



KENRICK-GLENNON

S E M I N A R Y

PST 555: Dante

Dr. Sebastian Mahfood

2 credit hours

Course Description

Dante's *Divine Comedy* can be read as a narrativization of the works of St. Thomas Aquinas. Written between the years 1308 and 1321, the *Divine Comedy* is among the last of the great works of medieval Europe, preceding Petrarch's introduction of the Italian Renaissance by only a handful of years. For this reason alone, it is a meaningful study for graduate theological programs that base themselves in some way on the teachings of St. Thomas as we come to experience a successful merger of theology and philosophy (read faith and reason) in narrative poetry.

To successfully complete the course, the pilgrim will need to read one canto a day for the entire hundred days of the class. Students will have the opportunity to interact with others in the tour group through the discussion boards set up for each canto and may leave tracks for classmates to follow in some cases and follow in the tracks left by classmates in others. Because it is possible to get lost in this universe, it will be necessary for all students to keep up with the schedule on the one hand and not burst too far ahead on the other. One thing that students will learn through this experience is that the concept of time is very important throughout much of this cosmos, and they will want to respect it as they travel through it -- one canto per day (see course calendar on pages 4 and 5).

Since this is only a two-credit course based on student interaction with the literature, exams have been waived in favor of a culminative semester experience that will take the form of a multimedia project based on some aspect of the Comedy and posted on an external website or blog (details below).

Envisioned Outcomes

Envisioned outcomes of the course include an understanding and appreciation of the cosmological realities of the post-Aquinine Church, of the historical and political realities of the 14th-century Church, and of the literary accomplishment of the last great medieval writer who happened to confront the greatest taxonomy of all time.

Course Requirements and Percentage Weight:

No exams or quizzes are scheduled for this course. Student work will be divided evenly between class participation (in the form of online discussion postings) and the semester project.

Discussion postings – 50%

For the first accountability exercise, pilgrims are encouraged to pose questions, comments, and reactions on each of the 100 cantos, but they are only required to respond meaningfully (around 300 words or so) to eleven (21) of them. Everyone is required to respond to Canto I and to Canto 100. The other eighteen responses are divided into three groups so that each pilgrim responds at least six times to each canticle

(the *Inferno*, the *Purgatorio*, and the *Paradiso*). Pilgrims are free to decide where to place their responses, but they should strive to evenly space out their postings so that reflections are not lumped all together in the final cantos of each canticle.

1 (F)	2 (C)	3 (C+)	4 (B)	5 (B+)	6 (A)
WRITING & EXPRESSION					
<p>Incomplete writing</p> <p>Posting is only partially written or completely misses the topic</p>	<p>Writing difficult to understand, serious improvement needed</p> <p>Posting fails to address the topic; confusing organization or development; little elaboration of position; insufficient control of sentence structure and vocabulary; unacceptable number of errors in grammar, mechanics, and usage</p>	<p>Episodic writing, a mix of strengths and weaknesses.</p> <p>Posting noticeably neglects or misinterprets the topic; simplistic or repetitive treatment, only partially-internalized; weak organization and development, some meandering; simple sentences, below-level diction; distracting errors in grammar, mechanics, and usage</p>	<p>Acceptable writing, but could use some sharpening of skill</p> <p>Posting is an uneven response to parts of the topic; somewhat conventional treatment; satisfactory organization, but more development needed; adequate syntax and diction, but could use more vigor; overall control of grammar, mechanics, and usage, but some errors</p>	<p>solid writing, with something interesting to say.</p> <p>Posting is an adequate response to the topic; some depth and complexity in treatment; persuasive organization and development, with suitable reasons and examples; level-appropriate syntax and diction; mastery of grammar, mechanics, and usage, with hardly any error</p>	<p>command-level writing, making a clear impression</p> <p>Posting is a thorough response to the topic; thoughtful and insightful examination of issues; compelling organization and development ; superior syntax and diction; error-free grammar, mechanics, and usage</p>
CONTENT					
<p>Absence of Understanding</p> <p>Posting shows no awareness of the discipline or its methodologies as they relate to the topic</p>	<p>Lack of Understanding</p> <p>Posting seems to misunderstand some basic concepts of the discipline or lacks ability to articulate them.</p>	<p>Inadequate understanding</p> <p>Posting is sometimes unclear in understanding or articulating concepts of the discipline.</p>	<p>Adequate understanding</p> <p>Posting demonstrates an understanding of basic concepts of the discipline but could express them with greater clarity.</p>	<p>Solid Understanding</p> <p>Posting demonstrates a clear understanding and articulation of concepts with some sense of their wider implications.</p>	<p>Insightful understanding</p> <p>Posting clearly demonstrates an understanding and articulation of concepts of the discipline as they relate to the topic; highlights connections to other concepts; integrates concepts into wider contexts.</p>

