



University of British Columbia, Vancouver
Dept of French, Hispanic and Italian Studies

ITAL 403 / ITST 413

Academic Year 2019-20, Term 1

Tu-Th 2:00pm to 3:15pm

Buch TBA

Prof. Daniela Boccassini

WITHIN THE UNIVERSE THE UNIVERSE WITHIN

Dante Alighieri's Divine Comedy:

A journey into
medieval ecospirituality
cosmological symbolism
visionary imagination



https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Domenico_di_michelino,_Dante_con_in_mano_la_Divina_Commedia,_1465,_01.JPG

Undoubtedly the best-known of all poems written in the Italian language during the last seven hundred years, Dante Alighieri's *Divine Comedy* takes us on a most unusual journey. We begin our travels quivering with the wayfarer at the outskirts of a ghastly dark forest, and we end them basking in the blissful light of a cosmic embrace. What makes such a change of perspective possible? It is the journey itself, answers Dante, who in his visionary exploration of "the beyond" is taught by his teachers, Virgil and Beatrice, how fearlessly to approach the abysses of the human psyche.

From exile to reintegration, from wretchedness to felicity, this is the story of a process of inner transmutation, whose liberating power has touched countless readers over the ages and across cultures. More than ever today Dante's poem is apt to teach us how progressively to uncover the vastness that lies hidden within every single atom of our own self, and of the universe that surrounds us.

In the words of Pope Francis (2014), Dante is «a prophet of hope, herald of the possibility of redemption, liberation and the profound transformation of every man and woman, of all humanity.» As such, he «still has much to say and to offer through his immortal works to those who wish to follow the route of true knowledge and authentic discovery of the self, the world and the profound and transcendent meaning of existence.» In order to do this, Dante walks a very thin line between orthodoxy and heterodoxy, the path taken by visionaries of all times and spiritual traditions.

Dante's cosmic perspective is more powerfully inspiring today than ever, witness the exemplary role his journey played in shaping the worldview of C. G. Jung, the father of analytical psychology, at the beginning of the 20th century, and at the other end of that same century, the "wild sacred" vision of Thomas Berry, the father of spiritual ecology. It is indeed as a "wounded healer", as a "modern shaman", and even more compellingly perhaps as an ante litteram ecologist and activist of the world-soul that Dante asks to be understood today – once shattering vision within the boundaries of society's legitimizing and self-serving needs.

PREREQUISITES AND COREQUISITES

There are neither prerequisites nor corequisites for this course. However, ITST 231 is highly recommended as a complement; some background on Medieval Europe is an asset.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

This course offers a close reading of Dante's masterpiece through a large selection of excerpts from all of the canticas (*Inferno*, *Purgatorio*, *Paradiso*), along with a reading of Dante's earlier work *Vita Nuova* (The New Life) in its entirety. Some complementary readings will be used as well, but we will focus mostly on Dante's text with the support of the instructor's detailed explanations and the apparatus of commentaries and notes provided by the recommended Penguin edition.

<p>The Historical and Literary Medieval Context</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student will develop a familiarity with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ the historical, political, religious and cultural context of 13th- and 14th-c. Italy; ◦ the literary world wherein Dante operated, which encompassed both religious and lay perspectives, contemporary approaches and classical traditions; ◦ the <i>Divine Comedy</i> as a highly structured poetic form. 	<p>Assessment Methods</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Midterm • Final Exam • Reading Responses • In-class discussions
<p>The Religious and Philosophical Components</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student will develop a familiarity with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ the religious perspective of Medieval Christianity, especially in relation to the issue of life beyond death; ◦ basic philosophical notions such as Aristotelianism, Platonism and Neoplatonism, which informed Dante's worldview. 	<p>Assessment Methods</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Midterm • Final Exam • Reading Responses • In-class discussions
<p>The Cosmological and Symbolic Aspects</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student will develop an understanding of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ the way in which Dante makes use of the Ptolemaic system of geocentric cosmology; ◦ the symbolism connected to that cosmology in the perspective of Dante's poem as journey; ◦ how such a cosmology may still carry symbolic value in 	<p>Assessment Methods</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Midterm • Final Exam • Reading Responses • In-class discussions

