



FLOR LITR 3315

Florence and The Florentine in the Divine Comedy and Decameron

CAPA Florence Program

Course Description

The course will introduce students to the history of Italian Literature, focusing on great masterpieces (in English translation) from the 14th century. A multidisciplinary approach, dealing with social, political, historical and philosophical implications will provide further understanding by placing literary works in a comprehensive cultural context. Special emphasis will be placed on the impact of Italian literature in European culture in pre-modern age, stressing the broad influence of Dante's *Comedy* and Boccaccio's *Decameron*.

Students will be provided with the basic operational tools to help them recognize different literary genres and understand why certain forms of artistic expression are peculiar to certain ages, at times to the exclusion of others. Literary issues such as the great divide between high and low literature, the question of language, the relation between classical, Christian and chivalric epics, the concept of originality in the Middle Ages, the circulation of books and the development of a reading public will be thoroughly investigated. Students will be able to follow the formation and the evolution of the mainstream literary tradition, and appreciate the innovative charge, both in form and content, of the works selected. They will also learn to practice a close reading of the texts, and will be encouraged to form their own critical opinion on the writings analyzed for their oral presentations and video project.

The first lessons will be devoted to a general overview of the 13th and the 14th centuries both from a historical and a more specifically literary perspective. Then the focus will shift onto the role of Dante in shaping the vernacular literature as a means to bridge the gap between academic and popular culture, to Boccaccio's ground-breaking work in restyling storytelling into an art of conversation and therefore a joint effort. Each lecture introducing a new author will be preceded by a brief outline of his life and literary output, and will then proceed with the description and analysis of his major work.

Course Aims/Objectives

The course aims at providing students with the elementary background knowledge needed to appreciate the relevance of few, selected authors, and it means to provide an adequate knowledge of their works in terms of form, structure, style, imagery and themes. Students will also learn to distinguish among different poetic and prose kinds and to discuss the implications of major infractions of the law of genre.

Requirements and Prerequisites

There are no prerequisites for this course, although a basic knowledge of Italian language and literary history is recommended. Students are asked to take careful notes during lectures as the issues addressed in class are to be considered a fundamental didactic base for the whole course. Individual study of notes, readings, handouts etc. is required on a weekly basis. NOTE: it is the students' responsibility to check whether they have all the materials handed out in class.

Learning outcomes

At the end of the course students should be able to:

1. recognize, describe, and interpret the impact of the Middle Ages and Renaissance historical periods in the urban environment from their examination of relevant literary texts and through their exploration and analysis of the urban environment of their host city
2. reflect on the 'personification' of Florence in Medieval and Renaissance works and on the relationship between citizen/author and the urban space he lives in
3. understand diverse philosophies and literary concepts that shaped Medieval and Renaissance culture
4. develop a greater appreciation of Medieval and Renaissance Italian authors through critical readings and on-site activities

Class methodology

A lecture and discussion course with a seminar format. Students will be encouraged to take part to each class and to work together. They will be assigned weekly homework to reinforce their new acquisitions to prepare for both the mid-term and final

exam. Moreover they will work on specific and original on-site projects individually or in group and will be given the chance to report on them publicly.

Field Component(s): CAPA provides the unique opportunity to learn about the city through direct, guided experience. Participation in the field activity(s) for this course is required. You will actively explore the Global City you are currently living in. Furthermore, you will have the chance to collect useful information that will be an invaluable resource for the essays/papers/projects assigned in this course.

The assigned field component(s) are:

- WEEK 3 - Dante in Florence_Dante Today (ppt presentation)
- WEEK 4 - Medieval symbolism: Florence Through Dante's Eyes#1/2 (fieldtrip)
- WEEK 6 - Dante's Plaques in Florence (fieldtrip)
- WEEK 9 - My Plaque Video Project

- Students are strongly encouraged to participate in co-curricular program activities.

