ROIT 40116: Dante II

Spring, 2018 Christian Moevs Tu Th 11:00-12:15; DeBartolo 202

Description:

Dante's *Comedy* is one of the supreme masterpieces of Western literature. It is also a comprehensive synthesis of the Western cultural tradition up to its time (from antiquity to the late Middle Ages), a daring experiment in language, poetics and poetic technique, and a profound exploration of Christian spirituality.

Dante I and Dante II (ROIT 40115 and 40116) are a close, discussion-based study over two semesters of the entire *Comedy*, in its cultural (historical, literary, political, philosophical) context. Dante I explores the works that precede the *Comedy*, and the *Inferno*. Dante II focuses on the *Purgatorio* and *Paradiso*, along with the *Monarchia*. These are separate courses and can be taken individually, or in either order, although they do form an integrated sequence. (ROIT 40114, Dante's Divine Comedy, is a lecture-based introduction to the the entire poem emphasizing the *Inferno*, and can substitute for Dante I.)

Goals:

- 1) Learn to read a great text closely, interpret it deeply, and write incisively about it.
- 2) Read attentively, and think deeply about, the *Purgatorio* and *Paradiso*, the latter two-thirds of Dante's great *Comedy*.
- 3) Understand key elements of the Western cultural tradition the poem synthesizes, and of the vibrant historical-cultural-spiritual context that spawned the poem, and that it responds to.
- 4) Meditate on the spiritual, philosophical, moral, political, and existential issues raised by this most profound of literary texts, in relation to Catholic revelation, and to yourself.
- 5) Know yourself better: what, why, where, whence, you are. *Noverim me, noverim te* (Augustine): the only path toward knowing God (rather than knowing *about* God) is to know one's true self (not what we think we are). That is the path of the *Comedy*.

Catholicism And the Disciplines:

This course qualifies for the CAD Ways of Knowing designation. As Popes have repeatedly emphasized across the centuries, the *Comedy* is one of the most profound explorations of Christian (Catholic) spirituality/understanding in all of Western culture. My own background and research interests center on philosophy, theology, and spiritual life, and the relation between (Dante's) poetics and revelation. The *Comedy* moreover is saturated with Scripture, and is modeled on Scripture in how it signifies, how it can be revelatory, how it can effect change in the world. Thus we will necessarily be thinking a great deal about such issues, and you will address them in a paper, and perhaps also in your forum entries and final paper or exam. In particular, one cannot read Dante properly without reflecting deeply on the following questions, which are all probed

explicitly by the text, and will be discussed in our course: 1) the relation between faith and reason, and the extent to which the foundation of faith is not other than the foundation of reason; 2) how all morality (all sin and salvation) is grounded in how humans love: 3) how the ultimate ontological reality (the foundation or essence of everything that exists), can be understood as love; 4) the relation between finite individuality and God (understood as unlimited awareness, truth, being, bliss, love); 5) the concept of creation as the foundation of Christian understanding (i.e., the non-duality between the world and the ground of its being, so that if God were not, the world would disappear instantly); 6) the definition of justice, and its relation to the true nature of reality as grounded in unity; 7) the proper political order and its relation to revelation or divine justice (i.e., Dante's understanding of "empire"); 8) the relation between spiritual and political authority (in Dante's terms, between Pope and Emperor); 9) the sacraments, and how they reveal the world (and oneself) as intrinsically sacramental; 10) liturgy as ritual that conforms the individual to justice and truth (this is the foundation of the *Purgatorio*); 11) the relation between the human as created and redeemed, and Christ (i.e., Adam awakening to himself as sacrament, Eucharist, Christ): 12) original sin (pride) as a transgression of one's own true nature, a misreading of oneself; 13) how art or poetry can be revelatory; 14) renunciation (self-sacrifice, detachment) as the foundation of intellectual understanding: 15) the universality of Christian revelation (i.e., the salvation of non-Christians, or, what does it mean to "know Christ"?); 16) the relation between contemplation and action in a well-ordered life, oriented toward salvation; 17) why the theological virtues (faith, hope, and love) are the ground of salvation (the fruition of baptism); 18) the relation between the corruption of the Church (emblematically Pope Boniface VIII) and the Church's sacramental mission; 19) the nature of the beatific vision, and the possibility of union with God in this lifetime; 20) the relation between repentance and salvation (why "one little tear" can redeem a lifetime of sin).

