

Prof. Greta Matzner-Gore
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Office Hours: Tuesdays, 2-4 PM
(and by appt.)

SLL 345g (60232D)
Tues./Thurs. 12:30-1:50 PM
Location: VKC 154

Literature and Philosophy: Dostoevsky

Course Description

In this course we will read, analyze and discuss Dostoevsky's major works of fiction, focusing on how he uses narrative form (unreliable narrators, free indirect discourse, beginnings and endings, major and minor characters, suspense) to create meaning. We will analyze what Dostoevsky called the "correspondences" between form and content in his most important literary works, and ponder questions such as: How do Dostoevsky's novels (to quote Wolfgang Iser) "claw their way into us?" How does he use narrative dynamics to implicate us, his readers, in the major moral and philosophical problems his works investigate?

Learning Goals

This course is designed not only to introduce students to Dostoevsky's major works, but also to help them develop their close reading, writing and discussion skills. By the end of this course, students who complete all assignments in a satisfactory manner (with an average grade of B- or higher) will be able to:

- Use textual evidence to construct compelling arguments, and present those arguments both orally and in writing.
- Analyze Dostoevsky's narrative strategies and how they reflect and/or complicate the most important questions, problems, and ideas his works raise.
- Independently develop and pose their own critical questions about the works we read and explore potential answers to them, both in writing and in class discussion.
- Trace the nuances of the metaphysical and ethical questions that obsess Dostoevsky's protagonists (about the nature of good and evil, the causes of human suffering and social inequality, and the possibility of establishing universal brotherhood on earth) and develop their own answers to them.

Assignments and Course Breakdown

Class Participation (15%)

To understand a work of literature you must engage with it actively (think about it, debate it, and sometimes even argue with it). To that end, attendance and active participation in discussion are essential components of this course. Students will be expected to **attend every class (arriving on time, with book in hand!)**, and **participate** thoughtfully and respectfully in classroom discussions and in-class group work.

In order to receive a high score for class participation:

- Each student will be expected to make a thoughtful contribution to the general discussion *at least* **once per week**.
- Each student will be expected to participate actively in classroom group activities (including debates and group presentations).
- Any student who accrues **more than 2 unexcused absences** will receive a **reduced participation grade**. A student with 3 unexcused absences will receive a 10% grade reduction; a student with 4 unexcused absences will receive a 20% grade reduction, and so on. If you would like to be excused from class for a religious observance, family emergency, or documented illness, please let me know as soon as you are able.
- When you arrive to class late you miss important material and disrupt the general discussion. For that reason, students who regularly arrive late for class will receive a **reduced participation grade**, calculated in the following way: **3 late arrivals to class = 1 unexcused absence**. If you are finding it difficult to get to class on time because of a scheduling conflict, please speak to me.

Reading Journal (25%)

Starting the **second week of class**, students will write **weekly** journal entries (**minimum 200 words**) and post them to the course's Blackboard page. Prompts will vary from week to week, sometimes asking you to address a particular question that a text raises, to pose a question of your own (and explore potential answers to it), or to write a personal response to one of the works we have read.

- Each journal entry will receive a score of **0,1,2, or 3 points**. Your score will reflect not so much *what* your post concludes as the *process* by which you reach that conclusion. Generally, in order to receive 3 points on a journal post you will need to:
 - Cite the text **at least twice**, providing the relevant page numbers for each citation/passage you introduce.
 - Thoughtfully analyze the passages you cite.
 - Take into account the text's complexities and nuances.
- Journal Entries will be due by 11 AM before class on Tuesdays. Late submissions will receive a 1-point markdown (for example, a journal entry that would have received a score of 3 if handed in on time, will receive a score of 2 if handed in late).
- **Your lowest score on a journal entry will be dropped.**

Weekly Reading Quizzes (10%)

To encourage you to keep up with the readings, you will be required to fill out a brief 3-question reading quiz on the course's Blackboard page before class every Thursday, starting the second week of the semester.

- Reading Quizzes will be due by 12 NOON before class on Thursdays.
- **Late quiz submissions will not be accepted.**
- **Your 2 lowest reading quiz scores will be dropped.**

2 Essays (Essay 1: 20%; Essay 2: 30%)

Students will be required to write two formal essays for the course, one (5 pages) due in the middle of the semester, and one (7-8 pages) due at the end of it.

