presentation 3 (see schedule for details)** followed by Discussion **Dante, the Popes and the Church**.

### Week 5

4 Feb Lecture: Journeys of Perdition and Salvation: Ulysses v Dante

Study task: *Inferno*26

# Suggested readings:

• Maria Corti, "On the metaphors of sailing, flight, and tongues of fire in the episode of Ulysses (*Inf.* 26), *Stanford Italian Review9* (1990), 33-47;

- Giuseppe Mazzotta, "Canto XXVI. Ulysses: Persuasion versus prophecy," in *Lectura Dantis. Inferno*, edited by A. Mandelbaum *et al.*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1998, pp. 348-356;
- Teodolinda Barolini, "Ulysses", in *The Dante Encyclopedia*, edited by Richard Lansing, New York and London, Garland Publishing, 2000, pp. 842-47.

6 Feb Lecture: At the Heart of Evil: Ugolino and the Art of Lying

Study task: *Inferno*32-33

### Suggested readings:

- Piero Boitani, '*Inferno* xxxii', in *Cambridge Readings in Dante's Comedy*, edited by Kenelm Foster and Patrick Boyde, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1981, pp. 70-89;
- John Freccero, 'Bestial Sign and the Bread of Angels: *Inferno* XXXII and XXXIII', in *Dantethe poetics of conversion*, Mass, Harvard London, Cambridge, University Press, 1986, pp. 152-66.
- Ronald B. Herzman, 'Cannibalism and Communion in *InfernoXXXIII*', *Dante Studies*, 98 (1980), pp. 53-78;
- Robert Hollander, 'Inferno XXXIII, 37-74: Ugolino's Importunity', *Speculum*, 59, 3 (1984), pp. 549-555;

### 8 Feb **Discussion section:**

Study task: Inferno34

Presentation 4 (see schedule for details) followed by Discussion on *Inferno* 34

### Week 6

11 Feb Lecture: **The Creation of Purgatory: Purification, Friendship and Hope** 

Study task: Purgatorio 1 and 2

# Suggested readings:

- Peter Armour, 'The theme of Exodus in the first two cantos of the *Purgatorio*', in *Dante Soundings*, ed. D. Nolan, Dublin, Irish Academic Press, 1981, pp. 59-99;
- Zygmunt Barański, 'Dante Alighieri: Experimentation and (self-)exegesis', in *The Cambridge History of Literary Criticism*, edited by Minnis & I. Johnson, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2005, pp. 559-582;
- Manuele Gragnolati, 'Productive pain: the "Red scripture", the "Purgatorio", and a new hypothesis on the "birth of purgatory"', in Manuele Gragnolati, *Experiencing the afterlife. Soul and body in Dante and Medieval culture*, Notre Dame (Indiana), University of Notre Dame Press, 2005, pp. 89-137;
- Ezio Raimondi, 'Canto I. Ritual and story', in *Lectura Dantis. Purgatorio*, eds A. Mandelbaum *et al.*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 2008, pp. 1-10.

# 13 Feb Lecture: **Learning to be humble**

Study task: *Purgatorio*10-12

# Suggested readings:

- Teodolinda Barolini, 'Re-presenting What God Presented: The Arachnean Art of Dante's Terrace of Pride', Dante Studies, 105 (1987), pp, 43-63
- Anthony Oldcorn, 'Canto XI: Gone with the Wind', *Lectura Dantis: Purgatorio*, edited by Allen Mandelbaum, Anthony **Oldcorn**, and Charles Ross, Berkeley, University of California Press, 2008, pp. 103–118
- Stanley Benfell III, "'Una nuova legge": the Beatitudes in the *Purgatorio*', in V. Stanley Benfell, *The Biblical Dante*, Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 2011, pp. 107-142.
- Ronald L. Martinez, '*L'amoroso canto*: Liturgy and Vernacular Lyric in Dante's *Purgatorio*', *Dante Studies*, 127 (2009), pp. 93-127.

