Course Syllabus

GeorgetownX HUMX421-01x The Divine Comedy: Dante’s Journey to Freedom

10/27/2014
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COURSE DESCRIPTION

Students will question for themselves the meaning of human freedom, responsibility and identity by reading and responding to Dante Alighieri's *Divine Comedy*. The *Comedy*, which is richly steeped in the medieval culture of 14th century, still speaks vividly to modern readers struggling with the question, “who am I?” Dante, as a Florentine, a poet, a lover, and religious believer struggled with the same question in each facet of his life before coming to a moment of vision that wholly transformed him as a person.

As a 21st-century reader, you will encounter the poem in a novel online environment that integrates knowledge from the disciplines of literature, history, psychology, philosophy, and theology with modern technology. You will be guided through the poem by means of the MyDante Project, an online environment developed by Professor Ambrosio in collaboration with the Georgetown University Center for New Designs in Learning and Scholarship (CNDLS), which will aid your own contemplative engagement with the poem. Alone and with the edX community, you will reflect on both Dante's interpretation of freedom and how it functions in the formation of personal identity, and the problem of finding appropriate metaphors to discuss these issues in our modern life.

You, the modern reader, will only understand the full implications of Dante's poetry if you participate with it in a way that is personal and is genuinely contemplative. You will discover that contemplative reading goes beyond the literal meaning, and even beyond the traditional allegorical and interpreted meaning, to apply every possible meaning contained in the text to your own life and identity. Through the MyDante platform, you will learn to know yourself in your own historical, personal, and spiritual contexts as you journey toward a richer understanding of your freedom, identity and responsibility as a person.

In this course, you will be asked to participate in learning activities on both edX and on MyDante, an innovative platform for deep reading that emphasizes mindfulness and contemplative reading habits as key to deriving lasting meaning from poetic texts. This module will take you through *Vita Nuova* and *Inferno*. The module on *Purgatorio* will launch on February 2015, and the concluding module on *Paradiso* will launch in April 2015. This course features Robert and Jean Hollander's contemporary translations of Dante Alighieri's *Inferno*, *Purgatorio*, and *Paradiso*, permission courtesy of The Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group, a division of Random House LLC. The print editions contain valuable notes and commentary which are highly recommended as companions to the course materials.

KEY LEARNING OUTCOMES

The course-level learning outcomes for this course are:

1. Students will become familiar with the theory and practice of “Contemplative Reading” that constitutes one of the principal structural dynamics of Liberal Arts education.
2. Students will be able to apply the general practice of “Contemplative Reading” to Dante’s *Divine Comedy*.
3. Students will demonstrate in-depth and relatively advanced familiarity with and knowledge of an epic poem of the highest cultural significance; in specific, Dante’s *Divine Comedy*.
4. Students will begin to articulate for themselves their own personal convictions in response to reflection questions about human dignity, freedom and responsibility with which the *Divine Comedy* inevitably confronts its readers.
5. Students will engage with the most fundamental goal of Liberal education, promoting the universal dignity of personhood
6. Students will become acquainted with the specific contributions the Christian, Catholic and Jesuit tradition of Georgetown University bring to the promotion of human dignity.

FACULTY

LEAD FACULTY

Francis J. Ambrosio, PhD, is Director of the Doctoral Program in Liberal Studies and Associate Professor of Philosophy at Georgetown University. After studies in Italian language and literature in Florence, Italy, he completed his doctoral degree at Fordham University with a specialization in contemporary European Philosophy. He is the founding Director of the Georgetown University MyDante Project, a web-based platform for personal and collaborative study of Dante’s Commedia. He is the author of Dante and Derrida: Face to Face (State University of New York Press, 2007), as well as scholarly works on Hermeneutics and interdisciplinary studies of the Italian Renaissance. He is the recipient of multiple awards for excellence in teaching at Georgetown. In October 2009, The Teaching Company released his course, "Philosophy, Religion and the Meaning of Life," a series of 36 half-hour video lectures which he created for the "Great Courses" series. In addition to his work at Georgetown, he co-directs The Renaissance Company with Deborah R. Warin, leading adult study programs focusing on Italian Renaissance culture and its contemporary heritage.

CO-DIRECTOR OF PROJECT

Eddie Malone, PhD, is the Executive Director of The Center for New Designs in Learning and Scholarship (CNDLS) and an Associate Professor in the Department of English. He holds a Ph.D. from The Ohio State University in English Literature and a Master’s Degree from Syracuse University in English and Textual Studies. As Executive Director of CNDLS, a research center on teaching and learning, he helps to define Georgetown’s strategy to advance teaching and learning practices at the University, including developing innovative approaches to technology-enhanced learning, learning analytics, and fulfilling the Jesuit mission of teaching to the whole student. As a faculty member in the Department of English, he teaches courses on modernism, postmodernism, critical and narrative theory. He has a particular interest in the works of James Joyce, Virginia Woolf, Samuel Beckett, Vladimir Nabokov, and Jorge Luis Borges, and he has published on Joyce and others, as well as on issues related to narrative theory, film studies, and hypertext fiction. He has served as the Electronic Resources Editor for the Heath Anthology of American Literature, and he is currently working on two book-length projects—one, Footnotes in Fiction, on the use of artificial paratexts in fictional narratives, and the other, Narrative Pedagogy, on the role of narrative in teaching and learning. He has co-directed the MyDante project with Professor Frank Ambrosio since its inception.

