

# IP304-15 Posthumous Geographies I: Underworlds

**20/21**

**Department**

Liberal Arts

**Level**

Undergraduate Level 3

**Module leader**

Bryan Brazeau

**Credit value**

15

**Assessment**

100% coursework

**Study location**

University of Warwick main campus, Coventry

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## Description

### Introductory description

This is an optional module for the BA Liberal Arts degree.

[Module web page](#)

### Module aims

Physical, spiritual, allegorical, and psychological journeys through the underworld present a wide variety of problems; How does a trip through hell and back change the person undertaking the journey? What forces shape the imaginary design of such underworlds and their often terrible punishments? What narratives about the self and society are intertwined in such underworlds and how do they manifest themselves today in recovery narratives, our conceptions of organised crime, and experiences of incarceration? This transdisciplinary module examines such problems (and more) across a wide variety of material.

Students wishing to undertake this module should note that it is decidedly not a Classics, Sociology, or Italian Studies module. While we draw on insights from these disciplines and many others (such as cultural criticism, philosophy, religious studies, psychology, and intellectual history), we employ a variety of student-led approaches to consider the problems of the underworld from a transdisciplinary perspective. For example, in our discussions, we will explore problems such as the concept of the self in relation to political power, the reflexivity of normalizing

power and social discourse on gender and race in the katabatic imaginary, the psychological reshaping of urban landscapes by criminal gangs, distorted experiences of space and time in carceral geography, and the relationship between the tyranny of originality and substance abuse. Through exploration of and reflection upon these problems, students will refine their analytical skills by thinking across disciplines to engage with complex problems that resist simple solutions.

## Outline syllabus

This is an indicative module outline only to give an indication of the sort of topics that may be covered. Actual sessions held may differ.

Week 1: Introduction: Fame and its Discontents

Weeks 2-5:

Problem 1: Individualism vs. Social Cohesion

- a. "Lovers in a Dangerous Time:" Romantic Love and Political Stability
- b. Hellish Punishments as Normalizing Discourses
- c. Akrasia, Alcoholism, and Autobiography
- d. "Bat out of Hell:" Infernal Liberty and Self-Reliance

Weeks 6-9:

Problem 2. Fire and Brimstone: Space and Place Down Under

- e. Hostile Environment: Ecological Allegories of Suffering
  - f. Body and Soul: Placelessness and Separation
  - g. Hell's Angels: Urban Battle Lines in the Quebec Biker Wars
  - h. Carceral Geography and the Temporality of Imprisonment
- Conclusions and Group Presentations

## Learning outcomes

By the end of the module, students should be able to:

- Articulate and discuss problems posed by underworld narratives.
- Critically analyse the dynamic between how such narratives have been inherited, reconfigured, and reshaped according to changing religious, political, and social concerns and how they, in turn, influence and often justify such cultural values.
- Examine underworld geographies from multiple perspectives (including spatial theory).
- Engage in sustained (weekly) critical reflection on problems generated by underworld narratives.
- Apply advanced cognitive skills to build transdisciplinary knowledge that fosters transformative dialogue.
- Implement meta-cognitive skills in approaching complex contemporary problems.
- Collaborate in the creation of their own version of an underworld, showcasing the new problems it generates and engaging in analytical reflection.

## Indicative reading list

Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* (penguin edition recommended)

Aquinas, T. *Summa Theologica*

Bachelard, G. *The Poetics of Space* (1958)

Bremmer, J.N. 'Christian Hell: From the Apocalypse of Peter to the Apocalypse of Paul.' *Numen* 56 (2009): 298-235.

Burkert, W. 'Pleading for Hell: Postulates, Fantasies and the Senselessness of Punishment', *Numen*, vol. 56.2-3 (2009): 141-160.

Brown, P. *The Body and Society: Men, Women, and Sexual Renunciation in Early Christianity* (1988).

Dante, *Divine Comedy* (Hollander Trans.)

Emerson, R. W., "Self-Reliance" (Norton edition recommended)

Freccero, J. *Dante: The Poetics of Conversion* (1986)

Foucault, M. 'Of Other Spaces: Utopias and Heterotopias' (1967/1984)

Jamison, L. *The Recovering: Intoxication and its Aftermath* (2018)

Jensen, D., "Criminals," in *The Culture of Make Believe* (2004)

Laing, O. *Trip to Echo Spring: Why Writers Drink* (2013)

Matthews, R. *Doing Time: An Introduction to the Sociology of Imprisonment*, McCraw, B. and R. Arp, eds., *The Concept of Hell* (2015)

Milton, J. *Paradise Lost, Books I and II* (Norton edition recommended)

Moran, D., N. Gil, and D. Conlon, eds., *Carceral Spaces: Mobility and Agency in Imprisonment and Migrant Detention* (2013)

Schneider, S. *Iced: The Story of Organised Crime in Canada* (2009)

Scher, J. and W. Marsden, *Angels of Death: Inside the Biker Gangs' Crime Empire* (2006)

Tuan, Y.-F. *Topophilia* (1990)

Virgil, *Aeneid* book VI; *Georgics* IV

Additional texts, specific book chapters and articles may be set for additional reading.

[View reading list on Talis Aspire](#)

## **Interdisciplinary**

This is an optional module on the BA in Liberal Arts course which offers a trans disciplinary learning experience that allows students to develop breadth and depth of knowledge using problem based learning approaches to consider issues from a variety of disciplinary perspectives.

## **Subject specific skills**

Skills of critical analysis attained through analysing the dynamic between how narratives of underworld journeys have been inherited, reconfigured, and reshaped according to changing cultural concerns and how they, in turn, influence and often justify such cultural values.

## **Transferable skills**

Critical analysis  
Critical reflection  
Advanced cognitive skills

Meta-cognitive skills in approaching complex contemporary problems.

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## Study

### Study time

Type	Required
Seminars	10 sessions of 2 hours (13%)
Practical classes	(0%)
Other activity	130 hours (87%)
Total	150 hours

### Private study description

No private study requirements defined for this module.

### Other activity description

Film screenings, self-directed study and revision

### Costs

No further costs have been identified for this module.

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## Assessment

You must pass all assessment components to pass the module.

### Assessment group A2

	Weighting	Study time	Eligible for self-certification
Take-Home Test	25%		No
Creative Group Presentation	15%		Yes (extension)
1 x Creative Group Presentation (each student speaks for 5 mins)			
Reflection Diary (word length variable)	15%		Yes (extension)
3000 word essay	45%		Yes (extension)
Underworld essay			

## **Feedback on assessment**

General feedback for written assignments will be provided via Tabula (detailed feedback appointments available for all students upon request). Group feedback on the media assignment will be provided via Tabula (students will submit a brief précis of their video or photo essay). Feedback on take-home test will be provided individually with written comments via Tabula.

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## **Availability**

### **Courses**

This module is Optional for:

- Year 3 of UVCA-LA99 Undergraduate Liberal Arts
- Available to students from other departments by application
- Available to students from other departments by application
- LA 98 BA Liberal Arts with Intercalated Year
- LA 99 BA Liberal Arts