THE WORLD OF DANTE

ITAL 313  Fall 2017  Professor Jason Houston  GIF 304
Office Hours: M/W: 2-3  Class Meeting: Tu/Th 2-3:30
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Course Description

This course satisfies the University Core Broadening Course “Literature” requirement. In this course students will engage with the history, philosophy, art, politics, and poetics of the Middle Ages through a close reading of Dante Alighieri’s *Commedia, Vita Nova*, and other period texts. The course will also briefly consider the monumental cultural heritage that Dante’s poem has and continues to produce. In class discussion, students will be expected to know, discuss, and offer interpretations of our text through their own reading and preparation based on notes provided by instructor on Blackboard. This class will emphasize close reading of primary poetic texts. Offered in Dante’s hometown of Florence, Italy, this course will actively interact with historical, artistic, and biographical loci the bring to life Dante’s life, times, and impact.

Course Objectives

1: Read texts as literature: identifying a range of elements in the text and questioning with increasing nuance how these elements make meaning: Students will read primary sources texts from the Middle Ages in both poetry and prose. Students will also choose one other primary source text from any period to in a comparative lens. Students will consider at least the following genre: epic poetry, lyric poetry (sonnet, courtly poetry, troubadour, *dolce stil novo*), dream-vision, prosimetrum, autobiography, and philosophical treatise. Students will also learn to identify and interpret rhetorical figures common to poetry: allegory, simile, chiasmus, synecdoche, metonymy, and metaphor. Students will complete a written “close reading” of one canto, generating meaning through contemplating genre and poetic rhetoric.

2: Integrate texts and relevant contexts (such as genre, other literary and non-literary works and traditions, historical and socio-political conditions, critical frameworks, the students’ life experiences, etc) to further understanding and interpretation. As a course offered in the Gonzaga in Florence program, students will leave the classroom to see firsthand the civic, architectural, artistic, and even natural environment that Dante wrote from. Discussions will consider historical, theological/philosophical, literary, and political context for Dante’s writing and thought.

3: Communicate text-grounded ideas, interpretations and arguments in various forms, while demonstrating an awareness of purpose and audience. Students will actively discuss the text during class discussions. The written work (close reading, prospectus, and final paper) will build on individual interpretation of poetic meaning. The
structure of the written assignments provides feedback from the instructor to the individual student. Each assignment recasts the interpretive act (this also includes the essay and identification exams) in different genre.

4: Discuss how literature engages with a range of human experiences and how it differs from and is connected to other disciplines. Significant attention during discussion and faculty guided excursions will consider the impact of Dante's poetry in broader cultural forms, including but not limited to the following: the formation of an Italian national language and culture (Santa Croce), the arts (painting, sculpture, and music), Dante and pop culture (video games, board games, contemporary literature, film).

All of this is in support of the following University Core outcomes:

A. Students will be able to use the basic modes of inquiry and expression of the disciplines that represent liberal education.
B. Students will be able to demonstrate growth in intercultural knowledge and competence.
C. Students will be able to communicate clearly and persuasively, using ideas and arguments based on evidence, logic, and critical thinking.
D. Students will be able to formulate and articulate their personal growth and the need for social transformation.

This Course will foster the above University Core outcomes by giving students the tools to:

A. Interpret contextually literature, specifically poetry and philosophical texts, from the Middle Ages (1,2,A,B).
B. Communicate, both in written and oral mode, nuanced ideas and novel interpretations of art, broadly understood (3,4, C).
C. Contextualize their experience living in Florence with Florence and Italy's (and other places) own history (4, D).

Required Texts:


Course Guidelines- All graded assignments will have be explained by a course assignment handout.
1. Students are expected to attend class on a regular basis and be prepared to participate in discussion. If a student shows a poor attendance (more than 6 absences), he/she will be asked to excuse the absences or drop the course.
2. Students should come to class having read and re-read the texts assigned for the day.
3. Close reading assignment will ask students to offer their own interpretation of a short passage from the primary text (no more than 1 canto) based on an analysis of poetic language and rhetorical structures.
4. Quizzes will include multiple choice character identifications and short answers.
5. Mid-term and final exams must be completed on the date announced. The exams will have character and passage identifications and essay questions.
6. Finding Dante assignment will require students to document a physical space in Florence where they can identify the presence or influence of Dante. Students are left to their own to determine how they can document this presence: photos, videos, audio recordings, drawings, performances, etc. Students should seek to find transtemporal, transpatial, and transcultural meanings in their space.
7. Late work will not be accepted.
8. Grades will be based on the five components listed below:
   Close Reading - 15%
   Quizzes- 10% (5% each)
   Mid-Term exam- 20%
   Finding Dante 15%
   Interpretive essay (2500 words)- 20%
   Final Exam- 20%

ADDENDA
The above schedules and procedures are subject to change due to extenuating circumstances or caprices of Fate. Supplementary material may be forthcoming.