COURSE DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANTS

Elisabetta Lanzilao, M.Sc., is an Italian doctoral candidate at Georgetown University (Doctor of Liberal Studies). Her research is focused upon "foundational models" of human rights committed to religious value systems as a vehicle for their interiorization and implementation in the Middle East. Elisabetta earned her M.Sc. in European and International Policy and her B.A. in Political Science and International Relations at the Catholic University of the Sacred Heart of Milan.
Rita Pearson, B.A., graduated from Georgetown University in 2013. During her senior year at Georgetown, when she studied Existentialism under Professor Ambrosio, she was hounded by the terrifying question, “who am I, and what on earth am I going to do after college?” Luckily, because she began working for Professor Ambrosio on the MyDante project soon after graduation, she’s had the chance to read and contemplate some of the loveliest poetry ever written. "Così orai; e quella, si lontana/ come parea, sorrisi e riguardommi; poi si tornò a l’eterna fontana." (Paradiso, Canto XXXI)

GUEST FACULTY

Francesco Ciabattoni, Ph.D., is Associate Professor and Director of Graduate Studies in the Italian Department at Georgetown University. His monograph Dante’s Journey to Polyphony (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2010) is a thorough study of the role of music in Dante’s Commedia. Professor Ciabattoni teaches two courses on Dante at Georgetown University, one in English translation, the other tackling Dante’s original Italian text for majors in Italian and students with adequate preparation. He also teaches courses on Boccaccio, French and Italian love poetry, and other aspects of medieval literature. Among his research favorites are Dante, Petrarch, Boccaccio, Ariosto, Pasolini, the Middle Ages, and the interplay of music and literature. With P.M. Forni he has edited The Decameron Third Day in Perspective: Volume Three of Lectura Boccaccii (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2014) and is currently preparing a book on the intertextual practice among Italian song writers.

Jo Ann Moran Cruz, Ph.D., is Associate Professor of History at Georgetown University. She has also served as Professor of History and Dean of Humanities and Natural Sciences at Loyola University, New Orleans. Professor Moran Cruz is a late medieval and Renaissance historian, publishing on education and literacy in late medieval England, the clergy in late medieval England, medieval and Renaissance social mobility, popular western views of Islam, the Roman de la Rose, and Dante. She is the author of a textbook on “Medieval Worlds” and has taught and published on E.M. Forster. At Georgetown, she co-developed the team-taught introductory course “The Age of Dante” for Medieval Studies. She has taught Dante at Georgetown’s Villa la Balze where she also conducted Dante tours of the city. In 2006 she published "Dante, Purgatorio II and the Jubilee of Boniface VIII" in Dante Studies; she has a forthcoming article “Dante’s Matelda: Queen and Mother,” also in Dante Studies. Professor Moran Cruz has been invited to give lectures on Dante on several occasions at The Catholic University of America and also at Marymount University. Her most current projects are a paper on Inferno XV and the relationship between Dante and Brunetto Latini as well as a book manuscript entitled A Question of Disobedience: Letters from an Elizabethan Family.

Anthony DelDonna, Ph.D., is a specialist in early modern music, in particular 17th- and 18th-century Italian music, musicians, and culture. His research has focused primarily on opera, instrumental genres, archival studies, performance practice and ballet. Professor DelDonna’s research has been published in peer-reviewed journals such as Eighteenth-Century Studies, Early Music, Eighteenth-Century Music, Recercare, Studi musicali and Civiltà musicale as well as essays in scholarly volumes dedicated to the eighteenth century. He is the co-editor of The Cambridge Companion to Eighteenth-Century Opera (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), co-editor of Music as Cultural Mission: Explorations of Jesuit Practices in Italy and North America, and editor for Genre and Music in the 18th Century (Ann Arbor: Steglein Press, 2008). His monograph Opera, Theatrical Culture and Society in Late Eighteenth-Century Naples is published by Ashgate Press (2012). His critical edition of the oratorio Trionfo per l’Assunzione della Santissima Vergine (Nicola Ceva, 1705) will be published by Fondazione Arcadia and his essay “Cantatas in Honor of San Gennaro: Martyr, Miracle Worker and Musical Protagonist” will be published by The Journal of Musicology.
TEACHING ASSISTANTS

Alexa Minesinger, B.A., is a master’s candidate in Georgetown University’s Department of English. In addition to teaching writing, her research interests include medieval and early modern book history and material culture (along with the occasional Victorian novel). She earned her B.A. in English and Theatre at the University of Maryland, College Park.

Katie Mitchell is a senior at Georgetown University, pursuing a double major in English and Philosophy. She has academic interests in critical theory, book history, text materiality and performance, as well as the evolution of authenticity and subjectivity in the context of social media. She also writes her own poetry. She first read the Commedia with Professor Ambrosio and was moved by Dante's understanding of the soul and what exactly is at stake in the pursuit of answers to questions of individual identity. She finds the Commedia breaking through into everything she does and cares about, and is thrilled for the opportunity to wander around in the dark wood again.

Joseph Romano, B.A., graduated from Georgetown University in 2012. As an Italian minor studying abroad in Florence, he read the Commedia and spoke “la lingua di Dante” while living in the city from which Dante was exiled. And as a philosophy minor in Professor Ambrosio’s Existentialism course, he had his first encounter with Jacques Derrida, whose writing confronted him with the notion of existential exile from one’s self: primarily, how an “I” is an other. For Joe, this background makes exile and poetic performance hermeneutical points of entry into the Commedia. With Dante as our guide, he looks forward to inspiring discussion, using especially the MyDante platform as a forum for critical performance and participation.

CNDSL DESIGN & DEVELOPMENT TEAM

Rebecca Berg, B.F.A., Graphic Designer
Dedra Demaree, Ph.D., Learning Designer
William Garr, M.A., Software Developer
Anna Kruse, M.A., Project Manager
Alfred Schoeninger, B.A., Videographer
Marie Selvanadin, M.S., Product Manager and Software Developer
Ryan Walter, M.A., Videographer

Special thanks to Stacey Church and Lexi Dever for their amazing work with the immersive parallax images and to Linda Huber and Vincent Larach for helping build out the edX and MyDante site.

COMMUNICATING WITH THE PROFESSOR:

Please use the following email address for any communication regarding this course:
GUX@georgetown.edu
Students are requested not to email the lecturer directly. All course emails must go through this address.

FORMAT

WHAT DOES THE COURSE INCLUDE?
The course consists of two platforms: edX and MyDante. MyDante is a self-guided platform for anyone wishing to have an in-depth reading experience with Dante’s Divine Comedy and Vita Nuova. edX is the courseware platform which will help you go through a guided experience with MyDante and increase engagement with the content by providing comprehension checks, polling questions, and discussion boards.

