The Invention of Subjectivity
Fragments of a Love Discourse in Medieval Italy

In this course we will investigate the ideology, content, and material forms of courtly love poetry from Dante Alighieri (1265-1321) to Francesco Petrarca (1304-1374). Through a close reading of such texts as Dante's *Vita Nova* and Petrarca's *Rerum vulgarium fragmenta* (often referred to as the poetry book par excellence: *il canzoniere*) we will unveil the literary and fictitious nature of love poetry. We will explore the origins of erotic poetry in medieval France and its subsequent interpretation and re-writing in Italian courts and *comuni*. We will become familiar with intertextual and cultural relationships between diverse areas of the Romance sphere. We will explore the cultural construction of the medieval notion of love and how it still has an impact on our own notion of love. We will analyze the dynamics of composition, circulation, and reception in manuscript culture. Through a close analysis of our texts as they have been preserved in manuscript form, we will gauge the differences between medieval and modern ways of writing, reading, and loving.

Course conducted in Italian. Advanced Italian required.

*** Fear not! Texts assigned in Latin, Old Occitan, or Old French will be accompanied by an English or Italian translation.

Course Objectives

1. To improve diachronic and synchronic knowledge of Italian.
2. To develop close reading skills and construct arguments supported by textual or contextual evidence.
3. To acquire fundamental notions of metrics, rhetoric, and stylistics.
4. To incorporate dynamics of writing and reading in manuscript culture into the understanding of pre-modern texts.
5. To investigate the literary system of the late Middle Ages in the Romance cultures.

Course Assignments and Grades

**Preparation, Attendance, Participation (25%)**

You are expected to arrive in class on time having closely read the primary texts assigned for that week. You are also responsible for weekly written responses: one paragraph (10-15 lines, in Italian) per week, posted on the Moodle blog on Wednesdays by noon. In this paragraph you can take a position on the reading assigned for that day’s class, or ask a question and try to hypothesize about preliminary answers or way to address it.

**Presentation (10%)**

A presentation (15 minutes) on a primary source.

**Two Close Readings (30%)**

4 pages each, in Italian, based on a single poem. As we read the different texts, we will produce ‘miniature’ versions of close readings as in-class activities to practice this genre. Due via email on 10/07 and 11/04 by 5 pm.

**Final Paper (35%)**

8 pages, in Italian. Your paper should discuss a single question/argument/issue arising from the texts read in class. Thinking of a genuine, original question is one of the hardest parts of being a literature scholar: so, start planning early. You are strongly encouraged to meet with me to discuss your ideas prior to starting the paper.

Abstracts of your final paper (300 words, in Italian) due via email Sunday 12/04 by 5pm. The abstract should contain the following information: a clear initial statement of purpose; a summary of the argumentation; some examples to be used in the argumentation. We will discuss your abstracts in class on 12/05. Therefore, be ready to prepare for a three-minute presentation of your proposed work, followed by a three-minute discussion. Final paper due via email Wednesday of Finals week, 5 PM.
Italian 227 – Monday and Wednesday 2:50-4:10 pm
Professor F. Marco Aresu – faresu@wesleyan.edu
Office Hours: Monday and Wednesday 1:00-2:00, and by appointment

September 5 – Introduction to the Course

1. Syllabus and course assignments
2. Fragmentation and unity in the Romance sphere
3. Latin vs. vernaculars: diglossia and bilingualism
4. Orality and writing. Production, circulation, reception
5. Literary genres and styles
6. Courts and comuni

September 7 – Theory and Practice of Courtly Love

CHRÉTIEN DE TROYES, Lancelot
ANDREAS CAPPELLANUS, De amore (selections from the 14th century Italian volgarizzamento)

September 12 – The Occitan Legacy

GUILLEM IX, “Ab la dolchor del temps novel”
JAUFRE RUDEL, “Lanquan li jorn son lone e may”
MARCABRU, “A la fontana del vergier”
BERNART DE VENTADORN, “Can l’erba fresch”, “Can vei la lauzeta mover”
ARNAUT DANIEL, “Ab gai so cundet e leri”
RAIMBAUT D’AURENGA, “Non chant per auzel ni per flor”


September 14 – Tenso on the Notion of Love

JACOPO DA LENTINI, “Amore è un(o) desio”
JACOPO MOSTACCI, “Solicitando un poco meo savere”
PIER DELLE VIGNE, “Però ch’amore no si po’ vedere”

