



**Faculty of Arts**  
**School of Languages, Linguistics, Literatures and Cultures**

ITAL 599  
*Topics in Italian Studies II - Dante's Divine Comedy (Seminar)*  
Winter 2023  
Mo/Fr 15:30-16:45 ChC 305

**COURSE OUTLINE**

**INSTRUCTOR'S NAME:** Dr. Eleonora Buonocore

**OFFICE HOURS:** M-W 10.00-10.50 (in person or zoom – CHD 420) or by appointment.

**E-MAIL:** [Eleonora.buonocore@ucalgary.ca](mailto:Eleonora.buonocore@ucalgary.ca)

*I will try my best to give a timely response, but as a policy, I will respond to e-mails within 48 hours during weekdays and within 72 hours during weekends*

**TELEPHONE NUMBER:** 403 220 4424

**DESCRIPTION**

This is a CURE course focused on Dante's *Divine Comedy*, a masterpiece of world literature and a crucial text that lays at the foundation of European culture. The students will learn skills necessary to do research within a humanities literary context. The course will begin exploring Dante's first work, the *Vita Nuova* (New Life) as the culmination of Dante's poetic education and the springboard for his poetic journey through the afterlife. We will read selections from the three canticles that form the *Comedy: Inferno, Purgatorio* and *Paradiso*, with the goal of understanding Dante's intellectual trajectory and his goals in writing his journey through the underworld and into heaven. The aims of this course are threefold. On the one hand the students will discover the main text of Medieval Italian Literature understand the complex interplay between the characters and Dante the poet/ pilgrim and will become familiarized with selected cantos of the *Comedy*, in order to identify the main themes present in the poem. Secondly, the course will explore the historical context of medieval Italian history, paying particular attention to the politics behind the literary text. Finally, we will learn how to write a research paper on a specific problem of the poem, how to interpret and analyze poetry. In order to do so, the students will analyze a selection of canti and learn about rhetorical figures, tropes, and recognize similarities in language/content. They will select a topic for their research, present their preliminary findings in a Video Presentation, write a short proposal of their thesis statement and necessary bibliography before finally writing the research paper. Throughout the class the students will be reflecting on their own learning process in a class blog, they will all write 2 entries and respond to 2 other students' entries.

**OBJECTIVES**

This CURE course aims to introduce the students to Dante's *Divine Comedy*, to place it in the context of Medieval European History and Literature, and to teach students how to do research in a humanities field. The objectives of this course are manifold:

- to explain the context surrounding Dante's *Divine Comedy*, and familiarize the students with Medieval European History of XIII and XIV c.



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- to explore Dante's sources in the Classical tradition, including Virgil and Ovid
- to provide the students with the tools to recognize Dante's poetic style, starting from the poetic device of "terza rima."
- to recognize Dante's cosmology, and be able to articulate its relationship to a Ptolemaic world-view and medieval astrology.
- to learn how to analyze the crucial theological and philosophical issues at play in the *Comedy*, including Dante's harmonization of a Christian and Aristotelian Ethics in *Inferno*, the ethics of time at play in *Purgatorio*, and his views on salvation in *Paradiso*.
- to discern and interpret the medieval concept of allegory and how it contributes to Dante's creation of meaning in the *Comedy*.
- to gain the analytic tools necessary to do research in a humanities field
- to express the initial results of the research in a presentation
- to create and write an original research paper dealing with a relevant issue in the *Divine Comedy*

**OUTCOMES**

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

- Create short analytic pieces demonstrating their understanding of the principal issues at play in a specific canto of the *Divine Comedy* or comparing two canti, or two characters from the *Comedy*.
- Identify key characters in the *Comedy* and point out their significance in the context of the poem.
- Be able to follow the development of Dante's intellectual trajectory throughout the text and acknowledge Dante's sources in the Classical and biblical tradition.
- Reach an understanding of the philosophical and theological basis of the *Comedy* and how they inform Dante's structuring of his work.
- Sustain a discussion on the *Divine Comedy* and its role in Medieval European Literature.
- Create an Abstract with their original thesis statement and an initial bibliography to begin fleshing out their research topic.
- Be able to give a presentation on their research on the *Divine Comedy*, including talking about the literary qualities of the text, to an audience and be prepared to reply to their questions
- Produce a longer Research Paper focusing on one canto of the *Comedy* or on a specific issue in the *Comedy* as it relates to medieval culture.



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#### REQUIRED COURSE MATERIALS

- 1) Dante. *The Divine Comedy*, trans. John D. Sinclair (New York: Oxford University Press, 1968 (Reissued October 2010))
- 2) Additional material provided in PDF format on D2L.

#### RECOMMENDED COURSE MATERIALS

Virgil, *Aeneid*, any edition

Augustine, *The city of God*, any edition

Any textbook of Italian grammar and syntax.