today's Copernican heliocentric model of the universe.	
<p>The Visionary and Psychological Underpinnings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student will familiarize themselves with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ the journey to the beyond as a visionary, psychologically transformative experience; ◦ visionary journeys as shamanic experiences. 	<p>Assessment Methods</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Midterm • Final Exam • Reading Responses • In-class discussions
<p>Medieval Ecospirituality</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student will be asked to reflect upon: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ the degree of Dante's awareness of notions such as "ecology" and "ecospirituality": while such words were not in use, the meaning and the implications of an ecological worldview were THE issue at stake at the time of Dante's writing and the risks that the burgeoning mercantile economy posed for the human and more than human world are at the core of Dante's preoccupations in writing the <i>Comedy</i>. 	<p>Assessment Methods</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Midterm • Final Exam • Reading Responses • In-class discussions

MEET YOUR INSTRUCTOR

<p>Daniela Boccassini</p> <p>Professor</p> <p>Dpt of French, Hispanic and Italian Studies</p>	<p>Websites:</p> <p>https://fhis.ubc.ca/people/daniela-boccassini/</p> <p>http://blogs.ubc.ca/boccassini/</p> <p>https://ubc.academia.edu/DanielaBoccassini</p>
<p>Office: Ponderosa G7</p> <p>Office Hours: by appointment, Tu and Th</p>	<p>Tel.: 822-4006</p> <p>Email: <daniela.boccassini@ubc.ca></p>

Dr. Boccassini is a Dante scholar. Below is a list of her publications pertaining to Dante and the *Divine Comedy*. She is currently working on a book-length project on Dante and Jung.

2020: «On the Wings of the Night: Jung's and Dantes Encounters with Soul», *Harvest* (forthcoming).

2019: «Down to the Father's Womb: Jung's and Dante's Encounters with the Dead», *Jung Journal* 13: 46-81.

2018: «Earthly Paradise: Dante's Initiatory Rite of Passage.» *Oikosophia: dall'intelligenza del cuore all'ecofilosofia / From the Intelligence of the Heart to Ecophilosophy*, ed. D. Boccassini. Milano: Mimesis. «Quaderni di Studi Indo-Mediterranei» 10: 181-203.

2015-2009: «Falconry as a Transmutative Art: Dante, Frederick II, and Islam», *Dante Studies* 125: 157-82. Reprinted with minor changes and updates in *Dante and Islam*, ed. by J. Ziolkovski. New York: Fordham University Press. 133-58.

2013: «Dante, la via del cuore e il destino di Guido da Montefeltro». *Il mondo errante. Dante fra letteratura, eresia e storia*. Atti del Convegno internazionale di studio, Bertinoro, 13-16 settembre 2010, a cura di Marco Veglia, Lorenzo Paolini e Riccardo Parmeggiani. Spoleto: Fondazione Centro Italiano di Studi sull'Alto Medioevo. 487-522.

2013: «"Non impedir lo suo fatale andare". Volti e risvolti del viaggio nell'oltretomba, da Virgilio a Dante». *Sindbad mediterraneo. Per una topografia della memoria, da Oriente a Occidente*, ed. Roberta Morosini. Lecce: Pensa Multimedia. 25-63.

2012: «"Imagini di ben seguendo vere": misticismo, alchimia e psicologia del profondo, da Dante a Dürer». *Transmutatio. La via ermetica alla felicità / The Hermetic Way to Happiness*, ed. D. Boccassini e C. Testa. «Quaderni di Studi Indo-mediterranei» 5: 275-310.

2012: «L'ora che volge il disio": Comparative Hermeneutics of Desire in Dante and 'Attār». *Desire in Dante and the Middle Ages, proceedings of the Conference, Oxford, 2010*, ed. M. Gragnolati, T. Kay, E. Lombardi. Oxford: Legenda. 29-44.

2009: «"Ego tanquam centrum circuli": La Vita nuova, percorso di reminiscenza e psico-cosmogramma», *Italian Culture* 27: 5-23.

2007: «I sogni di Dante e l'ombra di Aristotele: riflessioni sulla fenomenologia della visione nel De ignorantia di Petrarca», *Italica* 84: 137-61.

