

UGS 303: *Dante's Hell and Its Afterlife*
Spring 2013: Unique Numbers 64395, 64400, and 64405

Professor Guy P. Raffa
Office: Homer Rainey Hall (HRH) 3.104A
Department of French and Italian
Office Hours: M 1:30-3:30, W 3-4, and by appointment
E-mail: guyr@utexas.edu; Phone: 232-5492
Home Page: <http://uts.cc.utexas.edu/~guyr>

Teaching Assistant:
TA E-mail and Phone:
TA Office Hours:

Lectures: MW 11-12 in Parlin 301

Discussion sections: F 9-10 in MAI 220C (64395)
 F 10-11 in MAI 220C (64400)
 F 11-12 in MAI 220C (64405)

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," a book and 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 Sandro Botticelli's illustrations, Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, and a silent *Inferno* film to T. S. Eliot's "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock," Vincent Ward's *What Dreams May Come*, and Dante-inspired music and video games.

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. Quizzes and a midterm examination will be used to assess your knowledge of course readings, viewings, and lecture material. A class visit to the Blanton Museum will put Dante's achievement in dialog with early European art, and you will attend and report on an approved campus lecture or other relevant cultural event that takes place this spring. You are required to keep a class journal to record responses to the course material; entries could include answers to study questions, but other observations and musings on the material are welcome as well. Periodically the TA will collect your "Dante Diaries," which, along with other low-stakes writing assignments, will count toward the classwork component of your final course grade. You will work on information literacy, writing, and presentation skills to produce *News from Hell* (a team-based project) and to complete an individual research project on a creative work influenced by or resonating with Dante's *Inferno*.

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, images, viewings, and recordings.

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 and refine 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)
Danteworlds: A Reader's Guide to the "Inferno" (Chicago, 2007)

Other readings (prose excerpts, poems, song lyrics, essays) will be posted on the Blackboard course site (<https://courses.utexas.edu/webapps/login/>).

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); *A TV Dante* (1989; Peter Greenaway, Raúl Ruiz); *Deconstructing Harry* (1997; Woody Allen); *What Dreams May Come* (1998; Vincent Ward); *Dante's Inferno* (2008; Sean Meredith, Sandow Birk, and Paul Zaloom); *Sex and the City* (2008; Michael Patrick King).

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>

Assignments

10%: *News from Hell* written report (graded).

5%: *News from Hell* oral presentation (full credit for successful completion).

25%: Research Essay (graded): a paper (750-1000 words) relating the *Inferno* to another literary, artistic, cinematic, or popular work. 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. The paper will be revised based on feedback from a peer review.

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

10%: Oral Presentation (graded): a 5-7 minute presentation of your research for the essay.

20%: Midterm examination (graded): short-answer questions on Dante's *Inferno* and other assigned texts, images, viewings, and recordings.

15%: Five Quizzes (graded): short-answer questions on Dante's *Inferno* and other assigned texts, images, viewings, and recordings. These graded quizzes will be given, unannounced, during lecture meetings. Since there is no final (or second) exam, at least 3 quizzes will be given after spring break. If the TA gives additional quizzes during discussion section meetings, these will count toward your classwork and participation grade.

10%: Classwork and Participation: you are expected to read or view the assigned material **before lectures** and to participate—through attentive listening and informed contributions—in discussion section meetings. Classwork includes your course journal ("Dante Diaries"), which will be collected periodically during the semester, and successful completion of the lecture series requirement (attending and reporting on an approved lecture or other cultural event).

Attendance Policy: Your attendance, which counts toward your classwork and participation grade, is expected at all class meetings: lectures, discussion sections, Blanton Museum visit, and library information session. To pass the course, you cannot miss—for any reason whatsoever—more than 8 lectures or 4 discussion section meetings (including the Blanton Museum visit and the library information session). You are expected to arrive on time to lectures and discussion (including sessions held in the museum, the library, or elsewhere) and to stay for the entire lesson. Repeated late arrivals to—or early departures from—class will count as absences.

Late Work: There will be no make-up quizzes or 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 attend an approved lecture or other cultural event (<http://www.utexas.edu/ugs/uls>) and submit a written response (300-500 words) for credit. You will present your response, combining summary and analysis, to your discussion section.

Gem of the University: Each discussion session will visit the Blanton Museum of Art for a guided tour of selected works related to the course content. One quiz will include questions based on this museum visit.

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 lectures, and **computers** and **tablets** may be used only for note-taking or for class activities. Students who use devices for other purposes will be marked absent. **All electronic devices** must be turned off and put away during discussion sessions except when the TA grants permission to use them.

