

DANTE'S *DIVINE COMEDY* IN ENGLISH – ITAL 276W

Description

Study Dante's *Divine Comedy* in Florence, the city where Dante was born and raised, where he first made his name as a poet and politician, and from which in 1302 he was exiled. Dante wrote the entire *Divine Comedy*, his poetic journey through hell, purgatory, and heaven, during his exile away from Florence, but features his hometown – its people, places, and politics – all throughout the poem.

In this course, we will examine the main themes, characters, events, and (many Florentine) spaces featured in the *Divine Comedy*, with emphasis on *Inferno* (Hell), and explore the artistic responses to Dante's poem. The written assignments in this writing-intensive (W) course will be tied to our Florence location.

Instructor

Prof. Julie Van Peteghem
Email: jv41@hunter.cuny.edu

Class Hours

Monday through Friday, from 10am to 12:30pm
(not including mandatory afternoon visits)
First day of class: Thursday January 2, 2025
Last day of class: Tuesday January 21, 2025

Learning Outcomes

- Identify and discuss key people, places, events, and concepts in Dante's *Divine Comedy*
- Recognize the current relevance of the central themes of Dante's poem
- Formulate interpretations of the *Divine Comedy* and artistic responses to the poem supported by evidence from the text and the critical literature, in discussion, oral presentations, and writing

Schedule of Readings

Class 1 – Thu Jan 2

Introduction, *Inf.* 1
PM: A Walk Through Dante's Florence

Class 2 – Fri Jan 3

Inf. 1-3

Class 3 – Mon Jan 6

Inf. 4-6
PM (on your own): Find your Dante *lapide* (plaque)

Class 4 – Tue Jan 7

Inf. 7-11

Class 5 – Wed Jan 8

Inf. 12-16

Class 6 – Thu Jan 9

Inf. 17-21

PM (on your own): Pick your own Dante adventure (via *Dante's Florence* app)

Class 7 – Fri Jan 10

Inf. 22-26

Class 8 – Mon Jan 13

Inf. 27-31

PM: Visit Baptistery and Cathedral

Class 9 – Tue Jan 14

Test 1, *Inf.* 32-34, *Purg.* 1

Class 10 – Wed Jan 15

Purg. 10-12, *Purg.* 16

PM: Visit to the Uffizi

Class 11 – Thu Jan 16

Purg. 24, 27, 30, 33

Class 12 – Fri Jan 17

Par. 1-3, *Par.* 15-17

Class 13 – Mon Jan 20

Par. 33, Conclusion

Class 14 – Tue Jan 21

Test 2, Final presentations: Dante Sightings in Florence

Textbook and Course Materials

1. Required: one of the following editions of the *Inferno* (price varies):

→ if you prefer a physical copy

- *The Divine Comedy by Dante Alighieri. Volume 1: Inferno.* Edited and translated by Robert Durling (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997) paperback (\$21.99)

→ if you prefer a digital edition

- *The Divine Comedy by Dante Alighieri. Volume 1: Inferno.* Edited and translated by Robert Durling (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997) Kindle (\$5.69) or [e-book via Hunter College Libraries](#) (no cost)

2. Required: The *Dante's Florence* app (\$0.99)

available via [Google Play](#) (Android) and the [Apple App Store](#) (iOS)

3. Required: Additional course materials (no cost)

provided by the instructor and posted on Brightspace

Evaluation

Attendance: Attendance of all classes and scheduled visits is mandatory. Missing one class equals missing one whole week during a regular semester. After more than one unexcused absence, your final grade will be lowered with a third of a letter grade.

Active Participation (20%): In order to actively participate during class and our visits, you should have read the assigned *cantos* carefully before class, completed the reading questions, and be prepared to discuss your answers to the questions in class.

