

Carleton University
Fall 2013
Department of English

ENGL 2002A: Reading Epic

Classes: Mondays and Wednesdays, 4:00-5:30
Location: **TBA--confirm location on Carleton Central**

Professor Wallace
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Phone: 520-2600 ext. 1039
Office Hours: Mondays, 3:00-4:00

The course explores the epic tradition via the great Italian poet Dante's masterpiece, The Divine Comedy. Dante's poem opens in a scene of crisis in which the poet finds himself lost and must journey down into Hell in order to proceed upward into Purgatory and then Paradise. Universally regarded as one of the great masterpieces of literary history in any language, Dante's poem is a kind of world unto itself, and its three parts are populated by the souls of dead lovers, tyrants, poets, soldiers, and great women and men. The poem marks Dante's attempt to embrace and understand, in a work of extraordinary ambition, the literary, religious, and political concerns of his age.

The full term will be spent on Dante's poem, but special care will be taken to drive it into conversation with the ancient, medieval, and early modern epic traditions, and to establish an understanding of the position of epic in modernity. Lectures will offer close readings of Dante's poem, situate The Divine Comedy in the contexts in which it was first composed and digested, and illustrate how epic is reinvented in Dante's poem. Reading the poem in relation to shifting understandings of epic will enable us to study the intensity with which the past can assert its hold over the present, and the ingenuity with which the present can labour to bend past and future to its will.

Required Texts

Dante, The Divine Comedy (1: Inferno), trans. and comm. John D. Sinclair (Oxford) [9780195004120]
Dante, The Divine Comedy (2: Purgatorio), trans. and comm. John D. Sinclair (Oxford)
[9780195004137]
Dante, The Divine Comedy (3: Paradiso), trans. and comm. John D. Sinclair (Oxford) [9780195004144]

*Books are available at Octopus Books in The Glebe, 116 Third Avenue, Ottawa, ON, K1S 2K1, (613) 233-2589.

Assignments

10%	Test 1 (30 minutes)
25%	Test 2 (80 minutes)
25%	Paper
40%	Exam

You must complete all required assignments in order to be eligible to pass this course.

Note that a significant portion of your writing for this course will be supervised: that is, it will be done in-class or, in the case of the final exam, during the formal exam period. This approach supplies me with an important guard against plagiarism. It also provides me with an effective means of assessing your command of the texts we will read together and of the tradition to which they belong. For the purposes of this course, then, your command of the course material will be measured by your ability to write at length on lecture material and on each of the course texts, and by your ability to move from specific passages and prompts to larger arguments about the texts and tradition under examination.

Test 1 (30 minutes): You will be asked to identify short passages and literary terms, and you will have to answer one or more short questions on the epic tradition, on The Divine Comedy itself, and on the contexts in which it was written. [10%]

Test 2 (80 minutes): You will be asked to identify and explain the importance of short passages and literary terms, and you will have to answer a series of questions. At least two of these questions will require you do demonstrate your command of important aspects the relationship between The Divine Comedy and the epic tradition. [25%]

Paper: one 7-page essay for the course. The prompt for this essay will be distributed on the first day of classes. The essay must be submitted on the final day of classes. Late papers will be penalized 2% per day. [25%]

You will write a three-hour exam during the formal examination period. You will write in detail and at length on The Divine Comedy and and on the poem's relation to the epic tradition. The exam will emphasize, without being restricted to, material covered during lectures. [40%]

Members of the class are expected to attend all meetings and participate fully in discussion. You are also expected to bring your copy of the main text to every class. I do not grade your participation in discussion. I do, however, regard your presence in class as a measure of your ability to continue in the course. **If you miss more than four lectures you will not be permitted to write the final exam. As a result, it will be impossible for you to receive a passing grade in the course.**

Plagiarism and Instructional Offences

Please see the section on "Instructional Offences" in the 2013-2014 Undergraduate Calendar. The Undergraduate Calendar defines an act of plagiarism as an attempt "to use and pass off as one's own idea or product the work of another without expressly giving credit" to the original author. Any act of

plagiarism will be prosecuted to the full extent of the guidelines set out in the Undergraduate Calendar. Penalties may include expulsion from Carleton University.

The Undergraduate Calendar specifies that the act of submitting “substantially the same piece of work to two or more courses without the prior written permission of the instructors from all courses involved” constitutes an Instructional Offence punishable under the guidelines set out in the Undergraduate Calendar. Please note: “Minor modifications and amendments, such as changes of phraseology in an essay or paper, do not constitute a significant and acceptable reworking of an assignment.” No piece of work written for another course will be accepted for credit in this course.

Academic Accommodations

You may need special arrangements to meet your academic obligations during the term because of disability, pregnancy or religious obligations. Please review the course outline promptly and write to me with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist.

Students with disabilities requiring academic accommodations in this course must register with the Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities (PMC) for a formal evaluation of disability-related needs. Documented disabilities could include but are not limited to mobility/physical impairments, specific Learning Disabilities (LD), psychiatric/psychological disabilities, sensory disabilities, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), and chronic medical conditions. Registered PMC students are required to contact the PMC, 613-520-6608, every term to ensure that your Instructor receives your Letter of Accommodation, no later than two weeks before the first assignment is due or the first in-class test/midterm requiring accommodations.

You can visit the Equity Services website to view the policies and to obtain more detailed information on academic accommodation at <http://carleton.ca/equity/accommodation>.

Reading Schedule

M 9 September: Course business; introduction to the epic tradition; introduction to Dante

W 11 September: Inferno 1-4

M 16 September: Inferno 5-9

W 18 September: Inferno 10-13

M 23 September: Inferno 14-18

W 25 September: **Test (30 minutes)** / Inferno 19-22

M 30 September: Inferno 23-27

W 2 October: Inferno 28-31

M 7 October: Inferno 32-33 / Purgatorio 1-2

W 9 October: Purgatorio 3-7

M 14 October: Thanksgiving, University closed

W 16 October: Purgatorio 8-11

M 21 October: Purgatorio 12-16

W 23 October: Purgatorio 17-20

M 28 October - F 1 November: Fall Break, no classes

M 4 November: Purgatorio 21-25

W 6 November: Purgatorio 26-29

M 11 November: Purgatorio 30-33 / Paradiso 1

W 13 November: **Test (80 minutes)**

M 18 November: Paradiso 2-5

W 20 November: Paradiso 6-10

M 25 November: Paradiso 11-14

W 27 November: Paradiso 15-19

M 2 December: Paradiso 20-23

W 4 December: Paradiso 24-28

M 9 December: Paradiso 29-33

• **Paper due at beginning of class**

*NB: I will schedule a formal exam review session during the short break between the end of classes and the beginning of exams.