Students often find they are wrestling with these questions, and with how radical the Catholic understanding really is, for the first time when they read Dante. Dante makes these questions come alive, reveals their urgency, what they really entail, and forces you to grapple with them. As a famous dantist (who is also a theologian) has observed, "Readers have nothing to lose in coming to the *Commedia* -- except, perhaps, life as they've known it thus far."

Texts:

Required:

- 1) Dante Alighieri. *Purgatorio*. Translated Robert and Jean Hollander. Doubleday, 2003. (In Hammes)
- 2) Dante Alighieri. *Paradiso*. Translated by Stanley Lombardo, commentary by Alison Cornish. Hackett, March 2017. (In Hammes)

Recommended / Supplementary:

1) If you haven't read the *Inferno* recently, read it through in the first week of class. Some good translations: 1) Pinsky (beautiful), 2) Musa (very clear), 3) Hollander (ditto; in Hammes), 4) Mandelbaum (blank verse), 5) Durling (intriguing notes, excellent interpretative essays), 6) Palma (terza rima), 7) Kirkpatrick (freer but brilliant), 8) Lombardo (excellent). All are available in

bookstores, through Amazon, or in the library. *Purgatorio* and *Paradiso* expect you to be familiar with the *Inferno*.

- 2) If you haven't read Dante's *Vita Nuova*, read it through (it's short) before we get to *Purgatorio* 28. Musa's translation is good (helpful intro too), and in Hammes. Dante expects the reader of the *Comedy* to know the *Vita Nuova*.
- 3) If you are of a theological bent, you might be intrigued by the introductory essays to each canto in Robin Kirkpatrick's edition of the *Purgatorio* and *Paradiso* (Penguin, 2008).
- 4) The excerpts we'll read from Dante's *Monarchia* are on ereserve.
- 5) Most important commentaries (about 70 of them) can be consulted (for individual verses or tercets) online at the Princeton Dante Project.
- 6) If you are fluent in Italian, the best Italian commentaries are Nicola Fosca, Chiavacci Leonardi, and Bosco-Reggio (any of those can replace Hollander and Lombardo).
- 7) The most important Dante websites are a) *Dante Online* (website of Società Dantesca Italiana: all the works, best bibliography, links, mansucript images) and b) the *Princeton Dante Project* (70 commentaries (searchable), all the works in Italian and English, (searchable), Hollander translation and commentary, images, reference, maps, links, audio of the Italian). Other useful sites: c) *Digital Dante* (all the works, images, maps, links, resources), d) the *World of Dante* (text, images, maps, links); e) *Danteworlds* (images, audio, commentary, guides); f) *Dante Today* (gathers "Citings and Sightings" and bibliography of Dante in the arts and contemporary culture); g) the *Dante Society of America* website (information on student essay prizes, publications, events, and the American Dante Bibliography, downloadable).

Other things out there, if you want to explore:

- 1) An excellent book on all facets of Dante and his works is John Scott's *Understanding Dante* (Notre Dame UP, 2004; in Hammes). Other, briefer, highly readable introductions are Hollander's *Dante: A Life in Works*, and Hawkins' *Dante: A Brief History*.
- 2) An excellent collection of essays on Dante is Rachel Jacoff's *Cambridge Companion to Dante* (in Hammes; some essays on electronic reserve).
- 3) The most lucid, fun introduction to Dante's world is C.S. Lewis's *The Discarded Image: An Introduction to Medieval and Renaissance Literature* (Cambridge, 1994). It's a classic, you can read it in an afternoon, and it will give you the whole basic picture of how people in Dante's time saw things, like stars and plants and people and beasts. (In Hammes).
- 4) You can find an article on each canto of the *Purgatorio* and *Paradiso* in the following volumes:
 - Lectura Dantis: Purgatorio. Edited by Allen Mandelbaum, Anthony Oldcorn, and Charles Ross. University of California Press, 2008.
 - Dante's Divine Comedy Introductory Readings II: Purgatorio. [Lectura Dantis Virginiana, II; Dante's Purgatorio: Introductory Readings]. Special Issue of Lectura Dantis (Number 12: Supplement; Spring 1993)

Dante's Divine Comedy Introductory Readings III: Paradiso. [Lectura Dantis Virginiana, III; Dante's Paradiso: Introductory Readings]. Special Issue of Lectura Dantis (Numbers 16-17, Spring-Fall 1995).