Il volo della mente. Falconeria e sofia nel mondo mediterraneo. Islam, Federico II, Dante. Ravenna: Longo, 2003.

For further information on your instructor and her research profile, please consult her UBC and Academia webpages.

SCHEDULE OF TOPICS

W 1 Sep 03 Sep 05	History, the bearings — Imagine UBC, no classes — Historical intro: Italy and Florence in the 13th century	Raffa: pp. ix-xviii Bemrose: pp. xix-xxi
W 2 Sep 10 Sep 12	Poetry: who is the beloved? — Literary introduction: from the Sicilian poets to the <i>stilnuovo</i> — Dante's <i>Vita nuova</i>	Raffa: pp. 1-17 Bemrose: ch. 1-2 RR1 group A : Vita Nuova
W 3 Sep 17 Sep 19	Inferno / 1 — the Outskirts: cc. 1, 2 (dark wood and Virgil); The Neutrals: c. 3 (Acheron); Limbo: c. 4 (the noble castle); — The Lustful: c. 5 (Paolo and Francesca); The Gluttonous: c. 6 (Ciaccio); The Avaricious c. 7 (Fortuna)	Bemrose: ch. 3-4 Raffa: pp. 18-45 RR1 group B : Vita Nuova
W 4 Sep 24 Set 26	Inferno / 2 — The Wrathful: cc. 8-9 (Styx and the gates of Dis); Heretics: c. 10 (Farinata and Cavalcante); c. 11 (structure of Hell) — The Violents: c. 13 (Pier della Vigna); The Violents: c. 14 (Capaneo); c. 15 (Brunetto Latini)	Bemrose: ch. 5 Raffa: pp. 46-71 RR2 group A : Inferno
W 5 Oct 01 Oct 03	Inferno / 3 — The Violents: cc. 16-17 (The Florentines; the Usurers; Geryon); The Fraudolents: c. 18 (overview of Malebolge); c. 19 (popes and symonists) — The Fraudolents: cc. 20-25 (see summaries); c. 26 (Ulysses); c. 27 (Guido da Montefeltro)	Bemrose: ch. 8 (i), (ii) Raffa: pp. 74-106 RR2 group B : Inferno
W 6 Oct 08 Oct 10	Inferno / 4 — The Traitors: cc. 31-34 (overview); c. 33 (Ugolino); cc 34 (Satan) — MIDTERM —	Bemrose: ch. 6 Raffa: pp. 107-120
W 7 Oct 15 Oct 17	Purgatorio / 1 — The Outskirts: c. 1 (Cato); The Excommunicate: cc. 2 (Casella), 3 (Manfred); The Negligents: c. 4 (nature of Purg) — Valley of Rulers: cc. 6-7 (Sordello); c. 8 (Nino Visconti); c. 9 (dream of the eagle)	Bemrose: ch. 7 (i, ii, iii) Raffa: pp. 121-151
W 8 Oct 22 Oct 24	Purgatorio / 2 — Pride: cc. 10 (God's art), 11 (Oderisi); 12 (ex of pride) — Envy: cc. 13 - 14 (Guido del Duca); Wrath: canto 15 (D's questions 1); 16 (Marco Lombardo)	Bemrose: ch. 7 (iv, v, vi, vii) Raffa: pp. 152-175 RR3 group A : Purg 1
W 9 Oct 29 Oct 31	Purgatorio / 3 — cc. 17-18 (D's questions 2); Sloth: c. 19 (the Siren, Adrian V); — Avarice: end of c. 20 (the "earthquake"); 21-22 (Statius); Gluttony: cc. 23-24 (Forese, Bonagiunta); 25 (aerial bodies)	Raffa: pp. 176-202 RR3 group B : Purg 1

