

SYLLABUS

Dante's *Inferno*

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Mondays Sept 9 - Oct 21 1:00-2:30

UMA Brunswick Center, Room 101

READING SCHEDULE

NO CLASS OCT. 14 , ZOOM CLASS OCT 21

Sept. 9. INTRO. Cantos I-IV: The Dark Wood, Entrance to Hell, Limbo

Sept. 16. Cantos V-IX: Lust, Gluttony, Avarice, Arrogance

Sept. 23 Cantos X-XVI: Heresy, Sodomy, Violence,

Sept. 30. Cantos XVII-XXII: Usury, Fraud,

Oct. 7. Cantos XXIII-XXVIII: Discord, Hypocrisy, Theft

Oct. 14 NO CLASS Indigenous People's Day

Oct. 21 ZOOM Cantos XXIX-XXXIV Treachery, Exit. SUMMARY

Welcome to everyone in the class!

I recommend that before each meeting you read all the cantos assigned for that day. You are welcome to use any translation or edition of the work, but my references in class will be to the edition translated by John Ciardi. For each class I'll speak a bit about biographical, historical, and literary background, but emphasis will be on class discussion of what the poem is saying and how it is being said. Sometimes we'll also examine relevant works of art, including illustrations of *Inferno* done by William Blake and Gustave Doré.

The Dartmouth Dante Project (<https://dante.dartmouth.edu/>) offers a great list of print and video resources far beyond the scope of our brief course. For our purposes I would especially recommend the following:

Introductions by translators to their translations, in the versions by: John Ciardi, Dorothy Sayers, Allen Mandelbaum, John D. Sinclair, Mark Musa, and Bowdoin's own Henry W. Longfellow.

Book length biographical and literary studies: Giovanni Boccaccio, *A Life of Dante*. (The first important study,) Alessandro Barbero, *Dante, A Life*. (A very detailed presentation of social and biographical information), Charles Williams, *The Figure of Beatrice: A Study in Dante*. (A sensitive study of the mystical side of Dante's vision by a member of the J. R. R. Tolkien and C.S. Lewis group, The Inklings) Wallace Fowlie, *A Reading of Dante's Inferno*. (A good, immersive study,) Guy P. Raffa, *The Complete Danteworlds: A Reader's Guide to the Divine Comedy*. (All you ever wanted to know, and more,) Matthew Pearl, *The Dante Club*. (For fun, a mystery novel set in Cambridge, MA)

Videos: *Dante: Inferno to Paradise | Part One: The Inferno | Episode 1* (Available through Maine PBS Passport , created by Ric Burns (brother of Ken Burns) Outstanding, but requires membership in Maine PBS. <https://video.mainepublic.org/show/dante-inferno-to-paradise/>

PBS Preview For a tempting look, several brief clips: <https://video.mainepublic.org/video/preview-2sxf5s/>

Another good one: *Perspective: How Dante Provided a New World*: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Bkh2xILmKzY>.

A third also good, by Romana Cortese: *Dante's Life, Exile, and Legacy*: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GbYNkYqY5zQ>

A fourth video, well done but from a viewpoint unsympathetic to the religious context of the poem. Martin Hossick, *Dante: The First Renaissance Man*. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QXgYvfm-l7I>

And for the ultimate video series, Yale University offers an entire semester, 24 classes, on Dante brilliantly taught by Professor Giuseppe Mazzotta, free through youtube in Yale's series of online courses. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=679FGDpZBew>

No extra work is required, but if you have the time, any of these could enrich your lifelong appreciation of Dante and *Inferno*. See you soon!

George