Mid-Term & Final Exams

The mid-term exam consists of:

- A. Short questions with open answers on topics covered until that point in class (2 hours)

The final exam consists of two parts:

- A. SLO questionnaire (1 hour)
- B. One short essay writing on the thematic clusters (2 hours)

Assessment/Grading Policy

DESCRIPTOR	ALPHA	NUMERIC	GPA	REQUIREMENT/EXPECTATION
Outstanding (High Distinction)	A	93+	4.0	Maximum grade: In addition to description for grade "A-", the student shows detailed understanding of materials about which he or she can show independent analytical ability. This means the ability to question an issue from different perspectives and evaluate responses in an objective manner.
Excellent (Distinction)	A-	90 - 92	3.7	Student shows understanding of literature beyond the textbook/class hand-outs/class notes, and the work shows a high level of independent thought, presents informed and insightful discussion and demonstrates a well-developed capacity for evaluation.
Very good (High Credit)	B+	87 - 89	3.3	Shows evidence of a capacity to generalise from the taught content, or the material in literature, or from class lectures in an informed manner. Also, the work demonstrates a capacity to integrate personal reflection into the discussion and an appreciation of a range of different perspectives.
Good (Credit)	B	83 - 86	3.0	The work is well organised and contains coherent or logical argumentation and presentation.
Good (Credit)	B-	80 - 82	2.7	Student shows understanding of literature beyond the textbook and/or notes, and, there is evidence of additional reading.
Average (Good Pass)	C+	77-79	2.3	The work demonstrates a capacity to integrate research into the discussion and a critical appreciation of a range of theoretical perspectives. Also, the work demonstrates a clear understanding of the question and its theoretical implications and demonstrates evidence of additional reading.
Adequate (Pass)	C	73 - 76	2.0	Shows clear understanding and some insight into the material in the textbook and notes, but not beyond. A deficiency in understanding the material may be compensated by evidence of independent thought and effort related to the subject matter.
Below Average (Borderline Pass)	C-	70-72	1.7	Shows some understanding of the material in the textbook and notes. A deficiency in any of the above may be compensated by evidence of independent thought related to the subject matter.
Inadequate (Borderline Fail)	D+	67 - 69	1.3	Fails to show a clear understanding or much insight into the material in the textbook and notes
Poor (Fail)	D	60 - 66	0.7 - 1.0	Besides the above for D+, student has not shown interest or engagement in the class work or study.

Poor (Fail)	F	<60	0	Shows little or no understanding of any of the material
Incomplete	I			Please see CAPA policy in the Faculty Handbook.

Final Grade Breakdown

Learning Outcomes	Assessment task	Grade %	Due Date
Urban Environments 1-4	In-Class presentations and on-site activities	20%	WEEK 1-2-3-4-5-8-9-10-11-12-13
3-4	Mid-Term Exam	30%	WEEK 6
1-2-3-4	My Plaque Video Project_Research Paper	20%	WEEK 9
Urban Environments 1-3-4	Final Exam: Slo questionnaire Essay	10% 20%	WEEK 13

Students will be able to explore and analyze the spaces they inhabit and reflect on differences and similarities between their home and host environments. As a **key** section of the Final Exam in Week 14 students will be asked to fill a short open answers questionnaire.

Course Materials

Alighieri, Dante: The Vita Nuova (<http://www.danteonline.it/italiano/opere.asp?idope=5&idlang=OR>)
 Alighieri, Dante: The Divine Comedy (<http://www.danteonline.it/italiano/opere.asp?idope=1&idlang=OR>)
 Boccaccio, Giovanni: The Decameron (http://www.brown.edu/Depents/Italian_Studies/artmdweb/http://www.gutenberg.org/files/23700/23700-h/23700-h.htm)

Boccaccio, Giovanni :*The Life of Dante*, Hesperus Press, London (Canvas - File)

Niccolai, Foresto (1999): *Dante's Plaques in Florence* (Canvas - File)

Dante in Translation With Mazzotta: <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLD1450DFDA859F694>