W 10 Nov 05 Nov 07	Purgatorio / 4 — Lust: c. 26 (Guinizelli, Arnaut); to Earthly Paradise: cc. 27 (wall of fire, Dante's 3rd dream, Virgil's last speech), 28 (Earthly Paradise) — 29-30-31 (pageantry and encounter with Beatrice), cantos 32-33 (Lethe, Eunoë, prophecies)	Bemrose: ch. 8 (iii), ch. 9 Raffa: pp. 203-220 RR4 group A : Purg 2
W 11 Nov 12 Nov 14	Paradiso / 1 — introduction, cc. 1 (ascent to heaven), 2 (address to readers) — Moon, Mercury, Venus: cc. 3-4-5 (Piccarda and violence) 5 (vows)	Raffa: pp. 223-239 RR4 group B : Purg 2
W 12 Nov 19 Nov 21	Paradiso / 2 — Sun: cc. 10 (first circle of the wise), 11-13 (Francis and Dominic) — Mars, cc. 15-17 (Cacciaguida); Jupiter, cc. 18-20 (The Eagle)	Bemrose: ch. 10 Raffa: pp. 259-92 RR5 group A : Paradiso
W 13 Nov 26 Nov 28	Paradiso / 3 — fixed stars: cc. 22 (124-54, looking down) 23 (vision of Christ), 26 (80-142, Adam), 27 (St Peter) — Empyrean: cc. 30 (visions), 31 (St Bernard), 33 (final vision)	Bemrose: ch. 8, iv; 11 Raffa: pp. 293-326 RR5 group B : Paradiso

TEXTBOOKS

Primary Texts:

Dante Alighieri, *Vita Nuova*, tr. S. Applebaum. Dover, 2001.
Please buy this book (currently available at the Bookstore).

Dante Alighieri, *Inferno, Purgatorio, Paradiso*, tr. R. Kirkpatrick. Penguin Classics 2006-07, 3 vols.
Please buy these books (currently available at the Bookstore).

Reference Works:

Stephen Bemrose, *A New Life of Dante*. Revised and Updated ed. University of Exeter Press, 2010.
You can either buy this book or read it at **UBC Reserve : PQ4335 .B46 2000**

Guy P. Raffa, *The Complete Danteworlds. A Reader's Guide to the Divine Comedy*. Chicago UP, 2009.
You can either buy this book or read it at **UBC Reserve : PQ4390 .R258 2009**

See also the interactive, abbreviated version online : www.danteworlds.laits.utexas.edu

N.B. The above editions of the *Commedia* and the *Vita nuova* have the Italian text as well as the English translation. It is recommended that all students use these specific editions. Students who enrol in the ITAL 403 (as opposed to ITST 413) course **must** use this (or any other) edition which also gives the Italian original text.

While in class we will be able to cover only a limited number of cantos (those indicated in the syllabus), students are encouraged to read on their own the rest of the poem as well, or at least as many cantos as possible. This applies especially to the first two, easier canticas, *Inferno* and *Purgatorio*; as for *Paradiso* (the most challenging of the three, both in style and content) we will limit our approach to just a few cantos.

Given that any translation, no matter how good, can only convey part of the poetic richness of the original, students with any knowledge of Italian are encouraged to use the Italian side of their textbook as much as possible for their readings at home.

COURSE POLICIES AND REQUIREMENTS

ATTENDANCE: Attendance is required and expected of all students. An attendance sheet is circulated at the beginning of each class. It is the student's responsibility to remember signing the attendance sheet every time. Missed classes will affect your attendance and participation mark and, beyond that, they will have an impact on your overall performance. The professor does not distinguish between excused and unexcused missed classes; however, if you run into health or personal issues that may translate into missed classes, please inform your professor as soon as possible, as absences will affect both your performance and your grade.

Students who must miss class because of required university activities (such as participation on a sports team) should notify the instructor prior to the absence and make any necessary special arrangements for work missed.

Students who miss class are expected to keep up with the readings and share notes with their classmates and should come prepared for the class following the absence.

Office hours cannot be used for private tutoring to cover what was done in class. If a student is absent, it is his/her responsibility to study what was covered in class and/or get notes from other students. Office hours are reserved for questions students might have AFTER class lectures and study of the material.

CLASS PARTICIPATION: Being a prerequisite, attendance as such is not evidence of good class participation. Please remember that class participation is calculated into the final grade for this course. Explicit criteria for class participation includes the following components:

1. Preparedness – that is, having done the readings outlined in the syllabus before class.
2. The ability to make valuable contributions to the class. These include, but are not limited to, the following:
 - a. volunteering relevant information when the context calls for it;
 - b. asking questions whose answers may be of benefit to the whole class;
 - c. contribute constructive answers to the teacher's and peers' questions;
 - d. sharing relevant experiences, reflections, observations

Out of courtesy for all present, all electronic devices (cell phones, iPads, etc.) must be silenced and put away upon entering the classroom. I strongly recommend that you take notes by hand, rather than on an electronic device, but if you do, please disconnect your mail and any other programs that may cause you to get distracted.

