

Fall 8-15-2005

## ENG 3601-001: Dante

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3601-001

ENG

~~EH~~ 3601: Dante  
Fall 2005

Instructor: David Raybin  
Office: 324 Coleman Hall  
Office Hours: Tu 9:30-11:30; W 9-10, 11-12; and by appointment  
Telephone: 581-6980 (office); 330/678-2628 (home, weekends before 7:30 p.m.)

Texts: Dante, *The Divine Comedy*  
Dante, *Vita Nuova*  
Jacoff, Rachel, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Dante*  
Virgil, *The Aeneid*

### Texts, Topics, and Assignments

- August 23: **Reading:** *Inferno* 1-2 (in class); *Cambridge Companion*, Chapter 1  
**Discussion:** Introduction to the course; Dante's life; Medieval conceptions of the afterlife.
- 30: **Reading:** Virgil, *The Aeneid*, Books 1-6, 12  
**Discussion:** Virgil's ideas on matters such as love, death, honor, fate, knowledge, and the afterlife.
- September 6: **Reading:** Dante, *Vita Nuova*; *Cambridge Companion*, Chapter 3  
**Discussion:** Dante's early thinking on matters such as love, death, poetry, and autobiography.
- 13: **Reading:** *Inferno* 3-11; *Cambridge Companion*, Chapter 7  
**Discussion:** Dante and the classical poets. Virgil (esp. *The Aeneid*); Ovid (esp. *Metamorphoses*); the unique fate Dante assigns to the great minds of the past.
- 20: **Reading:** *Inferno* 12-17; *Cambridge Companion*, Chapter 6  
**Discussion:** Dante and Florence. Life and art in Florence (and Italy generally) in the 12C-14C; Giotto; the effect of Dante's peopling Hell with Florentines and other Italians.
- 27: **Reading:** *Inferno* 18-30; *Cambridge Companion*, Chapter 5  
**Discussion:** Dante and politics. The pope, the Holy Roman Emperor, the King of France, and their relation to turbulent Florentine and Italian politics; Dante's response to his exile; Dante's *Monarchia*.
- October 4: **Reading:** *Inferno* 31-34; *Cambridge Companion*, Chapter 11  
**Discussion:** Overview of *Inferno*. Ethical, political, literary, and psychological considerations with respect to Dante's construction of Hell.  
**Writing:** Last day to turn in Paper #1 \*\*\*
- 11: **Reading:** *Purgatorio* 1-9; *Cambridge Companion*, Chapter 12  
**Discussion:** Introduction to *Purgatorio*. The notion of a purgatorial world bridging good and evil (and the history of this notion); the meaning of redemption.
- 18: **Reading:** *Purgatorio* 10-20; *Cambridge Companion*, Chapter 2  
**Discussion:** Dante and the lyric past. The placement of other poets in Hell, Heaven, and especially Purgatory; how Dante uses other poets as guides and models; Dante's role in the development of lyric (and epic) poetry; Dante's sense of his importance.
- 25: **Reading:** *Purgatorio* 21-27; *Cambridge Companion*, Chapter 8  
**Discussion:** Beatrice. The nature of a symbol; Dante's conceptions of physical and spiritual love and of human and divine reason. Dante and the Bible, Old and New Testaments; Eden and Apocalypse; Adam and Jesus, Eve and Mary.
- November 1: **Reading:** *Purgatorio* 28-33; *Cambridge Companion*, Chapter 10  
**Discussion:** Dante's poetics. *Terza rima*, the canto, the canticle. Dante's rhetoric: is *The Divine Comedy* fact or fiction? How Dante uses rhetoric to create the illusion that he is recounting divine truths and not creating a personalized human fiction.  
**Writing:** Last day to turn in Paper #2 \*\*\*

8: **Reading:** *Paradiso* 1-9; *Cambridge Companion*, Chapter 13  
**Discussion:** Introduction to *Paradiso*. Dante's cosmology (scientific and spiritual) and his taxonomy of bliss.

15: **Reading:** *Paradiso* 10-22; *Cambridge Companion*, Chapter 9  
**Discussion:** Dante's theology and spirituality. Augustine, Aquinas, and Boethius; Francis and Bonaventure; divine justice and the limits of human knowledge.

22: Thanksgiving Holiday

29: **Reading:** *Paradiso* 23-29; *Cambridge Companion*, Chapter 14  
**Discussion:** Dante's heritage and value. His sense of self worth; his commentators; his literary and spiritual influence; Boccaccio's *Decameron*, Milton's *Paradise Lost*.

December 6: **Reading:** *Paradiso* 30-33; *Cambridge Companion*, Chapter 15  
**Discussion:** Summary. Personal responses to the *Comedy*; Dante in English, American translations in poetry and prose from Longfellow to Singleton to Mandelbaum.  
**Writing:** Last day to turn in **Paper #3 \*\*\***

**Final Examination:** Tuesday, December 13, 7:30-9:30 p.m.

## Course Policies, Assignments, and Grading

### Grading

Final grades will be determined on a 100-point scale:

Papers	60 points
Final Exam	30 points
Participation	10 points

**Course Grade:** A=90-100; B=81-89.99; C=72-80.99; D=63-71.99; F=below 63

**Note:** To pass the course, you must complete all assignments.

### Assignments

**Papers:** You will write three 1000- to 1200-word papers, each exploring in as stimulating a way as possible some one thing you found particularly interesting in the relevant canticle of *The Divine Comedy*. Begin each paper by focusing on a passage that is important to illustrating your main idea.

**Final Examination:** The exam will allow you the opportunity to synthesize your understanding of *The Divine Comedy* as we reflect on the broad scope of Dante's vision.

### Course/University Policies

**Typing.** All papers must be typed (double-spaced with one-inch margins).

**Honor Policy.** Education depends on trust. Should you cheat and I find out about it, you can expect to fail the course. The University may take additional action.

**Plagiarism.** If you use other people's words or ideas without citing your sources and indicating when you have quoted, you risk failing an assignment or even the course depending on how serious I deem the offense. If you are not sure what plagiarism is, or whether a particular use of language is plagiarism, ask me before you turn in an assignment.

**Students with Disabilities.** "If you have a documented disability and wish to receive academic accommodations, please contact the Coordinator of the Office of Disability Services (581-6583) as soon as possible."