

DANTE 'S *DIVINE COMEDY*
ENG 320/CRN 16654/Fall 2015
MWF 11-11:50/Palmer 207

Prof. Judith Haas
Office: Palmer 401**
Office Hours: MW 12:30-1:30; Tu 2-3
Office Phone: 843-3076
Email: haasj@rhodes.edu



One day to pass the time in pleasure,
 We read of Lancelot, how love enthralled him.
 We were alone without the least misgiving. (Dante, *Inf.* 5)

Unreal City,
 Under the brown fog of a winter dawn
 A crown flowed over London Bridge, so many
 I had not thought death had undone so many.
 (T. S. Eliot, "The Wasteland")

This course will focus on the work of Dante Alighieri, the fourteenth-century Italian poet who translated his vision of the Christian afterlife into his epic poem *The Divine Comedy*, and whose work has had a profound influence on English writers from Chaucer to T.S. Eliot. We will read a few of the works that Dante read—including parts of Virgil's *Aeneid* and Augustine's *Confessions*—and we will follow the thread of one of Dante's preoccupations: the body and its relation to love, language, sin, and salvation. **All readings and discussion will be in English.**

Required Texts (available at the Rhodes College Bookstore)**

Augustine, *Confessions* (Penguin) Trans. Pine-Coffin
Vita Nuova. Trans. Musa (Oxford World's Classics) (on order)
Inferno, Purgatorio, and Paradiso. Trans. Hollander (Anchor)
 Virgil, *The Aeneid*. Trans. Mandelbaum (Bantam Classics)

**If you choose to purchase these books elsewhere, it is your responsibility to make sure you are purchasing the correct edition/translation.

Moodle (M): Selected readings. Students are responsible for printing out individual copies of Moodle readings and bringing them to class. Make sure you have access to a reliable printer.

Recommended

MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers
 The New Oxford Annotated Bible

Graded Work (All writing for this class must make use of the MLA style of documentation and citation)

Paper 1 (4-6 pages)	15%
Paper 2 (4-6 pages)	20%
Paper 3 (4-6 pages)	20%
Paper 4 (10-15 pages/research paper)	30%
Presentations	5%
Participation	10%

Participation: This course is an advanced literature seminar. The active and engaged participation of every member of the class is expected and required. Much of the work in class will involve closely examining specific passages, working through different levels of meaning, making connections, and raising questions. Everyone in the class will be asked to read aloud from the text on a regular basis. In order to participate in class in a meaningful way, you must have the assigned reading with you.

Presentations: In addition to informal, everyday participation, **each student will sign up in groups of two to present an explication and analysis of a specific canto.**

General Policies:

- All assigned reading and writing is due at the beginning of the class for which it is assigned unless otherwise noted.
- Always bring the assigned text(s) to class; repeated failure to do so will cause you to be marked absent.
- Be on time: repeated or chronic lateness will count as absence.
- Turn in your work on time: late papers will be penalized **a third of a letter grade per day**. Except in the case of documented illness or family emergency (and by prior arrangement with me), papers more than a week late will receive a failing grade.
- Extensions: under special circumstances I may grant extensions on papers, but I will **only** consider requests made **in advance of the due date**. If you need an extension, you must contact me **at least one class period before** the paper is due; however, this does not guarantee that I will grant you an extension. Requests made for extensions on the day a paper is due will not be entertained.
- **Email is not an appropriate medium for requesting extensions or any other kind of dispensation.**
- Intellectual honesty: don't plagiarize, don't hand in work that is not your own. All suspected cases of plagiarism will be directed to the Honor Council. If you are found to have plagiarized, you will receive a failing grade, in addition to any penalty determined by the Honor Council.

****A note about my office:** there is no elevator access to 401 Palmer from the 3rd floor. If you have an injury or a disability that prevents you from being able to access my office, I am more than happy to arrange an alternative meeting place.

Attendance/Absence Policy: You can miss up to three classes *for any reason* without risking your grade. It is up to you to choose the best use of these "free" absences, and, of course, you may choose not to miss any classes at all. Except for cases of real emergency or truly extraordinary events (i.e. you are being hospitalized for the rest of the semester), *I do not wish to know the reason for your absence*. If you choose to make use of one or all three of these absences, I will assume that you are using them wisely. Further absences will affect your grade in the following way (based on a 4.0 grading scale):

- 4 absences will result in a deduction of .2 from your final grade;
- 5 absences will result in a .3 deduction from your final grade;
- 6 absences will result in a .6 deduction from your final grade
- 7 absences will result in a full point (1 full letter grade) deduction from your final grade
- 8 absences will result in an "F" for the course, no matter what your starting grade was

Except for extraordinary circumstances that are *clearly* beyond your control (e.g. hospitalization, death in the family, natural disasters) I do not distinguish between excused and unexcused absences. I assume that if you choose to make use of your three "free" absences, you are doing so for a good reason. *Therefore, I do not wish to be informed about the particular reasons you are absent*. Of course, if you do need to use these free absences, you are still responsible for what

you missed, and you should expect that any time you miss a class, there will be a detrimental effect on your learning and on your grade.

The syllabus is not set in stone. The schedule of readings will undoubtedly be subject to fine-tuning as we proceed. I will announce any upcoming alterations to the schedule in class. **If you miss a class, make sure you check with a classmate to get notes and confirm the next assignment.**

Citation and Documentation: Use MLA style (*MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*) for all documentation and citation of sources.