Weekly Schedule

WEEK 1	
Date	
Meet	
Venue	
In-class activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Course presentation – http://www.worldofdante.org/index.html http://www.brown.edu/Depents/Italian_Studies/artmdweb/http://www.danteonline.it/italiano/home_ita.asp - The Middle Ages http://www.slideshare.net/PaoloOrteza/the-middle-ages-10771965 - The Middle Ages – 3 minutes video https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6EAMqKUimr8 - The Middle Ages http://www.slideshare.net/Halligan/the-middle-ages-introduction-and-overview <p><i>Essay: A short critical analysis of the Medieval World</i></p>
Assignments and Readings	<p>Dante's Life http://www.danteonline.it/italiano/vita_indice.htm Boccaccio's Life of Dante – study questions (Due WEEK 2)</p>

WEEK 2	
Date	
Meet	
Venue	
In-class activity	<p>- Boccaccio's Life of Dante study questions DUE/ correction in class</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - "Chronological Table of Important Dates" group activity - Dante in Florence/in Ravenna Dante Today Project https://research.bowdoin.edu/dante-today/map/ - Dante's Plaques in Florence_My Plaque Video Project (video project) (WEEK 9) Museo Casa di Dante
Assignments	<p>Dante in Florence_Dante Today Project (presentation in class DUE WEEK 3) Read Alighieri, Dante: The Vita Nuova (http://www.danteonline.it/italiano/opere.asp?idope=5&idlang=OR)</p>

WEEK 3	
Date	
Meet	
Venue	
In-class activity	<p>Dante in Florence_Dante Today Project (presentation by students)</p> <p>Frankie Goes To Hollywood: The Power of Love https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NyoTvgPnOrU</p> <p>Early Italian Lyric Schools_What is Love?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -The VITA NUOVA: structure and numerology. -Beatrice
Assignments/Readings	<p>Draw a chart of Beatrice's Palinode and insert a quote from The vita Nuova for each stage. (Due WEEK 4)</p> <p>Alighieri, Dante: The Divine Comedy (INFERNO Cantos I, II, III, IV, V, VI, X, XV, XX, XXI, XXIV) (http://www.danteonline.it/italiano/opere.asp?idope=1&idlang=OR)</p>

WEEK 4	
Date	
Meet	
Venue	
In-class activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Beatrice's Palinode Chart DUE/correction <p>Introduction to the Divine Comedy Video Gnosis Dante's Maps https://research.bowdoin.edu/dante-today/map/</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Dante the Author/Pilgrim/Commentator - Dante the Author's goal vs Dante the Pilgrim's role in the Comedy
Assignments/Readings	<p>Alighieri, Dante: The Divine Comedy (INFERNO Cantos IV, XX, XXI) (http://www.danteonline.it/italiano/opere.asp?idope=1&idlang=OR)</p>
Out-class activity	<p>MEDIEVAL SYMBOLISM IN Florence Through Dante's Eyes#1 Review List for Mid-Term Exam</p>

WEEK 5	
Date	

Meet	
Venue	
In-class activity	Lecture: Dantean Aspects in Fincher's Seven SEVEN (Film)
Assignments and Readings	Dante in SEVEN (a critical analysis of the opening credits) http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SEZK7mJoPLY

WEEK 6	
Date	
Meet	
Venue	
In-class activity	Office Hours (1 hr) Dante in SEVEN (a critical analysis of the opening credits)/correction MID-TERM EXAM (2 HOURS)

WEEK 7	
	MID TERM BREAK

WEEK 8	
Date	
Meet	
Venue	
In-class activity	- <i>Exile (INFERNO Cantos X, XV, XXIV)</i> - <i>Gonfalonni and Quartieri</i>
Out-of-class activity	MEDIEVAL SYMBOLISM IN Florence Through Dante's Eyes#2

WEEK 9	
Date	
Meet	
Venue	
In-class activity	- Dante Video Project _My Plaque Video Project (written and presentation)
Assignments	Dante vs Boccaccio: what's Medieval? What's Renaissance? (class discussion)

WEEK 10	
Date	
Meet	
Venue	
In-class activity	- <i>Introduction to Boccaccio and The Decameron (class discussion)</i>
Out-of-class activity	Fieldtrip to Palazzo Davanzati
Assignments/Readings	Boccaccio, Giovanni: The Decameron (http://www.gutenberg.org/files/23700/23700-h/23700-h.htm) DAY IV 1 story and 9 story and Y I 1-4 story and DAY II 2-7-9 story Stories of Love and Adventures_presentation