- **Late papers:** Late papers will be marked down **1/3 of a letter grade for every day they are late**, including weekends. For example, a paper that, had it been handed in on time, would have received an A-, will receive a B+ if it is handed in one day late, a B if it is two days late, and so on.
- **Appointments:** I strongly encourage you to drop by office hours or make an appointment to discuss your ideas for your essay or a draft in progress. If you choose to make an appointment, you must do so at least **48 hours** before the paper is due.
- **Rewrites:** You will be permitted to rewrite your first essay, if you choose. Rewrites are due **one week** after you receive your graded paper back. Your final grade for the paper will be equal to the average of the grades you receive on the original submission and the rewrite.

Extra Credit

Students will have the option of completing an extra-credit assignment in conjunction with R.F. Georgy's lecture about his Dostoevsky-inspired novel, *Notes from the Café*, on Wednesday, September 14th. More information about the assignment TBA.

Grading Rubric

<u>Assignment</u>	<u>% of Course Grade</u>
Class Participation (attendance, participation, in-class group work)	15
Reading Journal	25
Weekly Reading Quizzes	10
Essay 1	20
Essay 2	<u>30</u>
TOTAL	100

93-100% = A, 90-92% = A-, 88-89% = B+, 83-87% = B, 80-82% = B-, 78-79% = C+, 73-77% = C, 70-72% = C-, 68-69% = D+, 63-67% = D, 60-62 = D-, under 60% = F.

Required Texts

Unless otherwise indicated, all of the required readings for the course are available for purchase and/or rent at the University Bookstore. They are also available on Amazon, from used bookstores, and in libraries, some in digital form through USC's library website. (**NOTE:** If you would like to borrow copies of our books, but they are already checked out of the university libraries, you can order them through ILL).

To facilitate our class discussions, **please use the translations and editions listed on the syllabus.** That way you and your classmates will always be, as it were, on the same page!

Fyodor Dostoyevsky. *Poor Folk and Other Stories*. Translated by David McDuff. ISBN: 9780140445053

---. *The Great Short Works of Fyodor Dostoevsky*. Perennial Classics. ISBN: 9780060726461.
---. *Demons*. Translated by Robert Maguire. ISBN: 9780141441412.
---. *The Brothers Karamazov*. Translated by Richard Pevear and Larissa Volokhonsky. ISBN: 9780374528379.

Schedule of Assignments

T Aug. 23 Introduction: Dostoevsky and the Russian Literary Tradition

R Aug. 25 *Poor Folk*, 3-58 (up to June 28)

T Aug. 30 *Poor Folk*, 58-115 (up to September 18) + Pushkin's "The Stationmaster" (Handout)

R Sept. 1 *Poor Folk*, 115-129 (to end) + Gogol's "The Overcoat" (Handout)

T Sept. 6 *Notes from Underground* (Part 1, Part 2 ch. 1-5) in *Great Short Works of Dostoevsky*, 263-338 + Selections from Chernyshevsky's *What is to be Done?* (Handout)

R Sept. 8 *Notes from Underground* (Part 2, ch. 6-10) in *Great Short Works*, 338-377.

T Sept. 13 *Demons* (Part I, ch. 1-2), 7-88.

W Sept. 14 An Evening with R.F. Georgy, author of *Notes from the Café Doheny* (DML) 240, 7 PM

R Sept. 15 *Demons* (Part I, ch. 3), 89-139.

M Sept. 19 Optional Extra Credit Assignment Due at 5:00 PM via Blackboard

T Sept. 20 *Demons* (Part I, ch. 4-5, Part 2, ch. 1), 139-284.

R Sept. 22 *Demons* (Part 2, ch. 2), 285-312.

T Sept. 27 *Demons* (Part 2, ch. 3-6), 313-430.

R Sept. 29 *Demons* (Part 2, ch. 7-9), 430-480.

T Oct. 4 *Demons* (Part 2, ch. 10, Part 3, ch. 1-2), 480-574.

R Oct. 6 *Demons* (Part 3, ch. 3-4), 575-624.

T Oct. 11 *Demons* (Part 3, ch. 5-7), 625-734.

R Oct. 13 *Demons* (Part 3, ch. 8 + "At Tikhon's"), 735-787.

T Oct. 18 “A Gentle Creature” in *Great Short Works*, 667-714 + Excerpts from *Diary of a Writer* (handout).

R. Oct. 20 “The Dream of a Ridiculous Man” in *Great Short Works of Dostoevsky*, 715-738 + Excerpts from *Diary of a Writer* (handout).

F. Oct. 21 Prospectus for Paper # 1 Due at 5:00 PM via Blackboard

T Oct. 25 *The Brothers Karamazov* (Dedication, “From the Author,” Books 1 + 2), 1-91.

