

UGS 303: *Dante's Hell and Its Afterlife*

Spring 2011: Unique Numbers 63710, 63715, and 63720

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Lectures: TTH 11-12:15 in BUR 136

Discussion sections: F 10-11 in MAI 220A (63710)
F 11-12 in MAI 220A (63715)
F 12-1 in MAI 220A (63720)

Course Description

Dante Alighieri may not have invented Hell but he created the most powerful and enduring vision of the underworld as a place of eternal punishment for lost souls in the afterlife. This course takes you on a journey down through the nine circles of Hell presented in Dante's *Inferno*. Danteworlds, an award-winning Web site created here at UT, will help guide you by portraying infernal creatures and scenes and by explaining the medieval poem's vast array of references to religion, philosophy, history, politics, and other works of literature. Along the way, you will encounter adaptations and echoes of Dante's *Inferno* in selected literary, artistic, cinematic, and popular works, ranging from Michelangelo's *Last Judgment*, Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, and a silent film adaptation of the *Inferno* to Primo Levi's *Survival in Auschwitz*, Ridley Scott's *Hannibal*, and a Dante-inspired video game by Electronic Arts.

Course themes, based on the *Inferno* and its resonance in modern culture, include moral values, emotional or psychological hell, religion and politics, oppression and injustice, attitudes toward gender and sexuality, and the risks and rewards of pursuing knowledge. You will enhance your readings and viewings by examining medieval and early modern paintings in the Blanton Museum of Art. You are required to view at least one of the University Lectures from Fall 2010 and to attend at least one other approved lecture or event this spring. After receiving instruction on information literacy, you will conduct research on a work (and / or its creator) influenced by or resonating with Dante's *Inferno*. This research will be the subject of your oral presentation and will inform your essay.

Expectations and Objectives

To read—closely and critically—literary, artistic, cinematic and other cultural texts. You are expected to prepare the assigned texts and review the corresponding material in *Danteworlds* (including the study questions) before class so that you can reap the greatest benefit from lectures and participate actively and substantively in class discussion.

To explain the significance of major characters, references, and ideas in Dante's *Inferno* and other course texts. You will be tested on this ability in quizzes and exams.

To interpret and compare cultural works. You will develop these skills by showing how Dante's vision of Hell inspires or resonates with the vision of a later creative mind.

To develop writing, research, and oral presentation skills.

Readings and Viewings

Required Texts (you *must* use the editions of these texts ordered for the class):

Dante Alighieri, *Inferno* (Bantam, 2004. ISBN = 0553213393)

Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein* (Penguin, 2003. ISBN = 0141439475)

Other readings (prose excerpts, poems, essays) will be posted on the Blackboard course site (<https://courses.utexas.edu/webapps/login/>). These readings will include selected texts by Virgil, Samuel Beckett, T.S. Eliot, and Primo Levi in addition to several scholarly essays.

Optional Text: *Danteworlds: A Reader's Guide to the "Inferno"* (Chicago, 2007).

Danteworlds Web site (<http://danteworlds.laits.utexas.edu>): In addition to entries, audio recordings, and study questions, this Web site contains numerous images from works by Sandro Botticelli, John Flaxman, William Blake, Gustave Doré, and Suloni Robertson (a UT graduate).

Films and Film-Clips include: *L'Inferno* (1911 silent film; Francesco Bertolini, Adolfo Padovan, Giuseppe de Liguoro); *Dante's Inferno* (1935; Harry Lachman); *Go Down, Death!* (1944; Spencer Williams); *A TV Dante* (1989; Peter Greenaway, Raúl Ruiz); *Deconstructing Harry* (1997; Woody Allen); *What Dreams May Come* (1998; Vincent Ward); *Hannibal* (2001; Ridley Scott); *Dante's Inferno* (2008; Sean Meredith, Sandow Birk, and Paul Zaloom); *Sex and the City* (2008; Michael Patrick King)

Books on Reserve (in PCL): *The Complete Danteworlds: A Reader's Guide to the "Divine Comedy"* (Raffa), *A Reading of Dante's "Inferno"* (Fowlie), *The Cambridge Companion to Dante* (Jacoff, ed.), *Dante: A Brief History* (Hawkins), *Dante, Cinema & Television* (Iannucci, ed.)

Dante Web Sites

Danteworlds (the course Web site): <http://danteworlds.laits.utexas.edu/>

Dante Today (Dante in contemporary culture): <http://learn.bowdoin.edu/italian/dante/>
Dartmouth Dante Project (commentaries on the *Divine Comedy*): <http://dante.dartmouth.edu/>
World of Dante: <http://www.worldofdante.org/>
Princeton Dante Project: <http://etcweb.princeton.edu/dante/index.html>
Digital Dante: <http://dante.ilt.columbia.edu/new/>

Assignments

10%: Responses to Study Questions from the Danteworlds Web site: a low-stakes writing assignment (full credit given for successful completion).