MyDante contains four modes with which to engage with the text. These are:

- **Reading Mode**
  In this mode, you will have access to the Divine Comedy translated into English and in the original Italian
- **Personal Mode**
  This mode is similar to reading mode but enables you to make annotations and add images from the media library, creating a personalized record of your relationship to the poem
- **Guided Mode**
  This mode contains instructional materials in addition to the poem
- **Social Mode**
  This mode allows you to interact with your peers via public annotations

Each week, you will log in either to MyDante or edX and have access to instructions for how much content to read, which aspects of the MyDante platform to engage with, and learning objectives for the week. You will then engage with several of the reading modes listed above, including instructional materials aimed at helping students achieve a deep understanding of the literal, metaphorical, and reflective meaning of the poem. These instructional materials include text, annotations, videos, and images. You will then return to edX and engage in assessment questions, open-ended self-graded assignments, and discussion board conversations. You will also have access to a glossary of terms and a list of references and resources both through edX and MyDante.

**WHAT WILL YOU DO IN THIS COURSE?**

The official start of the course is Oct 15, and each weekly unit be released at 16:00 UTC on Wednesday. The weekly unit should be completed by the following Tuesday to stay on track.

Students will be completing activities for the course both within edX and on the MyDante platform. In edX students will:

- Be oriented to the navigation, learning objectives, and instructions for optimal learning
- Watch introductory videos to each week
- Complete comprehension checks (multiple choice and multiple answer questions) and open-ended self-graded assessment questions
- Respond to discussion board prompts

In MyDante students will:

- Be oriented to the navigation, learning objectives, and instructions for optimal learning
- Complete readings including the guide material which is both in text and video format
- Read, create, and respond to annotations
- Journal in the scriptorium

Students are also expected to participate in the pre- and post-course surveys that will be delivered via email.

**COURSE CONTENT OUTLINE**
Overview
a. What is the course about?
b. What does the course include?
c. What will I learn in the course?
d. How do I use the course features?
e. Who is part of this course?
f. Your pre-launch reading assignment

Week 1: Introduction to the Course
a. Introduction to MyDante and Contemplative Reading
b. Introduction to Course Themes
c. The World of Dante
d. Dante in Love
e. Engagement Exercises

Week 2: The Vita Nuova
a. Section 1: Reading the Vita Nuova (Chapters 1-19)
b. Section 2: Re-reading the Vita Nuova (Chapters 20-34)
c. Engagement Exercises

Week 3: Inferno, Canti 1-4
a. Section 1: The Dark Wood (Canti 1 and 2)
b. Section 2: The Hell Gate (Canto 3)
c. Section 3: The Neutrals (Canto 4)
d. Engagement Exercises

Week 4: Inferno, Canti 5-15
a. Section 1: Sins of the Leopard (Canti 5-7)
b. Section 2: The Gates of Dis: Hardening the Heart (Canti 8-10)
c. Section 3: The Wood of the Suicides (Canti 11-13)
d. Section 4: Hate Crimes (Canti 14-15)
e. Engagement Exercises

Week 5: Inferno, Canti 16-30
a. Section 1: Sins of the Wolf (Canti 16-25)
b. Section 2: Ulysses (Canto 26)
c. Section 3: Discord and Decay (Canti 27-30)
d. Engagement Exercises

Week 6: Inferno, Canti 31-34
a. Section 1: The Traitors (Canti 31 and 32)
b. Section 2: Ugolino (Canto 33)
c. Section 3: The Turning Point (Canto 34)
d. Engagement Exercises

EXPECTATIONS

GRADING AND PARTICIPATION IN THE COURSE

At the start of the course you will be emailed a link for the pre-course demographic survey. This survey does not count toward your course grade, but it is very valuable for the instructional team and is quick to complete.
Your completion of this survey is expected as part of your participation in the course. There will also be a brief post-course survey emailed after the completion of the course, which you are also expected to take, but does not count toward your course grade. Please note: your participation score will be added to your edX grade at the "end of the course." However, you will be able to view your current MyDante participation on your dashboard in MyDante throughout the course.

To receive a certificate of completion, you must successfully complete the assessment questions ("comprehension checks") and open-ended self-graded assessments in edX each week, engage in the edX discussion boards, and engage with the MyDante platform.

Your edX comprehension checks and open-ended self-graded assessments (75% of your total grade) consist of one weekly open-ended self-graded assessment question as well as numerous multiple choice and multiple answer (checkbox) questions based on the week's reading assignments, guide content, and videos. Comprehension check questions in edX can be attempted 2 times. While you are encouraged throughout the course to discuss the topics with your friends and fellow students, you must do the comprehension checks on your own, without consulting others. We strongly recommend that you take the comprehension checks in sequence to assess your individual progress.

- To do well on the multiple choice/multiple answer questions, you will need to read the text assigned for the week carefully and deeply, but you will not be expected to know details outside the bounds of the text (such as sociohistorical details, names of characters not explicitly identified in the text, etc.). Literary terms may occasionally be used in the questions; the glossary in edX will provide definitions of those terms for your learning.
- To do well on the open-ended self-graded assessments, students should respond to the detailed prompt that will indicate the length of the expected response and key points to address. After submitting a response, students will be required to use the rubric provided within edX to grade their own responses. Be sure to address all of the key points that are requested in the detailed prompt for full credit.