There are no make-up quizzes/exams. Unjustified failure to take a quiz or exam will result in a grade of "F/0" for that quiz or test. Extreme circumstances may be discussed with the instructor. It is the responsibility of each student to check the date for all final exams before making any arrangements to leave campus during and at the end of the semester. Under no circumstances will a private exam be administered to accommodate a student's travel plans.

ASSIGNMENTS

Reading Responses	One every other week for a total of 5
1 Midterm Exam	Th 10 October

1 Final Exam

TBA December

Reading Responses (30%): students will write 5 short (500-600 words) responses to the readings, every other week (deadlines on syllabus' calendar). This may take the form of:

- a) an expanded question of a thought-provoking nature; please note that requests for factual information that cannot be easily gathered are welcome and can be included in the response, however they will not count as part of your response;
- b) a comment or consideration pertaining to the assigned readings, again of a thought-provoking nature;
- c) a brief analysis in a comparative perspective of the current readings in relation to some previously covered material, again of a thought-provoking nature.

Reading responses are due by noon on Friday of the assigned week of classes. Responses are to be produced in the form of a word or pdf document and must be submitted through the Canvas Reading Response tool. In case of a "Canvas" failure, you can email your document to my UBC address: <daniela.boccassini@ubc.ca>

Students who do not write their weekly response by the deadline will not receive a mark for that response.

Midterm and Final Exam (30% and 40%): these will be essay-type of exams. You will receive the topic ahead of the exam, so that you will have a chance to document yourself and prepare a mental outline beforehand

ASSESSMENTS OF LEARNING

Reading Responses (5 total)	30 %
1 Midterm Exam	30 %
1 Final Exam	40 %
Attendance and Participation	10 %

GRADING CRITERIA

A= (superior/outstanding) is the highest grade given; it is reserved for those students whose work is of a markedly outstanding quality in all the different components of the course.

B= (excellent/very good) is the grade given for work which, while not notably superior, is clearly above average in all the different components of the course.

C= (average) is the grade given for satisfactory work in all or almost all components of the course. It is the work done by the average student.

D= (inferior/below average) is the grade for work which, while not altogether satisfactory, is good enough to receive credit for the course.

F= (failure) indicates that no credit can be received for the course except by repetition.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

The academic enterprise is rooted in honesty, civility, and integrity. Hence, all students are expected to know, understand, and follow the codes of conduct regarding academic integrity. At the most basic level, this means submitting only original work done by you and acknowledging all sources of information or ideas and attributing them to others as required. This also means you should not cheat, copy, or mislead others about what is your work. Violations of academic integrity (i.e., misconduct) lead to the breakdown of the academic enterprise, and therefore serious consequences arise and harsh sanctions are imposed. For example, incidences of plagiarism or cheating may result in a mark of zero on the assignment or exam and more serious consequences may apply when the matter is referred to the Office of the Dean.

A more detailed description of academic integrity, including the University's policies and procedures, may be found in the [UBC Calendar: Student Conduct and Discipline](http://www.calendar.ubc.ca/vancouver/index.cfm?tree=3,54,0,0) (<http://www.calendar.ubc.ca/vancouver/index.cfm?tree=3,54,0,0>).

ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATION FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Academic accommodations help students with a disability or ongoing medical condition overcome challenges that may affect their academic success. Students requiring academic accommodations must register with [UBC's Center for Accessibility](https://students.ubc.ca/about-student-services/centre-for-accessibility) (<https://students.ubc.ca/about-student-services/centre-for-accessibility>). The Center will determine a student's eligibility for accommodations in accordance with [Policy 73: Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities](#). Academic accommodations are not determined by your instructors, and instructors should not ask you about the nature of your disability or ongoing medical condition, or request copies of your disability documentation. However, your instructor may consult with Access and Diversity should the accommodations affect the essential learning outcomes of a course.

