

Spring 2-1-2018

LIT 430.01: Studies in Comparative Literature: Dante

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LIT 430: Dante, Spring 2018

This course will undertake a reading of the three-part medieval Christian epic poem that Dante called a "comedy": a work with a happy ending written in a "low" style (the Italian of everyday speech, not Latin). Along the way we'll read short excerpts of other works that shed light on what the poet is doing in his masterwork, with emphasis on the love poetry of southern France and Italy, including Dante's own. All readings will be in English, but we will pay close attention to Dante's Italian and discuss issues of translation.

Class meetings

MW 3:30-4:50, in LA 307

Instructor

John Hunt (john.hunt@mso.umt.edu)

Office hours

Monday 1:30-3:30, and by appointment, in LA 127

Schedule of assignments

Week One (January 22-24)

Monday: Introduction to the Divine Comedy

Wednesday: *Inferno* 1-2

Week Two (January 29-31)

Monday: *Inferno* 3-5

Wednesday: *Inferno* 6-9

Week Three (February 5-7)

Monday: *Inferno* 10-13

Wednesday: *Inferno* 14-17

Week Four (February 12-14)

Monday: *Inferno* 18-22

Wednesday: *Inferno* 23-26

(No class on Monday, Feb. 19: Presidents Day.)

Week Five (February 21)

Wednesday: *Inferno* 27-31

Week Six (February 26-28)

Monday: *Inferno* 32-34

Wednesday: *Purgatorio* 1-2

Week Seven (March 5-7)

Monday: *Purgatorio* 3-7

Wednesday: *Purgatorio* 8-12 (**paper due**)

Week Eight (March 12-14)

Monday: *Purgatorio* 13-16

Wednesday: *Purgatorio* 17-21

Week Nine (March 19-21)

Monday: *Purgatorio* 22-24

Wednesday: *Purgatorio* 25-27

(No class March 26-28: Spring Break)

Week Ten (April 2-4)

Monday: *Purgatorio* 28-30

Wednesday: *Purgatorio* 31-33

Week Eleven (April 9-11)

Monday: *Paradiso* 1-4

Wednesday: *Paradiso* 5-9

Week Twelve (April 16-18)

Monday: *Paradiso* 10-13

Wednesday: *Paradiso* 14-17

Week Thirteen (April 23-25)

Monday: *Paradiso* 18-22

Wednesday: *Paradiso* 23-26 (**paper due**)

Week Fourteen (April 30-May 2)

Monday: *Paradiso* 27-30

Wednesday: *Paradiso* 31-33

Week Fifteen (May 10)

Thursday: Final exam 3:20-5:20, same room

Texts

In addition to the four required textbooks (Robert and Jean Hollander's *Inferno*, *Purgatorio*, and *Paradiso* and Mark Musa's *Vita Nuova*), I will be posting shorter readings on Moodle. Always check Moodle a couple of days in advance of a class meeting: its reading assignments will be more complete and up-to-date than this syllabus.

Hollander's endnotes to the cantos are both terrific and oppressive. You will need them to make sense of much of what's going on in the poem, but they can also interrupt and disrupt the reading process, making the poem less enjoyable. I want everyone to read all of the notes, but I expect that you will have to experiment with strategies for when and how you do it. We can talk about this in class.

Please stay off your cell phones, laptops and tablets during class, *except* when you want to look up something directly relevant to what we are discussing.

Attendance

Please come to class every day, unless you are ill or encounter an emergency, in which case email me before class or very soon afterward. More than three unexcused absences will lower your course grade.

Participation

I really appreciate having people contribute their thoughts and questions. You should be learning from yourselves and one another, not just from me. If you are hesitant to speak in class, you can contribute to the forums that I'm setting up each week on Moodle. Participation will make up a small part of your course grade.

Papers

A paper assignment will be posted on Moodle in the second or third week of the semester. Please email the essays to me as attachments in Word or some other word processing format (but no PDFs, since I will have to convert those before I can mark them). I will return the papers the same way, i.e. electronically.

Grading

30% first paper
30% second paper
30% final exam
10% participation

Disabilities

Students with documented disabilities will receive appropriate accommodations. Please speak with me privately at the beginning of the semester about any accommodations you need, and bring a letter from your DSS Coordinator. I will work with you and Disability Services in the accommodation process.

Plagiarism

Your papers must be solely your own work and written solely for this course. While all the ideas discussed in our classroom are common property, unacknowledged use of others' written work, whether reproduced verbatim or closely paraphrased, constitutes plagiarism, which is an affront to the fundamental values of an academic institution. You must acknowledge, by citation of name, title, and source, any published work whose thought or language you are incorporating, using established academic guidelines for documentation. Violating this policy subjects you to university procedures spelled out in the Student Conduct Code.

Academic deadlines

Please consult the university's official dates and deadlines calendar, which I have loaded on our Moodle shell as a PDF.