



ITAL 472B: Petrarch's Poetry and Legacy (1.5 units)
(cross-listed with ENSH 347P and MEDI 320B)
Fall 2026 – University of Victoria



From a 1470 incunabulum of Petrarch's *Canzoniere* and *Trionfi*.
Venice: Biblioteca Marciana, Inc. Ven. 546. Source: Wikipedia Commons.

Schedule

Mondays & Thursdays from 13:00 until 14:20

Prerequisites

None

Description

This course explores the writings of the fourteenth-century humanist, poet, and proto-influencer Francesco Petrarca (Francis Petrarch), especially his *Canzoniere*, which popularized the sonnet form and has influenced the arts of poetry and self-curation ever since. Although Petrarch himself belittled his collection by calling it *Rerum vulgarium fragmenta*, “Fragments of Common (or Plain) Things”—i.e. things written about in the Italian vernacular instead of Latin—he spent decades writing, revising and organizing it, in the process immortalizing both his beloved muse Laura and himself as her probably unwilling publicist. In addition to the *Canzoniere* we’ll read excerpts from Petrarch’s *Secret, Remedy for Both Kinds of Fortune, Letters to His Friends*, and *Guide to the Holy Land*. Consideration of scholarly studies and of works by Petrarch’s imitators and critics will round out the course. The primary texts will be presented in English translations with attention to the original languages, but no previous preparation in Italian or Latin is required.



Textbooks

- *Petrarch's Lyric Poems: The Rime Sparse and Other Lyrics*, trans. Robert Durling; Italian and English facing-page edition and translation (Harvard University Press, 1976; reprinted in paperback)
- Supplementary materials to be uploaded to Brightspace

Instructor

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Office hours: Tuesdays, 11:00-12:30, Thursdays 15:00-16:30, and by appointment