Engagement with the MyDante platform consists of creating annotations, responding to annotations, and posting journal entries. Participation in MyDante activities counts for a total of 20% of the final course grade, and participation on the edX discussion board counts as 5%. The grade you receive from participation in MyDante activities will be calculated as follows:

- If you have completed at least 10 private annotations for any given week you receive 50 points for annotations. You receive 45 points if you have done 9 annotations, 40 points for 8, 35 points for 7, 30 points for 6, 25 points for 5, 20 points for 4, 15 points for 3, 10 points for 2, 5 points for 1, and 0 points if you did not do any annotations in MyDante.
- If you have completed at least 2 journal entries for any given week you receive 30 points for journaling. You receive 15 points for 1 journal entry and 0 points if you do not do a journal entry for any given week in MyDante.
- If you respond to at least 4 (public) annotations in the social mode of MyDante for any given week you receive 20 points. If you respond to only 3 then 15 points, if 2 then 10 points, if 1 then 5 points, and if you do not respond to any annotations in the social mode of MyDante you receive 0 points.
- If you post 10 or more posts on the edX discussion board throughout the entire 6 weeks of the course you will receive your full 5% for discussion board participation, the highest score possible. 9 posts will earn you 4.5%, 8 posts will earn you 4%, 7 posts 3.5%, 6 posts 3%, 5 posts 2.5%, 4 posts 2%, 3 posts will earn you 1.5%, 2 posts 1%, 1 post .5%, and 0 posts 0%.

The Divine Comedy: Dante's Journey to Freedom, Part 1 (Inferno)  
Oct 15 – Nov 26, 2014
A total score of 75% or higher overall qualifies as a passing grade for the course.

**WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT FROM THE COURSE TEAM**

The teaching assistants and some of the faculty support team will be moderating the course discussion forum (on the edX platform) and the Facebook group (https://www.facebook.com/guxdivinecomedy). Questions that receive the most up-votes are the comments most likely to be addressed by the teaching assistants. Up-voting can be done by clicking on the green plus sign within the edX discussion board; the more up-votes a question receives, the higher it will appear in the overall discussion thread. **Make sure you post any course-related questions on the discussion board and not on Facebook.** We will also provide regular updates and reminders in the course info page and through weekly email updates.

**WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT FROM EDX**

In the event of a technical problem, you should click the “Help” tab located on the left border of the screen within the edX platform. This “Help” tab opens an instruction box that directs you to student Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) for general edX questions. You can also:

- Report a problem
- Make a suggestion
- Ask a question

You may post technical problems to the “Technical” thread of the discussion board. Finally, you may also contact technical@edx.org directly to report technical problems.

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

The MyDante team has been extremely fortunate to receive generous permissions that go well beyond the usual scope of freely available courses. We are very grateful because this generosity gives us the opportunity to experiment with how appropriate uses of such materials can help students like you have an exceptional learning experience.

On the other hand, for this experiment to be successful, it’s critical that we demonstrate to those who have given us permissions that students value the opportunity to make conscientious use of their materials and honor the parameters put in place for their use.

So we ask you most sincerely to respect our generously-given permissions by complying with the conditions set forth for their use:

1.) **Images** should be enjoyed where they are placed on the MyDante website. Images that exist in the media library may be linked to in MyDante annotations. Please do not attempt to copy any of these images in any way. Public Domain images are available for download on Wikimedia Commons or a number of other sites.
2.) The **guide commentaries** are intended for the use of students in this GeorgetownX course and users of MyDante. They are copyrighted and should not be copied or reproduced except within the limits of academic fair use.

3.) **Translations** are copyrighted and are governed by standard restrictions for copyrighted material as published in the books and here on the website. For this reason, and because of the great benefit to be derived from the Hollanders' copious notes, we highly recommend that you consider purchasing the books of the *Commedia*, which are available at randomhouse.com. Our recommendation also applies to Professor Mark Musa's translation of the *Vita Nuova*, which can purchased at iupress.indiana.edu.

4.) **Video** from FILM PLATFORM has been generously made available uniquely for this course. Please respect their wish that the video be used solely within the context of this course.

We offer our sincerest thanks to the following artists, publishers, and others for their willingness to make their quality materials available to us for this course:

- Random House and Robert and Jean Hollander for the translations of *Inferno*, *Purgatorio*, and *Paradiso*
- Indiana University Press and Mark Musa for the translation of the *Vita Nuova*
- Fabrica / Patrick Waterhouse for illustrations inspired by the *Inferno*
- Roberta Coni for illustrations inspired by the *Inferno*
- FILM PLATFORM and Joshua Oppenheimer for *The Act of Killing* and accompanying materials

**WHAT WE EXPECT FROM YOU**

**NETIQUETTE GUIDELINES**

**Please be respectful**

To promote the highest degree of education possible, we ask each student to respect the opinions and thoughts of other students and be courteous in the way that you choose to express yourself. Some topics may be controversial and promote debate. Students in this course should be respectful and considerate of all opinions.

In order for us to have meaningful discussions, we must learn to really try to understand what others are saying and be open-minded about others’ opinions. If you want to persuade someone to see things differently, it is much more effective to do so in a polite, non-threatening way rather than to do so antagonistically. Everyone has insights to offer based on his/her experiences, and we can all learn from each other. Civility is essential.

**Look before you write**

Prior to posting a question or comment on the discussion board, the GeorgetownX course team asks that you look to see if any of your classmates have the same question. Up-vote questions that are similar to your own or that are also of interest to you, instead of starting a new thread. Up-voting can be done by clicking on the green plus sign within the edX discussion board; the more up-votes a question receives, the higher it will
appear in the overall discussion thread. This will greatly help our Georgetown teaching assistants to best monitor the discussions and will bring the most popular questions to their attention.

**Use the discussion board for course-related posts only**

While we encourage students to get to know each other, please use the discussion board for course content conversations only and NOT for personal messages or discussions unrelated to the course.

**Properly and promptly notify us of technical issues**

While we do not predict technical issues, they can and may happen. To make sure these receive prompt attention, post details about any technical issues pertaining to edX directly on the “Technical” discussion thread or email technical@edx.org directly. If you have technical issues pertaining to MyDante, email gux@georgetown.edu.

**ACADEMIC INTEGRITY**

**Observe edX and GeorgetownX’s honor policies**

While collaboration and conversation are encouraged and will certainly contribute to your learning during the course, we ask students to refrain from collaborating with or consulting one another on any graded material for the course. Violations of the honor policy undermine the purpose of education and the academic integrity of the course. We expect that all work submitted will be a reflection of one’s own original work and thoughts.

GeorgetownX faculty and staff expect all members of the community to strive for excellence in scholarship and character.

