



Dante Series

October 26th

1321

2021

The Center for Italian Studies presents

Poetics of Judgment: Dante and the Foundations of Humanism.



A Lecture by **Peter Carravetta**,

Professor of Philosophy, Stony Brook University

Peter Carravetta is professor of philosophy at SUNY/Stony Brook. He has published ten books in methods of critique, cultural criticism and philosophy, including, *Prefaces to the Diaphora. Rhetorics, Allegory, and the Interpretation of Postmodernity* (1991), *The Elusive Hermes. Method, Discourse, Interpreting* (2012), *After Identity. Migration, Critique, Italian American Culture* (2017) and *Language at the Boundaries. Philosophy, Literature, and the Poetics of Culture* (2021). He is also the author of eight books of poetry, including *The Sun and Other Things* (1997), and *the other lives* (2014). He is the founding editor of *DIFFERENTIA review of Italian thought* (9 vols. 1986-1999) and translator of G. Vattimo & P.A. Rovatti's *Weak Thought* (2012).

Among Dante's concerns that still speak to us we find the separation of the political powers of church and state, and the emphasis on libero arbitrio, free will, in the proper conduct of citizens as regards both an individual's civil life and their overarching ethics. With that goes the crucial question of judgment: though often unwittingly, people do pass judgment on how one and the others in a society do or must act in order to attain a civil, we might say more democratic, coexistence. The key is the human's capacity to understand (*intellectus*) and then act (*voluntas*) by relying on the consciousness of the agent to choose what course to follow. It's an ethical and sociopolitical question. Dante had already explored the centrality of human agency and the responsibility that goes with the greatest gift bestowed on humans by God: the freedom to choose, to shape their life, to intervene in society. In that sense, he is still speaking to us. The paper starts with a reading of Canto 16 of Purgatory.

**Join us Tuesday, October 26th, 2021, at 04:00 pm EST
at The Center For Italian Studies - Melville E-4340**