

COVID-19 Statement

We know from existing data that wearing a mask in public can help prevent the spread of COVID-19 in the community (Lyu & Wehby, 2020; CDC, 2020; Johns Hopkins Medicine, 2020). In accordance with PA Department of Health regulations and guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), The Pennsylvania State University has determined that everyone will be required to wear a face mask in university buildings, including classrooms. While ***this course will meet synchronously via Zoom***, if you are in a campus building for any reason, you **MUST** wear a mask appropriately (i.e., covering both your mouth and nose). Masks are provided for students, instructors, and staff, and everyone is expected to wear one.

Students experiencing any illness and especially COVID-19 related symptoms should not attend class in person. Those students are strongly encouraged to contact a health care provider and their instructor as soon as possible to discuss reasonable accommodations.

Failure to comply with university policies related to COVID-19 may result in a violation of the [Student Code of Conduct](#). Students who believe they should be granted a health or safety exception to this policy should consult with Student Disability Resources about reasonable accommodations and present their accommodation letter to me if an exception is granted.

ITALIAN 415

La Divina Commedia di Dante

Spring 2021 – COVID Remote Instruction Mode

Department of Spanish Italian & Portuguese

The Pennsylvania State University

Prof. Michele Rossi



Class Information

Class Schedule: Tuesday & Thursday, 1:35pm-2:50pm, via Zoom (teaching mode: remote synchronous).

Contact

Michele Rossi, Ph.D.
Email: mur38@psu.edu

Zoom Office Hours

Monday and Wednesday, 2:30pm-3:30pm, and by appointment. Always contact me via email to schedule a time. I will then send you the link to my personal room in Zoom, and we will virtually meet at that time.

Course Description:

As stated by the Italian writer Italo Calvino, “a classic is a book that has never finished saying what it has to say.” The *Divine Comedy*, Dante’s masterpiece, continues to speak to us even seven centuries after its composition. In this course, we will read Dante’s poem focusing on its famous characters – Virgilio, Beatrice, Francesca da Rimini, Pier delle Vigne, Ulisse, il conte Ugolino, Manfredi, Guido Guinizzelli... –, and we will explore different topics: love, power, and literature, among others. We will also investigate the relationships between the concepts of *metaphor* and *metamorphosis*, with the goal of illuminating Dante’s unique and complex poetics. In our journey from Hell to Heaven, we will place the *Divine Comedy* in the cultural, historical, and literary context in which it was conceived (Italy in the Middle Ages), without forgetting its enduring influence today, even in our pop culture, as demonstrated by contemporary books (Dan Brown’s *Inferno*), movies (*Seven*), music bands (*The Divine Comedy*), videogames (*Dante’s Inferno*), and comic books (Go Nagai’s manga *La Divina Commedia*). **The course will be taught in Italian. Prerequisite: any 300-level Italian course.**

Required Book (complete version: *Inferno*, *Purgatorio*, and *Paradiso*):

Dante Alighieri, *The Divine Comedy*, eds. Durling and Martinez, Oxford University Press.

Course Requirements

Attendance (5%) – In order to be successful in this course, you must attend class regularly via Zoom. **Class participation is not the same as attendance** and constitutes a substantial part of your final grade (see below), and you cannot participate in class unless you are present. **You are not permitted to miss class** with the exception of absences due to officially documented, university-approved curricular and extracurricular activities. **4 late arrivals (or two late arrivals of 15 minutes or more) are equivalent to one absence.** **You are responsible for all material covered in class, regardless of whether you are present.** In the event you are unable to attend a class, contact the instructor prior to the conclusion of the day’s class by e-mail to find out what assignments you missed. Absence

from class is NOT an excuse for the late submission of work; it should be recognized that not all work can be “made-up” and that absences can affect student performance in a class. **If an evaluative event will be missed due to an unavoidable absence, you must contact your instructor as soon as the unavoidable absence is known to discuss ways to make up the work. An instructor might not consider an unavoidable absence legitimate if you do not contact the instructor beforehand.** Students will be held responsible for using only *legitimate, unavoidable reasons* for requesting a make-up in the event of a missed class or evaluative event ([Policy 42-27](#)). Requests for missing class or an evaluative event due to reasons that are based on false claims may be considered violations of the policy on Academic Integrity ([Policy 49-20](#)). **You are required to provide verification from University Health Services or outside clinicians for significant prolonged illnesses or injuries resulting in absences from classes.**

