

Dante's Dark Wood: Introducing the Divine Comedy

Credit / award	Non-accredited		
Start date	26 th April 2017	End date	31 st May 2017
Day and time	Wednesdays, 19:00 – 21:00	No of meetings	5
	<i>(Please note this course will not be meeting on 24th May 2017)</i>		
Venue	Maddingley Hall Maddingley Cambridge		
Tutor	Dr Scott Annett	Course code	1617NWR007

Director of Programmes Emma Jennings
For further information on this course, please contact Public Programme Coordinator, Clare Kerr
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To book See: www.ice.cam.ac.uk or telephone 01223 746262

Tutor biography

Dr Scott Annett is an experienced teacher of medieval literature, having taught courses in both the Faculty of English and the Faculty of Modern and Medieval Languages at the University of Cambridge. He has experience working on authors as diverse as Chaucer, Marie de France, Dante and the Gawain Poet. Indeed, the relationship between medieval English and medieval Italian literature is one of his primary research interests. Dr Annett enjoys working on texts written in various languages (Latin, English, Italian and Anglo-Norman), as well as attending to the complex theological, philosophical and literary questions posed by authors of this time.

Course syllabus

Aims:

The course aims to

- Introduce students to Dante's writing with particular focus on the *Divine Comedy*;
- Enhance critical appreciation of the texts discussed by close reading and practical criticism;
- Encourage awareness of the diversity and complexity of texts from the period, including attention to theological and philosophical perspectives, literary innovations and the wider European context within which the texts were written.

Content:

This course explores Dante's writing, focusing on the *Divine Comedy*. The texts will be discussed in translation and particular attention will be paid to medieval culture and Dante's influence on English literature, including Chaucer. The final session will examine the impact of Dante's writing upon modern authors, including Samuel Beckett, T S Eliot and Seamus Heaney.

Session 1 (26 April 2017): Introducing Dante and the Medieval World

Session 2 (3rd May 2017): Cavalcanti, Dante and Love as Sickness

Session 3 (10th May 2017): Pity and Piety in Dante's *Commedia*

Session 4 (17th May 2017): Chaucer's Dante

Session 5 (31st May 2017): Dante and the Moderns

(Please note this course will not be meeting on 24th May 2017)

Presentation of the course:

The unit takes place over five two-hour evening classes. All students will be encouraged to participate fully in discussion of the texts and the issues surrounding them, and may be invited to prepare informal individual presentations on particular aspects of a text or historical issue.

As a result of the course, within the constraints of the time available, students should be able to:

As a result of the unit, within the constraints of the time available, students should be able to:

- Develop knowledge and understanding of medieval literature and in particular Dante's *Divine Comedy* within its cultural and historical context;
- Show awareness of critical and theoretical approaches to literature from the period;
- Develop keener close reading skills, particularly when engaging with texts in medieval texts;
- Articulate and discuss the broader concepts of the course and the relationships between the texts, particularly Dante's writing and modern texts.

Reading and resources list

Listed below are a number of texts that might be of interest for future reference, but do not need to be bought (or consulted) for the course.

Author	Title	Publisher and date
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Primary Texts

- Beckett, Samuel, "Dante and the Lobster" in *More Pricks than Kicks* (London: Picador, 1934, repr. 1974)
- Chaucer, Geoffrey, *The Canterbury Tales* (London: Penguin Classics, 2005)
- *Dante, Divine Comedy*
 - ---, *Inferno*, trans. by Kirkpatrick (London: Penguin Classics, 2006)
 - ---, *Purgatorio*, trans. by Kirkpatrick (London: Penguin Classics, 2007)
 - ---, *Paradiso*, trans. by Kirkpatrick (London: Penguin Classics, 2007)
- Eliot, T.S. *Four Quartets* (London: Faber, 1994)
- Heaney, Seamus, *Station Island* (London: Faber, 1984)

Additional printouts and material will be made available closer to the commencement of the course. Specific editions of each text are not crucial. Dante will be discussed in translation, though parallel text editions would be helpful so that occasional comparison can be made to specific Italian terms.

Suggested Secondary Reading

- Boyd, Patrick, *Dante Philomythes and Philosopher: Man in the Cosmos* (Cambridge: CUP, 1983)
- Griffiths, Eric, "Introduction" to *Dante in English*, ed. Griffiths and Reynolds (London: Penguin, 2005)
- Jacoff, R (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Dante* (Cambridge: CUP, 1993)
- Kirkpatrick, Robin, *English and Italian Literature from Dante to Shakespeare* (London: Longman, 1995)
- Scott, J.A., *Understanding Dante* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2004)

Note Students of the Institute of Continuing Education are entitled to 20% discount on books published by Cambridge University Press (CUP) which are purchased at the Press bookshop, 1 Trinity Street, Cambridge (Mon-Sat 9am – 5:30pm, Sun 11am – 5pm). A letter or email confirming acceptance on to a current Institute course should be taken as evidence of enrolment.

Information correct as of: 23 November 2016