The Semester Project – 50%

For the second accountability exercise, pilgrims will develop a multimedia project based on some aspect of the *Comedy* and make a class presentation of it during the final week of the course.

This project will be divided into three parts, each of which will be due at the conclusions of the three major divisions of the *Comedy*.

The first part is to establish a blog and post a short *annotated* bibliography concerning some aspect of the *Commedia*. By the end of the *Inferno*, even if the pilgrim plans to do a project over some part of the *Purgatorio* or *Paradiso*, enough of an understanding of Dante's cosmos should be available to develop a thesis statement and a resource list. The *annotated* bibliography should include about half a dozen resources.

The second part is to build some kind of multimedia experience concerning the topic with which all pilgrims in the class can interact. Any pilgrim who needs help with the building of his online project should email me before reaching the midway point of the *Purgatorio*. Adequate examples of multimedia projects can be found online at

<http://www.kenrickparish.com/dante/meyer/index.html>,

http://www.kenrickparish.com/enemeth/divine_comedy.htm,

<http://www.kenrickparish.com/srogers/hell.htm>,

<http://www.kenrickparish.com/bhecktor/Courses/Divine%20Comedy/Div%20Com.html>, and

<http://www.kenrickparish.com/askrobutt/DanteLadys.htm>

(The rubric for the discussion postings applies to this multimedia experience. The student is not graded on aesthetics or functionality of the experience, but attention to these things would demonstrate an awareness of the divine aesthetics and functionality that permeate the Commedia.)

The third part is to write up a 2- to 3-page analysis outlining why the pilgrim chose the project, what the pilgrim learned from it, and where the pilgrim might take it in the future. *(The rubric for the discussion postings applies to this analysis.)*

Grading Scale – See Kenrick-Glennon Seminary’s grading system

<http://www.kenrick.edu/kenrick/credential-program/course-listings-and-grading>

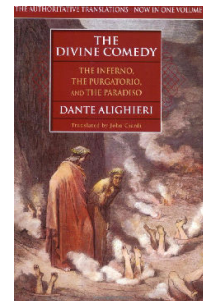
Classroom Procedures

The discussion board will be run in seminar format to enable class pilgrims to share their reflections with one another concerning the philosophy they find inherent within the poetry. Students are encouraged not only to post their own responses but also reply to the postings of others – especially those so moved as to post in the same cantos as they. Because there are 100 cantos, the pilgrim will need to read one canto a day. As linear as the structure of Dante’s cosmos is, it *is* possible to get lost in it, so it will be necessary for all pilgrims to keep up with the schedule on the one hand and not burst too far ahead on the other.

TextBook

The text for the course is Ciardi's translation, which can be found on Amazon.com for \$11. <http://www.amazon.com/Divine-Comedy-Inferno-Purgatorio-Paradiso/dp/0451208633>

While the preferred text to use is the Ciardi translation, a number of suitable translations of each canto are also embedded within the course site. What Ciardi provides, though, that the digital translations do not, are extended footnotes on each canto.

