

HUMA 650: Humanities and the Law: Dostoevsky
Course Introduction (Fall 2009)

Class Meetings: TR 2:10-3:30
Murkland 218

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Office Hours: TR 3:40-4:30
(and by appointment)

Texts: Dostoevsky, *Crime and Punishment*
Dostoevsky, *The Brothers Karamazov*
course packet (available at MUB Copy Center)

Course Objective: To become improved readers, writers, and thinkers by examining how the Russian author, Fyodor Dostoevsky, treats a number of legal, judicial, and moral issues in his writings.

Course Grade: 45% = writing assignments: essays
30% = writing assignments: analyses
25% = class attendance, preparation, participation, contribution

* This breakdown of the course grade applies only for those students who miss 3 or fewer class meetings. Students who miss more than 3 class sessions can expect their overall course grade to be lowered substantially (one intermediate grade level for each absence).

Course Description:

In this course we will be reading and discussing *Crime and Punishment* (1866), *The Brothers Karamazov* (1881), as well as selected entries from *Diary of a Writer* (1873-1881), the one-person journal in which Dostoevsky discusses a number of jury trials that took place in Russia during the 1870s. We will examine in these works how Dostoevsky views the new legal reforms in post-emancipation Russia, with special attention being focused on his treatment of such issues as criminality, justice, and legal (as opposed to moral) guilt. Dostoevsky was particularly interested in the newly established jury trials and the new institution of the bar, both of which resulted from the sweeping legal reforms that were instituted in 1864. He was dismayed by what he considered to be a high number of acquittals as well as by the use of what were then fashionable new defense strategies, such as those that argued that a hostile social and economic environment was responsible for individual acts of criminality. Some commentators feel that at the heart of Dostoevsky's misgivings about trials by jury was his fear that the growing professionalization of the bar and the formalism of legal procedures would sow moral confusion in Russian society by institutionalizing the separation of ethics and morality from legal practice. In other words, he feared that the law courts would soon replace such traditional institutions as the Russian Orthodox Church and the family as a school of moral values in Russia. In addition, Dostoevsky seemed to fear that lawyers were in competition with literary artists (such as himself) as psychologists of the human soul, constructing narrative plots and drawing character profiles in the courtroom that served not the truth about human beings, but rather the narrow and immediate interests of the clients who hired them (system of advocacy).

Course Policies and Expectations:

Attendance: Regular class attendance is necessary if the objectives in this course are to be met. Failure to attend class regularly will result in a substantial lowering of your final course grade. In this course there is no such thing as an excused absence: either you are in class or you are not. Do not make doctor's appointments and other scheduled appointments during class time. Be on time for class: students who leave early or arrive late are treated as absent for half that class period when attendance grades are computed.

Absences: Students are responsible for all information and announcements gone over in class, whether they are in attendance or not. If you do miss a class, you are still responsible for turning in any work that is due that day and for finding out what occurred in class. It is the responsibility of the absent student to ask a classmate ahead of time to pick up handouts, take notes, record announcements, etc. Do not simply ask the instructor upon your return what you missed.

Quizzes: Short quizzes, asking only for five identification items from the texts assigned, may be given each class period. It is your responsibility to make arrangements with the instructor to make up any quizzes you may have missed. Unless you make those arrangements before the start of the next class meeting, you will not be able to make up a quiz you have missed due to an absence.

Writing Assignments: Guidelines to follow when writing analyses and essays in this course, as well as the deadlines for their submission, will be distributed separately. Late work will be accepted, but with a substantial penalty (a reduction in grade of 5 points for each weekday late). Being absent from class does NOT relieve a student of the responsibility for turning in a written assignment on its due date.

Reading Assignments: You should attempt to finish reading all the assigned texts as soon as possible. However, the class discussions and quizzes will focus only on the pages assigned for that particular day. You should try to reread the assignments shortly before class.

Class Participation: This course is designed for discussion rather than lecture. Therefore, you should be prepared to discuss the events depicted and the characters portrayed in the assigned reading. Take notes when you are reading and then review them before class.

Academic Honesty: Students are reminded that academic dishonesty is unethical and constitutes a violation of the academic honesty policy at UNH. One of the most common forms of academic dishonesty committed in a course such as this one is plagiarism: namely, the unattributed use of the ideas, evidence, or words of another person. Plagiarism may include, but is not limited to, the representation of the ideas, data, or writing of another person as one's own work (even though some wording might have been altered). Copying items from the internet is a particularly egregious form of plagiarism. Any student found guilty of academic dishonesty will automatically receive a failing grade for the assignment, perhaps even for the entire course.

Guidelines for Analyses:

As part of the writing component for this course, you will write four typed, double-spaced, two-page analyses (using 12-point font) on selected sections of the texts we will be reading and examining. Each analysis should provide a thoughtful interpretation of, and some critical commentary on the significance of, one or two of the main themes, issues or messages expressed in the textual passages under analysis. Your analysis should focus primarily on how each textual passage reveals illuminating aspects of our course focus on legal/judicial/moral issues in Dostoevsky's writings (that is, issues of criminality, guilt, justice, legality, etc.).

Schedule for Analyses:

Tuesday, September 15:

two-page analysis of Part 3, Chapter 5 (*Crime and Punishment*)

Tuesday, October 06: two-page analysis of Kroneberg Case (*Diary of a Writer*)
Tuesday, November 17: two-page analysis of Book 09 (*The Brothers Karamazov*)

Schedule for Essays:

Thursday, October 15: five-page essay on *Crime and Punishment*
Tuesday, November 10: five-page essay on *Diary of a Writer*
Wednesday, December 10: five-page essay on *The Brothers Karamazov*

**HUMA 650: Humanities and the Law: Dostoevsky
Syllabus (Fall 2009)**

September 01: Course introduction
September 03: Dostoevsky: life and works

September 08: *Crime and Punishment*: Part I
September 10: *Crime and Punishment*: Part II

September 15: *Crime and Punishment*: Part III
September 17: *Crime and Punishment*: Part IV

September 22: *Crime and Punishment*: Part V
September 24: *Crime and Punishment*: Part VI

September 29: *Crime and Punishment*: Epilogue
October 01: *Diary of a Writer*: “The Environment,” “Vlas,” “Colony of Young Offenders”

October 06: *Diary of a Writer*: Kroneberg Case
October 08: *Diary of a Writer*: Kairova Case

October 13: NO CLASS (UNH follows a Monday schedule)
October 15: *Diary of a Writer*: Dzhunkovsky Case

October 20: *Diary of a Writer*: Kornilova Case
October 22: *Diary of a Writer*: Kornilova Case

October 27: Guest Lecture on Dostoevsky and Law
October 29: *The Brothers Karamazov*: Books 1-2-3

November 03: *The Brothers Karamazov*: Books 1-2-3
November 05: *The Brothers Karamazov*: Books 4-5-6

November 10: *The Brothers Karamazov*: Books 4-5-6
November 12: *The Brothers Karamazov*: Books 7-8-9

November 17: *The Brothers Karamazov*: Book 7-8-9
November 19: *The Brothers Karamazov*: Book 10-11

November 24: *The Brothers Karamazov*: Book 10-11
November 26: NO CLASS (THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY)

December 01: *The Brothers Karamazov*: Book 12

December 03: *The Brothers Karamazov: Book 12*

December 08: *The Brothers Karamazov: Epilogue*

December 10: *Crimes and Misdemeanors* (film)