



PC: @igiabas on Twitter

## ITAL 325 Dante(s) in Modern and Contemporary Culture

Fall 2018

Languages Building

Tu/Thurs 10:05 -11:20 AM

**Instructor:** Alyssa Granacki

**Department:** Romance Studies

**Email:** alyssa.granacki@duke.edu

**Office Hours:** M/W 3-4PM. Languages 014

### Course Overview

This course offers an introduction to Dante's works and their afterlife in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Why does Dante continue to fascinate readers and scholars even centuries after he wrote? How has he become an icon across cultures, languages, and epochs? What does 'Dante' represent? Students will examine the myriad ways Dante continues to live on in our modern and contemporary culture. They will also consider what insight modern re-writings and re-imaginings can offer us when reading Dante's original works. We will focus on the legacy of Dante in the Italophone and Anglophone worlds, but we will venture beyond national literatures and languages. The course is loosely organized around three thematic sections, each of which confronts a different

aspect of Dante's poetry: Poet of Nation, Poet of Love, and Poet of Universal Order. These sections are there to guide us, but we will also question whether they are accurate or useful for our understanding of Dante today.

This class requires intense reading and writing. Sessions will include short lectures and discussions of the materials assigned for the week. Course taught in English. A preceptorial component is available for those who wish to read select texts in the original Italian and participate in an hour-long weekly discussion section in Italian.

### Course Objectives

By the end of this course you will be able to:

- Identify and describe major themes and issues at stake across Dante's works
- Analyze the historical contexts of transformations of Dante's works in modern and contemporary culture
- Analyze an excerpt from a literary text using close reading techniques
- Evaluate competing claims and interpretations of a literary text
- Synthesize scholars' interpretations and compare them with your own interpretation of a text

### Format and Procedures

The class will be built around weekly lectures, readings, and discussions. Students are expected to do the readings before class and to participate actively in class discussions. There will be various writing assignments as well as a final paper.

### Course Readings

All materials will be available on Sakai. If you would like your own copy of Dante's *Divine Comedy*, I recommend the translation by Mandelbaum with the facing Italian text.

### Other resources

Dante in Contemporary Culture: <https://research.bowdoin.edu/dante-today/>

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

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

### Assignments

- I. **Class participation and attendance (25%).** Students are expected to attend class having read the assigned text and actively participate in discussion.
- II. **Summary of a secondary source (15%).** You will be expected to write a 2 page summary of one of the secondary sources on the syllabus
- III. **Close readings (2) (30%).** During the course of the semester, you will complete two close readings (about 2 pages) of short excerpts from literary texts. These exercises will help you develop a final paper topic.
- IV. **Final Paper (30%).** Students will write a 7-10 page final paper that examines one transformation of a Dantean text. Students should incorporate secondary materials into their essay. Students are welcome to use texts on the syllabus or examine other aspects of Dante in modern and contemporary culture. Topic must be approved by the instructor by week 10 of the course. Students may build on close reading assignments for the final paper.

### Academic Integrity

Duke University is a community dedicated to scholarship, leadership, and service and to the principles of honesty, fairness, respect, and accountability. Citizens of this community commit to reflect upon and uphold these principles in all academic and non-academic endeavors, and to protect and promote a culture of integrity. You are expected to uphold the [Duke Community Standard](#):

- I will not lie, cheat, or steal in my academic endeavors;
- I will conduct myself honorably in all my endeavors; and
- I will act if the Standard is compromised.

### Accommodations for students with disabilities

We welcome all students with differing abilities and are happy to provide accommodations as needed. Please visit one of the two centers during the semester: the [Academic Resource Center](#) (in the Academic Advising Building on East Campus) or the [Student Disability Access Office](#) to seek documentation that will inform your professor of any needed accommodation. Check with the ARC or SDAO regarding deadlines and requirements for accommodations.