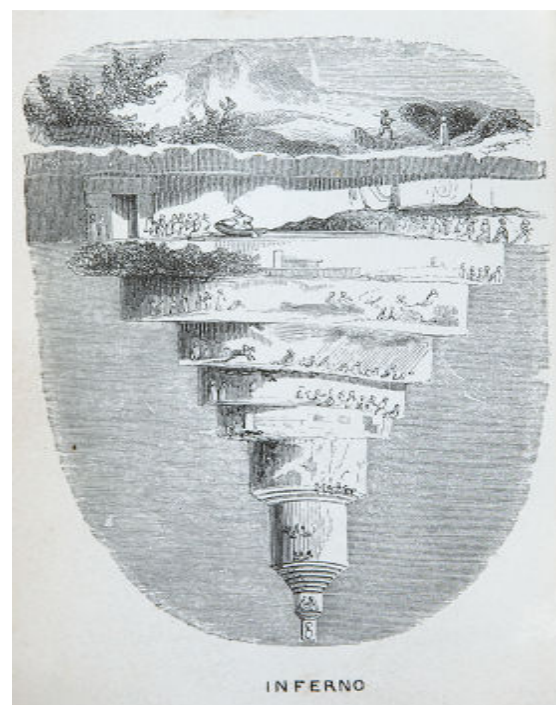


*Images below courtesy of Jeffrey Monseau, Digital Collections Intern, Mt. Holyoke College, who scanned them from G. Borghi’s "La Divina Commedia di Dante Alighieri," 1844

Class Cartography

The course opens on January 8 to enable everyone to access the class prior to the course beginning date on January 11.

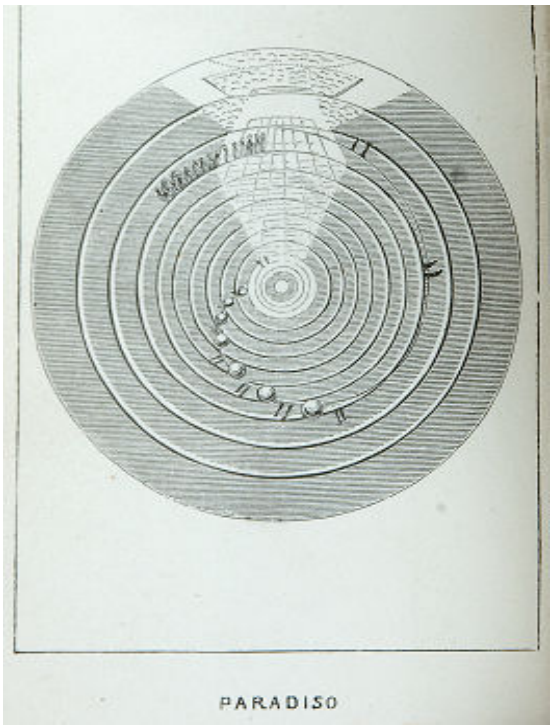
January 2010						
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
<i>Inferno</i>	Canto 1	Canto 2	Canto 3	Canto 4	Canto 5	Canto 6
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
Canto 7	Canto 8	Canto 9	Canto 10	Canto 11	Canto 12	Canto 13
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
Canto 14	Canto 15	Canto 16	Canto 17	Canto 18	Canto 19	Canto 20
31						
Canto 21						



February 2010						
	1	2	3	4	5	6
	Canto 22	Canto 23	Canto 24	Canto 25	Canto 26	Canto 27
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
Canto 28	Canto 29	Canto 30	Canto 31	Canto 32	Canto 33	Canto 34
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
Break	Break	Break	<i>Purg.</i> , Canto 1	Canto 2	Canto 3	Canto 4
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
Canto 5	Canto 6	Canto 7	Canto 8	Canto 9	Canto 10	Canto 11
28						
Canto 12						



March 2010						
	1 Canto 13	2 Canto 14	3 Canto 15	4 Canto 16	5 Canto 17	6 Canto 18
7 Canto 19	8 Canto 20	9 Canto 21	10 Canto 22	11 Canto 23	12 Canto 24	13 Canto 25
14 Canto 26	15 Canto 27	16 Canto 28	17 Canto 29	18 Canto 30	19 Canto 31	20 Canto 32
21 Canto 33	22 Break	23 Break	24 Break	25 Break	26 Break	27 Break
28 Break	29 Break	30 Break	31 Break			



April 2010						
				1 Break	2 Break	3 Break
4 <i>Para.</i> , Canto 1	5 Canto 2	6 Canto 3	7 Canto 4	8 Canto 5	9 Canto 6	10 Canto 7
11 Canto 8	12 Canto 9	13 Canto 10	14 Canto 11	15 Canto 12	16 Canto 13	17 Canto 14
8 Canto 15	19 Canto 16	20 Canto 17	21 Canto 18	22 Canto 19	23 Canto 20	24 Canto 21
Canto 22	26 Canto 23	27 Canto 24	28 Canto 25	29 Canto 26	30 Canto 27	

May 2010						
						1 Canto 28
2 Canto 29	3 Canto 30	4 Canto 31	5 Canto 32	6 Canto 33		