Any good Italian-English, English-Italian dictionary for advanced students

#### COURSE NOTES

- The course will consist in class readings, writing and communicative activities: analyses and seminar discussions will be in ITALIAN. Regular attendance is strongly recommended.
- This course is a CURE project course, meaning that students will be trained in techniques to perform research within a literary context. Students will learn how to describe and clearly state their research question, they will examine the text, analyze it and mine it for clues and evidence supporting their thesis, find secondary literature to back up their thesis and finally students will articulate the results of their research in a paper, as well as reflect on their own process of learning in the class blog.
- Active participation is warmly encouraged. Active participation is defined as coming to class prepared to discuss the reading, and to ask questions about the reading. Students will read the text of the *Comedy* both in Italian and in translation and peruse the footnotes to clarify hard points. Participation includes being prepared and ready to give active and positive contributions to class interactions. Participation also includes posting on the class blog at least twice in the term and responding to the other students' post at least once. Lack of attendance or of participation will adversely affect your overall performance and will have a negative impact on your final grade. The instructor should be informed of any reasons for prolonged absence.
- Attendance at two co-curricular events during the term will earn students 4 bonus marks in the participation portion of the grade. In general, attendance to all co-curricular events is encouraged in order to have more occasions to practice your language skills and can help make up your absences for the participation portion of the grade.
- Students are expected to write their assignments in ITALIAN and they are strongly encouraged to communicate consistently on the target language during office hours and to attend IL CIRCOLINO (CHC 318) to practice Italian.

#### **Important dates:**



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- In person class meetings will start on Monday January 9<sup>th</sup>.
- Term break will be the week of February 19<sup>th</sup> – 25<sup>th</sup>.
- The two exams (delivered as a D2L quizzes) will take place on February 17<sup>th</sup> and April 3<sup>rd</sup>.
- The First writing assignment is due in a dedicated D2L folder by February 10<sup>th</sup>
- The Research Paper proposal will be uploaded to a dedicated D2L folder by March 6<sup>th</sup>
- Presentations of the Research Question will take place either in-class or submitted by Video by March 17<sup>th</sup>.
- The Final Research Paper will be uploaded to a dedicated D2L folder by April 12<sup>th</sup>.
- In class meetings will end on Monday, April 10<sup>th</sup>.

**Additional Notes**

- Attendance at all tests and examinations is mandatory. The exams will take the form of a D2L quiz. Missed tests, assignments and examinations will be given a grade of F. A student who is absent /unable to take the test in the 48h period for legitimate reasons must inform the instructor immediately and an alternative course of action may be considered.
- Written exams: Both exams will take the form of a D2L quiz. The D2L quiz will be available to the students for a period of 48 hours, starting on class time on February 17<sup>th</sup> and on April 3<sup>rd</sup> but when the students begin the test, the assessment will be timed to a full class period and a half (115 minutes), to account for technical difficulties. The exams will evaluate students' knowledge of the key characters and themes as well as of the structure of the *Comedy*. Students will be asked to write a composition and analyze selected passages chosen among those canti of the *Comedy* read in class.
- Writing Assignment: throughout the term students will write 1 short essay of 500/600 words on a topic of their choice among those covered in class (i.e. the short story needs to include the principal issues at play in a specific canto of the *Comedy* or comparing two canti, or on a character of the *Comedy*, etc.). The Writing Assignment will be uploaded to a dedicated D2L folder by February 10<sup>th</sup>.
- Class Research Blog: Students will reflect on their learning experience and articulate their engagement with research by participating to the class blog on D2L with at least 2 entries and by commenting on at least 2 other students' entries.
- Research Paper Proposal: Students will create an abstract with a research question (thesis statement) and some preliminary bibliography, primary and secondary literature that they intend to use to support their statement. The Research Paper Proposal will be uploaded to a dedicated D2L folder by March 6<sup>th</sup>.
- Presentation of the Research: Students will prepare and deliver one 5-minute presentations about the preliminary results of their research on the class material, one short canto from the *Comedy* or an important character or issue in the text. The Presentation of the Research will be delivered in class or a Video Presentation will be uploaded to a dedicated D2L folder by March 17<sup>th</sup>.
- Final Research Paper: the research paper will present an original argument dealing extensively with a theme discussed in class, using evidence from the text and from the bibliography to prove it (i.e. focusing on one canto of the *Comedy* or on a specific issue in the *Comedy* as it relates to medieval culture). The topic will be agreed with the instructor. The paper will have a length of 5/6 pages. The Final Written Paper will be uploaded to a dedicated D2L folder by April 12<sup>th</sup>.
- There will not be a final examination.
- The Procedure for Course evaluation will be online via a dedicated D2L Link



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**ASSESSMENT**

Active class participation 10% [includes actively participating to class discussions and responding to other students' questions]

1 Written Assignment 10% [Due February 10<sup>th</sup> on the D2L Folder]

2 Written exams (2 at 15% each) = 30% [both as D2L Quiz- on February 17<sup>th</sup> and April 3<sup>rd</sup>]

1 Research Paper Proposal 5% [Due March 6<sup>th</sup> on the D2L Folder]

1 Presentation of the Research Question 15% [Due March 17<sup>th</sup> on the D2L Folder or In Class]

Class Research Blog 5% [participating to the class blog with at least 2 entries and comments on other students' entries - Due throughout the semester - last entry due before April 12<sup>th</sup> on D2L]

1 Final Research Paper 25% [Due April 12<sup>th</sup> on the D2L Folder]

**GRADING SCALE**

A+ = 100-96 A= 95-91 A- =90-86

B+ = 85-81 B =80-76 B- =75-71

C+ = 70-67 C= 66-62 C- =61-58

D+ = 57-54 D= 53-50 F =49%-0%

The official grading system (A=4, B=3, C=2, D=1) will be applied for the calculation of the final mark

**INTEGRITY AND CONDUCT**

All members of the University community have a responsibility to familiarize themselves with the Statement on Principles of Conduct, and to comply with the University of Calgary Code of Conduct and Non-Academic Misconduct policy and procedures (available at: <http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/k.html>).

