

ENGE4150 Reading Dante's *Inferno*

This course will focus on one seminal work of Western literature: Dante's *Inferno*. The length and richness of this work make it ideally suited for the focussed, semester-long consideration this course will provide. Some of the themes covered will be: the concept of Hell, the nature of Sin, the poet as prophet, the medieval understanding of the cosmos, the uses of allegory. These themes not only exist in the *Inferno*, but will be substantiated and extrapolated by references to many of Dante's other works, including *Vita Nuova*, *Monarchia*, and the *Convivio*. These other works, together with details of Dante's political life, biography, and historical period will be brought to bear on the text as we read through it. Emphasis will also be put on the various literary critical approaches which have been taken to the text, including historicist, feminist, and psychoanalytic. Students are encouraged to take ENGE4120 Reading *Paradise Lost* either before or after taking this course.

Course Timeline

Week	Lecture Title	Reading
1	The Art of Waking Up: Canto 1	
2	The Art of Being Guided: <i>Imitatio</i> , Virgil, and the Pilgrim-Poet	Cantos 2-3
3	Transgression and Courtly Love: Paolo and Francesca, and <i>Vita Nuova</i>	Cantos 4-6
4	The City of Dis: Misers and Heretics	Cantos 7-9
5	Violence: Descending into the Seventh Circle	Cantos 10-12
6	Old Friends: Usurers, Sodomites, and Brunetto Latini	Cantos 13-15
7	Truth Under a Beautiful Lie: Allegory and Violence Against Art	Cantos 16-18
8	In the Bolgias: Soothsayers and Boiling Pitch	Cantos 19-21

9	The Hypocrites and Thieves	Cantos 22-24
10	Violence against Community (I): Ulysses	Cantos 25-7
11	Violence Against Community (II): Florentine Politics, and <i>Monarchia</i>	Cantos 28-30
12	The Frozen Heart of Hell	Cantos 31-33
13	Satan: Dante, Milton, and Elsewhere	Canto 34

Assessment Scheme

Task nature	Description	Weight
Essay 1	1000-1500 words	40%
Essay 2	1000-1500 words	40%
Presentation	15 mins (approx.)	15%
Participation		5%

Set Texts

Dante, *Inferno*, (trans) Mark Musa (Penguin, 2003)

Tutorial Presentation

- i) These may focus on any aspect of any play/poem(s) for that week's reading.
- ii) Approximately 15 mins.
- iii) Please formulate some interesting questions to pose to the class.

Late Submission of Essays

If you submit your essay late, you will incur a penalty of one mark per day.

Contact

Associate Professor Julian Lamb
Room 327 Fung King Hey

E-mail: julianlamb@cuhk.edu.hk

Phone: 39437018

Office Hours: TBA

Plagiarism

You must submit a soft copy of your essay through VERIGUIDE, and submit a hard copy to me.

Attention is drawn to University policy and regulations on honesty in academic work, and to the disciplinary guidelines and procedures applicable to breaches of such policy and regulations. Details may be found at http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/ . With each assignment, students will be required to submit a statement that they are aware of these policies, regulations, guidelines and procedures.
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