Written Assignments (40%): This is a writing-intensive course. You will write in preparation for and during each class session. Before class you will respond to questions about the assigned readings (10%); our in-class writing activities will focus on various aspects of the research and writing process – for assignments in this course and beyond. There are four short formal writing assignments, based on our afternoon visits in Florence:

- ***The Dante plaques of Florence (10%) – due Thu Jan 9***
At various locations in Florence *lapidi* or plaques are installed with verses from Dante's *Divine Comedy* related to that particular place. You will choose one of the 33 plaques, and write a short piece explaining the context of the passage and the place. Your audience are future Hunter students without previous knowledge of Dante, who may visit or study abroad in Florence.
- ***In Dante's Footsteps (5%) – due Mon Jan 13***
Using the *Dante's Florence* app or one of the instructor's suggestions of places outside of Florence (posted on Brightspace), select a location tied to Dante's life or poem and write up a short description.
- ***Dante and the arts at the Uffizi (10%) – due Wed Jan 15***
At the Uffizi, one of the most famous museums in the world, you will see masterpieces of Italian medieval and Renaissance art. You will respond to a series of questions about the art and its connections to key figures and concepts in Dante's poem.
- ***Dante today at Florence (5%) – due Mon Jan 20***
Florence's glorious past is still very much visible in the city today: in addition to the medieval and Renaissance architecture and art on display, Michelangelo's David, the Medici, and Dante Alighieri can be spotted in various (sometimes hilarious!) shapes and forms throughout the city. Select one "Dante sighting" in Florence and write up a short description in the style of a [Dante Today](#) entry. Anything goes!

Detailed instructions for the assignments will be posted on Brightspace.

Tests (20%): There will be two 45-minute in-class tests with questions about the content of the *Divine Comedy* (one about the *Inferno*, one about our selections from *Purgatorio* and *Paradiso*). If you keep up with the readings, diligently respond to the reading questions, and actively participate during class, the questions on these tests should pose no surprises to you.

Final Project (20%): Your final project in this course will have a written and oral component and incorporate the communication skills we worked on during the term. Your project will center around a particular passage in Dante's *Divine Comedy*, selected by you and approved by me. In the written component, you will introduce the passage, identify the main characters and themes, and situate it within Dante's poem. You will also reflect on the relevance of the passage to readers today. You will then tie this passage to a particular space in Florence (no historical connection is required!) and explain how the content and your chosen location interact with each other. You will prepare a 3-minute presentation about your topic, to be delivered at your chosen location during a final group walk through the city. Instructions will be posted on Brightspace and also discussed in class.

Policies

Hunter College Policy on Academic Integrity

Hunter College regards acts of academic dishonesty (e.g., plagiarism, cheating on examinations, obtaining unfair advantage, and falsification of records and official documents) as serious offenses against the values of intellectual honesty. The College is committed to enforcing the CUNY Policy on Academic Integrity and will pursue cases of academic dishonesty according to the Hunter College Academic Integrity Procedures.

ADA Policy

In compliance with the American Disability Act of 1990 (ADA) and with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Hunter College is committed to ensuring educational parity and accommodations for all students with documented disabilities and/or medical conditions. It is recommended that all students with documented disabilities (Emotional, Medical, Physical and/or Learning) consult the Office of AccessABILITY located in Room E1214A to secure necessary academic accommodations. For further information and assistance please call (212- 772- 4857) or (212- 650- 3230).

Hunter College Policy on Sexual Misconduct

In compliance with the CUNY Policy on Sexual Misconduct, Hunter College reaffirms the prohibition of any sexual misconduct, which includes sexual violence, sexual harassment, and gender-based harassment retaliation against students, employees, or visitors, as well as certain intimate relationships. Students who have experienced any form of sexual violence on or off campus (including CUNY-sponsored trips and events) are entitled to the rights outlined in the Bill of Rights for Hunter College.

a. Sexual Violence: Students are strongly encouraged to immediately report the incident by calling 911, contacting NYPD Special Victims Division Hotline (646-610-7272) or their local police precinct, or contacting the College's Public Safety Office (212-772-4444).

b. All Other Forms of Sexual Misconduct: Students are also encouraged to contact the College's Title IX Campus Coordinator, Dean John Rose (jtrose@hunter.cuny.edu or 212-650-3262) or

Colleen Barry (colleen.barry@hunter.cuny.edu or 212-772-4534) and seek complimentary services through the Counseling and Wellness Services Office, Hunter East 1123.

CUNY Policy on Sexual Misconduct Link:

<http://www.cuny.edu/about/administration/offices/la/Policy-on-Sexual-Misconduct-12-1-14-with-links.pdf>

Except for changes that substantially affect implementation of the evaluation statement, this syllabus is a guide for the course and subject to change with advance notice. All changes will be announced via Brightspace.