#### 15 Feb **Discussion section:**

**Presentation 5 (see schedule for details)** followed by Discussion on **Religion, Liturgy and Prayer in Dante** 

### Week 7

17 Feb Lecture: **To live is to be a citizen** 

Study task: Purgatorio6 and Purgatorio16; Monarchia3, 10 and 3, 15-16

- Charles Davis, 'Dante and the empire', in *The Cambridge Companion to Dante*, by R. Jacoff, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2007, pp. 257-269;
- Claire E. Honess, 'Divided city, slavish Italy, universal empire', in *Vertical readings* in *Dante's Comedy*. Volume 1, edited by George Corbett, Heather Webb, Cambridge, Open Book Publishers, 2015, pp. 119-142 (open access)
- John Scott, 'Canto XVI. A world of darkness and disorder', in *Lectura Dantis. Purgatorio*, edited by A. Mandelbaum et al., Berkeley, University of California Press, 2008, pp. 277-87.

# 19 Feb Lecture: **Guiding the Will to a Happy Life**

Study task: Purgatorio16-18 and all previous Purgatorio cantos read in class

### Suggested readings:

- Kenelm Foster, 'Dante's Idea of Love', in *From Time to Eternity; Essays on Dante's Divine Comedy*, by Thomas G. Bergin, New Haven, Yale UP, 1967;
- Robert M. Kane, 'The Free Will Problem', *A Contemporary Introduction to Free Will*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005, pp. 1-11.
- Gerald Morgan, 'Natural and Spiritual Movements of Love in the Soul: An Explanation of Purgatorio, XVIII. 16-39." The Modern Language Review 80.2 (Apr. 1985): 320-329.

#### 22 Feb **Discussion section:**

**Presentation 6 (see schedule for details)** followed by Discussion on *Purgatorio* 6 and 16 (**Reason v Caos**)

#### Week 8

25 Feb Lecture: **Poetry will save us all** 

Study task: Inferno 4 Purgatorio 21 and 22

# Suggested readings:

- Kevin Brownlee, 'Dante and the classical poets', in *The Cambridge Companion to Dante*, ed, by R. Jacoff, Cambridge, Cambridge U. Press, 2007, pp. 141–160;
- Richard Lansing, 'Statius's homage to Vergil', *Modern Language Notes*, 127, 1 (2012), pp. 91-98;
- Ronald Martinez, 'Dante and the two canons: Statius in Virgil's footsteps' (*Purgatorio*21–30), *Comparative Literature Studies*, 32, 2 (1995), pp. 151–175.

### 27 Feb Lecture: **The modern vernacular canon**

Study task: *Purgatorio*21-26

- RonaldMartinez, 'The Pilgrim's Answer to Bonagiunta and the Poetics of the Spirit', *Stanford Italian Review*, 3 (1983), pp. 37–63;
- Lino Pertile, 'Canto XXIV. Of poetry and politics', in *Lectura Dantis. Purgatorio*, a cura di Allen Mandelbaum, Anthony Oldcorn, Charles Ross, Berkeley Los Angeles London, University of California Press, 2008, pp. 262-276
- Lino Pertile, 'Purgatorio XXVI', in Dante's Divine Comedy. Purgatorio, 1993, pp. 380-397;

### 1 Mar **Discussion section:**

Study task: Inferno 4

**Presentation 6 (see schedule for details**) followed by Discussion on *Purgatorio*21-22 and *Inferno*4 (**Pagans, Poetry and Knowledge**)

#### Week 9

4 Mar Lecture: **The Birth of the Poet: Beatrice and the** *Vita Nova* 

Study task:

Read extracts on the *Vita nova* (extracts provided by Prof. Nasti)

6 Mar Lecture: **Meeting Beatrice** (1)

Study task: Purgatorio 30-33

### Suggested readings:

- John A. Scott, 'Beatrice's reproaches in Eden: Which 'school' had Dante followed?', *Dante Studies*,109 (1991), pp. 1-23;
- Lino Pertile, 'Dante's Comedy beyond the Stilnovo, in *Lectura Dantis*, 12 (Fall, 1993), pp. 47-77;
- Peter Hawkins, 'Dido, Beatrice, and the signs of ancient Love', in *The Poetry of Allusion*, ed. by R. Jacoff and J. Schnapp (Stanford, Stanford University Press, 1991), pp. 113–30.

