Divinity 5492 / Religion 5492 william.franke@vanderbilt.edu

Tuesday 4:10-6 Office: 224 Furman (tel: 2-6900)

Div. 122 Hours: T 2:30-3:00 & R 2:30-3:30

**Dante and Theology**

Dante’s poetic, philosophical, critical, and political work will be considered especially from the standpoint of the theological vision it promulgates and of the possibilities for aesthetic theology that it discloses. The course serves also as an introduction to Literature and Religion. The emphasis will be placed on Dante’s *Paradiso* but also on the pertinence of his pre-modern theological ideas and passions as developed in *Convivio,* *De monarchia,* and *De vulgari eloquentia* for our contemporary and postmodern world. Dante’s theology will be developed in its own context by comparison especially with Thomas Aquinas, Bonaventure, Meister Eckhart, and Duns Scotus, the last being his exact contemporary. Dante’s own pioneering of a modern approach to theology in the context of an incipient secular world will be brought out, but also the implications of his expressly imperialist political theology for our global age and the tension between claims of universal truth and of negative theology. We will scrutinize, for example, issues of Transgression and Transcendence and the question What Makes Religion Radical? The objective is to bring Dante into dialogue with current issues in theology that his vision, as one of Western culture’s greatest resources, illuminates.

REQUIRED TEXTS:

Dante, *Il Paradiso,* Robert Hollander, ed.

Dante, *La vita nuova* (*The New Life*)*,* Stanley Appelbaum trans., bilingual

RECOMMENDED:

Dante, *La vita nuova* (*The New Life*)*,*

Frisardi trans.: <http://digitaldante.columbia.edu/library/dantes-works/la-vita-nuova->frisardi/

Dante, *The Convivio* (*The Banquet*)<http://dante.ilt.columbia.edu/books/convivi/>

Lansing trans.: http://digitaldante.columbia.edu/library/dantes-works/the-convivio/

Dante, *De vulgari eloquentia* (*On the Vulgar Tongue*)

Princeton Dante Project: http://etcweb.princeton.edu/dante/pdp/convivio.html

Dante, *De Monarchia* (*On World Government*)

Princeton Dante Project: http://etcweb.princeton.edu/dante/pdp/convivio.html

William Franke, *Dante and the Sense of Transgression: ‘The Trespass of the Sign’*

Hans Urs von Balthasar, Glory of the Lord III: Studies in Theological Style: Lay Styles, “Dante”

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COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

1. Regular attendance and participation in seminar discussion.

2. A 20-minute oral presentation on an individually selected topic

relevant to the issues of the course.

3. A 15-20-page research paper.

SUPPLEMENTARY TEXTS:

Vittorio Montemaggi, *Divinity Realized in Human Encounter: Reading Dante’s* Commedia *as Theology*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016.

*Dante’s ‘Commedia’: Theology as Poetry,* edited by Montemaggi and Treherne. Notre Dame University Press, 2010.

Heather Webb, *Persona: Dante’s Ethics of the Transhuman.* Oxford: Oxford

University Press, 2016.

Maria Luisa Ardizzone, *Reading as the Angels Read: Speculation and Politics in Dante's 'Banquet.'* Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2015.

William Franke, *Secular Scriptures: Modern Theological Poetics in the Wake of Dante*

(Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2016)

Erich Auerbach, *Dante: Poet of the Secular World* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961)

Jacob Burckhardt, *The Civilization of the Italian Renaissance*, 2 vols. (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1958)

Ernst H. Kantorowicz, *The King’s Two Bodies: A Study in Mediaeval Political Theology* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997; originally 1957)

Charles T. Davis, *Dante and the Idea of Rome* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1957)

Jaroslav Pelikan, *Eternal Feminines: Three Theological Allegories in Dante’s Paradiso* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1990),

Martha Nussbaum, *Upheavals of Thought: The Intelligence of the Emotions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003)

Ruedi Imbach, *Dante, la philosophie et les laïcs* (Fribourg: Éditions Universitaires Fribourg Suisse, 1996)

Carl Schmitt, *Politische Theologie: Vier Kapitel zur Lehre der Souveränität* (1922)

Alexis Ladame, *Dante, Prophète d’un monde uni* (Paris: Grancher, 1996).

J. F. Took, *Dante: Lyric Poet and Philosopher* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990)

Michael Caesar, ed., *Dante: The Critical Heritage* (London: Routledge, 1989)