30%: Two In-Class Examinations (15% each) consisting of short-answer questions on Dante's *Inferno* and other assigned texts.

10%: Oral Presentation: a 5-7 minute presentation of research on a work (and / or its creator) inspired by or resonating with Dante's *Inferno*. You are not limited to course texts for this assignment, though you may choose to provide additional information on a work / creator discussed in class.

20%: Research Essay: a paper (750-1000 words) relating the *Inferno* to another literary, artistic, cinematic, or popular work. The paper will be revised based on feedback from a peer review.

5%: Peer Review: review of another student's draft (full credit given for successful completion).

25%: Class Work and Attendance: students are expected to read or view the assigned material before lectures and to participate—through attentive listening and informed contributions—in discussion sessions. Class work includes occasional quizzes (unannounced) and "thought pieces" (brief written responses to the reading). Regular attendance is required at lectures, discussion sessions, and other required meetings (e.g., Blanton Museum visit): more than 3 total absences will automatically lower your final grade by 1/3 (e.g., a B becomes a B-) for each absence after the third. You are expected to arrive on time to lectures and discussion meetings (including sessions held in the museum, the library, or elsewhere) and to stay for the entire lesson. Repeated late arrivals to—and early departures from—class will count as absences.

Late Work: There will be no make-up exams and late work will lose a full letter grade for each day it is late except in the case of documented emergencies (e.g., serious illness, death in the family), religious holidays (see university policy below), or university-sponsored events (with prior notification).

University Lecture Series: You will view one of the two University Lecture Series presentations from Fall 2010 on-line (<http://www.utexas.edu/ugs/uls>), and you will attend one of the approved events for Spring 2011 (<http://www.utexas.edu/ugs/uls/2011/spring>).

Grading and Plagiarism: Assignments and final grades will be converted to letter grades consistent with university policy:

Excellent range: A+ (98-100), A (94-97), A- (90-93)

Above average / good range: B+ (88-89), B (84-87), B- (80-83)

Average range: C+ (78-79), C (74-77), C- (70-73)

Passing: D+ (68-69), D (64-67), D- (60-63)

Failing: F (below 60)

Plagiarism, intentional or not, will result in an automatic F on the assignment as well as possible disciplinary action. For the definition of plagiarism and the University's policy on it, see http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/sjs/acadint_plagiarism.php. This University web page states the following:

"In simplest terms, [plagiarism] occurs if you represent *as your own work* any material that was obtained from another source, regardless how or where you acquired it."

"Using *verbatim* material (e.g., exact words) without proper attribution (or credit) constitutes the most blatant form of plagiarism. However, other types of material can be plagiarized as well, such as *ideas* drawn from an original source or even its *structure* (e.g., sentence construction or line of argument)."

"Plagiarism can be committed intentionally *or* unintentionally."

Cell phones must be turned off and put away during class, and **computers** may be used only for note-taking or for class activities. Students who use computers or other devices for other purposes will be marked absent.

University Notices and Policies

University of Texas Honor Code: The core values of The University of Texas at Austin are learning, discovery, freedom, leadership, individual opportunity, and responsibility. Each member of the university is expected to uphold these values through integrity, honesty, trust, fairness, and respect toward peers and community.

Documented Disability Statement: The University of Texas at Austin provides upon request appropriate academic accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. For more information, contact Services for Students with Disabilities at 471-6259 (voice) or 232-2937 (video phone) or <http://www.utexas.edu/diversity/ddce/ssd>

Use of E-Mail for Official Correspondence to Students: E-mail is recognized as an official mode of university correspondence; therefore, you are responsible for reading your e-mail for university and course-related information and announcements. You are responsible to keep the university informed about changes to your e-mail address. You should check your e-mail regularly and frequently—I recommend daily, but at minimum twice a week—to stay current with university-related communications, some of which may be time-critical. You can find UT

Austin's policies and instructions for updating your e-mail address at <http://www.utexas.edu/its/policies/emailnotify.php>

Religious Holy Days: By UT Austin policy, you must notify me of your pending absence at least fourteen days prior to the date of observance of a religious holy day. If you must miss a class, an examination, a work assignment, or a project in order to observe a religious holy day, I will give you an opportunity to complete the missed work within a reasonable time after the absence.

