

## FLOR LITR 3315

# Florence and the Florentines in Dante's Divine Comedy and Boccaccio's Decameron

## **CAPA FLORENCE PROGRAM**

## **Course Description**

The course will introduce students to the history of Italian Literature, focusing on great masterpieces (in English translation) from the 14th century. A multidisciplinary approach, dealing with social, political, historical and philosophical implications will provide further understanding by placing literary works in a comprehensive cultural context. Special emphasis will be placed on the impact of Italian literature in European culture in pre-modern age, stressing the broad influence of Dante's Comedy and Boccaccio's Decameron.

Students will be provided with the basic operational tools to help them recognize different literary genres and understand why certain forms of artistic expression are peculiar to certain ages, at times to the exclusion of others. Literary issues such as the great divide between high and low literature, the question of language, the relation between classical, Christian and chivalric epics, the concept of originality in the Middle Ages, the circulation of books and the development of a reading public will be thoroughly investigated. Students will be able to follow the formation and the evolution of the mainstream literary tradition, and appreciate the innovative charge, both in form and content, of the works selected. They will also learn to practice a close reading of the texts and will be encouraged to form their own critical opinion on the writings analyzed for their oral presentations and video project.

The first lessons will be devoted to a general overview of the 13th and the 14th centuries both from a historical and a more specifically literary perspective. Then the focus will shift onto the role of Dante in shaping the vernacular literature as a means to bridge the gap between academic and popular culture, to Boccaccio's ground-breaking work in restyling storytelling into an art of conversation and therefore a joint effort. Each lecture introducing a new author will be preceded by a brief outline of his life and literary output and will then proceed with the description and analysis of his major work.

## **Course Aims**

The course aims at providing students with the elementary background knowledge needed to appreciate the relevance of few, selected authors, and it means to provide an adequate knowledge of their works in terms of form, structure, style, imagery and themes. Students will also learn to distinguish among different poetic and prose kinds and to discuss the implications of major infractions of the law of genre.

## **Requirements and Prerequisites**

There are no prerequisites for this course. Students are asked to take careful notes during lectures as the issues addressed in class are to be considered a fundamental didactic base for the whole course. Individual study of notes, readings, handouts etc. is required on a weekly basis. NOTE: it is the students' responsibility to check whether they have all the materials handed out in class.

## **Capa Students Learning & Developmental Outcomes (SLDOs)**

- 1. **Globalization**. Students are able to recognize, describe, and interpret examples of the impact of the globalization in the urban environment.
- 2. <u>Urban Environment</u>. Students are able to explore and analyse the spaces they inhabit and reflect on differences and similarities between their home and host environments.
- 3. <u>Social Dynamics</u>. Students are able to understand concepts of and the implications of the realities of power, privilege, and inequality in urban environments.

- 4. <u>Diversity</u>. Students are able to describe, interpret, and respect the differences and similarities within their student community and between their home country and the host country.
- 5. Personal and Professional Development: CAPA students will gain insight into their personal and professional development that occurred during their CAPA learning abroad experience, with emphasis on the skills they acquired that will be of particular interest to future employers and graduate school admissions officers. The development of skills relative to personal and professional development and career preparedness include for this class the following ones:
  - Networking: The ability to intentionally and purposefully connect and interact with others in order to develop professional and social relationships;
  - Communications: The ability to receive, interpret, and articulate information and ideas effectively:
  - **Remote Collaboration**: The ability to utilize IT resources to connect virtually with others and achieve collective goals and objectives;
  - Global Perspective: The skills required to live and work in an interdependent world through forming an understanding of connections between one's own life and those of people across the globe;
  - Cultural Awareness: The understanding of oneself, others and the ability to embrace and appreciate diverse and complex perspectives, values, and beliefs;
  - Organization, Time Management and Prioritization Skills: The ability to achieve identified outcomes by using time, energy and resources in an effective and productive manner;
  - Problem Solving: The ability to find solutions to difficult or complex issues and to manage moments of uncertainty or ambiguity;
  - Adaptability: The ability to adjust oneself readily to different conditions and environments;
  - Goal Setting: The ability to identify, form and implement actions that will achieve predetermined aims and objectives;
  - **Career-based or Vocational Skills**: The development of specific knowledge or abilities related to an occupation.