5) Some other collections of articles on Dante:

Richard Lansing, *Dante: The Critical Complex* (in 8 volumes, divided by subject)

Amilcare Iannucci, Dante: Contemporary Perspectives

Teodolinda Barolini and Wayne Storey, Dante for the New Millennium

Harold Bloom, Dante's Divine Comedy: Modern Critical Interpretations

Harold Bloom, Dante: Modern Critical Views

John Freccero, Dante: A Collection of Critical Essays

Giuseppe Mazzotta, Critical Essays on Dante

Theodore Cachey, Dante Now: Current Trends in Dante Studies

Amilcare Iannucci, Dante Today

Dino Cervigni, Dante and Modern American Criticism

Michael Caesar, Dante: The Critical Heritage. (history of reception; from 1314-1870.)

Jeremy Tambling, *Dante*. (Excellent set of essays.)

- 6) A good one-volume encyclopedia in English is *The Dante Encyclopedia*, edited by Richard Lansing (Garland, 2000). Most entries also have brief bibliographies (English-language focus).
- 7) The great reference work on Dante is the *Enciclopedia Dantesca*, in 6 volumes (1970-76). It covers everything, in depth, with bibliographies.
- 8) The main journals on Dante are *Dante Studies* (available also online through the library), *Studi Danteschi*, and *L'Alighieri*. *Dante Notes* (formerly *EBDSA*, Electronic Bulletin of the Dante Society of America) publishes up-to-date short contributions (max 1500 words) online, available on the Dante Society of America website. There are of course many other journals that publish on Dante, and a number dedicated only to Dante (*Tre Corone, Rivista di studi danteschi, Dante: Rivista internazionale, Letture Classensi, Deutsches Dante Jahrbuch, Tenzone*, etc...)

Devers Dante Corner: in corner of Special Collections reading room, gathers all basic editions, commentaries, concordances, reference works, and classical texts for reading Dante.

Zahm Dante Collection: ND has one of the greatest Dante library collections in the world, all early and recent editions, manuscript facsimiles, illustrations, scholarly works. You can explore the Renaissance editions online at *Renaissance Dante in Print*.

Electronic reserve: All the articles and readings listed on the syllabus, and others besides, are on electronic reserve for this course.

Requirements and Grading:

1) **Attendance, punctuality**. I'm strict about these: we owe it to Dante, and to each other. Every absence counts; three count a letter grade; six constitute failure.