Behavior Concerns Advice Line (BCAL): If you are worried about someone who is acting differently, you may use the Behavior Concerns Advice Line to discuss by phone your concerns about another individual's behavior. This service is provided through a partnership among the Office of the Dean of Students, the Counseling and Mental Health Center (CMHC), the Employee Assistance Program (EAP), and The University of Texas Police Department (UTPD). Call 512-232-5050 or visit <http://www.utexas.edu/safety/bcal>

Dante's Hell and Its Afterlife

Jan. 18 "Welcome to Hell" (Rowan Atkinson). Introduction to Dante and the Afterlife

Jan. 20 Dante and his World (Mandelbaum, "Dante in His Age" (319-29); **Blackboard:** Giuseppe Mazzotta, "Life of Dante"; Guy Raffa, "Hell" [*Complete Danteworlds*])

[Jan. 21 Last day of the official add/drop period]

Jan. 25 *Inferno* 1-2 (cantos 1 and 2): Dark Wood (Three Beasts, Virgil, Beatrice). Peter Greenaway, *A TV Dante*, canto 1

Jan. 27 *Inferno* 3-4: Periphery of Hell (Charon), Limbo (**Blackboard:** Virgil, *Aeneid* 6)

Feb. 1 *Inferno* 5: Lust (Minos, Francesca and Paolo). Two models for Dante's cultural resonance: Peter Greenaway, *A TV Dante*, canto 5; Allman Brothers Band, "One Way Out" (**Blackboard:** "One Way Out" lyrics; Nancy Vickers, "Dante in the Video Decade")

[Twelfth class day; last day to drop a class for a possible refund.]

Feb 3 *Inferno* 6-7: Gluttony (Cerberus, Ciaccio), Avarice

[Feb 4 **Written responses to Danteworlds study questions for canto 5**]

Feb. 8 *Inferno* 8-10: Gate of Dis, Allegory, Heresy (Farinata, Cavalcante) (**Blackboard:** "Letter to Cangrande")

Feb. 10 *Inferno* 11-12: Organization of Hell, Murderers. Raúl Ruiz, *A TV Dante*, selections

Feb. 15 *Inferno* 13-14: Suicide (Pier della Vigna), Blasphemy (Capaneus). Scenes from Vincent Ward, *What Dreams May Come* (1998)

Feb. 17 *Inferno* 15-17: Sodomy (Brunetto Latini), Usury (Geryon)

[Feb. 18 Review for Exam]

Feb. 22 **Exam 1**

Feb. 24 *Inferno* 18-19: Pandering and Seducing, Flattery, Simony (Pope Nicholas III)

[Feb. 25: VISIT TO THE BLANTON MUSEUM OF ART (<http://blantonmuseum.org/>). **Please arrive at the museum at 9:55, 10:55, or 11:55, depending on your section.**]

Mar. 1 *Inferno* 20-21: Soothsaying (Manto), Civic Corruption. (**Blackboard:** Samuel Beckett, "Malacoda")

Mar. 3 *Inferno* 22-23: Civic Corruption, Hypocrisy (**Blackboard:** Guy Raffa, "A Beautiful Friendship: Dante and Virgil in the *Commedia*")

Mar. 8 *Inferno* 24-26: Thieves, Ulysses. **Written response (300-500 words) to "World Changers: The Great Debate"** (<http://www.utexas.edu/ugs/uls/2010/world-changers>)

Mar. 10 *Inferno* 26-27: Ulysses, Guido da Montefeltro. What is their sin?

SPRING BREAK

Mar. 22 Review *Inferno* 26-27 (**Blackboard**: Primo Levi, *Survival in Auschwitz* [selections], T. S. Eliot, "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock")

Mar. 24 *Inferno* 28-29: Sowers of Discord (Bertran de Born), Falsifiers

[Mar. 28: Last day an undergraduate student may, with the dean's approval, withdraw from the University or drop a class except for urgent and substantiated, nonacademic reasons.]

Mar. 29 *Inferno* 30-31: Falsifiers, Giants

Mar. 31 *Inferno* 32-33: Traitors (Ugolino and Ruggieri)

[Apr. 1 **Research topic due**: choose a modern work inspired by or resonating with the *Inferno*]

Apr. 5 *Inferno* 34: Traitors (Lucifer), Review for Exam. Michelangelo, *The Last Judgment*

Apr. 7 **Exam II**

[Apr. 8 LIBRARY INFORMATION SESSION IN PCL 1.339]

Apr. 12 Dante and Popular Culture: Monuments, Battleships, Stamps, and Video Games

Apr. 14 Dante at the Movies: Silent *Inferno* (1911; Bertolini, Padovan, and de Liguoro)

[Apr. 15 **Research bibliography and essay outline due**]

Apr. 19 Dante at the Movies: scenes from Lachman, *Inferno* (1935); Williams, *Go Down, Death!* (1944); Allen, *Deconstructing Harry* (1997); Scott, *Hannibal* (2001); King, *Sex and the City* (2008) (**Blackboard**: Dennis Looney, "Spencer Williams and Dante")

Apr. 21 Puppet Dante: *Dante's Inferno* (2008; Sean Meredith, Sandow Birk, and Paul Zaloom)

[Apr. 22 **Peer editing of essay drafts**]

Apr. 26 Hell on Earth: Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein*, introduction and volume 1 (pp. 5-90)

Apr. 28 *Frankenstein*, volume 2 (pp. 94-151)

[Apr. 29 **Oral Presentations**]

May 3 *Frankenstein*, volume 3 (pp. 155-225)

[May 4 **Oral Presentations**]

May 5 **Research Essay Due**; Exit Hell