## **Learning Outcomes specific for the course:**

- a) recognize, describe, and interpret the impact of the Middle Ages and Renaissance historical periods in the urban environment from their examination of relevant literary texts and through their exploration and analysis of the urban environment of their host city
- b) reflect on the 'personification' of Florence in Medieval and Renaissance works and on the relationship between citizen/author and the urban space he lives in
- c) understand diverse philosophies and literary concepts that shaped Medieval and Renaissance culture
- d) develop a greater appreciation of Medieval and Renaissance Italian authors through critical readings and on-site activities

## **Class Methodology**

A lecture and discussion course with a seminar format. Students will be encouraged to take part to each class and to work together. They will be assigned weekly homework to reinforce their new acquisitions to prepare for both the mid-term and final exam. Moreover, they will work on specific and original on-site projects individually or in group and will be given the chance to report on them publicly.

## **Field Components**

CAPA provides the unique opportunity to learn about the city through direct, guided experience. Participation in field activities for this course is required. You will actively explore the Global City in which you are currently living. Furthermore, you will have the chance to collect useful information that will be an invaluable resource for the essays/papers/projects assigned in this course.

#### The assigned field component(s) are:

Please list field studies or other relevant experiential learning here

- Visit to the Museo Casa di Dante
- Love Poetry and Florence (walking tour)
- Medieval symbolism: Florence Through Dante's Eyes (walking tour)
- Visit to the Church of Santa Maria Novella

Students are also strongly encouraged to participate in **co-curricular** program activities, among which the following one is warmly suggested:

Siena and San Gimignano

#### **Mid-Term & Final Exams**

The mid-term exam consists of two parts:

- a. Five short-answer questions worth 10 points each (1 hours)
- b. One long-answer (or short-essay) question worth 50 points. (1 hour)

The final exam consists of two parts:

- a. Five short-answer questions worth 10 points each (1 hours)
- b. One long-answer (or short-essay) question worth 50 points. (1 hour)

## Please note that NO make-up exams will be allowed.

Assessment/Grading Policy

100000111101119 0110111111	<u> </u>			
Descriptor	Alpha	UK	US	GPA
Excellent	Α	75+	93+	4.0
	A-	70-74	90-92	3.7
Good	B+	66-69	87-89	3.3
	В	63-65	83-86	3.0
	B-	60-62	80-82	2.7
Average	C+	56-59	77-79	2.3
	С	53-55	73-76	2.0
Below Average / Poor	C-	50-52	70-72	1.7
	D+	46-49	67-69	1.3
	D	40-45	60-66	0.7
				1.0
Fail	F	<40	<60	0

## **Grade Breakdown and Assessment of Learning Outcomes**

Assessment Task	Grade %	Learning Outcomes	Due Date
Class participation/Small group discussion	10%	a, b, c, d	Weekly
Assignments	15%	a, b, c, d	Various Weeks
Mid-term exam	25%	a, b, c, d	Week 7
My Plaque Video	15%	c, d	Week 9
Presentation about stories from <i>Decameron</i>	10%	c, d	Week 12
Final Exam	25%	a, b, c, d	Week 14

## **Assignments**

## Assignment 1

Read the selected excerpts from Boccaccio's Life of Dante and answer the following questions:

- How can you define Boccaccio's Life of Dante?
- How does Boccaccio intend to honour Dante?
- What's Boccaccio interpretation of Dante's name?
- Does Boccaccio think Dante's New Life is a true account of Dante's love for Beatrice?
- Why is Dante associated to Homer and Virgil in Chapter VI?
- Discuss Boccaccio's definition of poetry in Chapter IX.
- What's the metaphor for the laurel poet?