**APPENDIX: DETAILED COURSE OUTLINE**

**WEEK 1: OCT 15 – OCT 21**

**Week 1: Introduction to the Course**

- **Section 1: Introduction to MyDante and Contemplative Reading**
  - **Unit 1: Introduction to Week 1**
    - **Learning Objectives:**
      - You will be able to define the following concepts:
        - Contemplative reading
        - Illuminated manuscript
        - Three levels of meaning: literal, interpretive, and reflective
      - You will gain facility with the features of MyDante
      - You will be able to describe the platform (MyDante) as a modern interpretation of the medieval manuscript and contemplative practice
      - You will reflect on the significance of your experience reading the text contemplatively, both through silent and oral readings, with and without accompanying images.
    - **Activities:**
      - Complete all of the activities in Section 1 of the "Start" tab in MyDante
      - Return to edX to complete assessment questions
- **Section 2: Introduction to Course Themes**
  - **Unit 1: Introduction to Course Themes**
    - **Learning Objectives:**
      - You will be able to articulate the significance of re-reading and questioning as contemplative practices
• You will be able to explain the significance at the interpretive level of reading the following elements:
  o The difference between choice and freedom
  o The relationship between freedom and identity
  o What is meant by "freedom as an absolute"
  o Virgil’s offer of help as it relates to divine grace
• You will be able to reflect on the significance of the following:
  o The relationship between meaning, mystery, and metaphor
  o The meaning of Dante questioning whether he can trust Virgil’s offer of help

Activities:
• Complete all of the activities in Section 2 of the "Start" tab in MyDante
• Return to edX to complete assessment questions

• Section 3: The World of Dante
  o Unit 1: The World of Dante
    ▪ Learning Objectives:
      • You will be able to summarize the following background information at the literal level of reading:
        o Concept of a muse
        o Basic biographical information about Dante
        o Historic role of Beatrice in Dante’s life
        o Basic information about medieval Florence
      • You will be able to explain the significance at the interpretive level of reading the following elements:
        o The conventions of popular romances and how these relate to Renaissance individualism
    ▪ Activities:
      • Complete all of the activities in Section 3 of the "Start" tab in MyDante
      • Return to edX to complete assessment questions

• Section 4: Dante in Love
  o Unit 1: Dante in Love
    ▪ Learning Objectives:
      • You will be able to comment on the relationship among love poetry, music, and deep emotion
    ▪ Activities:
      • Watch all of the videos and read the commentary in Section 4 of the "Start" tab in MyDante
      • Return to edX to complete assessment questions

WEEK 2: OCT 22 – OCT 28

Week 2: The Vita Nuova
• Section 1: Reading the Vita Nuova (Chapters 1-19)
  o Unit 1: Week Overview and Chapters 1-3
    ▪ Learning Objectives:
      • You will be able to summarize the major narrative events of Vita Nuova 1-3 at the literal level of reading.
      • You will be able to explain the significance at the interpretive level of reading the following elements:
        o Dante’s revisiting of his poems to discover meaning
        o The Camus quote on the work of life as discovering heart-opening moments
The importance of the number 9 in the Vita Nuova

Activities:
- Read Vita Nuova Chapters 1-3 in guided mode
- Return to edX to complete assessment questions

Unit 2: Chapters 4-11

Learning Objectives:
- You will be able to summarize the major narrative events of Vita Nuova 4-11 at the literal level of reading.
- You will be able to explain the significance at the interpretive level of reading the following elements:
  - Dante's use of a “shield” in writing love poetry for Beatrice
  - Students will be able to reflect upon reasons that Dante would be deceptive and discuss what it means to be concerned with how someone affects you rather than who that someone actually is

Activities:
- Read Vita Nuova Chapters 4-11 in guided mode
- Return to edX to complete assessment questions

Unit 3: Chapters 12-19

Learning Objectives:
- You will be able to summarize the major narrative events of Vita Nuova 12-19 at the literal level of reading.
- You will be able to explain the significance at the interpretive level of reading the following elements:
  - Paths involving the afterlife as being circular as the end is the beginning
  - Dante’s contemplative exercise in Chapters 10-12
  - Dante’s revelation and turn from narcissism to a focus on the Other in Chapter 18

Activities:
- Read Chapters 12-19 of the Vita Nuova in guided mode
- Return to edX to complete assessment questions

Section 2: Re-Reading the Vita Nuova (Chapters 20-34)

Unit 1: Chapters 20-29

Learning Objectives:
- You will be able to summarize the major narrative events of Vita Nuova 20-29 at the literal level of reading.
- You will be able to explain the significance at the interpretive level of reading the following elements:
  - How re-reading is critical to a full understanding of a literary text
  - Dante's earlier dream of heart eating and how it relates to themes in this unit

Activities:
- Read Vita Nuova Chapters 20-29 in guided mode
- Return to edX to complete assessment questions

Unit 2: Chapters 30-38

Learning Objectives:
- You will be able to summarize the major narrative events of Vita Nuova 30-38 at the literal level of reading.
- You will be able to explain the significance at the interpretive level of reading the following elements:
  - the significance of the Ironic Self

Activities:
- Read Vita Nuova Chapters 30-38 in guided mode
• Return to edX to complete assessment questions

  o Unit 3: Chapters 39-42
  
  ▪ Learning Objectives:
  
  • You will be able to summarize the major narrative events of Vita Nuova 39-42 at the literal level of reading
  
  • You will be able to explain at the interpretive level of reading the significance of the following elements:
    
    o Dante's grief, his "wavering faith," and the irony of his final promise in relation to the beginning of the Inferno
    
    o Reasons that Dante faltered in his intention to remain true to Beatrice
  
  • You will be able to reflect on the significance of the following:
    
    o The nature of self-promises and how these "break the limits of the present" by both reaching into and exerting control over the future
    
    o Dante's sense of self given his final promise, why he privileges love, and how he privileges individual identity
  
  ▪ Activities:
  
  • Read Vita Nuova chapters 39-42 in guided mode
    
    o You will read commentary on guided mode on the further conversion of Dante and his "new life." In the course of this commentary you will view a video: "The Promise of Writing"
    
