

Antonello Borra

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Honors College 185 A The Worlds of Dante

TR 11:40-12:55 University Heights North 016

Fall 2015

Final: Dec. 17 07:30

Textbooks

Inferno trans. Mandelbaum (Bantam Classics, 2004)
Purgatorio trans. Mandelbaum (Bantam Classics, 2004)
Paradiso trans. Mandelbaum (Bantam Classics, 2004)
 Material distributed in class or available on-line (Blackboard)

Course Description This course is essentially devoted to the study of the writings of Dante Alighieri, in particular the *Vita nova* and the *Commedia*, which we will both read in their entirety in light of recent scholarship and taking into account different commentaries and critical approaches. We will also read parts of Dante's unfinished treatise on language (*De vulgari eloquentia*) as well as excerpts from his book on political theory (*Monarchia*), and his philosophical compendium (*Convivio*), works that are essential for a fuller understanding of the poet's masterpiece. In addition, we will read relevant passages from the *Bible* and from works by Virgil, Ovid, and the Troubadours. Basics of prosody and rhetoric will also be introduced and reference will be made to a variety of literary theories of interpretation that are of relevance to Biblical, Classical, Medieval, and Renaissance Studies. However, the main emphasis will be laid on extensive yet close textual reading. You will be responsible for reading all assigned texts **before** coming to class and be ready to comment on them or lead the discussion. Issues concerning translation will also be addressed throughout the semester.

Response papers Roughly every other week you will be required to write a short paper, normally a couple of pages long, dealing with the reading material and addressing, directly or indirectly, at least one of the study questions that I will supply.

Quizzes There may be **unannounced quizzes** on the *Commedia* aimed at verifying your familiarity with the material that you are expected to have read.

Individual and group research Throughout the semester you will be asked to undertake different kinds of research, both individually and in small groups. Research tasks will be communicated in class.

Presentations During the last weeks of the semester you will teach part of the class yourselves, each one of you presenting and explaining one particular canto to your fellow students. The cantos to be presented will be assigned to you randomly and you will not have the possibility to substitute them.

Assignments All written assignments must be typed and double-spaced and will not be accepted late.

Attendance Class attendance is mandatory and absences should be avoided, as they will negatively affect the final grade. A maximum of **3** absences (excused and/or unexcused) is permitted during the semester.

Prerequisites The course is a sophomore seminar designed for Honors College students and does not have other prerequisites. No knowledge of any foreign language is expected.

Grading Policy Your grade will be determined in the following way:

25%	Class work	15%	Individual and group research	15%	Response papers (5 out of 6)
15%	Midterm	15%	Individual presentation	15%	Final paper / Exam

Distributed with this syllabus is a file on class etiquette, which you are expected to read and abide by. You are also expected to be familiar with and abide by both the Code of Students Rights and Responsibilities and the Code of Academic Integrity.

Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities

<http://www.uvm.edu/~uvmppg/ppg/student/studentcode.pdf>

Code of Academic Integrity

<http://www.uvm.edu/~uvmppg/ppg/student/acadintegrity.pdf>

Tentative Schedule

September

- 1 Introduction to the course and vernacular literature before Dante
3 *Troubadour Lyrics* (PDF)
- 8 *Vita Nova* I-XLII (PDF) Response paper due
10 Inferno I-IV also read essay on Christian doctrine
- 15 Inferno V-VIII also read *Inferno* essay and book intro
17 Inferno IX-XII Response paper due also read *Dante in His Age*
- 22 Inferno XIII-XVI also read essay on Typology
24 Inferno XVII-XX
- 29 Inferno XXI-XXIV Response paper due

October

- 1 Inferno XXV-XXIX Talk by Dante translator Michael Palma
- 6 Inferno XXX-XXXIV
8 Purgatorio I-IV also read *Purgatorio* essay and book intro
- 13 Purgatorio V-VIII and **Midterm exam**
15 Purgatorio IX-XII
- 20 Purgatorio XIII-XVI Response paper due
22 Purgatorio XVII-XX
- 27 Purgatorio XXI-XXIV
29 Purgatorio XXV-XXIX

November

- 3 Purgatorio XXX-XXXIII Response paper due
5 Paradiso I-IV also read *Paradiso* essay and book intro
- 10 Paradiso V-VIII **Individual presentations begin**
12 Paradiso VIX-XII
- 17 Paradiso XIII-XVI
19 Paradiso XVII-XX
- 24-26 Thanksgiving Break

December

- 1 Paradiso XXI-XXIV Response paper due
3 Paradiso XXV-XXXVIII
- 8 Paradiso XXIX-XXXIII **Last day of classes**