

- I Background , Life of Dante Alighieri (Florence, 1265? – Ravenna, 1321)
  - Childhood sweetheart Beatrice from 9 yrs old
  - Lives in a city divided between pro-papal and pro-imperial factions
  - Married with 3 children, never mentions them in his writing
  - Other works include *Vita nuova*, *Convivio*, *De vulgari eloquentia* (writes in Latin and Italian)
  - Exiled from his city 1301, begins to write the *Divina Commedia*
  
- II *The Divine Comedy*
  - Christian epic poem, Dante guided by a pagan author at the request of a “lady of Heaven”
  - Three part pilgrimage through the three parts of the afterlife - Inferno, Purgatorio, Paradiso

Key Concepts:

- A Allegory - representation of abstract principles by characters, figures in narrative; invites interpretation; creates parallel paths
  
- B Eschatology (<eschaton – the last day) - field of belief or a doctrine concerning the ultimate things, such as the soul after death, the afterlife, or the Last Judgment
  
- C Purgatory - a passing state for the souls of those who have died sanctified by the divine, but must still expiate their sins before they move on to paradise

-Density of Dante’s poetics—both allusive and elusive—constantly commented, 14<sup>th</sup> c to today  
-“Digital humanities” – 21<sup>st</sup> century research into huge body of commentary; large corpora databases and the humanities

- III Image of the island-mountain (slide and book)
  
- IV Michelino’s “The Comedy Illuminating Florence” (slide) - narrative and presentation
  
- V The narrative poem – Dante as narrator, pilgrim and author
  
- VI Three themes to begin with
  - A The intertwining of the political/temporal and the spiritual - critique of his time, critique out of time
  
  - B The question of vision and light – literal and non-literal meanings
  
  - C Dreams in Purgatory – a progression, an ascent
  
- VII Conclusion