    • Return to edX to complete assessment questions

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**WEEK 3: OCT 29 – NOV 4**

Week 3: Inferno, Canti 1-4

• Section 1: The Dark Wood (Canti 1 and 2)
  
  • Unit 1: Beginning Week 3
  
  ▪ Learning Objectives:
  
  • You will be able to summarize the major narrative events of Canto 1 at the literal level of reading
  
  • You will be able to explain the significance at the interpretative level of reading the following elements of the canto:
    
    o Dante’s attempt to climb the hill toward the light of the sun and his being turned back (and failure) by the three beasts
    
    o Virgil as role model for Dante and as the voice of poetry in Dante’s journey
    
    o Dante’s awakening from sleep and movement toward greater consciousness
    
    • You will reflect on the significance of Dante’s journey unfolding ‘Nel Mezzo’
  
  ▪ Activities:
  
  • Read Canto 1 in personal mode
  
  • Read Canto 1 in guided mode
  
  • You will read commentary in guided mode on the poem being a journey to heightened consciousness, in the course of this commentary you will view two videos in guided mode: “The Monstrosity of Sin,” and “The Appearance of Virgil”
  
  • Return to edX to complete assessment questions

• Unit 2: Canto 2

  ▪ Learning Objectives:
  
  • You will be able to summarize the major narrative events of Canto 2 at the literal level of reading.
  
  • You will be able to explain the significance at the interpretive level of reading the following elements of the canto:
• Virgil’s entry as an allusion to that of Gabriel in the story of the Annunciation
• The identities and hierarchical positions of the three members of Dante’s “feminine trinity”
• You will be able to reflect on the significance of the following:
  • The reasons for Dante’s wavering courage
  • The relationship of the voice of Beatrice to Dante’s faith, mystery, and death
  • The relationship between Dante’s state of consciousnesses and what Beatrice represents to him (as revealed in the Vita Nuova)
• How the Camus quote/prompt relates to real/modern life

Activities:
• Read Canto 2 in personal mode
• Read Canto 2 in guided mode
  • You will read commentary in guided mode on Dante’s wavering courage the offer of help made by the divine other; in the course of this commentary you will view 3 videos in guided mode: “The Ambivalence of Freedom,” “The Feminine Trinity,” and “Annunciation”
• Return to edX to complete assessment questions

Section 2: The Hell Gate (Canto 3)
• Unit 1: Canto 3
  • Learning Objectives:
    • You will be able to summarize the major narrative events of Canto 3 at the literal level of reading
    • You will be able to explain the significance at the interpretive level of reading the following:
      • The double meaning of Hell Gate as it relates to a pilgrim’s journey
      • The Neutrals fear of “having a self”
    • You will reflect on the significance of the following:
      • Sin as a rejection of Self through the Other
      • Self awareness achieved through looking into the darkness inside
      • A general state of “half-consciousness” and how that relates to their own life
      • “Half-consciousness” in terms of self-destructive actions that often occur without our full awareness
  • Activities:
    • Read Canto 3 in personal mode
    • Read Canto 3 in guided mode
  • You will read commentary by Helen Luke in guided mode; in the course of this commentary students will watch 2 videos: “The Gates of Hell” and “The Neutrals”
• Return to edX to complete assessment questions

Section 3: The Neutrals (Canto 4)
• Unit 1: Canto 4
  • Learning Objectives:
    • You will be able to summarize the major narrative events of Canto 4 at the literal level of reading
    • You will be able to explain the significance at the interpretive level of reading the following:
      • The virtuous pagans’ placement in Limbo
    • You will reflect on the significance of the following:
• what the pagans reveal about the truth of reality, the fundamental tension between worldviews, and Dante’s “schema of identity” - how virtue is not enough
• What it means to be “fully alive” and whether or not it is is possible to be “fully alive”

Activities:
• Read Canto 4 in personal mode
• Read Canto 4 in guided mode
  • Read commentary on the virtuous pagans’ placement in limbo in guided mode from Sayers; in the course of this commentary students will view 2 videos: “The Neutrals” and “The Virtuous Pagans”
• Return to edX to complete assessment questions

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WEEK 4: NOV 5 – NOV 11

Week 4: Inferno, Canti 5-15
• Section 1: Sins of the Leopard (Canti 5-7)
  • Unit 1: Canto 5
    • Learning Objectives:
      • You will be able to summarize the major narrative events of Canto 5 at the literal level of reading
      • You will be able to explain the significance at the interpretive level of reading the following events:
        • Dante’s practice of asking the sinners for their own versions of their stories
        • Dante’s personal identification with Paolo and Francesca
      • What is meant by Francesca’s ironic language
      • You will reflect on the significance of the following:
        • The problem of ‘lust’ or ‘false closeness’ and relate it to real/modern life
        • What it means to “finalize” one’s identity
    • Activities:
      • Read Canto 5 in personal mode
      • Read Canto 5 in guided mode
        • You will read commentary in guided mode on Francesca's ironic language; in the course of this commentary students will view 2 videos: “Masaccio & Renaissance Art” and “Paolo and Francesca”
      • Return to edX to complete assessment questions
  • Unit 2: Canti 6 and 7
    • Learning Objectives:
      • You will be able to summarize the major narrative events of Canti 6-7 at the literal level of reading
      • You will be able to explain the significance at the interpretive level of reading the ambiguity of Francesca’s lines (‘love commanded me’) as compared to ideas presented in the Vita Nuova
      • You will be able to reflect on the worsening forms of incontinence as these pertain to real/modern life
    • Activities:
      • Read Canti 6-7 in personal mode
      • Read Canti 6-7 in guided mode

• You will read commentary in guided mode on worsening forms of incontinence

• Return to edX to complete assessment questions

• Section 2: The Gates of Dis: Hardening the Heart (Canti 8-10)

  • Unit 1: Canto 8
  
  Learning Objectives:
  
  • You will be able to summarize the major narrative events of Canto 8 at the literal level of reading.
  