September 19 – Love Poetry at the Court of Frederick II (1)

JACOPO DA LENTINI, “Maravigliosamente”, “Io m’aggio posto in core”, “Dolce coninzanamento”

September 21 – Love Poetry at the Court of Frederick II (2)

GIACOMINO PUGLIESE, “Morte perché m’ài fatta sì gran guerra”
RINALDO D’AQUINO, “Per fino amore vao si letamente”, “Già mai non mi conforto”
GUIDO DELLE COLONNE, “Gioiosamente canto”

September 26 – From Sicily to Tuscany

GUITTONE D’AREZZO, Rime (selections)
CHIARO DAVANZATI, “La splendente luce”

September 28 – The ‘Invention’ of a New Style (1)

BONAGIUNTA ORBICCIANI, “Voi ch’avete mutata la mainera”
GUIDO GUINIZZELLI, Rime (“Al cor gentile rempaira sempre amore”, “Lo vostro bel saluto e ’l gentil sguardo”, “Vedut’ho la lucente stella diana”, “Io voglio del ver la mia donna laudare”, “Dolente, lasso, già non m’assecuro”, “Omo ch’è saggio non corre leggero”)


October 3 – The ‘Invention’ of a New Style (2)

DANTE, “Guido i’ vorrei che tu e Lapo ed io”
LAPO GIANNI, “Siccome i Magi a guida della stella”
CINO DA PISTOIA, “Tutto mi salva il dolce salutare”, “La dolce vista e ’l bel guardo soave”


October 5 – Guido Cavalcanti’s Eros and Thanatos (1)

GUIDO CAVALCANTI, Rime (“Chi è questa che vèn, ch’ogn’om la mira”, “Donna me prega, - perch’eo voglio dire”)

October 10 – Guido Cavalcanti’s Eros and Thanatos (2)

GUIDO CAVALCANTI, Rime (“Biltà di donna e di sacente core”, “Fresca rosa novella”, “In un boschetto trova’ pasturella”, “Io non pensava che lo cor giammai”, “L’anima mia vilment’ è sbigotita”, “Perché non fuoro a me gli occhi
“dispenti”, “Perch’i’ non spero di tornar giammai”, “Voi che per li occhi mi passaste il core”)

October 12 – Corpus / Corporeal / Ethereal

DANTE, Vita Nova 1-8


October 17 – A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man (1)

DANTE, Vita Nova 9-18

October 19 – A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man (2)

DANTE, Vita Nova 19-26

October 26 – A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man (3)

DANTE, Vita Nova 27-31

October 31 – Reading Dante with Dante

DANTE, Inferno 5
DANTE, Purgatorio 24, 26, 30 (selections)

November 2 – The Many Songbooks of Francesco Petrarca (1)

FRANCESCO PETRARCA, Rerum vulgarium fragmenta (selections)


November 7 – The Many Songbooks of Francesco Petrarca (2)

FRANCESCO PETRARCA, Rerum vulgarium fragmenta (selections)

November 9 – The Many Songbooks of Francesco Petrarca (3)

FRANCESCO PETRARCA, Rerum vulgarium fragmenta (selections)
November 14 – Learning with Things

***SESSION TO BE HELD IN OLIN LIBRARY***


November 16 – The Many Songbooks of Francesco Petrarca (4)

FRANCESCO PETRARCA, Rerum vulgarium fragmenta (selections)

November 21 – Francesco Petrarca’s Hair is Full of Secrets

FRANCESCO PETRARCA, Secretum (selections)

November 28 – The Bad and the Ugly

GUIDO GUINIZZELLI, “Volvol te levi, vecchia rabbiosa”, “Chi vedesse a Lucia un var capuzzo”  
CECCO ANGIOLIERI, “En bona verità, non m’è avviso”  
GUIDO CAVALCANTI, “Guata, Manetto, quella scrignutuzza”  
RUSTICO FILIPPI, “O dolce mio marito Aldobrandino”, “Dovunque vai, con teco porti ‘l cesso”


November 30 – Final Considerations

December 05 – Paper Presentations

December 7 – Bacchanalia
Bibliography

*** All texts will be provided in .pdf format except for the following (available at Broad Street Bookstore by the second half of September):


*** “Work, work, work, work, work, work” – Rihanna ft. Drake.