

College of the Humanities
Carleton University
HUMS 4901

Dante's *Divine Comedy*
Winter 2020

Prof. Erik Stephenson
Paterson Hall 2A57
613-520-2600 ext. 3085
erik.stephenson@carleton.ca
Office hours: Fridays, 9am to noon

Course Description:

Dante's *Divine Comedy* is a love poem dedicated to the memory of his Beloved Lady, Beatrice Portinari. It is equally true to say that it is a poem *about* love. It presents, in poetical form, a comprehensive theory of the nature, origin, function, aim, corruption, and purification of human love. In this course, we will be engaging in a close reading of the *Comedy* in its entirety. We will do so in the aim, first and foremost, of gaining a thorough understanding of its theory of love. Since Dante did not develop his account of love *ex nihilo*, we will be studying the *Comedy* with an eye to the many medieval theories of love that it is clearly indebted to or reacting against. These will include, most notably, the theory of courtly love formalized by Andreas Capellanus, and the many accounts of the metaphysical, ethical, political, and religious dimensions of love put forward by such theologians as Augustine, Hugh of St. Victor, Bernard of Clairvaux, Ibn Sina, and Thomas Aquinas. But since, as has often been said, the *Comedy* is both encyclopaedic in its scope, and yet also firmly rooted in the history and politics of 13th and 14th century Italy, our study of it will inevitably require that we acquaint ourselves with, among other things: the cosmology, natural science, rhetorical theory, and teaching methods of Dante's day; the origins and history of the mendicant orders; the thirteenth-century struggle between Guelfs and Ghibellines and the longer history of conflict between the Empire and the Papacy to which it is tied; and certain developments in 13th and early 14th century visual art and architecture.

Prerequisites: Fourth-year standing in the Bachelor of Humanities program or special permission from the instructor.

Lectures: Wednesdays, from 8:35am to 11:25am, in 2A46 Paterson Hall

Required Texts:

Dante. *The Divine Comedy: 3 Volumes*. Tr. D. Sayers. London: Penguin, 1949-1962.

We will also be reading Dante's *Vita Nuova*, a good translation of which is available for free online through the Princeton Dante Project:

<http://etcweb.princeton.edu/dante/pdp/>

Grades: Grades will be based solely on individual, academic merit as judged against absolute standards. Grades will not be adjusted to achieve a supposedly normal distribution or manipulated in any other way.

Grades for the course will be based on the following:

- (1) Class participation, for a total of 20% of the final mark;
 - (2) One annotated bibliography, **due on the last day of classes** and worth 30% of the final mark; and
 - (3) One take-home examination, 10 to 15 double-spaced pages in length, worth 50% of the final mark, **due on April 25th** – i.e., the last day of the April examination period.
- I will distribute separate handouts describing my expectations for: (1) class participation; (2) the annotated bibliography; and (3) the take-home examination.
 - At the end of the course, you will be assigned a letter grade corresponding to your final percentage, according to the standard Carleton University grading scale (which can be found in the Undergraduate Calendar online here:
<https://calendar.carleton.ca/undergrad/regulations/academicregulationsoftheuniversity/acadregsuniv2/>).

Learning Outcomes:

- The *Divine Comedy* is a work of philosophy, theology, history, and – above all – poetry. Students will come away from this course with a thorough understanding of it in terms of these various dimensions.
- Our study of the *Divine Comedy* will thus be resolutely interdisciplinary, and students can expect to finish the course with a deeper understanding of not only the methods of textual analysis deployed by scholars today in the study of works within these various disciplines, but also the methods that would have been employed in Dante's day. Of course, students can also expect to make progress in their own ability to perform such textual analyses.

- Students will gain an appreciation for how works within very different media and disciplines can influence each other within a cultural tradition. They will learn how to read such works in light of each other, and how to identify long-term trends, affiliations and influences, departures, conflicts, novelties, and so on, within a relatively cohesive cultural tradition.
- Students will be introduced to various databases, collections, and research tools relevant to the study of Dante and/or widely used in the study of medieval literature, theology, philosophy, *et alia*.

Course Requirements at a Glance:

- To pass this course, you will have to:
 - Regularly attend, and do the readings assigned for, the seminar sessions; and
 - Complete and submit *both* the annotated bibliography and the take-home examination
- Failure to attend seminar sessions regularly and/or complete *both* the annotated bibliography and the take-home examination will result in the grade 'F'.

Attendance:

- *Attendance and participation are critical components of all courses in the liberal arts. Thus, a pattern of non-attendance will in and of itself constitute sufficient grounds for my awarding a final course grade of 'F'.*
- This means that you must attend seminar sessions regularly or you will fail the course automatically. If you find yourself having to miss more than two or three sessions, you will have to justify your absences, and the onus will be on you to do so (I will not chase after you). You will not be penalized if there are legitimate reasons for your repeated absences.
- Furthermore, it is your responsibility to stay on top of any materials covered, to find out about and obtain any materials distributed, and to enquire about any announcements made during seminar sessions you must miss for whatever reason.