Email etiquette: Compose your email messages with the care that you would bring to writing a formal letter. *Always* proofread your email message before sending. I am happy to answer quick questions over email as my time permits, but you need to make sure that you have used your own resources (like the syllabus or the college web page) first. *If there is something you need to discuss or negotiate, you need to do it in person or, failing that, over the phone.* In order to prevent email from interrupting my own work, I generally set aside one part of the day to responding to it rather than monitoring it throughout the day. Except under unusual circumstances, I do not respond to student email on weekends and holidays. If you send me an email over the weekend, I will respond to it on Monday. I reserve the right to ignore email messages that fail to abide by the basic rules of etiquette.

Plagiarism is the borrowing of language or ideas from another writer without proper citation. It may be intended or unintended, but in either case, it constitutes a breach of the Honor Code. If in doubt, see me, see the Writing Center, and/or consult the Honor Council website. It goes without saying **that all work for this class must be done in compliance with the Rhodes Honor Code.**

Some useful Dante resources

Princeton Dante Project <http://etcweb.princeton.edu/dante/index.html>

Dartmouth Dante Project <http://dante.dartmouth.edu/>

Dantenet/The Dante Society of America <http://www.princeton.edu/~dante/>

Schedule of assignments (subject to adjustment as needed)

W 8/26 Introductions: Dante and the Middle Ages

F 8/28 *Inferno* 1-2,
Acts 9 (NOAB or King James Version)
 Virgil, *Eclogue* 4 <http://classics.mit.edu/Virgil/eclogue.4.iv.html>
 Robert Hollander, *Inferno*, "Introduction" pp xxiii-xl (pay particular attention to section on allegory)
 Dante, selection from "Letter to Can Grande"

Epic Exemplars: Virgil and Aeneas

M 8/31 *Aeneid* Books 1-4
Inferno 3

W 9/2 *Aeneid*, Book 6
Inferno 3, cont'd

F 9/4 *Inferno* 1-4 (re-read 1-3)
Assignment: track/catalogue images, language, etc. that Dante has borrowed from the *Aeneid* (type up to turn in, include book, canto, line numbers, as needed)

M 9/7 **Labor Day**

Love Poetry and the Erotics of Reading

- W 9/9 *Inferno* 5, love poetry selections **M**
- F 9/11 *Inferno* 5 (cont'd)
Augustine, *Confessions* Bks 1-2; Bk 3.1-9; Bk 5.10, 12-14; Bk 8.2, 6-8, 12
Assignment: track/catalogue images, language, etc. that Dante borrowed from *Confessions*. Pay particular attention to the way Augustine talks about reading, speech, language, and sin (type up to turn in, include book, canto, line numbers, as needed)
- M 9/14 *Inferno* 5, *Confessions*, love poetry cont'd

Who Is Beatrice?

- W 9/16 Dante, *Vita Nuova*, Introduction and Books 1-20
- F 9/18 *Vita Nuova*, Books 21-42
- M 9/21 *Inferno* 6-8
[Cicero, from *De inventione*--handout]
- W 9/23 *Inferno* 9
Dante, Rime petrose **M**
Ovid, *Metamorphoses*: Medusa **M**
Confessions Book 6.5, 11-13
- F 9/25 **Paper #1 due**
Inferno 9 cont'd
- M 9/28 *Inferno* 10-13
Confessions Bk 3.7-9
- W 9/30 *Inferno* 14-16
Karras, "Men Outside of Marriage" **M**
- F 10/2 *Inferno* 17-19
- M 10/5 *Inferno* 20-23
- W 10/7 *Inferno* 24-26
Ovid, *Metamorphoses*: Icarus, Phaeton, Ganymede **M**
- F 10/9 *Inferno* 27-29
- M 10/12 *Inferno* 30-32
Dante, from *De vulgari eloquentia* **M**
- W 10/14 *Inferno* 33
Handout (NT intertexts)
- F 10/16 *Inferno* 34
- M 10/19 **Fall Break, no class**

- W 10/21 *Purg.* 1-2;
LeGoff, "Ancient Imaginings" M
- F 10/23 **Paper #2 due**
[medieval music lecture?]
- M 10/26 *Purg.* 3-6
Augustine, *Confessions*, Book 10
- W 10/28 *Purg.* 9-11
- F 10/30 *Purg.* 12-15
- M 11/2 *Purg.* 16-17, 19
- W 11/4 *Purg.* 21, 22, 24
- F 11/6 *Purg.* 25-28
- M 11/9 *Purg.* 30-31
- W 11/11 *Purg.* 32-33
Selections from *Revelation* (NOAB or King James)
Research topic due (1 paragraph, typed, single-spaced)
- F 11/13 *Par.* 1-3, 4
- M 11/16 *Par.* 10, 18-19
- W 11/18 *Par.* 21-22.
Paper # 3 due
- F 11/20 *Par.* 24-30
- M 11/23 *Par.* 31-33
- W 11/25 Thanksgiving
- F 11/27 Thanksgiving
- M 11/30 Final paper proposal (200 words) and list of 5 secondary sources
Discuss proposals in class
- W 12/2 Boccaccio, Introduction to *The Decameron* M
- **Th 12/3 6pm film screening of *Afterlife* (bring your own dinner) location TBA**
- F 12/4 Discuss film
- M 12/7 TBD
- W 12/9 TBD

Paper #4 due: Tuesday the 12th, by 5pm, outside my office.