  • You will be able to explain the significance at the interpretive level of reading the following:
    
    • Dante’s response to Filippo as it pertains to a pilgrim’s conversion experience
    
    • The central irony of Dante’s pilgrim journey as both a progression through sin and an acknowledgment of his need for forgiveness
  
  • You will be able to reflect on the significance of Dante’s encounters as marking in Dante the growing progression of his need for forgiveness

  Activities:
  
  • Read Canto 8 in personal mode
  • Read Canto 8 in guided mode
    
    • You will read commentary in guided mode on Dante’s growing need for forgiveness; in the course of this commentary you will watch a video: “Filippo Argenti”
  
  • Return to edX to complete assessment questions

  • Unit 2: Canto 9
  
  Learning Objectives:
  
  • You will be able to summarize the major narrative events of Canto 9 at the literal level of reading
  
  • You will be able to explain the significance at the interpretive level of reading the following elements:
    
    • The inability of Virgil to open the Gates of Dis
    
    • Dante’s encounter with the Gorgons
  
  • You will be able to reflect on why it is necessary for one to ‘harden the heart’ for more deliberate sin

  Activities:
  
  • Read Canto 9 in personal mode
  • Read Canto 9 in guided mode
    
    • You will read commentary in guided mode on Virgil’s failure to open the Gates of Dis, the encounter with the Gorgons, and concept of “hardening” one’s heart”; in the course of this commentary you will watch a video: “Gates of Dis”
  
  • Return to edX to complete assessment questions

  • Unit 3: The Act of Killing
  
  Learning Objectives:
  
  • You will be able to summarize the major narrative events of “The Act of Killing” at the literal level.
  
  • You will be able to explain the significance at the interpretive level of reading the following elements:
    
    • Filippo as a pivot point in the Inferno
    
    • You will be able to contrast ‘The Act of Killing’ to the Inferno, particularly Dante’s encounters of specific sinners
    
    • You will be able to summarize the “hardening of the heart” required to commit violent sins
• Students will reflect on the significance of the following:
  • The journey that the movie’s principal figure goes through during the making of the movie as a sinner becoming increasingly aware of his sin
  • The relevance of the Helen Luke reading in context of the structure of hell, the behavior of the sinners, and the movie ‘The Act of Killing’

• Activities:
  • Watch introductory video to Act of Killing
  • Watch Act of Killing
  • Participate in a group discussion about Act of Killing
  • Return to edX to complete assessment questions

• Unit 4: Canto 10
  • Learning Objectives:
    • You will be able to summarize the major narrative events of Canto 10 at the literal level of reading
    • You will be able to explain the significance at the interpretive level of reading the following:
      • Why Cavalcanti is inside the Gates of Dis
      • You will reflect on what is meant by the distortion of ‘the word made’
  • Activities:
    • Read Canto 10 in personal mode
    • Read Canto 10 in guided mode
      • Read commentary in guided mode on Cavalcanti and “The Word Made”
    • Return to edX to complete assessment questions

• Section 3: The Wood of the Suicides (Canti 11-13)
  • Unit 1: Canto 11
    • Learning Objectives:
      • You will be able to summarize the major narrative events of Canto 11 at the literal level of reading
    • Activities:
      • Read Canto 11 in personal mode
      • Read Canto 11 in guided mode
      • Read commentary in guided mode
      • Return to edX to complete assessment questions

  • Unit 2: Canto 12
    • Learning Objectives:
      • You will be able to summarize the major narrative events of Canto 12 at the literal level of reading
      • You will reflect on the parallels shared between Canto 12 and Act of Killing
    • Activities:
      • Read Canto 12 in personal mode
      • Read Canto 12 in guided mode
      • Read commentary in guided mode
      • Return to edX to complete assessment questions

  • Unit 3: Canto 13
    • Learning Objectives:
      • You will be able to summarize the major narrative events of Canto 13 at the literal level of reading
      • You will be able to explain the significance at the interpretive level of reading the following:
        • The irony in the phrase ‘I never broke faith with my lord’
• The narrative connection between ‘the neutrals’ to ‘P&F’ to ‘Filippo’ to ‘the suicides’
• You will reflect on the complicated concept of “finalizing one’s identity” and how this relates to the concept of “self, freedom, and relational identity”

Activities:
• Read Canto 13 in personal mode
• Read Canto 13 in guided mode
  • Read commentary in guided mode
• Return to edX to complete assessment questions

Section 4: Hate Crimes (Canti 14-15)
• Unit 1: Canti 14-15
  • Learning Objectives:
    • You will be able to summarize the major narrative events of Canti 14-15 at the literal level of reading
  • Activities:
    • Read Canti 14-15 in personal mode
    • Read Canti 14-15 in guided mode:
      • Use marginalia to comment and contemplate with limited guidance
    • Return to edX to complete assessment questions

WEEK 5: NOV 12 – NOV 18

Week 5: Inferno, Canti 16-30
• Section 1: Sins of the Wolf (Canti 16-25)
  • Unit 1: Canto 16
    • Learning Objectives:
      • You will be able to summarize the major narrative events of Canti 16 at the literal level of reading
      • You will reflect on why violence against nature, art, and god are worse sins than suicide and wrath
    • Activities:
      • Watch a video overview of the week
      • Read Canto 16 in personal mode
      • Read Canto 16 in guided mode:
        • Read commentary in guided mode on violence against nature, art, and God as opposed to acts of wrath
      • Return to edX to complete assessment questions
  • Unit 2: Canto 17
    • Learning Objectives:
      • You will be able to summarize the major narrative events of Canto 17 at the literal level of reading
      • You will be able to explain the significance at the interpretive level of meaning the following:
        • Relationship between the concept of ‘lying to yourself’ and the characters in ‘The Act of Killing’
        • Relationship between the ideas of conscious and unconscious irony and the concepts of explicit and implicit choice
        • The location of usury next to geryon and the implicit choice involved in usury
        • The relationship between usury and the attitudes in ‘The Act of Killing’
      • You will reflect on the following
The difference between sin where you ‘lie to yourself’ vs. sin where you do not lie to yourself