CONFLICTING RESPONSIBILITIES

UBC recognizes that students may occasionally have conflicting responsibilities that affect their ability to attend class or examinations. These may include: representing the University, the province or the country in a competition or performance; serving in the Canadian military; or observing a religious rite. They may also include a change in a student's situation that unexpectedly requires that student to work or take responsibility for the care of a family member, if these were not pre-existing situations at the start of term.

Students with conflicting responsibilities have a duty to arrange their course schedules so as to avoid, as much as possible, any conflicts with course requirements. As soon as conflicting responsibilities arise, students must notify either their instructor(s) or their Faculty Advising Office (e.g. Arts Academic Advising), and can request [academic concession](#). Instructors may not be able to comply with all such requests if the academic standards and integrity of the course or program would be compromised.

Varsity student-athletes should discuss any anticipated and unavoidable regular-season absences with the instructor at the start of term, and provide notice of playoff or championship absences in writing as soon as dates are confirmed.

Religious observance may preclude attending classes or examinations at certain times. In accordance with the [UBC Policy on Religious Holidays](#), students who wish to be accommodated for religious reasons must notify their instructors in writing at least two weeks in advance. Instructors provide opportunity for such students to make up work or examinations missed without penalty.

COURSE EVALUATIONS

It is important for every student to fill out an on-line course evaluation. Toward the end of the semester, students will receive a notice regarding the on-line process. Please make sure to write your evaluation within the set timeframe.

UNIVERSITY POLICIES

UBC provides resources to support student learning and to maintain healthy lifestyles but recognizes that sometimes crises arise and so there are additional resources to access including those for survivors of sexual violence. UBC values respect for the person and ideas of all members of the academic community. Harassment and discrimination are not tolerated nor is suppression of academic freedom. UBC provides appropriate accommodation for students with disabilities and for religious observances. UBC values academic honesty and students are expected to acknowledge the ideas generated by others and to uphold the highest academic standards in all of their actions.

Details of the policies and how to access support are available on [the UBC Senate website](#)

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If you would like to record my classes please ask me beforehand.

REFERENCE WORKS ON DANTE

The Dante Encyclopedia, ed. Richard Lansing. New York and London: Garland, 2000.
 UBC Library [ZPQ 4333 D36 2000]

The Cambridge Companion to Dante, ed. Rachel Jacoff. Cambridge UP, 1993.
 UBC Library [PQ 4333 C36 1993]

Medieval Italy: an Encyclopedia, ed. Christopher Kleinheinz. New York: Routledge, 2004.
 UBC Library [ZDG 443 M43 2004]

Le Goff, Jacques. *Medieval Civilization, 400-1500*, tr. by Julia Barrow. Oxford : Blackwell, 1988.

Colish, Marcia. *Medieval Foundations of the Western Intellectual Tradition, 400-1400*. New Haven and London, Yale UP, 1998.

Haren, Michael. *Medieval Thought. The Western Intellectual Tradition from Antiquity to the Thirteenth Century*. U of Toronto P, 1992.

SOME SCHOLARLY WEBSITES

Dante Society of America:	http://www.dantesociety.org
Società Dantesca Italiana:	http://www.dantesca.it
Centro Dantesco di Ravenna:	http://www.centrodantesco.it
Italian poetry of the origins:	http://www.silab.it/frox/200/index.htm
Dartmouth Dante:	http://dante.dartmouth.edu
Princeton Dante:	http://etcweb.princeton.edu/dante/index.html
Columbia U Dante:	http://dante.ilt.columbia.edu/
U of Virginia Dante:	http://jefferson.village.virginia.edu/dante/
The World of Dante:	http://www.worldofdante.org
Danteworlds	http://www.danteworlds.laits.utexas.edu

<http://www.wisdomportal.com/Dante/DanteResources.html> has the ambition to offer a synthesis of «Dante Resources on the Internet». It was compiled in 2001, and I don't think it has been updated since, so many links may not be current. Still, there is lots of interesting material gathered there.

<http://academicearth.org/courses/dantes-inferno-purgatory-and-paradise/>

offers a series of lectures on the Divine Comedy by Prof. Giuseppe Mazzotta, Yale University