R Oct. 27 *The Brothers Karamazov* (Book 3, ch. 1-5), 92-122.

F. Oct. 28 Paper #1 Due at 5:00 PM via Blackboard

T Nov. 1 *The Brothers Karamazov* (Book 3, ch. 6-11 + Book 4), 123-212.

R Nov. 3 *The Brothers Karamazov* (Book 5), 213-282.

T Nov. 8 *The Brothers Karamazov* (Books 6 + 7), 283-363.

R Nov. 10 *The Brothers Karamazov* (Book 8), 364-444.

T Nov. 15 *The Brothers Karamazov* (Book 9) 444-512.

R Nov. 17 CLASS CANCELLED (Take this time to Read Ahead!)

T Nov. 22 *The Brothers Karamazov* (Book 10 + 11), 515-655.

R Nov. 24 THANKSGIVING

T Nov. 29 *The Brothers Karamazov* (Book 12), 656-753.

R Dec. 1 *The Brothers Karamazov* (“Epilogue”), 757-776 + “Pushkin Speech” (Handout).

F Dec. 2 Prospectus for Paper #2 Due at 5:00 PM via Blackboard

T Dec. 13 Paper # 2 Due at 1:00 PM via Blackboard

ADDITIONAL COURSE POLICIES

Instructor Availability

Office hours: I will hold office hours on **Tuesdays from 2-4 PM in 255B Taper Hall**. You are welcome to drop by to discuss Dostoevsky, the readings, your written work, or any other academic question you may have. My door is open!

Appointments: If you have a scheduling conflict that will keep you from attending office hours, email me (or come talk to me after class) about setting up another time to meet.

Email: The best way to contact me outside of class is via email (matzner@usc.edu). I will respond as soon as possible, normally within 48 hours.

Electronic Devices

Electronic devices distract you and your classmates from the discussion. At the beginning of each class, please turn your phones to silent and put them away. In general, **I do not permit the use of computers in discussion-based classes**. If this policy poses a problem for you, please speak to me after class, drop by my office hours, or contact me by email.

ACADEMIC CONDUCT AND SUPPORT SYSTEMS

Academic Conduct

Plagiarism – presenting someone else’s ideas as your own, either verbatim or recast in your own words – is a serious academic offense with serious consequences. Please familiarize yourself with the discussion of plagiarism in *SCampus* in Section 11, *Behavior Violating University Standards* <https://scampus.usc.edu/1100-behavior-violating-university-standards-and-appropriate-sanctions/>. Other forms of academic dishonesty are equally unacceptable. See additional information in *SCampus* and university policies on scientific misconduct, <http://policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct/>.

Discrimination and Assault

Discrimination, sexual assault, and harassment are not tolerated by the university. You are encouraged to report any incidents to the *Office of Equity and Diversity* <http://equity.usc.edu/> or to the *Department of Public Safety* <http://capsnet.usc.edu/department/department-public-safety/online-forms/contact-us>. This is important for the safety whole USC community. Another member of the university community – such as a friend, classmate, advisor, or faculty member – can help initiate the report, or can initiate the report on behalf of another person. *The Center for Women and Men* <http://www.usc.edu/student-affairs/cwm/> provides 24/7 confidential support, and the sexual assault resource center webpage sarc@usc.edu describes reporting options and other resources.

The Office of Disability Services and Programs

http://sait.usc.edu/academicsupport/centerprograms/dsp/home_index.html provides certification for students with disabilities and helps arrange the relevant accommodations. If an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible, *USC Emergency Information* <http://emergency.usc.edu/will> provide safety and other updates, including ways in which instruction will be continued by means of blackboard, teleconferencing, and other technology.

The Writing Center and Other Helpful Resources

The USC Writing Center is available to help students improve their critical thinking and writing skills. It offers free materials and online resources at <https://dornsife.usc.edu/writingcenter/>. Students whose primary language is not English should check with the *American Language*

Institute <http://dornsife.usc.edu/ali>, which sponsors courses and workshops specifically for international graduate students.

The USC Kortschak Center for Learning and Creativity offers free online resources for time management, note taking, paper writing, and goal setting, which can be accessed at <http://kortschakcenter.usc.edu/>

The USC Libraries offers free research guides on 22 subjects at <http://libguides.usc.edu/>

Lynda.com can be accessed from the Blackboard homepage and provides free video tutorials on a wide range of topics and academic skills.