

ENGLT 345

Response – *Inferno*

Your response should be a minimum of TWO typed, double-spaced pages. Be sure to include support in the form of analysis of specific lines/points from the poem. **No late responses will be accepted.**

Choose ONE of the following questions to respond to:

1. Punishment – in this case, divine retribution – is a significant aspect of the poem. Discuss at least TWO of the punishments imposed upon the sinners in the poem. In doing so, you might consider giving your opinion on the appropriateness (or inappropriateness) of the punishment in relation to the sin, what you think might have been Dante’s reasoning for assigning a particular punishment, etc.

2. Dante himself indicated that this poem should be read as an *allegory*, with the literal story being about “the state of souls after death” and the figurative/symbolic one being about how man’s exercise of his free will “[subjects him] to reward or punishment by Justice.” Can you find any other figurative/symbolic meaning in the story? That is, is there something else, other than what Dante has identified, that the poem might mean? Might there have been another purpose behind it?

3. *Inferno*, like much storytelling, involves repetition of key elements – symbols, archetypes, particular themes, etc. Choose one of these elements that you find to be particularly significant and discuss its significance in the poem.

4. Dante divides Hell into circles, each encompassing a particular sin or sins and those who have been damned for committing these sins. Do you think that Dante’s placement of the various sinners in hell is appropriate? That is, do you think the various levels in which he places them are appropriate?