WEEK 11	
Date	
Meet	
Venue	

In-class activity	1348: <i>The plague in Florence</i> - Santa Maria Novella http://www.brown.edu/Departments/Italian_Studies/dweb/themes_motifs/plague/
Out-of-class activity	Fieldtrip to Santa Maria Novella

WEEK 12/13	
Date	
Meet	
Venue	
In-class activity	Stories of Love and Adventures_presentation/correction
Out-of-class activity	<i>Fieldtrip to Certaldo (to be confirmed on week 2)</i>

WEEK 14	
Date	
Meet	
Venue	
In-class activity	Office Hours (1 hr) Final Exam (2 hrs)

Attendance, Participation & Student Responsibilities

Refer to the *Academic Handbook* for a complete outline of all academic policies. This page contains a summary only.

Attendance

CAPA has a mandatory attendance policy. Students are also expected to participate actively and critically in class discussions, and the participation portion of the class will be graded accordingly. Students must read assignments BEFORE the class, and come in on time. Attendance is mandatory and is taken at the beginning of every class. Unauthorized absence from class will result in a reduction of the final grade and ultimately in a F for the course.

Unexcused absences

The instructor for the course may lower the student's participation grade based on the number of absences. For custom programs, some will follow our absence policy (like when CAPA sponsors visa) and some will not; see academic director for details.

Excused absences

Any student seeking to be excused from class on the ground of a verifiable illness (i.e. doctor's note) or a family emergency, must email the DAA (greverdito@capa.org) in advance of their class. The CAPA staff will then email the relevant Faculty member. Note that calling the CAPA Center (055-2466439) is acceptable only if you do not temporarily have access to the internet. An e-mail is still required as quickly as you can get access to the internet again. If a doctor's note is written to excuse a student from class, the student cannot use that time for personal travel. Please note: excused absences will NOT be granted to accommodate visiting friends or family. Students absent due to extenuating circumstances that have been approved by the Director of Academic Affairs in advance of the missed class, including family emergency or verifiable health-related incapacity, remain responsible for meeting all class requirements. Faculty shall offer such students reasonable assistance in making up missed work (e.g. share handouts).

Class Participation

Participation is a vital part of your grade: students are expected to participate orally in seminars and in online forums and discussions in a critical and evaluative manner; to interact with the faculty and fellow students with respect and tolerance; and to actively engage in discussion. Derogatory or inflammatory comments about the cultures, perspectives or attitudes of others in the class will not be tolerated.

Academic Integrity

The faculty expects from you, the student, a high level of responsibility and academic honesty. Because the value of an academic course depends upon the absolute integrity of the work done by the student, it is imperative that a student demonstrates a high standard of individual honor in his or her scholastic work and class behavior. Plagiarism and cheating

will result in dismissal from the program. See the Handbook of CAPA Academic Policies for more information and resources on plagiarism.

Use of electronic equipment in class

All devices such as laptops, I-pods, I-pads, netbooks, notebooks and tablets, smartphones, cell phones, etc. are **NOT** allowed unless you have express permission from the faculty or you have been instructed to do so. If you require an accommodation to use any type of electronic equipment, inform the Director of Academic Affairs or the Resident Director at the beginning of Term.

Late Submission

Late submission of papers due, projects, journal entries, pieces of homework and portfolios is only permitted with prior approval. A request must be made to the relevant Faculty member no later than two days prior to the due date. Late submission without prior approval will result in a full alpha grade penalty. In either case, work cannot be submitted after feedback has been provided to the rest of the class on the relevant assessment or one week after the due date whichever comes first, after which point a grade of F will be given for the assessment.

Behavior during Examinations

During examinations, you must do your own work. Unless specifically instructed by the lecturer or instructor, talking during an exam is not permitted, nor may you compare papers, copy from others, or collaborate in any way. Any failure to abide by examination rules will result in failure of the exam, and may lead to failure of the course and disciplinary action