Extended Absences: During your enrollment at Penn State, unforeseen challenges may arise. If you ever need to miss an extended amount of class in such a circumstance, please notify your professor so you can determine the best course of action to make up missed work. If your situation rises to a level of difficulty you cannot manage on your own with faculty support, reach out to the Student Care & Advocacy office by phone at (814-863-2020) or email them at StudentCare@psu.edu. Office hours are Monday-Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Preparation & In-class Participation (20%). Class participation is vital in order to complete successfully this course, and you will be graded weekly. Highest grades are earned by students who come to class regularly (see the Attendance Policy above), participate actively, and are well prepared every time, having read the materials and completed the assigned homework for each class. In class you will also work small groups: it is essential that you provide an effective contribution and collaborate in a positive way with your classmates. Considering the kind of instruction (virtual), it is important that you work responsibly also when the professor is not checking directly your group. The language spoken in this class is Italian: speaking in English will lower your participation grade. Your spoken Italian is not supposed to be perfect, but you need to try to communicate in Italian in every class.

Quizzes (20%). There will be **5 short quizzes** (10-15 minutes) at the beginning of the class to verify that you read the *canto* we are going to discuss.

Written Exams (20%). There will be **two written exams** throughout the semester during class time. Guidelines will be provided.

Midterm Project (10%). Midterm projects are **due on March 9, 11:59pm**. You will write a one-page comment about one *terzina*. Highest grades are earned by students who show originality and a deep analysis of the chosen *terzina*. Guidelines will be provided.

Final Oral Presentation (10%). The last two weeks of our class will be dedicated to individual class presentations. You will decide a topic with the professor and present it in class. Guidelines will be provided.

Final Project (15%). Final projects are **due on April 15, 11:59pm (first draft) and April 29, 11:59pm (final draft)**. You can write a research paper (about 4 pages, double space, in Italian, with bibliography – at least 3 scholarly articles) or realize a creative project (for example: film a video, create a graphic novel, etc.). You need to discuss your ideas with me

during the week of March 22-26. Your final paper/project needs to be well connected with the readings and the topics we cover and discuss in class. Highest grades are earned by students who submit original, well-finished, and meaningful final papers/projects. Detailed guidelines will be provided.

****Note: This course does not have an exam during 'Finals Week'****

Grading Scale (based on departmental guidelines)

There is no curving or rounding of the grades in this course

A: 95.0-100.0 A-: 90.0-94.9 B+: 87.7-89.9 B: 83.3-87.6 B-: 80.0-83.2
C+: 75.0-79.9 C: 70.0-74.9 D: 60.0-69.9 F: 0.0-59.9

There is no extra credit in this course

Late Work: Work that is handed in late automatically receives a lower grade.

Academic Integrity – We support active collaboration with classmates, more proficient speakers, and tutors in completing and correcting homework, in practicing dialogues or other activities, or discussing the material of compositions. You may share notes and ideas with other students, however, you may not ask tutors, more proficient speakers or classmates to complete your own work, and **you may not use electronic translation programs**. In accordance with *PSU Senate Policy 49-20*, plagiarism, cheating, submitting work of another person or work previously used without informing the instructor may lead to lowered course grades, a failing in the course, or more severe measures, depending on the gravity of the individual case according to the judgment of the Academic Integrity Committee. Visit <http://undergrad.psu.edu/aappm/G-9-academic-integrity.html> for further information. For other general university policies regarding Academic Code of Conduct, please read <http://studentaffairs.psu.edu/conduct/codeofconduct/>.

Cell Phones – Cell phones not being used to access Zoom or other course materials are to be turned off and stored before class begins. The professor reserves the right to penalize a student's final grade for continued cell phone interruptions (including sending and receiving text messages).

Laptops/Tablet Computers – Any use of laptops or tablet computers unrelated to coursework is prohibited and the professor reserves the right to penalize a student's final grade for disregarding this policy.

University Policy on Disabilities – Penn State welcomes students with disabilities into the University's educational programs. In order to receive consideration for reasonable accommodations, you must contact [Student Disability Resources](#), located at 116 Boucke Building (814-863-1807), participate in an intake interview, and provide [documentation](#). If the documentation supports your request for reasonable accommodations, SDR will provide

you with an accommodation letter. Please share this letter with your instructors and discuss the accommodations with them as early as possible. Many disabilities are not readily noticeable and students are therefore encouraged to identify their needs early in the semester so timely adaptations can be made. ***Please note that you must follow this process for every semester that you request accommodations.*** For detailed information, please visit [Student Disability Resources](#) website.