- 2) **Preparation and participation**. Study the text closely, with the commentary. I'll constantly be asking you: "What should we notice in these lines? Why does Dante do that?" While not required, browsing in the critical articles listed for each class can be stimulating. Always prepared and active = A; almost always prepared and active = B; often passive and not prepared = C; rarely active or prepared = D. 15%
- 3) **Forum entries.** For one class each week, <u>write a paragraph</u> on our Sakai site (under "Forum"), due by class time. Ask a perceptive / intriguing question about the reading, <u>linked to a precise passage or detail in the text</u> (and/or commentary/articles), and then give your thoughts on it, try to answer it. Your question and answer can be specific (on the implications of a word, rhyme, tercet, reference, image, inter- or intra-textual echo, etc. . .) or more general (on a theme, concept, structure, feature of otherworld topography, etc. . .), but it must be grounded in details of the text. I will send a list of some possible questions for each class. You of course can read (and respond to) other entries as well. I will read all entries, and evaluate them globally at mid and end semester. 20%
- 4) **Article presentation.** For each class, one student will <u>read one of the essays</u> listed for that class, and <u>present its main ideas</u> to the class in a logical, succinct way (maximum 5 minutes), along with a <u>one-page handout</u> for the class with a clear outline or listing of the main points. Replaces that student's forum entry for that class. 5%
- 5) CAD essay. A 1000-1250 word (4-5 page) paper addressing one of the following questions:
- a) How has reading Dante's *Comedy* challenged or changed your own understanding of, or relation to, some key dimension or tenet of the Catholic faith? Or how has it challenged or changed your understanding of the ultimate nature of reality, or of what a human being is, or of what God is, or of the relation between the human being and God, or between the political order and divine justice, etc...? (Consult the CAD statement at the beginning of the syllabus for some possible questions.) How would you articulate and explain or account for that challenge or change to someone else?
- b) What is it about philosophical or theological truth, that is, about the ideal world order or the practice and object of the Catholic faith, that led Dante to believe such truth could only be fully explored or expressed or attained through literary means, through writing (and reading) a poem? From your experience, can the *Comedy* convey a dimension of philosophical or theological understanding beyond the discourse of a treatise or article or dialogue? If so, why, how exactly? Does all great literature intrinsically have philosophical or theological implications? Does all great philosophical or theological discourse necessarily have literary attributes? What, if anything, makes the *Comedy* different or special? Defend your position with both literary interpretations and conceptual arguments.
- 6) **Paper or Exam.** A 2000-2500 word (8-10 page) final paper, containing at least eight references to valid secondary sources. I will distribute a sheet on Basic Dante Research. (You'll need to find printed things in the library.) Good papers can be submitted for the Undergraduate Essay Prize of the Dante Society of America. It can be helpful to meet with me, hand me a thesis statement, outline, and bibliography by mid-March; I can also help with drafts. Submit the paper to me by email (cmoevs@nd.edu), preferably in Word, in a consistent academic style.

OR: You have the option of <u>substituting a final exam</u> for the final paper. The final exam consists of a set (8) passages to identify from the *Purgatorio* and *Paradiso*; you then choose a set (4) of them to comment on in detail and in relation to larger themes of the poem. 40%

Graduate students should read all the critical articles and write a graduate paper for the course: 4500-6000 words in a consistent academic style (such as MLA or Chicago); bibliography of at least 15 sources. For them the Forum entries are optional (they can be an excellent exercise, that can also lead to a paper topic).

Office hours:

Tuesday 3:30-5 pm, 346 Decio. If you need another time, just let me know. Office: 346 Decio Telephone: 631-6781 E-mail: cmoevs@nd.edu

Language:

The course and discussion will be in English. We'll read the *Comedy* in facing-page translation, and we will often refer to the Italian. Acquaintance with Latin or a Romance language is therefore helpful, but not necessary.

Italian Discussion Section:

If you know some Italian, you can sign up for an additional informal single credit discussion section, as part of the Languages across the Curriculum (LxC) initiative in the College of Arts and Letters. We'll meet once a week for an hour to read a passage or two of the text in Italian, and discuss it in as much Italian as we each can manage. No pressure, no requirements except faithful attendance. We'll do a sign up sheet, and find a time, in the first week of class.

Honor Code:

The Notre Dame Academic Code of Honor Pledge is observed in this course. "As a member of the Notre Dame community, I will not participate in or tolerate academic dishonesty." See the Honor Code website: http://honorcode.nd.edu/.

Special lectures and events:

Notre Dame has the leading Dante program in the world, and every semester there are lectures by eminent visiting Dantists, as well as other special events.

Syllabus:

Note:

1) As preparation for each class, read the cantos indicated for that class (Pg = Purgatorio; Pd = Paradiso) carefully, along with the commentary, and be ready to talk about details of the text. (Reading one or more of the critical articles listed can be stimulating, but is not required; some articles will refer to the cantos for the day; some may be more general.) All articles are on electronic reserve (under "Library reserves" on the ND library page, or from Sakai). They are alphabetized under title (not author), but you can search by author or title at the top of the page. (Title words tend to work best.)

