VISIONS OF HEAVEN AND HELL

Beginning with Homer’s vivid depictions of the Greek gods in heaven in The Iliad and of the shades of the human dead in Hades in The Odyssey, progressing through Dante’s medieval Catholic vision of the afterlife of the damned and the saved in The Divine Comedy, and ending with Milton’s great dramatization of the Genesis story of Adam and Eve in Paradise Lost, we will read, in chronological order, a series of great books which go beyond earthly experience. Each of these masterpieces presents us with a great example of creative imagination at work in literature.

Written work in the course will consist of 3 three-five page critical papers plus a 6-10 page creative paper--a short visionary account of the author's visit to heaven or hell.

Course texts:
- The Iliad
- The Odyssey
- The Aenead
- The Divine Comedy (Inferno, Purgatorio, Paradisio)
- Paradise Lost