#### Assignment 2

Read the selected excerpts from Dante's Vita Nuova and answer the following questions:

- How is Beatrice is described (physical appearance, behaviour)?
- What are the different emotional reactions of the poet when he sees/thinks about Beatrice?
- How is Beatrice praised by Dante? Briefly discuss the contents of sonnet "Tanto gentile e tanto onesta pare"
- Why is number 9 so symbolic in the Vita Nuova?

Dante Today Project: after visiting <a href="https://research.bowdoin.edu/dante-today/map/">https://research.bowdoin.edu/dante-today/map/</a> please

> find a reference to Dante in Florence: take a picture, show it in class, and comment on it

choose the itinerary (that should include at least 3 plaques) for your Dante\_My Plaques Video Project (see Dante's Plaques material on CANVAS)

#### Assignment 3

- Draw a chart of Beatrice's gradual transformation and insert a quote from the Vita Nuova for each stage Read Cantos I through IV from Dante's Inferno and for each canto please
- > Indicate the main characters presented
- > Briefly note down the main events (short summary of the plot)

#### Assignment 4

Watch the opening credits and research the plot of the movie Seven by David Fincher.

> Find as many references as you can to Dante's Inferno

#### Assignment 5

Read the following Cantos from Dante's Inferno: V, X, XV, XIX, XXIV, XXX, XXXII, XXXIII for each canto please

- Indicate the main characters presented
- Briefly note down the main events (short summary of the plot)

#### Assignment 6

Dante\_My Plagues Video Project:

- Prepare a short video (5 minutes max) where you show and discuss the itinerary that you will have selected by Week 3, and that should include at least 3 plaques from Dante's Comedy
- Write a paper containing the main points of the video project (1000 words, double-spaced, font size 12)

#### Assignment 7

Write your reflections on the visit to Santa Maria Novella, answering the following questions:

- What is your favourite work of art inside the church? Why?
- > How can you describe the different architectural spaces of the church (aisles, chapels, cloisters, graveyards)?
- What are the symbols inside the church that you found particularly interesting?
- > Is there anything else that caught your attention?

#### Assignment 8

Prepare PPT/Slides for Decameron presentations (8-minute presentations, no flashcards allowed, only the slides)

#### **Dress Code**

During the course, we will be visiting a church. Please remember that is not allowed wearing shorts, mini-skirts and tops with bare shoulders.

## **Course Materials**

Textbooks, articles and materials can be found in the sections 'Modules' on CANVAS.

## **Required Readings**

Alighieri, Dante: <i>The Vita Nuova</i> _http://danteonline.it/english/opere.asp?idope=5&idlang=OR
Alighieri, Dante: The Divine Comedy http://danteonline.it/english/opere.asp?idope=1&idlang=OR
Boccaccio, Giovanni: <i>The Decameron</i> https://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/23700
Boccaccio, Giovanni: The Life of Dante, Hesperus Press, London (Canvas - File) and https://archive.org/details/transla-
tionofgio00bocc
Niccolai, Foresto (1999): Dante's Plaques in Florence (Canvas – File)

## Recommended Reading(s)

Dante in Translation With Giuseppe Mazzotta: https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLD1450DFDA859F694

# **Weekly Course Schedule**

WEEK 1	
Lesson Number / title	Lesson 1 – Course Presentation
Meeting time and Venue	
In—class activity	Course presentation (syllabus, class topics, assignments, projects and exams)  Introduction to the historical background – Italy in the Middle Ages  The Middle Ages in 3 and ½ minutes: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6EAMqKUimr8&t=2s  Medieval Europe #1: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rNCw2MOfnLQ&t=34s  Overview of the Middle Ages: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H5ZJujqaOYQ&t=19s  Introduction to Dante:  http://www.worldofdante.org/ http://danteonline.it/english/home_ita.asp  Introduction to Boccaccio:  https://www.brown.edu/Departments/Italian_Studies/dweb/boccaccio/life1_en.php
Readings	Dante's Life (https://www.danteonline.it/english/vita_indice.htm) Read selected excerpts from Boccaccio, Giovanni: The Life of Dante (https://archive.org/details/translationofgio00bocc)
Assignments	Boccaccio's Life of Dante - study questions