- 2) The pace is basically five cantos per week. I have scheduled reading three cantos over the weekend, two during the week.
- 3) If you have not read the *Inferno*, read it during the first (introductory) week, using a readable translation (like Pinsky or Hollander or Musa or Durling or Mandelbaum or Palma).
- 4) If you have not read the *Vita Nuova*, read it by the time we reach *Pg* 28. (It's short.)
- 5) Everyone should read the first two articles, for Class 2.
- 6) Forum entries start with Class 2, on the Life and Context readings.

We will keep close to the following schedule:

1.	Tu Jan 16	Introduction. Syllabus, Handouts, [Inferno in first week].
2.	Th Jan 18	Life and context. Everyone read: Syllabus, Handouts (all read) Mazzotta "Life of Dante" (all read; under "Life") Najemy "Dante and Florence" (all read) Optional readings: Kirkpatrick "Introduction to DC: Inferno" Scott "Dante and his Contemporary World"
3.	Tu Jan 23	Introduction to Purgatorio (Hollander pp. xxiii-xxxi); Pg 1. Baranski "Experimentation and (Self-) Exegesis" Raimondi "Canto I: Ritual and Story" Hawkins "Dante's Religion" Mazzotta "Opus Restaurationis"
4.	Th Jan 25	Pg 2, 3. Armour "The Theme of Exodus in the First Two Cantos" Singleton "In exitu Israel de Aegypto" Freccero "Casella's Song" Balfour "Orribil Manfred's Wounds in Purgatorio III" Freccero "Manfred's Wounds"
5.	Tu Jan 30	Pg 4, 5. Kirkpatrick "Introduction to DC: Purgatorio" Baranski "Significar per verba" Hollander "Dante and his Commentators"
6.	Th Feb 1	Pg 6, 7. Parker "Interpreting the Commentary Tradition" Barolini "Bertran de Born and Sordello" Hawkins "Dante and the Bible"

		G .
7.	Tu Feb 6	Pg 8, 9, 10. Barkan "Divining Dream" Treherne "Ekphrasis and Eucharist: God's Art" Vickers "Seeing is Believing: Gregory, Trajan, D's Art"
8.	Th Feb 8	Pg 11, 12. Barolini "Re-presenting what God Presented" Oldcorn "Canto XI: Gone with the Wind" Marks "Hollowed Words: Vox and Vanitas in the Purg." Berk "Some Sybilline Verses in Pg X and XII
9.	Tu Feb 13	Pg 13, 14, 15. Cogan "The Shared Structure of Inf. and Purgatorio" Cachey "Purgatorio XV" McInerny "Philosophical Preface to the Purgatorio"
10.	Th Feb 15	Pg 16, 17. Monarchia excerpts (all read; under "Monarchy") Singleton "The Poet's Number at the Center" Boitani "From Darkness to Light: Government in Pg 16" Scott "Canto XVI: A World of Darkness and Disorder"
11.	Tu Feb 20	Pg 18, 19, 20. Cervigni "Nel mezzo del cammin second dream" Moore "Unity and Symmetry of Design in Dante's Pg"
12.	Th Feb 22	Pg 21, 22. Barolini "Statius: Per te poeta fui" Picone "Dante and the Classics" Martinez "Dante and the Two Canons Statius"
13.	Tu Feb 27	Pg 23, 24, 25. Barolini "Autocitation and Autobiography" Martinez "The Pilgrim's Answer to Bonagiunta" Webb "Dante's Definition of Life" Martinez "Canto 25: Statius's Marvelous Connection"
14.	Th March 1	Pg 26, 27. Abrams "Illicit Pleasures: Purgatorio XXVI" Yowell "Trop Amar Redemptive Love in Arnault" Pequigney "Sodomy in D.'s Inferno & Purgatorio" Moevs "Pyramus at the Mulberry Tree" Chiamenti "Dante Sodomita?"
15.	Tu March 6	Pg 28, 29, 30. Vita Nuova Hawkins "Watching Matelda" Dronke "Purgatorio XXIX" Norton "Retrospection in the Dreams of Purgatorio" Brownlee "Dante and Narcissus (Pg 30.76-99) Levenstein "The Pilgrim, the Poet, and the Cowgirl"
16.	Th March 8	Pg 31, 32, 33. Kaske "Dante's Purgatorio XXXII and XXXIII" Lansing "Narrative Design in Dante's Earthly Paradise" Pertile "Dante's Comedy beyond the Stilnovo" Hawkins "Dido, Beatrice, and the Signs of Ancient Love" Scott "Beatrice's Reproaches in Eden"

