

UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA

Department of Languages, Literatures & Cultures

Boccaccio's *Decameron*: "We Found Love in a Hopeless Place"

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NsvzFqrsnfA>

ITW3500

Fall 2021

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION:

Instructor: Dr. Mary Watt
Office: 2014 Turlington
Phone: (352) 392-8149
Office Hours: Thursdays 3-4 pm or by
appointment
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COURSE INFORMATION:

Time & Location: T Period 8 - 9 (3:00 PM - 4:55 PM) MAT 251; R Period 9 (4:05 PM - 4:55 PM) FLI 121

Description:

This course will take students back to the time of the Black Death (the bubonic plague of 1348), to join ten young men and women as they escape the apocalypse in Florence and take refuge in a Tuscan villa. Students will listen as the group of survivors pass the time telling stories - *novelle* – ten stories a day for ten days and learn about love, death and adventure while mankind teeters on the edge of annihilation. The primary source will be Boccaccio's *Decameron* but the course will be enhanced with visual materials and will make full use of the many digital resources devoted to the study of Boccaccio and the Middle Ages. Special attention will be paid to the political, historical and religious context in which Boccaccio was writing but the main point of the course will be to give students an appreciation of the art of storytelling and the enduring strength of the human spirit.

Classes will combine student-centered activities with brief lecture style introductions to the day's reading. Accordingly, students will be expected to have read the assigned reading and be prepared to comment and participate in a meaningful discussion.

Required texts:

Boccaccio, Giovanni. *Decameron*. Ed. Vittore Branca. Milan: Mondadori, 1985.

The instructor will also assign additional readings and provide additional materials from time to time. These will be provided well in advance of the date on which they will be discussed.

Decameron Web Resource:

http://www.brown.edu/Departments/Italian_Studies/dweb/texts/DecIndex.php?lang=eng

Grading Scale:

The following scale will be used in grading your assignments and in calculating the overall grade for the course:

<i>A = 95 – 100% (4 points)</i>	<i>B - = 75-79% (2.67 points)</i>	<i>D + = 55-59% (1.33 points)</i>
<i>A - = 90 – 94% (3.67 points)</i>	<i>C+ = 70 – 74% (2.33 points)</i>	<i>D = 50 – 54% (1.0 point)</i>
<i>B+ = 85 – 89% (3.33 points)</i>	<i>C = 65 – 69% (2.0 points)</i>	<i>D - = 45 – 49% (0.67 points)</i>
<i>B = 80 – 84% (3.0 points)</i>	<i>C - = 60-64% (1.67 points)</i>	<i>E = 40 – 44% (0 – Failure)</i>

If you have questions, please, consult:

<http://www.registrar.ufl.edu/catalog/policies/regulationgrades.html>

Assignments:

Take Home Exam: (25%)

Due on December 17, 2021 at 4 pm. Details of exam will be provided during class discussions.

Presentation: (25%)

Each student will be asked to present a particular contextual aspect of the day's assigned reading: depending upon the number of students this might be done in groups.

Weekly Reading Responses: (20% = 10 X 2%)

Most weeks students will respond to an assigned question (Discussion focus) and any additional assigned readings. These must be submitted digitally on the dates indicated on the syllabus. No credit will be given for late submissions.

Participation: (25%)

As noted above, student participation is essential. The class will not be simply a reiteration or summary of the *novelle*, rather, students are expected to know the stories in question and be prepared to discuss the issues they raise. Students must bring their copies of the *Decameron* to class each day. They will be reading from it.

CLASSROOM POLICIES

Cell phones and gadgets: Please turn your cell phone off during class as a courtesy to us all. If your cell phone does happen to disturb the class, you are required to treat the class to cookies as reparation for the interruption. Please keep all other gadgets out of sight and sound as well: they are a distraction!

Attendance and Lateness:

Students are expected to attend class and have completed all assigned readings and assignments. Attendance will be taken regularly. Students are permitted one unexcused absence, beyond which each additional unexcused absence will result in a lowering of the final grade by one full letter.

A class roll will be taken at the beginning of the class. If a student is late, he or she will be marked late. Because such lateness distracts other students and the instructor, this will affect the late student's final participation grade. Students will lose 1% from their final grade each time they arrive late.

Make-up Policy:

There are NO MAKE-UPS for un-excused absences for assignments. The instructor may allow students to makeup an assignment in certain mitigating circumstances.

Grades Disputes:

Should a student wish to dispute any grade received in this class (other than simple addition errors), the dispute must be in writing and be submitted to the instructor within a week of receiving the grade. The dispute should set out very clearly, the grade that the student believes the assignment should have received as well as why he or she believes that he or she should have received such a grade.

ACADEMIC HONESTY:

Students are expected to follow University of Florida Academic Honesty Guidelines. These can be found at <http://www.aa.ufl.edu/aa/Rules/4017.htm>

Students may also wish to consult The University of Florida Student Guide Standard of Ethical Conduct found at <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/stg/>

Academic honesty and integrity are fundamental values of the University community. An academic honesty offense is defined as the act of lying, cheating, or stealing academic information so that one gains academic advantage. Any individual who becomes aware of a violation of the Honor Code is bound by honor to take corrective action.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES:

Students requesting classroom accommodation must first register with the Dean of Students Office. The Dean of Students Office will provide documentation to the student who must then provide this documentation to the Instructor when requesting accommodation.