Submission Guidelines:

- All written assignments for this course are to be uploaded to a file folder prepared for that purpose in cuLearn.
- Your assignment will be considered submitted when it is uploaded.
- All uploaded documents must be in MS Word (i.e., .doc or .docx) format. Documents in any other file format will not be considered submitted, and late penalties will accrue, until the MS Word document is submitted.

- Do not upload your document a second time in order to fix a minor issue since the second submission date and time will replace the original one. If you need to re-submit, do so by emailing the document to me directly at erik.stephenson@carleton.ca

Late Assignments:

- Assignments will be docked 3% (or one third of a letter grade) for each calendar day after their due-date. Late penalties on assignments accompanied by a medical certificate or other proof of a legitimate reason for lateness will be adjusted accordingly.
- Late assignments will very quickly sink to a grade of 'F'. Hand in your assignments on time.
- Even an assignment that is so late it will merit a grade of 0%(F) must be completed or you will fail the course.

Plagiarism:

- Plagiarism is an academic offence. A professor who suspects a student has plagiarized an assignment is required to turn the matter over to the Dean. Students found guilty of plagiarism can receive a 0% for the assignment or a grade of 'F' for the whole course. In extreme cases, they can even be suspended or expelled from the university.
- If you use ideas or language from secondary sources in your assignments without citing those sources properly, you will have committed plagiarism, and I will have no choice but to hand over your work to the Dean for investigation.
- Submitting the same work as another student also constitutes plagiarism. Therefore, although I encourage you to help each other, if you hand in an assignment that is substantially the same as another student's, I will have to turn both of them in to the Dean to be investigated for plagiarism.
- Please read the full Departmental policy on plagiarism, which can be found on the final page of this course syllabus.

Lecture and Reading Schedule:

#	Date	Readings:
1	8 January	<i>Vita Nuova</i>
2	15 Jan.	<i>Inferno</i> , Cantos I-IV
3	22 Jan.	<i>Inferno</i> , Cantos V-XI
4	29 Jan.	<i>Inferno</i> , XII-XXII
5	5 Feb.	<i>Inferno</i> , XXIII-XXXIV
6	12 Feb.	<i>Purgatorio</i> , I-VIII
7	26 Feb.	<i>Purgatorio</i> , IX-XVIII

8	4 Mar.	<i>Purgatorio</i> , XIX-XXVII
9	11 Mar.	<i>Purgatorio</i> , XXVIII-XXXIII
10	18 Mar.	<i>Paradiso</i> , I-V
11	25 Feb.	<i>Paradiso</i> , VI-XIV
12	1 Apr.	<i>Paradiso</i> , XV-XXVII
13	8 Apr.	<i>Paradiso</i> , XXVIII-XXXIII



University Regulations for All College of the Humanities Courses

Copies of Written Work Submitted

Always retain for yourself a copy of all essays, term papers, written assignments or take-home tests submitted in your courses.

Academic Integrity at Carleton

Plagiarism is presenting, whether intentionally or not, the ideas, expression of ideas, or work of others as one's own. Plagiarism includes reproducing or paraphrasing portions of someone else's published or unpublished material, regardless of the source, and presenting these as one's own without proper citation or reference to the original source. Examples of sources from which the ideas, expressions of ideas or works of others may be drawn from include but are not limited to: books, articles, papers, literary compositions and phrases, performance compositions, chemical compounds, art works, laboratory reports, research results, calculations and the results of calculations, diagrams, constructions, computer reports, computer code/software, and material on the internet. More information can be found [here](#).

Academic Accommodation Policy

Academic Accommodation

You may need special arrangements to meet your academic obligations during the term. For an accommodation request the processes are as follows:

Pregnancy obligation: write to the instructor 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. For more details see the [Student Guide](#)

Religious obligation: write to the instructor 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. For more details see the [Student Guide](#)

Academic Accommodations for Students with Disabilities: The Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities (PMC) provides services to students with Learning Disabilities (LD), psychiatric/mental health disabilities, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD), chronic medical conditions, and impairments in mobility, hearing, and vision. If you have a disability requiring academic accommodations in this course, please contact PMC at

613-520-6608 or pmc@carleton.ca for a formal evaluation. If you are already registered with the PMC, contact your PMC coordinator to send me your Letter of Accommodation at the beginning of the term, and no later than two weeks before the first in-class scheduled test or exam requiring accommodation (if applicable). After requesting accommodation from PMC, meet with me to ensure accommodation arrangements are made. Please consult the [PMC website](#) for the deadline to request accommodations for the formally-scheduled exam (if applicable).

