**IB English III – Mrs. Fisher**

**Unit 1: *Inferno* by Dante Alighieri**

**September 8 – 30, 2014**

**Getting Started**

Dante was an Italian poet and moral philosopher best known for the epic poem *The Divine Comedy*, which comprises sections representing the three tiers of the Christian afterlife: purgatory, heaven, and hell. This poem, a great work of medieval literature and considered the greatest work of literature composed in Italian, is a philosophical Christian vision of mankind’s eternal fate. We will be reading the first part of the poem, *Inferno*, which details Dante's journey through the nine circles of Hell. The voyage begins during Easter week in the year 1300, the descent through Hell starting on Good Friday. After meeting his guide, the eminent Roman poet Virgil, in a mythical dark wood, the two poets begin their descent through a baleful world of doleful shades, horrifying tortures, and unending lamentation.

[www.worldofdante.org](http://www.worldofdante.org)

**Reading Strategically**

Fortunately for us, Dante writes *Inferno* in a vernacular style—the style of the commoner. This makes it more accessible for today’s reader. Your book also includes notes that will explain allusions throughout the poem. READ THESE NOTES carefully. They really will help you a great deal to make sense of the action.

* **Highlight, underline and annotate** ideas and language you believe is important, or that you don’t quite understand. Consider symbols, allusions, character traits and details about the nine circles of Hell.
* **Use post-it notes** to mark key evidence in the text. As we discuss the ideas and themes of the poem, you will need to be able to quickly reference lines which support them. This will also be helpful as you prepare to write an essay over the book.
* At the end of each Canto**, note the major characters and identify the “sinners”** that reside in various circles. Make note of important allusions and events along Dante’s journey. This will be hugely helpful after you complete the text and need to review for the exam.

**Assessments**

* **Reading quizzes (**at least one each week) that will not be announced in advance. I can help you understand and appreciate Inferno, but I cannot do your reading for you. The quizzes will help you stay accountable, and be ready for classroom discussions **(quiz grades**).
* **Socratic Seminars** are named for their embodiment of Socrates’ belief in the power of inquiry and in discussion over debate. You will write questions for these seminars to be discussed in class. (**100 points total, test grade)**
* **Analytical Essay** will allow you to practice your literary analysis and writing skills. I will provide several essay topics from which you can choose **(3-4 pages, 100 points, project grade**)
* **Unit Test** to include plot summary, quote analysis, short answer and two essay questions **(100 points, six weeks test grade -- 15% of grade).**

**Unit Calendar**

All dates are subject to change. I will post these in the class and online. Dates listed below are **due dates**. You must come to class and be ready for all seminars! These cannot be made up later. Put these important dates on your calendar and try not to be absent for any reason other than serious illness.

**Week 3**

9/8 - Inferno Handout and PP

9/9 - “Introduction” by John Ciardi pages *xii-xxiv* and *Cantos I-II*

9/10 - *Canto III-V*

9/11 - *Cantos VI-VIII*

9/12 **-** *Cantos IX-X1* **(Socratic Seminar)**

**Week 4**

9/15 **-** *Cantos XII-XV*

9/16 - *Cantos XVI-XVIII*

9/17 **-** *Cantos XIX-XXII* **(Socratic Seminar)**

9/18 - *Cantos XXIII-XV*

9/19 - *Cantos XXVI-XXVIII*

**Week 5**

**9/22 -** *Cantos XXIX* **–** *XXXI* **(Socratic Seminar)**

**9/23 -** *Cantos XXXII-XXXIII*

**9/24 - Essay Due**

**9/25 -** Review/Wrap Up

**9/26 - Unit TEST**