The role of “usury” in the context of modern capitalistic life

Activities:
- You will read Canto 17 in personal mode
- You will read Canto 17 in guided mode:
  - Students will read commentary in guided mode on Geryon and the process of “lying to oneself.” In the course of this commentary, students will view a video: “Geryon/The Art of Self Deception”
- Return to edX to complete assessment questions

Unit 3: Canti 18-25
- Learning Objectives:
  - You will be able to summarize the major narrative events of Canti 18-25 at a literal level of reading
  - You will reflect on the following:
    - The significance of these canti as a progression of worsening state of sin
    - How different types of fraud relate to real/modern life

Activities:
- Read Canti 18-25 in personal mode
- Read Canti 18-25 in guided mode:
  - Students will read commentary in guided mode while using annotations to contemplate and comment on worsening states of sin in the Inferno
- Return to edX to complete assessment questions

Section 2: Ulysses (Canto 26)
- Unit 1: Canto 26
  - Learning Objectives:
    - You will be able to summarize the major narrative events of Canto 26 at the literal level of reading
    - You will be able to explain the significance at the interpretive level of reading the following:
      - Definition of the ‘sins of the wolf’ as it pertains to both Canto 26 and 18-25
      - What it means to be suspicious of claims to transcendence in the context of the Inferno
      - How the trust/faith journey that Dante takes relates to the ones Ulysses’ men embark on
    - You will reflect on the significance of the following:
      - How Canto 26 illustrates the ‘shadow’ side of eucharistic feeding
      - The dangers of trust, truth claims, and the consumptive nature of certain identities
      - Students will reflect on claims to transcendence in context of real/modern life
  - Activities:
    - Read Canto 26 in personal mode
    - Read Canto 26 in guided mode:
      - You will read commentary in guided mode on the “sins of the wolf,” and the definition of “predation.” In the course of this commentary you will view a video: “Ulysses.”
    - Return to edX to complete assessment questions

Section 3: Discord and Decay (Canti 27-30)
• Unit 1: Canti 27-30
  • Learning Objectives:
    • You will be able to summarize the major narrative events of Canti 27-30 at the literal level of reading
    • You will be able to explain the significance at the interpretive level of reading the following:
      • The “snake scene” and sinners’ loss of self
      • The idea of ‘confronting the fraudulent intentions inside oneself’ within the context of the Inferno
    • You will reflect on the significance of the following:
      • How Dante’s grip on his own self strengthens as he witnesses loss of self
      • The nature of fraud and its place in our modern world
      • The idea of self-deception in the context of real/modern life
  • Activities:
    • Read Canti 27-20 in personal mode
    • Read Canti 27-30 in guided mode:
      • You will read commentary in guided mode on loss of self, fraud, and self deception within the Inferno
    • Return to edX to complete assessment questions

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**WEEK 6: NOV 19 – NOV 25**

Week 6: Inferno, Canti 31-34
• Section 1: Canti 31 and 32
  • Unit 1: Overview of week 6 and Canto 31
    • Learning Objectives:
      • You will be able summarize the major narrative events of Canti 31 at the literal level of reading
      • You will be able to explain the significance at the interpretive level of meaning the following elements:
        • The frozen center on hell
        • The muteness of the giants
        • The traitors beneath the ice
      • You will be able to reflect on how the material of Canto 31 relates to the character of Ali from ‘The Act of Killing’
    • Activities:
      • Watch a video overview of the week
      • Read Canto 31 in personal mode
      • Read Canto 31 in guided mode
        • Students will read commentary in guided mode on the center of hell and the muteness of the giants, connecting the elements of Canto 31 to Act of Killing
      • Return to edX to complete assessment questions
  • Unit 2: Canto 32
    • Learning Objectives:
      • You will be able summarize the major narrative events of Canti 32 at the literal level of reading
      • You will reflect on how the material of Canto 32 relates to the character of Ali from ‘The Act of Killing’
• You will be able to explain the significance at the interpretive level of reading the following:
  • The meaning of the “frozen” center of hell

Activities:
• Read Canto 32 in personal mode
• Read Canto 32 in guided mode
  • Students will read commentary in guided mode on the “frozen” center of hell and continue connecting this material to Act of Killing
• Return to edX to complete assessment questions

Section 2: Canto 33, Ugolino
  • Unit 1: Canto 33
    Learning Objectives:
    • You will be able summarize the major narrative events of Canto 33 at the literal level of reading
    • You will be able to explain the significance of the following at the interpretive level of reading:
      1. Ugolino's lack of self-awareness and lack of understanding of his own words
      2. Ugolino's denial of his children “words”
    • You will reflect on the significance of the following:
      1. How Ugolino's denial of guilt represents a final hopeless rejection of the Other
      2. Nature of language, identity, and the possibility of not understanding the full implications of your own words, and the terrible state it can ultimately lead to
      3. How the final scene of Act of Killing relates to this week's readings in the Inferno
    Activities:
    • Read Canto 33 in personal mode
    • Read Canto 33 in guided mode
      • You will read commentary in guided mode on Ugolino's lack of self-awareness and connect this material to the final scene in Act of Killing; in the course of this commentary students will view a video: “Ugolino”
    • Return to edX to complete assessment questions

Section 3: Canto 34, Satan and Conversion
  • Unit 1: Canto 34
    Learning Objectives:
    • You will be able to summarize the major narrative events of Canto 34 at the literal level of reading
    • You will be able to explain the significance of the following at the interpretive level of reading:
      1. The relationship between Satan and consumption
      2. How Dante has become ready to accept the forgiveness of the other
    • You will reflect on the significance of the following:
      1. Concept of a ‘moment of conversion’ and how it pertains to real/modern life
      2. Concepts of self and other and what happens when you reject your relational identity
    Activities:
    • Read Canto 34 in personal mode
• Read Canto 34 in guided mode
  • You will read commentary in guided mode on Satan, consumption, and Dante’s moment of conversion; in the course of this commentary students will view a video: “Satan: The Turning Point”
• Return to edX to complete assessment questions