CLASS SCHEDULE

The schedule of readings is preliminary and may undergo modifications as the semester progresses. The instructor may also supply students with a variety of handouts and direct them to a variety of web sites from time to time. Students will be provided with supplementary materials well in advance of the class in which they will be discussed. Students should note that the syllabus is a guideline and that there may be changes to the class schedule.

Week 1: August 24, 26

Introduction: The Plague of 1348, Fourteenth Century Florence

Watch: Documentary on The Black Death:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HYNB4sAxemk>

Look at: Breughel's Triumph of Death

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Triumph_of_Death#/media/File:The_Triumph_of_Death_by_Pieter_Bruegel_the_Elder.jpg

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Triumph_of_Death#/media/File:Jan_Brueghel_The_Triumph_of_Death.jpg

Listen to: This is the End

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CIrvSJwwJUE>

Explore: Santa Maria Novella

<http://www.chiesasantamarianovella.it/en>

<http://www.chiesasantamarianovella.it/en/all-works-art>

Consider: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Veronese_Riddle

Week 2: August 31, September 2

Discussion Focus: *Proemio*

For your Reference: <https://digitaldante.columbia.edu/dante/divine-comedy/inferno/inferno-5/>

Read: “The Gardens in the *Decameron* Cornice.” Edith G. Kern , PMLA, Vol. 66, No. 4 (Jun., 1951), pp. 505-523

Available through JSTOR: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/459490>

Listen to: If I die young

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7NJqUN9TCIM>

Consider: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Veronese_Riddle

(i) Response to question on readings for Weeks 1, 2 due by 3 pm August 31

Week 3: September 7, 9

Discussion Focus: *Prima Giornata, (Introduzione)*

Listen to: Fleas on Rats

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rZy6XilXDZQ>

Week 4: September 14, 16

(ii) Response to question on readings for Weeks 3, 4 due by 4 pm September 13

Discussion Focus: *Prima Giornata, Novelle 1-10*

Listen to: I don't want to wait

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YrUa62b0Xyc>

Week 5: September 21, 23

(iii) Response to question on readings for Week 5 due by 4 pm September 20

Discussion Focus: *Seconda Giornata, Novelle 1-10*

Listen to: You had a bad day

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gH476CxJxfg>

Week 6: September 28, 30

(iv) Response to question on readings for Week 6 due by 4 pm September 27

Discussion Focus: *Terza Giornata, Novelle 1-10*

Listen to: I got you back in arms again

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i8O6tEYKNRM>

Week 7: October 5

(v) Response to question on readings for Week 7 due by 4 pm October 4

Discussion Focus: *Quarta Giornata, Novelle 1-10*

Read: “Out of Bounds: Passion and the Plague in Boccaccio's *Decameron*” Jessica Levenstein, *Italica*, Vol. 73, No. 3 (Autumn, 1996), pp. 313-335

Available through JSTOR: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/479828>

Listen to: It's a heartache

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bEOI38y8Nj8>

Week 8: October 12

(vi) Response to question on readings for Week 8 due by 4 pm October 11

Discussion Focus: *Quinta Giornata, Novelle 1-10*

Listen to: Grenade

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SR6iYWJxHqs>

Week 9: October 19, 21

(vii) Response to question on readings for Week 9 due by 4 pm October 14

Discussion Focus: *Quinta Giornata, Novelle 1-10*

Week 10: October 26, 29

Sesta Giornata, Novelle 1-10

Listen to: Jive Talkin'

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3PHdoqU7g74>

Week 11: November 2, 4

(viii) Response to question on readings for Week 11 due by 4 pm November 1

Discussion Focus: *Settima Giornata, Novelle 1-10*

Listen to: *You don't own me*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JDUjeR01wnU>

Week 12: November 9

(ix) Response to question on readings for Week 12 due by 4 pm November 8

Discussion Focus: *Ottava Giornata, Novelle 1-10*

Listen to: The Games People Play:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MAGyENr3_44

Week 13: November 16, 18

Discussion Focus: *Nona Giornata, Novelle 1-10*

Listen to: Torn between two lovers:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TzGbvTl4mpg'](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TzGbvTl4mpg)

Week 14: November 23

(x) Response to question on readings for Week 13 due by 4 pm November 22

Discussion Focus: *Decima Giornata, Novelle 1-10*

Read: “The Griselda Tale and the Portrayal of Women in the *Decameron*.” Allen, Shirley S. *Philological Quarterly*, 1977, 56, 1-13

(In files section)

Listen to: Stand By Your Man

Look at: Lisa and Perdicone miniature. Boccaccio, *Decameron* (10.7),

Paris, early fourteenth century. Vatican
City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Pal. lat. 1989, fol. 304r.

http://publishing.cdlib.org/ucpressebooks/view?docId=ft1d5nb0d9&doc.view=popup&fig.ent=http://publishing.cdlib.org/ucpressebooks/data/13030/d9/ft1d5nb0d9/figures/ft1d5nb0d9_00072.jpg

Week 15: Nov. 30, December 2

Discussion Focus: *Decima Giornata, Novelle 1-10*

Week 16: December 7

Aftermath

July 2021