

Topic/Theme	NOTES	RELEVANT READINGS
General Notes	- Divine Comedy consists of 3 canticæ i. Inferno 34 canto's ii. Purgatorio 33 canto's iii. Paradiso 33 canto's - Add up to 100, creating a numerical sense of fullness - 3 is also very Trinitarian Last word of each cantica is "stele" or star. The realm of the stars is the realm of God.	
Dante (1265-1321)	- Born 1265 - He went to a grammar school where he was trained in classical Latin and medieval Latin texts - 1290, June 8: Beatrice dies—leads to the writing of <i>Vita Nuova</i> - 1295: Dante enters political life; Dante at first responded with enthusiasm and genuine excitement to the lure and prestige of public life - 1300: Dante's political career reached its peak (June 15-August 15) when he was one of the city's six priors (a lost epistle of Dante in which the by-now exiled poet, takes stock of his life's disappointments, sees the cause of all his misfortunes in the decisions taken while he was a prior) - 1301: Dante is sent on an embassy to Pope Boniface VIII - He is associated with the Italian Renaissance - Born into the "city-state" issues of his time—very unsettled. - Issue between the Guelphs (papacy) and the Ghibellines (empire): cities tended to be divided b/w who supported the pope and who supported the emperor. **irony: Dante was a Guelph and hated the papacy. - Guelphs further divided after defeat of Ghibellines: White vs. Black - Dante was a White Guelph—Black Guelphs took over Florence in 1302 and Dante was exiled because of the civil war ravaging the city while being on an embassy to Pope B - Exile: central tragedy of Dante's life. - 1308-1313: big historic time. He seems to have all along understood the necessity of the empire as the sole reasonable warranty against the sinister spirals of violence splintering all cities. *Mazzotta - 1308: Henry VII crowned emperor; Dante himself hailed his arrival as a new messianic advent. He met the emperor, and this meeting renewed and nourished, at least for a while, as one can infer from his political <i>Epistolae</i>, Dante's moral vision of the necessity of empire that comes to maturation in the political tract, <i>Monarchia</i>, perhaps written around 1316. (Mazzotta) - 1309: Papacy moves to Avignon - 1314: <i>Inferno</i> published - 1315: Florence proposes to repeal Dante's exile on the condition that he acknowledges his guilt. Dante refuses. <i>Purgatorio</i> published - 1321: Completion of <i>Paradiso</i>, dies in Ravenna.	• Body buried in Ravenna • Florence builds him a tomb in 1780—reveres him as great poet • 2008, Florence rescinding his sentence of exile - He puts himself among the greatest poets of his time when he was nothing but a middle-class man who was exiled—he turns out to be right in placing himself in this company. - No skepticism is warranted for the reality or legal identity of Dante's existence. (Mazzotta) - One suspects that it is exactly this unquestioned reality, the knowledge that he was part of our history and was so much like us, that he was so thoroughly human while at the same time so thoroughly extraordinary as only fictional characters are, that accounts for the persistent fascination he exerts on us. (Mazzotta)
Exile	- In modern western tradition, Dante is synonymous with exile - Exile= to be away from home and threatened with punishment upon return - His exile was originally temporary but was made permanent within 2 months - Exile could be voluntary (pilgrimage) - The <i>Commedia</i> is the story of exile and how to overcome it:	Lamentations- O.T - Written about the destruction of Jerusalem - Credited to Jeremiah but this is no longer accepted. - Written in reaction to exile, asking "why this is happening" - Jerusalem to the O.T was Rome to the people of Dante's time - In Dante's lifetime, the Medieval church suffered Babylonian captivity which upset him (Avignon Papacy 308-378 CE)