ITAL 310 Dante in Translation
Midterm Exam
October 21, 2008
Professor Giuseppe Mazzotta

Student Name:_____

This exam is in two parts. The first part consists of a series of quotes which comprise 60 points of the exam: you should devote approximately 30 minutes to these questions. The second part consists of two questions worth 40 points of the exam: you should devote approximately 20 minutes to these questions.

A.   **Identifications.** Set forth below are twelve short passages drawn from either *Inferno* or *Purgatory*. **Choose ten of them.** Identify the speaker of the lines, the person(s) to whom the speaker is speaking (if known), the context in which the passage appears, and the relationship of the passage to the canto and/or canticle in which the passage is found. Ten identifications at six points each equal a total of sixty points.

Your answers to the identifications should be written on the exam sheet, not in the blue book.

1.   "Take thought of the seed from which you spring. You were not born to live as brutes, but to follow virtue and knowledge."

2.   He looked round about me as if he had a desire to see whether someone was with me, but when his expectation was all quenched he said, weeping: "If thou goest through this blind prison by height of genius, where is my son and why is he not with thee?"

3.   My Master said this and himself turned me round and, not trusting to my hands, covered my face with his own also.

4.   "The sparks that kindled the fire in me were from the divine flame from which more than a thousand have been lit – I mean the *Aeneid*, which was in poetry my mother and my nurse."

5. "Why dost thou tear me?" And when it had turned dark with blood, it began again: 'Why manglest thou me? Hast thou no spirit of pity?"

6. "Then fasting had more power than grief."

7. O vainglorious Christians, weary wretches who are sick in the mind's vision and put your trust in backward steps, do you not perceive that we are worms to form the angelic butterfly that soars to judgment without defense?

8. "Standest thou there already, standest thou there already, Boniface? By several years the writing lied to me."

9. At the moment I heard a voice: "Honour the lofty poet! His shade returns that left us." When the voice had paused and there was silence I saw four great shades coming to us; their looks were neither sad nor joyful.

10. "What is this, laggard spirits? What negligence, what delay is this? Haste to the mountain to strip you of the slough that allows not God to be manifest to you."

11. Ah, Italy, enslaved, hostel of misery, ship without pilot in great tempest, no princess among the provinces but a brothel! So eager was that noble soul, only for the dear name of his city, to give welcome there to its citizen, and now in thee thy living are never free from war and of those whom one wall and moat shut in one gnaws at the other.

12. "Love, which is quickly kindled in the gentle heart, seized this man for the fair form that was taken from me, and the manner afflicts me still."

B. **Short Essay Questions**: **Pick TWO of the four questions** below and write a brief essay. Two answers at twenty points each equal a total of forty points.

1. What opinions does Dante express regarding the moral and spiritual condition of Florence in his time? Cite specific cantos, events, and historical personages with whom Dante discusses his native city.

2. What is Dante's doctrine regarding the proper relationship between the empire and the papacy? Name prominent political and religious personages and indicate Dante's interpretation of their roles in recent history for good or evil.

3. Citing specific examples drawn from both *Inferno* and *Purgatorio*, discuss Dante's relationship (in terms of personages and themes) with classical antiquity.

4. In *Inferno* 15 Dante encounters Brunetto Latini. Who is Brunetto and what role did he play in the poet's life? How is this relationship portrayed in the infernal context in which it takes place?