COURSE CONTENT WARNING
This course involves the study of a culture with values that often differ significantly from those today. Therefore students engaged in such study may be exposed to material that they consider offensive and/or obscene. The views of the ancients should not be confused with the views of the instructor.

A NOTE ON HARASSMENT, DISCRIMINATION AND SEXUAL MISCONDUCT:
Consistent with its mission, Gonzaga seeks to assure all community members learn and work in a welcoming and inclusive environment. Title VII, Title IX and Gonzaga’s policy prohibit harassment, discrimination and sexual misconduct. Gonzaga encourages anyone experiencing harassment, discrimination or sexual misconduct to talk to someone from the Campus and Local Resources list found in the Student Handbook: www.gonzaga.edu/studenthandbook about what happened so they can get the support they need and Gonzaga can respond appropriately. There are both confidential and non-confidential resources and reporting options available to you. Gonzaga is legally obligated to respond to reports of sexual misconduct, and therefore we cannot guarantee the confidentiality of a report, unless made to a confidential resource. Responses may vary from support services to formal investigations. As a faculty member, I am required to report incidents of sexual misconduct and thus cannot guarantee confidentiality. I must provide our Title IX coordinator with relevant details such as the names of those involved in the incident. For more information about policies and resources or reporting options, please visit the following websites: www.gonzaga.edu/eo and www.gonzaga.edu/titleix.

NOTICE TO STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES/MEDICAL CONDITIONS:
The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability/medical condition requiring an accommodation, please call or visit the Disability Resources, Education and Access Management (DREAM) office (room 209 Foley Library).
CLASS ATTENDANCE:
This course adheres to the university's standard policy on absences: the maximum allowable absence is two class hours (100 minutes) for each class credit, or the equivalent of two weeks of the course. For a three-credit class meeting three times a week, the maximum number of absences allowed is six. For a three-credit class meeting twice a week, the maximum number of absences allowed is four. The grade for excessive absences is "V" which has the same effect as "F" (Fail) and is counted in the GPA. Participation in school activities or athletics does not exempt students from this standard policy on absences.
See also Class Attendance Policy on page 68 of the University's online catalogue:

ACADEMIC HONESTY:
Academic honesty is expected of all Gonzaga University students. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to cheating, plagiarism, and theft. Any student found guilty of academic dishonesty is subject to disciplinary action, which may include, but is not limited to, (1) a failing grade for the test or assignment in question, (2) a failing grade for the course, or (3) a recommendation for dismissal from the University.
See also Academic Honesty on page 67 of the University's online catalogue:

Reading Assignments
WEEK I
Inf. I, and Vita Nuova
WEEK II
Inf. II-X
WEEK III
Inf. XI-XVIII (Close Reading Due)
WEEK IV
Inf. XIX-XXVIII (Quiz)
WEEK V
Inf. XXIX-XXIV
Midterm
WEEK VI
Purg. I-XIV
WEEK VII
Purg. XV-XXVII (Quiz)
WEEK VIII
Purg. XXVIII-XXXIII
WEEK IX
Par. I-IX (Finding Dante)
WEEK X
Thanksgiving
WEEK XI
Par. X-XIX,
WEEK XII
Par. XX-XXXII (Interpretive essay due)
WEEK XIII
Selected Secondary Primary Sources

The Bible
Andreas Capellanus, *The Art of Courtly Love*
St. Aquinas, *Summa Theologica, Summa Contra Gentiles*
Aristotle, *Nichomachean Ethics*
Boethius, *The Consolation of Philosophy*
St. Bonaventure, *Itinerarium mentis in Deum*
Brunetto Latini- *Tresor, Tesoretto*
Cicero, *De Re publica*
Ezra Pound, *The Cantos*
Giovanni Boccaccio- *The Decameron, Life of Dante*
Guido Cavalcanti- "Donna me prega"
Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meun, *The Romance of the Rose*
Homer, *Iliad, Odyssey*
James Joyce, *Ulysses*
Lucan, *Pharsalia*
Francesco Petrarca, *I Trionfi, Canzoniere*
Plato, *Timaeus*
Prudentius, *Psychomachia*
Ovid, *The Metamorphoses, Remedia amoris, Ars amatoria*
Virgil, *Aeneid, The Eclogues*

Students can choose another text or author after consultation with the professor.

Reference and Online Resources

Danteworlds: http://danteworl ds.laits.utexas.edu/index.html
Dante Dartmouth Project:  http://diglib.dartmouth.edu/  MLA International Bibliography: Access through OU Library Website (under Databases)
Dante Today: http://research.bowdoin.edu/dante-today/
Professor Houston’s Dante blog: http://italytodaywithdante.blogspot.it