**Academic misconduct**

Academic Misconduct refers to student behaviour which compromises proper assessment of a student's academic activities and includes: cheating; fabrication; falsification; plagiarism; unauthorized assistance; failure to comply with an instructor's expectations regarding conduct required of students completing academic assessments in their courses; and failure to comply with exam regulations applied by the Registrar.

For information on the Student Academic Misconduct Policy and Procedure please visit:

<https://www.ucalgary.ca/legal-services/university-policies-procedures/student-academic-misconduct-policy>

Additional information is available on the Academic Integrity Website at <https://ucalgary.ca/student-services/student-success/learning/academic-integrity>

**INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY AND COPYRIGHT LEGISLATION**

Course materials created by instructors (including presentations and posted notes, labs, case studies, assignments and exams) remain the intellectual property of the instructor. These materials may not be reproduced, redistributed or copied without the explicit consent of the instructor. All students are required to read the University of Calgary policy on Acceptable Use of Material Protected by Copyright (<https://www.ucalgary.ca/legal-services/university-policies-procedures/acceptable-use-material-protected->



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[copyright-policy](#)) and requirements of the Copyright Act (<https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/C-42/index.html>) to ensure they are aware of the consequences of unauthorised sharing of course materials (including instructor notes, electronic versions of textbooks etc.). Students who use material protected by copyright in violation of this policy may be disciplined under the Non-Academic Misconduct Policy.

**FREEDOM OF INFORMATION AND PRIVACY (FOIP) ACT**

Graded assignments will be retained by the Department for three months and subsequently sent for confidential shredding. Final examinations will be kept for one calendar year and subsequently sent for confidential shredding. Said material is exclusively available to the student and to the department staff requiring to examine it. Please see <https://www.ucalgary.ca/legal-services/access-information-privacy> for complete information on the disclosure of personal records.

**ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATIONS**

It is the student's responsibility to request academic accommodations according to the University policies and procedures listed below. The student accommodation policy can be found at:

<https://ucalgary.ca/student-services/access/prospective-students/academic-accommodations> .

Students needing an Accommodation because of a Disability or medical condition should communicate this need to Student Accessibility Services in accordance with the Procedure for Accommodations for Students with Disabilities:

<https://www.ucalgary.ca/legal-services/university-policies-procedures/student-accommodation-policy>

Students needing an Accommodation in relation to their coursework or to fulfil requirements for a graduate degree, based on a Protected Ground other than Disability, should communicate this need, preferably in writing, to their Instructor or the Department Head/Dean or to the designated contact person in their Faculty.

**FACULTY OF ARTS PROGRAM ADVISING AND STUDENT INFORMATION RESOURCES**

Have a question, but not sure where to start?

The Arts Students' Centre is the overall headquarters for undergraduate programs in the Faculty of Arts. The key objective of this office is to connect students with whatever academic assistance they may require.

In addition to housing the Associate Dean (Undergraduate Programs and Student Affairs) and the Associate Dean (Teaching, Learning & Student Engagement), the Arts Students' Centre is the specific home to:

- Program advising
- Co-op Education Program
- Arts and Science Honours Academy
- Student Help Desk

Location: Social Sciences Room 102

Phone: 403-220-3580

Email: [ascarts@ucalgary.ca](mailto:ascarts@ucalgary.ca)

Website: <https://arts.ucalgary.ca/current-students/undergraduate>

For registration (add/drop/swap), paying fees and assistance with your Student Centre, contact Enrolment Services at 403-210-ROCK [7625] or visit them at the MacKimmie Tower.

Contacts for the Students' Union Representative for the Faculty of Arts: [arts1@su.ucalgary.ca](mailto:arts1@su.ucalgary.ca), [arts2@su.ucalgary.ca](mailto:arts2@su.ucalgary.ca), [arts3@su.ucalgary.ca](mailto:arts3@su.ucalgary.ca), [arts4@su.ucalgary.ca](mailto:arts4@su.ucalgary.ca).

**INTERNET AND ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION DEVICES**

Devices such as laptops and tablets are allowed provided that they are used exclusively for instructional purposes and do not cause disruption to the instructor and to fellow students. Cellular telephones, blackberries and other mobile communication tools are not permitted and must be switched off.

**SUPPORT AND RESOURCES**



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Links to information that is not course-specific related to student wellness and safety resources can be found on the Office of the Registrar's website: <https://www.ucalgary.ca/registrar/registration/course-outlines>.