Survivors of Sexual Violence

As a community, Carleton University is committed to maintaining a positive learning, working and living environment where sexual violence will not be tolerated, and is survivors are supported through academic accommodations as per Carleton's Sexual Violence Policy. For more information about the services available at the university and to obtain information about sexual violence and/or support, visit: carleton.ca/sexual-violence-support

Accommodation for Student Activities

Carleton University recognizes the substantial benefits, both to the individual student and for the university, that result from a student participating in activities beyond the classroom experience. Reasonable accommodation must be provided to students who compete or perform at the national or international level. Please contact your instructor 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. <https://carleton.ca/senate/wp-content/uploads/Accommodation-for-Student-Activities-1.pdf>

Grading System at Carleton University

Standing in a course is determined by the course instructor, subject to the approval of the faculty Dean. Standing in courses will be shown by alphabetical grades. The system of grades used, with corresponding grade points and the percentage conversion is below. Grade points indicated are for courses with 1.0 credit value. Where the course credit is greater or less than one credit, the grade points are adjusted proportionately.

[Grading System](#)

Course Sharing Websites and Copyright

Classroom teaching and learning activities, including lectures, discussions, presentations, etc., by both instructors and students, are copy protected and remain the intellectual property of their respective author(s). All course materials, including PowerPoint presentations, outlines, and other materials, are also protected by copyright and remain the intellectual property of their respective author(s).

Students registered in the course may take notes and make copies of course materials for their own educational use only. Students are not permitted to reproduce or

distribute lecture notes and course materials publicly for commercial or non-commercial purposes without express written consent from the copyright holder(s).

Statement on Class Conduct

The Carleton University Human Rights Policies and Procedures affirm that all members of the University community share a responsibility to:

- promote equity and fairness,
- respect and value diversity,
- prevent discrimination and harassment, and preserve the freedom of its members to carry out responsibly their scholarly work without threat of interference.

Deferred Term Work

In some situations, students are unable to complete term work because of illness or other circumstances beyond their control, which forces them to delay submission of the work.

Students who claim illness, injury or other extraordinary circumstances beyond their control as a reason for missed term work are held responsible for immediately informing the instructor concerned and for making alternate arrangements with the instructor and **in all cases this must occur no later than three (3.0) working days after the term work was due.**

The alternate arrangement must be made before the last day of classes in the term as published in the academic schedule. Normally, any deferred term work will be completed by the last day of term. More information is available [in the calendar](#).

Deferred Final Exams

Students who are unable to write a final examination because of a serious illness/emergency or other circumstances beyond their control may apply for accommodation. Normally, the accommodation for a missed final examination will be granting the student the opportunity to write a deferred examination. In specific cases when it is not possible to offer a deferred examination, and with the approval of the Dean, an alternate accommodation may be made. [More information.](#)

The application for a [deferral](#) must:

1. be made in writing or online to the Registrar's Office no later than **three working days** after the original final examination or the due date of the take-home examination; and,
2. be fully supported by appropriate documentation and, in cases of illness, by a medical certificate dated no later than one working day after the examination, or by appropriate documents in other cases. Medical documents must specify the date of the onset of the illness, the (expected) date of recovery, and the extent to which the student was/is incapacitated during the time of the examination. The University's preferred medical form can be found at the Registrar's Office [forms and fees page](#).

Any questions related to deferring a Final Exam or Final Assignment/Take Home Examination should be directed to the [Registrar's Office](#).

Withdrawal From Courses

Withdrawn. No academic credit, no impact on the CGPA. WDN is a permanent notation that appears on the official transcript for students who withdraw after the full fee adjustment date in each term (noted in the Academic Year section of the Calendar each term). Students may withdraw on or before the last day of classes.

Important dates can be found [here](#).

Financial vs. Academic Withdrawal

Make sure that you are aware of the separate deadlines for Financial and Academic withdrawal!

Making registration decisions in Carleton Central involves making a financial and academic commitment for the courses you choose, regardless of attendance. If you do not attend – you must withdraw in Carleton Central within the published deadlines to cancel your registration. [More information](#)

Department Contact Information

College of the Humanities 300 Paterson Hall (613)520-2809

CollegeOfHumanities@cunet.carleton.ca

Drop box for CLCV, HUMS LATN GREK Term Papers and assignments is outside 300 P.A.

Greek and Roman Studies 300 Paterson Hall (613)520-2809

GreekAndRomanStudies@cunet.carleton.ca

Drop Box is outside of 300 P.A.

Religion 2A39 Paterson Hall (613)520-2100

Religion@cunet.carleton.ca

Drop box for RELI and SAST Term Papers and assignments is outside of 2A39 P.A.

Registrar's Office 300 Tory (613)520-3500

<https://carleton.ca/registrar/>

Student Resources on Campus

[CUKnowHow Website](#)

[Academics: From registration to graduation, the tools for your success.](#)