

The Catholic University of America
Department of English

ENG 834: Renaissance epic
Fall 2007

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A graduate seminar in the epic poetry of the Renaissance, including *Orlando furioso*, *Jerusalem Delivered*, *The Faerie Queene* and *Paradise Lost*. We will examine the formal and thematic features characteristic of the genre, with particular attention to the interplay between epic past and historical present in each poem. The secondary readings illustrate recent critical approaches to the individual poems and to the Renaissance epic tradition as such.

Required texts (available at CUA bookstore)

- Virgil, *The Aeneid*, trans. Robert Fagles. (Viking)
- Ariosto, *Orlando furioso*, trans. Barbara Reynolds, vols. 1 and 2 (Penguin)
- Tasso, *Jerusalem Delivered*, trans. Anthony Esolen (Johns Hopkins)
- Spenser, *The Faerie Queene*, ed. A.C. Hamilton et al, rev. 2nd ed. (Longman)
- Milton, *Paradise Lost*, ed. David Kastan (Hackett)
- Bakhtin, Mikhail. *The Dialogic Imagination* (Texas)
- Gregory, Tobias. *From Many Gods to One* (Chicago)
- Quint, David. *Epic and Empire* (Princeton)
- Zatti, Sergio. *The Quest for Epic* (Toronto)

Articles on the syllabus will be made available online or distributed in class.

Course requirements

50% of the course grade will be based on a seminar paper of 12-15 pages; 50% will be based on shorter writing assignments, presentations and classwork.

Schedule of readings and assignments

8-28 introductory

9-4 Virgil, *Aeneid* 1-4; Bakhtin, "Epic and Novel"; Gregory, *From Many Gods to One*
introduction

9-11 Virgil, *Aeneid* 6, 7, 12; Parry, "The Two Voices of the *Aeneid*"; Quint, *Epic and Empire* chap. 2

- 9-18 Ariosto, *Orlando furioso* 1-4.50, 6.17-8.21, 10.35-68 (Ruggiero and Alcina); Zatti, *The Quest for Epic* chap. 2
- 9-25 Ariosto, *Orlando furioso* 14-17 (siege of Paris, Grifone in Syria), 19.43-20 (Marfisa on the island of Amazons); Ascoli, "Ariosto and the 'Fier Pastor'" (*Renaissance Quarterly* 54.2 (2001))
- 10-2 Ariosto: *Orlando furioso* 27.116- 30.4 (on women's fidelity), 33.96-35.31 (Astolfo's voyage to the moon), 46 (conclusion); Gregory, *Many Gods* chap.3
- 10-16 Tasso, *Gerusalemme liberata* 1,4-8; Zatti, *Quest* chap. 6; Quint, *Epic and Empire* chap. 1
- 10-23 Tasso, *Gerusalemme liberata* 12,14-16, 20; Quint, *Epic and Empire* chap.5; Gregory, *Many Gods* chap. 4
- 10-30 Spenser, *The Faerie Queene* V 1-6; Patterson, "The Egalitarian Giant" (*Journal of British Studies* 31.2 (1992))
- 11-6 Spenser, *The Faerie Queene* V 7-12; Gregory, "Shadowing Intervention" (*ELH* 67 (2000))
- 11-13 Milton, *Paradise Lost* 1-4; Gregory, *Many Gods* chap. 5
- 11-20 Milton, *Paradise Lost* 5,6,9; Quint, *Epic and Empire* chap.7
- 11-27 Milton, *Paradise Lost* 10-12; Lewalski, Fish, Wittreich, "Why Milton Matters" (*Milton Studies*, 2005)
- 12-4 student presentations
- 12-10 5 PM: final papers due