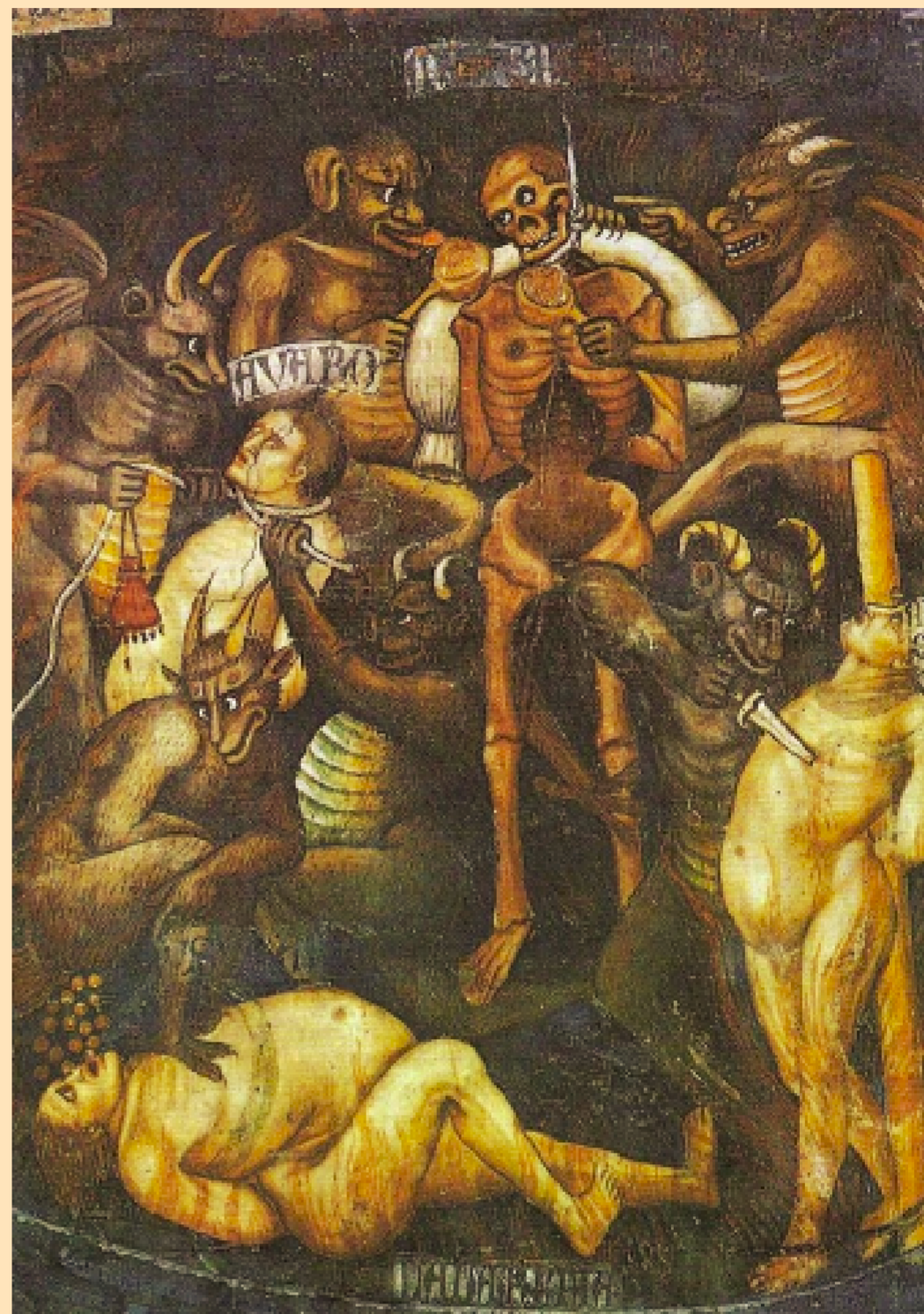


The Demon in the Text: Readings in Early Modern Italian Literature



Prof. Giovanni Braico

Tuesdays/Thursday 2:00-3:15

Casa Italiana Zerilli-Marimò, Room 306)

There is a rather intriguing phenomenon which took place in fourteenth-century Italy: demons and devils invaded the cities' cultural and social spaces by proliferating in both visual and written artworks. Writers described in painstaking detail the horrendous appearances and powers of these creatures; painters visualized their abhorrent bodies and acts in majestic monumental paintings; and preachers vehemently warned city audiences against their insidious dangers. In this course we will investigate the roots of this phenomenon by critically considering the sociocultural factors which determined and shaped the existence and proliferation of demons in early modern Italian arts. After an introductory exposure to the most updated theoretical approaches to demonic artifacts, we will examine a wide array of Italian literary sources, in order to explore the foundations of the conceptual domains of the demonic in early modern Italy. Along the way, we will draw comparisons between written and visual sources from both Italy and around the world, and we will take into account the dynamic processes of transmedial, transcultural and transhistorical migration which underlie the crafting of demonic figures. By the end of the course, we will be able to identify and discuss the sociocultural complexities behind the creation and interpretation of demonic depictions in early modern Italian literature and visual arts. This course will be taught in Italian. Fulfills "Literature Survey" requirement.