		SPRING BREAK
17.	Tu March 20	Introduction to Paradiso (Lombardo pp. vii-xxviii); Pd 1, 2, 3. Brownlee "Dante and the Classical Poets" Brownlee "Pauline Vision and Ovidian Speech in Pd 1" Limentani "Paradiso I" Moevs "Canto II: Gateway to Paradise" Lansing "Piccarda and the Poetics of Paradise"
18.	Th March 22	Pd 4, 5. Jacoff "Shadowy Pefaces: An Introduction to Paradiso" Williams "The Theology of the Comedy" Foster "The Mind in Love: Dante's Philosophy"
19.	Tu March 27	Pd 6, 7, 8. Davis "Dante and the Empire" under Jacoff (all read) Reeves "Dante and the Prophetic View of History" Ferrante "Dante and Politics" Moevs "Body and Soul"
20.	Th March 29	Pd 9, 10. Freccero "Paradiso X: The Dance of the Stars" Ordiway "In the Earth's Shadow" Dronke "The First Circle in the Solar Heaven"
21.	Tu April 3	Pd 11, 12, 13. Auerbach "St. Francis of Assisi in D's Commedia" Herzman "Dante and St. Francis"
22.	Th April 5	Pd 14, 15. Schnapp "'Sì pia l'ombra d'Anchise…': Pd 15.25" Turner "Sin as Misperception / Dante and Narrative" Martinez "Ovid's Crown of Stars"
23.	Tu April 10	Pd 16, 17, 18. Schnapp " Marte The Dilemma of Florentine History" Honess "Feminine Virtues and Florentine Vices" Ferrante "Dante's Beatrice: of an Androgynous God" Pertile "Paradiso XVIII tra autobiografia e scrittura"
24.	Th April 12	Pd 19, 20. Lund-Mead "Dante and Androgyny" Kirkham "A Canon of Women in Dante's Commedia" Picone "La viva speranza di Dante e il problema" Montemaggi "Question of Salvation" and "Dante's Love for Virgil" (pp. 202-15)
		EASTER
25.	Tu April 17	Pd 21, 22, 23. Newman "St. Augustine's Three Visions and" Hawkins "Augustine the Dialectic of Ineffability" Moevs "Review of Franke's Dante Transgression"
26.	Th April 19	Pd 24, 25. Treherne "Reading Dante's Heaven of Fixed Stars"

		10
27.	Tu April 24	Sarolli "Dante's Katabasis and Mission" Simonelli "L'inquisizione e Dante" Starn "Contrary Commonwealth: Rules of Exclusion" Pd 26, 27, 28. Montemaggi "The Theo. of D's Comm Fixed Stars" Davis "Poverty and Eschatology in the Commedia" Brownlee "Language and Desire in Pd 26" Peterson "Dante's Physics" Luzzi "'As a Leaf': Dante's Neologisms"
28.	Th April 26	Pd 29, 30, 31. Cornish "Planets and Angels in Paradiso XXIX" Moevs "Latona's Children" Dronke "Symbolism and Structure in Pd 30" Peters "The Failure of Church and Empire: Pd 30" Bemrose "Dante Expresses the Inexpressible"
29.	Tu May 1	Pd 32, 33. Chiarenza "The Imageless Vision and Dante's Paradiso" Poulet "The Metamorphoses of the Circle" Boitani "The Sybil's Leaves" Dronke "The Conclusion of Dante's Commedia" Botterill "Dante, Bernard, and the Virgin Mary" Kirkpatrick Commentary to Pd 33
	May 3-6	Reading days
	Wed May 9	Paper due. By email to cmoevs@nd.edu, preferably in Word.
	(Wed May 9)	(Final exam: 10:30-12:30.)