# 8 Mar Lecture/Discussion section on *Purgatorio* 30-33: Meeting Beatrice (2)

- John A. Scott, 'Beatrice's reproaches in Eden: Which 'school' had Dante followed?', *Dante Studies*,109 (1991), pp. 1-23;
- Lino Pertile, 'Dante's Comedy beyond the Stilnovo, in *Lectura Dantis*, 12 (Fall, 1993), pp. 47-77;
- Peter Hawkins, 'Dido, Beatrice, and the signs of ancient Love', in *The Poetry of Allusion*, ed. by R. Jacoff and J. Schnapp (Stanford, Stanford University Press, 1991), pp. 113–30.

#### 11 Mar Lecture and Revision

#### SOME INSTRUCTIONS ON BIBLIOGRAPHY AND SUPPLEMENTARY READINGS

- 1. The **Dante bibliography is** very vast. A long BIBILIOGRAPHY is/will be available on Canvas. You will be able to discuss with me the most adequate secondary literature for you essay/exam. By way of initial guidance keep the following points in mind:
- 2. The most important **Dante websites** are: *Dante Online*(website of Società Dantesca Italiana: all the works, best bibliography, links, manuscript images) and the *Princeton Dante Project*(70 commentaries, searchable, all the works in Italian and English, searchable, Hollander translation and commentary, images, reference, maps, links, audio of the Italian).

Other useful sites: *Digital Dante* (all the works, images, maps, links, resources), d) the *World of Dante* (text, images, maps, links); *Danteworlds* (images, audio, commentary, guides); *Dante Today*(gathers "Citings and Sightings" and bibliography of Dante in the arts and contemporary culture); the *Dante Society of America* website (information on student essay prizes, publications, events, and the American Dante Bibliography, downloadable).

- 3. An excellent book on all facets of Dante and his works is John Scott's *Understanding Dante* (Notre Dame UP, 2004).
- 4. Excellent collections of essays are the *Cambridge Companion to Dante* and the Cambridge *Companion to the Divine Comedy*.
- 5. You can find an article on each canto of the *Purgatorio* and *Paradiso* in the following volumes (all available in the library):

Lectura Dantis: Purgatorio. Edited by Allen Mandelbaum, Anthony Oldcorn, and Charles Ross (Berkeley, University of California Press, 2008)

Dante's Divine Comedy Introductory Readings II: Purgatorio. [Lectura Dantis Virginiana,

II; Dante's Purgatorio: Introductory Readings]. Special Issue of Lectura Dantis

(Number 12: Supplement; Spring 1993)

Dante's Divine Comedy Introductory Readings III: Paradiso. [Lectura Dantis Virginiana,

III; Dante's *Paradiso*: Introductory Readings]. Special Issue of *Lectura Dantis* (Numbers 16-17, Spring-Fall 1995).

6. Some other collections of articles on Dante (see bibliography for details):

Richard Lansing, *Dante: The Critical Complex*(in 8 volumes, divided by subject)

Amilcare Iannucci, Dante: Contemporary Perspectives

Teodolinda Barolini and Wayne Storey, Dante for the New Millennium

John Freccero, Dante: A Collection of Critical Essays

Giuseppe Mazzotta, Critical Essays on Dante

Theodore Cachey, Dante Now: Current Trends in Dante Studies

Amilcare Iannucci, Dante Today

Dino Cervigni, Dante and Modern American Criticism

Jeremy Tambling, Dante.

- 7. A good one-volume encyclopedia in English is *The Dante Encyclopedia*, edited by Richard Lansing (Garland, 2000). Most entries also have brief bibliographies (English-language focus).
- 9. The great reference work on Dante is the Italian *Enciclopedia Dantesca*, in 6 volumes (1970-76). It covers everything, in depth, with bibliographies.
- 10. The main journals on Dante are *Dante Studies* (available also online through the library), *Studi Danteschi*, and *L'Alighieri*. *Dante Notes* (formerly *EBDSA*, Electronic Bulletin of the Dante Society of America) publishes up-to-date short contributions (max 1500 words) online, available on the Dante Society of America website. There are of course many other journals that publish on Dante, and a number dedicated only to Dante (*Tre Corone, Rivista di studi danteschi, Dante: Rivista internazionale, Letture Classensi, Deutsches Dante Jahrbuch, Tenzone*).