WEEK 2		
Lesson Number / title	Lesson 2 - Life of Dante	
Meeting time and Venue		
In—class activity	Boccaccio's Life of Dante – study questions DUE / correction in class  "Chronological table of Important Dates" group activity Introducing Dante's Plaques in Florence_My Plaque Video Project	
Out—of—class activity	Visit to the Museo Casa di Dante	
Readings	Read selected excerpts from Alighieri, Dante: <i>The Vita Nuova</i> (http://dante-online.it/english/opere.asp?idope=5&idlang=OR)	
Assignments	Dante Today Project – students will choose their own itinerary for their video project (Dante's Vita Nuova – study questions	

WEEK 3	
Lesson Number / title	Lesson 3 - What is love?
Meeting time and Venue	
In—class activity	<ul> <li>Early Italian Lyric Schools: selection of sonnets by Sicilian and Tuscan poets</li> <li>The Vita Nuova: structure and numerology, the figure of Beatrice</li> <li>Frankie Goes to Hollywood: The Power of Love (https://www.youtube.com/watch? v=NyoTvgPn0rU)</li> </ul>
Readings	Read Alighieri, Dante: <i>The Divine Comedy</i> . Inferno, Cantos I through IV (http://danteonline.it/english/opere.asp?idope=1&idlang=OR)
Assignments	Draw a chart of Beatrice's gradual transformation and insert a quote from the <i>Vita Nuova</i> for each stage  Take notes of main characters and events in each canto assigned (I through IV)

WEEK 4		
Lesson Number / title	Lesson 4 – The Divine Comedy	
Meeting time and Venue		
In—class activity	<ul> <li>■ Beatrice's transformation chart – class discussion / correction</li> <li>■ Video: Gnosis – Introduction to the Divine Comedy: structure and themes</li> <li>■ Cantos I-IV main characters and events – class discussion / correction</li> <li>■ Dante's multiple roles in the Divine Comedy</li> </ul>	
Readings	Research the plot of the movie Seven and watch the opening credits:  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SEZK7mJoPLY	
Assignments	Dante in the movie Seven: a critical analysis of the opening credits and the plot of the movie – find references to Dante's <i>Inferno</i>	

WEEK 5		
Lesson Number / title	Lesson 5 - Medieval Symbolism	
Meeting time and Venue		
Out—of—class activity	Medieval Symbolism in Florence through Dante's eyes (walking tour)	
In—class activity	<ul><li>Pante in Seven − class discussion / correction</li><li>Group review for mid-term exam</li></ul>	
Assignments	Review for mid-term exam	

WEEK 6		
Lesson Number / title	Lesson 6 - Mid-term exam	
Meeting time and Venue		
In—class activity	MID-TERM EXAM	
Readings	Read Alighieri, Dante: <i>The Divine Comedy</i> . Inferno, Cantos V, X, XV, XIX, XXIV, XXX, XXXII, XXXIII (http://danteonline.it/english/opere.asp?idope=1&idlang=OR)	
Assignments	Take notes of main characters and events in each canto assigned (V, X, XV, XIX, XXIV, XXX, XXXII, XXXIII)	

# WEEK 7 - Break

WEEK 8		
Lesson Number / title	Lesson 8 - Major themes in the <i>Comedy</i>	
Meeting time and Venue		
In—class activity	<ul> <li>Cantos V, X, XV, XIX, XXIV, XXX, XXXII, XXXIII main characters and events − class discussion / correction</li> <li>Three fundamental aspects in Dante's Comedy:</li> <li>Love</li> <li>Exile</li> <li>Authority</li> </ul>	
Assignments	Dante_My Plaque Video Project (written and video parts)	