Counseling and Psychological services – Many students at Penn State face personal challenges or have psychological needs that may interfere with their academic progress, social development, or emotional wellbeing. The university offers a variety of confidential services to help you through difficult times, including individual and group counseling, crisis intervention, consultations, online chats, and mental health screenings. These services are provided by staff who welcome all students and embrace a philosophy respectful of clients’ cultural and religious backgrounds, and sensitive to differences in race, ability, gender identity and sexual orientation. For further information regarding CAPS please visit their web site at <http://studentaffairs.psu.edu/counseling/>

Educational Equity/Report Bias – Penn State takes great pride to foster a diverse and inclusive environment for students, faculty, and staff. Acts of intolerance, discrimination, or harassment due to age, ancestry, color, disability, gender, gender identity, national origin, race, religious belief, sexual orientation, or veteran status are not tolerated and can be reported through Educational Equity via the [Report Bias webpage](#).

University Important Dates

Drop deadline: Sunday, January 24th at 11:59pm (ET)

Add deadline: Monday, January 25th at 11:59pm (ET)

Late-drop deadline: Friday, April 9th at 11:59pm (ET)

Withdrawal deadline: Friday, April 30th at 5:00pm (ET)

For other dates, see the university’s academic calendar:

<https://www.registrar.psu.edu/academic-calendars/2020-21.cfm>

CLASS SCHEDULE

(note: this is a tentative schedule. You will find updated versions of this syllabus on Canvas)

SETTIMANA 1

Introduzione. *“Il poema sacro al quale ha posto mano e cielo e terra”*: la struttura della *Divina Commedia*

Martedì 19 gennaio: presentazione del corso

Giovedì 21 gennaio: *Inferno* I

SETTIMANA 2

“Nel mezzo del cammin di nostra vita”: l'inizio della *Divina Commedia*

Martedì 26 gennaio: *Inferno* I

Giovedì 28 gennaio: *Inferno* II. **Quiz 1.**

SETTIMANA 3

“Sì ch'io fui sesto tra cotanto senno”: il Limbo e la bella scola dei poeti

Martedì 2 febbraio: *Inferno* III

Giovedì 4 febbraio: *Inferno* IV. **Quiz 2.**

SETTIMANA 4

“Galeotto fu 'l libro e chi lo scrisse”: Francesca da Rimini tra letteratura, amore e morte (prima parte)

Martedì 9 febbraio: **Wellness Day – no class.**

Giovedì 11 febbraio: *Inferno* V

SETTIMANA 5

“Galeotto fu 'l libro e chi lo scrisse”: Francesca da Rimini tra letteratura, amore e morte (seconda parte)

Martedì 16 febbraio: *Inferno* V

Giovedì 18 febbraio: **Exam 1.**

SETTIMANA 6

“Uomini fummo, e or siam fatti sterpi”: il canto di Pier delle Vigne. Dante e Brunetto Latini

Martedì 23 febbraio: *Inferno* XIII

Giovedì 25 febbraio: *Inferno* XV

SETTIMANA 7

Il folle volo di Ulisse

Martedì 2 marzo: *Inferno* XXVI. **Quiz 3.**

Giovedì 4 marzo: *Inferno* XXVI

SETTIMANA 8

“E quindi uscimmo a riveder le stelle”: il conte Ugolino e l'ultimo canto dell'*Inferno*

Martedì 9 marzo: *Inferno* XXXIII-XXXIV. **Midterm project due.**

Giovedì 11 marzo: **Wellness Day – no class.**

SETTIMANA 9

Il Purgatorio

Martedì 16 marzo: **Exam 2.**

Giovedì 18 marzo: *Purgatorio I*

SETTIMANA 10

"Biondo era e bello e di gentile aspetto": Dante e Manfredi. Il dolce stil novo

Martedì 23 marzo: *Purgatorio III.* **Start to work on your final project: discuss your topic with me!**

Giovedì 25 marzo: *Purgatorio XXIV*

SETTIMANA 11

Amore, lussuria e gloria letteraria: Guido Guinizzelli. La fine del Purgatorio

Martedì 30 marzo: *Purgatorio XXVI.* **Quiz 4.**

Giovedì 1 aprile: *Purgatorio XXXIII*

SETTIMANA 12

"Stairway to Heaven": Dante in Paradiso

Martedì 6 aprile: *Purgatorio XXXIII*

Giovedì 8 aprile: *Paradiso I.* **Quiz 5.**

SETTIMANA 13

"L'amor che move il sole e l'altre stelle": la fine del Paradiso

Martedì 13 aprile: *Paradiso XVII*

Giovedì 15 aprile: *Paradiso XXXIII.* **Final project (first draft) due.**

SETTIMANA 14

Martedì 20 aprile: **Presentazioni finali**

Giovedì 22 aprile: **Presentazioni finali**

SETTIMANA 15

Martedì 27 aprile: **Presentazioni finali**

Giovedì 29 aprile: **Presentazioni finali.** **Final project (final draft) due.**