

Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey
Department of Italian
16:560:605
Dante Seminar
Fall 2013

Alessandro Vettori
Department of Italian
84 College Avenue - Rm 101
email: vettori@rci.rutgers.edu

Office Hours by appointment
Tel 732-932-7536
Fax 732-932-1686

The purpose of this course is the investigation of Dante's opus in relation to other poets, philosophers, and theologians that had deep influences on his writing. Although only two of his major works will be read in their entirety, the *Divine Comedy* and the *Vita nova*, constant references will be made to other writings. Besides a stylistic and formal analysis, numerous thematic strains will be researched and followed throughout Dante's production. Particular attention will be paid to such concepts as allegory, poetic auto-interpretation, autobiography, and the ever-changing concept of love.

Learning goals: Students will be trained to do a close analysis of literary texts, to put poetic and prose texts in conversation with philosophical ideas, to discern the boundaries of literature, philosophy, and theology. They will be assessed by means of oral presentations (one long, one short), one short paper, one long (publishable) paper, and class participation.

Syllabus

Texts: *Vita Nova* (any annotated edition); *Divina Commedia* (any annotated edition); secondary materials will be made available on sakai.

- 09/09 Introduction. Exile, Poetry, Prayer.
- 09/16 *Vita Nuova*. Ronald Martinez, "Mourning Beatrice: The Rhetoric of Threnody in the *Vita nuova*," *Modern Language Notes* 113 (1998): 1-29.
- 09/23 *Vita Nuova*. Teodolinda Barolini, "'Cominciandomi dal principio infino a la fine' (V.N. XXIII 15): Forging Anti-Narrative in the *Vita Nuova*," *La gloriosa donna de la mente. A commentary on the Vita Nuova*, ed. Vincent Moleta (Firenze: Olschki, 1994) 119-140.
- 09/30 *Vita Nuova*. Jeremy Tambling, "Thinking Melancholy: Allegory and the 'Vita Nuova'," *The Romanic Review* Volume 96 Number 1: 85-105.
- 10/07 *Divina Commedia*. "Virgil." Robert Hollander, "Dante's Virgil: A Light That Failed," *Lectura Dantis: A Forum for Dante Research and Interpretation* (1989) Spring 4: 3-9
- 10/14 *Divina Commedia*. "Brunetto Latini, *Inferno* XV." Michael Camille, "The Pose of the Queer. Dante's Gaze, Brunetto Latini's Body," *Queering the Middle Ages*, eds. Glenn Burger and Steven F. Kruger (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001) 57-86
- 10/21 *Divina Commedia*. "Satan, *Inferno* XXXIV." "The Sign of Satan," *Modern Language Notes* 80 (1965): 11-26.
- 10/28 *Divina Commedia*. "Art and Prayer, *Purgatorio* X." Gino Casagrande, "'Esto visibile parlare': A Synaesthetic Approach to *Purgatorio* 10. 55-63," *Lectura Dantis*

- Newberriana II*, eds. Paolo Cherchi and Antonio C. Mastrobuono (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1990) 21-57.
- 11/04 *Divina Commedia*. "Dante's Poets, *Purgatorio* XXI-XXVI." C. S. Lewis, "Dante's Statius," *Medium Aevum* 25 (1956): 133-139.
- 11/11 *Divina Commedia*. "Matelda, *Purgatorio* XXVIII." Flavia Coassin, "Matelda: Poetic Image or Achetype?," *Visions and Revisions. Women in Italian Culture*, eds. Mirna Cicioni and Nicole Prunster (Providence, RI: Berg, 1993) 3-12. Joan M. Ferrante, "Dante," *Woman as Image in Medieval Literature. From the Twelfth Century to Dante* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1975) 129-152.
- 11/18 *Divina Commedia*. "Earthly Paradise, *Purgatorio* XXVIII-XXXIII." Peter Armour, "*Purgatorio* XXXII," *Dante's Divine Comedy. Introductory Readings II: Purgatorio*, ed. Tibor Wlassics (Charlottesville: University of Virginia, 1993) 476-490.
- 11/25 *Divina Commedia*. "Cacciaguida, *Paradiso* XV-XVII." Guy Raffa, "Enigmatic 56's: Cicero's Scipio and Dante's *Cacciaguida*," *Dante Studies* 110 (1992): 121-134.
- 12/02 *Divina Commedia*. Steven Botterill, "Dante, Bernard, and the Virgin Mary," *Dante and the Mystical Tradition. Bernard Clairvaux in the Commedia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994) 148-193.
- 12/09 Conclusion. Final paper due.

This is a seminar and participation is very important; it will constitute a percentage of your final grade. Everyone is expected to do the assigned reading for the date specified on the syllabus. Readings will be posted on a sakai page dedicated to this course. Some response papers to the readings will be assigned from time to time. Participation, oral presentations, and a final paper will all contribute to your final grade. Academic integrity is expected of everyone. Please, quote your sources, do not plagiarize, do not copy, and do not submit your paper for more than one class. If you are caught plagiarizing, you will receive an F in this class and you will be reported to the Dean of the Graduate School for further action. Final grades will be based on class participation, two oral presentations, a draft of the final paper, and final paper.