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 410-6644 (videophone) or <http://ddce.utexas.edu/disability/>

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/cio/policies/>

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. 14: "Welcome to Hell" (Rowan Atkinson): Introduction to Dante and the Afterlife

Jan. 16: *Inferno* 1-2 (cantos 1 and 2), *Danteworlds* 13-19: Dark Wood (Three Beasts, Virgil, Beatrice) (**Blackboard**: Mazzotta, "Life of Dante")

[Jan. 21: **No Class**: Martin Luther King, Jr. Day]

Jan. 23: Peter Greenaway, *A TV Dante*, canto 1; Dante and his World (Mandelbaum, "Dante in His Age" (319-29) (**Blackboard**: Marcus Sanders and Mary Jo Bang "translations" of canto 1; Raffa, "Hell" [*Complete Danteworlds*])

Jan. 28: *Inferno* 3-4, *Danteworlds (DW)* 21-32: Periphery of Hell (Charon), Limbo (**Blackboard**: Virgil, *Aeneid* 6)

Jan. 30: *Inferno* 5, *DW* 33-38: Lust (Minos, Francesca and Paolo); *Inferno Rap* (Eternal Kool Project) [**Note**: Last day to add or drop a course for possible refund]

Feb. 4: 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; Vickers, "Dante in the Video Decade")

Feb. 6: *Inferno* 6-8, *DW* 39-53, 55: Gluttony (Ciaccio), Avarice, Wrath (Filippo Argenti); Explore the "Dante Today" Web site: <http://learn.bowdoin.edu/italian/dante/>
[Feb. 8: *News from Hell*: Formation of newscast teams]

Feb. 11: *Inferno* 9-11, *DW* 49-64: Gate of Dis, Allegory, Heresy (Farinata, Cavalcante), Organization of Hell (**Blackboard**: "Letter to Cangrande")

Feb. 13: *Inferno* 12, *DW* 65-69, 76-77: Murderers. Raúl Ruiz, *A TV Dante*, selections
[Feb. 15: *News from Hell*: Information literacy sessions in the library (PCL)]

Feb. 18 and 20: *News from Hell* workshops
[Feb. 22: *News from Hell*: Rehearse newscast presentations; discuss and assess research]

Feb. 25: *Inferno* 13-14, *DW* 69-72, 78-79, 81: Suicide (Pier della Vigna), Blasphemy (Capaneus). Scenes from Vincent Ward, *What Dreams May Come* (1998)

Feb. 27: *Inferno* 15-17 *DW* 72-76, 79-81: Sodomy (Brunetto Latini), Usury (Geryon)
[March 1: *News from Hell* presentations]

March 4: **Written News Reports due**; Review for Exam

March 6: **Midterm Exam**
[March 8: Brainstorm ideas for final research project]

SPRING BREAK

March 18: *Inferno* 18-20, *DW* 83-88, 91-97: Pandering and Seducing (Jason), Flattery, Simony (Pope Nicholas III), Soothsaying (Manto); (**Blackboard**: Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, "O Star of Morning and of Liberty"; Cordelia Ray, "Dante," in Dennis Looney, *Freedom Readers: The African American Reception of Dante Alighieri and the "Divine Comedy"*)

March 20: *Inferno* 21-23, *DW* 88-91, 95-97: Civic Corruption (Ciampolo, Malebranche), Hypocrisy (**Blackboard**: "A Beautiful Friendship: Dante and Virgil in the *Commedia*")
[March 22: **Blanton Museum visit** (<http://blantonmuseum.org/>). Please arrive at the museum at 8:55, 9:55, or 10:55, depending on your section.]

March 25: *Inferno* 24-25, *DW* 99-102, 112-13, 118-19: Thieves

March 27: *Inferno* 26-27, *DW* 102-5, 113-15, 118-19: Ulysses, Guido da Montefeltro. Their sin?

April 1: **Blackboard**: Alfred Tennyson, "Ulysses," Primo Levi, *Survival in Auschwitz* [selections], T. S. Eliot, "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" [**Note**: Last day to change registration to or from pass / fail. Last day, with the dean's approval, to withdraw from the University or drop a class except for urgent and substantiated, nonacademic reasons.]

April 3: *Inferno* 28-30, *DW* 105-11, 115-19: Sowers of Discord (Bertran de Born), Falsifiers
[April 5: **Research topic due**: choose a work inspired by or resonating with Dante's *Inferno*]

April 8: *Inferno* 31-32, *DW* 122-26, 130-33: Giants (Antaeus), Traitors (Bocca)

April 10: *Inferno* 33-34, *DW* 126-30, 132-34: Traitors (Ugolino and Ruggieri, Lucifer); Allen, *Deconstructing Harry* (1997)
[April 12: Research Day]

April 15: Dante at the Movies: Silent *Inferno* (1911; Bertolini, Padovan, and de Liguoro)

April 17: Dante at the Movies: Lachman, *Inferno* (1935); King, *Sex and the City* (2008); Hell on Earth: Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein*, introduction and volume 1 (pp. 5-90)
[April 19: **Research bibliography and essay outline due; Oral Presentations 1**]

April 22: *Frankenstein*, volume 2 (pp. 94-151); Puppet Dante: *Dante's Inferno* (2008; Meredith, Birk, and Zaloom); Video-Game Dante (<http://www.ea.com/dantes-inferno>)

April 24: Writing (theses, textual analysis, transitions); **Peer editing of essay drafts**
[April 26: **Oral presentations 2**]

April 29: *Frankenstein*, volume 3 (pp. 155-225); Branagh, *Mary Shelley's Frankenstein*

May 1 **Research Essay Due**; Exit Hell: An Infernal Photo Album (set to music)
[May 3 **Oral Presentations 3**]