### Inclusivity Statement

We understand that our members represent a rich variety of backgrounds and perspectives. The Romance Studies Department is committed to providing an atmosphere for learning that respects diversity. While working together to build this community we ask all members to:

- share their unique experiences, values and beliefs
- be open to the views of others
- honor the uniqueness of their colleagues
- appreciate the opportunity that we have to learn from each other in this community
- value each other's opinions and communicate in a respectful manner
- keep confidential discussions that the community has of a personal (or professional) nature
- use this opportunity together to discuss ways in which we can create an inclusive environment in this course and across the Duke community

### Preferred Contact

Please do not hesitate to contact instructor via email ([alyssa.granacki@duke.edu](mailto:alyssa.granacki@duke.edu)) with any questions or comments. Expect a response within 24 hours (or one business day) of email delivery.

### Tentative Course Schedule (*May change to accommodate guest presenters & student needs*)

Week	Theme	Readings
1	Introduction to Dante: Historical and Modern	Boccaccio, Giovanni. <i>Life of Dante</i> (excerpts) Compagni, Dino. <i>Chronicle of Florence</i> (excerpts) Dante, <i>Inferno</i> I-II
1		Dante in Contemporary Culture: <a href="https://research.bowdoin.edu/dante-today/">https://research.bowdoin.edu/dante-today/</a>
2	Poet of Love	Dante, <i>Vita Nuova</i> Visual representations of Beatrice

2		Pamuk, Orhan. <i>A New Life</i> . (excerpts) Interview with Pamuk.
3		Dante, <i>Vita Nuova</i> Bassani, Giorgio. <i>The Garden of the Finzi-Continis</i> Film: <i>Garden of the Finzi-Continis</i>
3		Woolf, Judith. "Micòl and Beatrice: Echoes of the <i>Vita Nuova</i> in Giorgio Bassani's <i>Garden of the Finzi-Continis</i> ," in <i>Dante's Modern Afterlife</i> , ed. Nick Havely.
4		Montale, Eugenio. Selected Poems (L'anguilla, L'ombra della magnolia, Voce giunta con le folaghe, Il gallo cedrone) Rosselli, Amelia. <i>Variazioni belliche</i> (Tutto il mondo è vedovo, Il soggiorno in inferno, La mia vita si salvò, Nel tuo occhio sornione )
4		Dante, <i>Rime Petrose</i> . West, Rebecca. "Wives and Mothers in Dante and Eugenio Montale" in <i>Metamorphosizing Dante</i> . <b>First close reading due</b>
5		Dante, <i>Inferno</i> III-V. Visual representations of Paolo and Francesca
5		Morante, Elsa. <i>L'isola d'Arturo</i> . (First section, Kiss scene)
6	Poet of Nation, Politics, and Exile	Dante, <i>Inferno</i> VI-XI
6		Dante, <i>Inferno</i> XII-XVI Gramsci, Antonio. Selections from <i>The Prison Notebooks</i>
7		Dante, <i>Inferno</i> XVII-XXI Mubiaya, Ingy. "Documenti, Prego"
7		Dante, <i>Inferno</i> XXII-XXVII Bouchard, Norma. "Reading the Discourses of Multicultural Italy"
8		Dante, <i>Inferno</i> XXVIII-XXXIII Rodin, The Gates of Hell
8		Dante, <i>Purgatorio</i> I-V
9		Heaney, Seamus. <i>Station Island</i> Heaney Reading/Video <b>Second close reading due</b>
9		Jones, Leroi. <i>Dante's system of hell</i> .
10	Poet of Universal Order	Dante, <i>Paradiso</i> X-XV
10		Lewis, C.S. <i>The Discarded Image</i> <b>Final paper topic must be decided by this date</b>
11		Levi, Primo. <i>If this is a man (Survival in Auschwitz)</i>
11		Pavese, Cesare. <i>The moon and the bonfire</i> . <b>Secondary source summary due by this date</b>
12		Pavese, Cesare. <i>The moon and the bonfire</i> .
12		Wrap up

**Final Paper Due**