WEEK 9	
Lesson Number / title	Lesson 9 - The <i>Decameron</i>
Meeting time and Venue	
In—class activity	<ul><li>♣ Dante_My Plaque Video Project (paper and presentation)</li><li>♣ Introduction to Boccaccio and The Decameron</li></ul>
Readings	Read selected excerpts from Boccaccio, Giovanni: <i>The Decameron</i> (https://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/23700)

WEEK 10	
Lesson Number / title	Lesson 10 - Middle Ages VS Renaissance
Meeting time and Venue	
In—class activity	● Dante VS Boccaccio: What's Medieval? What's Renaissance? (class discussion)
Out—of—class activity	Visit to the Church of Santa Maria Novella
Assignments	Write your reflections on the visit to Santa Maria Novella

WEEK 11		
Lesson Number / title	Lesson 11 - Maraviglioso Boccaccio	
Meeting time and Venue		
In—class activity	Reflections on the visit to Santa Maria Novella – class discussion / correction Movie: Maraviglioso Boccaccio (screening and class discussion)	
Assignments	Prepare PPT/Slides for Decameron presentations	

WEEK 12		
Lesson Number / title	Lesson 12 – <i>Decameron</i> Presentations	
Meeting time and Venue		
In—class activity	● Oral presentations on <i>The Decameron</i>	

WEEK 13		
Lesson Number / title	Lesson 12 – Review for Final Exam	
Meeting time and Venue		
In—class activity	<ul><li>Group review for Final Exam</li><li>● Office hours</li></ul>	
Assignments	Review for final exam	

WEEK 14		
Lesson Number / title	Lesson 12 - Final Exam	
Meeting time and Venue		
In—class activity	FINAL EXAM	

## **Attendance, Participation & Student Responsibilities**

Attendance: CAPA has a mandatory attendance policy. Attendance is taken at the beginning of every class. The first time a student has an unexcused absence for a class, their grade will not be impacted. The second time a student has an unexcused absence in that class, it will result in a 3 percent reduction of the final grade (for example: an A- [92] will become a B+ [89]). The student will be placed on academic probation at this time. Three unexcused absences per class will result in failure of the course. A pattern of three absences in more than one course will result in dismissal from the program. If a student arrives late for a scheduled class, it is the student's responsibility to notify the instructor to ensure that they are added to the class register for the session.

Excused Absences: Absences are only excused for medical reasons, for a family emergency or for a religious holiday. To request an excused absence, students must contact the Academic Director, Dr. Guido Reverdito, at <a href="mailto:greverdito@capa.org">greverdito@capa.org</a> and the Academic Coordinator, Vittoria Chesi, at <a href="mailto:vchesi@capa.org">vchesi@capa.org</a> ahead of time and provide evidence (e.g. a doctor's note) of the reason for their absence, otherwise the absence will not be excused. Even if the student knows the absence will not be excused, the student should still contact CAPA to inform CAPA they will not be in class. In addition to contacting he Academic Director, Dr. Guido Reverdito, at <a href="mailto:greverdito@capa.org">greverdito@capa.org</a> and the Academic Coordinator, Vittoria Chesi, at <a href="mailto:ychesi@capa.org">ychesi@capa.org</a> it is the responsibility of the student to contact their instructor and make up any missed assignments.

Class Participation: Students are expected to participate in all classes and to participate actively and critically in class discussions, and the participation portion of the class will be graded accordingly. Students must read assigned reading BEFORE the class and arrive at the session on time. Participation is a vital part of students' grade: students are expected to participate in class and in online forums and discussions in a critical and evaluative manner; to interact with the faculty and fellow students with respect and tolerance; and to actively engage in discussion. Derogatory or inflammatory comments about the cultures, perspectives or attitudes of others will not be tolerated.

Academic Accommodations: Any student who feels they may need an accommodation based on the impact of a physical, psychological, medical, or learning disability should contact the instructor and/or the Director of Academic Affairs privately to discuss their specific needs. Students requesting accommodations must have their home institution's Disabilities Services or an appropriate licensed professional or healthcare provider submit official documentation directly to CAPA in a timely manner outlining their specific needs. If the documentation is submitted by a provider other than the home institution's Disabilities Services, it must be someone familiar with the history and functional limitations of the student's disability (not a relative or family member of the student). Any required accommodations will be approved by CAPA's Vice President for Academic Affairs, in consultation with relevant Academic Directors, before being relayed to faculty. Any student who requires an accommodation based on official documentation should also discuss their needs directly with their instructor.

Academic Integrity: A high level of responsibility and academic honesty is expected. Because the value of an academic course depends upon the absolute integrity of the work done by the student, it is imperative that a student demonstrates a high standard of individual honor in their scholastic work and class behavior. Plagiarism, self-plagiarism and cheating can result in dismissal from the program. Self-plagiarism, copying an assignment entirely or partially to submit to a different class in an attempt to receive credit twice for one piece of work is unacceptable and considered cheating by duplication. Students risk receiving a "0" for any assignments in which they have duplicated their own work. All substantial writing assignments will be run through the plagiarism checking software Turnitin when submitted via CANVAS. See CAPA's Academic Standards and Policies for more information and resources on plagiarism.

Sexual Misconduct, Required Reporting, and Title IX: CAPA: The Global Education Network is committed to encouraging a safe and healthy environment at our CAPA centers. This commitment includes the understanding of, and applicable adherence to, the guidelines outlined in Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972. Title IX necessitates that US universities provide equity in all educational programs and activities without sex discrimination. CAPA understands the implications of Title IX compliance for our institutional partners and thus endeavors to support this compliance as a vital aspect of partnership. The safety and security of all students during a program is a matter of crucial importance to CAPA. To facilitate this, CAPA encourages students to openly disclose any and all information that is Title IX relevant so that CAPA staff can provide support and connect students with appropriate resources. Because students may not understand the implications of Title IX abroad, CAPA will work to advise students about the resources available through Title IX and explain the importance of compliance in Title IX reporting. CAPA will work to build student confidence in CAPA's status as a mandated reporter by outlining the advantage of disclosure for the student, reassuring them that any information disclosed will not be used in an inappropriate manner, and stressing that individuals will only be informed on a need-to-know basis.

**Use of Electronic Equipment in Class:** All devices such as laptops, i-pods, i-pods, netbooks, notebooks and tablets, smartphones, cell phones, etc. are NOT allowed unless students have express permission from the faculty, or they have been instructed to do so. If students require an accommodation to use any type of electronic equipment, they must inform the Director of Academic Affairs at the beginning of term.

**Use of Electronic Translators**: In language courses students are NOT allowed to use electronic translators for writing texts in the target language: those submitting compositions and texts of whatever kind translated in such a fashion will receive a "0" (F) grade for the course.

Late Submission: Late submission of papers, projects, journal entries, pieces of homework and portfolios is only permitted with prior approval. A request for an extension must be made to the relevant faculty member no later than two days prior to the due date. Late submission without prior approval will result in a 3 percent per day deduction of the final grade. In either case, work cannot be submitted after feedback has been provided to the rest of the class on the relevant assessment or one week after the due date whichever comes first, after which point a grade of "0" (F) will be given for the assessment.

**Behavior during Examinations:** During examinations, students must do their own work. Unless specifically instructed by the lecturer or instructor, talking during an exam is not permitted, and students may not access online resources of any kind, compare papers, copy from others, or collaborate in any way. Any failure to abide by examination rules will result in failure of the exam and may lead to failure of the course and disciplinary action.