RUSS 644 (Spring 2011)  
Graduate Seminar  

Dostoevsky, Tolstoy, and the Novel

Instructor: Molly Brunson  
Meetings: T 3:30-5:20; HGS 302  
Office Hours: Thursdays 2:30-4:30, or by appointment  
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Course Description
An examination of the place of Dostoevsky and Tolstoy in the history and theory of the novel. Topics include: modernity and the rise of the novelistic genre; narrative and description, time and space; novelistic form and discourse; psychological interiority and the elaboration of the self; the Realist novel, the Bildungsroman, and the epic; limits of novelistic representation. Alongside a selection of novels and contemporaneous critical and theoretical texts, we will read the central works of 20th century novel theory, including those by Bakhtin, Lukacs, and others.

The seminar is open to (and indeed welcomes) undergraduate and graduate students with no knowledge of Russian, as long as they demonstrate a serious interest in the topic and make special arrangements with the instructor at the beginning of the semester.

Texts
Balzac, Honoré de. *Le Père Goriot*.  
Dostoevsky, Fyodor. *Crime and Punishment*.  
Tolstoy, Lev. *War and Peace*.  
Dostoevsky, Fyodor. *The Brothers Karamazov*.

Seminar participants are expected to read the literary texts in the original language when possible and are responsible for locating their own copies of the novels. If you are reading the texts in translation, use the following editions:

- Tolstoy, Lev. *War and Peace* (Knopf, translated by Pevear and Volokhonsky)  
- Dostoevsky, Fyodor. *The Brothers Karamazov* (Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, translated by Pevear and Volokhonsky)

Available for purchase at Labyrinth Books:  
(1) the Norton Critical edition of *Père Goriot*  
(2) Michael McKeon’s edited volume *Theory of the Novel: A Historical Approach*.

Many of our supplementary readings can be found in excerpted form in McKeon’s volume and you are welcome to use this collection as a resource for the seminar. However, I will often ask you to
read larger excerpts and to look at the entire books. These readings will be posted on classesv2. All of the assigned books (along with some reference materials) will also be available on the seminar’s reserve shelf in the Slavic Reading Room (Room 406, Sterling Memorial Library).

Course Requirements
1. Regular attendance and active participation in seminar discussion
2. Occasional 15-minute informal presentations, either on the assigned readings or other topics of particular interest to the presenter
3. 1 final research paper (20-25 pp.)
4. 1 class presentation on final paper project (to be scheduled during reading week)

Schedule
Detailed reading assignments will be distributed weekly. Syllabus is subject to change according to the whims of the instructor and the seminar participants.

01.11 Introduction: In Search of a Novel

I. Theories of the Novel

01.18 Theory I: Lukács
Honoré de Balzac, Le Père Goriot
Georg Lukács, Theory of the Novel
Erich Auerbach, Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature

01.25 The Rise of the Russian Novel
Fyodor Dostoevsky, Crime and Punishment
David Gasperetti. The Rise of the Russian Novel: Carnival, Stylization, and Mockery of the West

02.01 Theory II: Bakhtin
Fyodor Dostoevsky, Crime and Punishment
Mikhail Bakhtin, “Epic and Novel”
Mikhail Bakhtin, “Discourse in the Novel”
Mikhail Bakhtin, Problems of Dostoevsky’s Poetics

II. The Tolstoyan Novel: War and Peace

02.08 Novelistic Time and Space
Mikhail Bakhtin, “Forms of Time and Chronotope in the Novel”
Joseph Frank, “Spatial Form in Modern Literature”
Gérard Genette, Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method
02.15 Details and the Everyday
Tolstoy, *War and Peace* and *Childhood*
Gary Saul Morson, *Hidden in Plain View: Narrative and Creative Potentials in War and Peace*
Nancy Armstrong, *Desire and Domestic Fiction: A Political History of the Novel*

02.22 The Deformation of History
Tolstoy, *War and Peace* and *Sevastopol Stories*
Viktor Shklovskii, *Material i stil’ v romane L’va Tolstoego Voina i mir*
Andrew Wachtel, *An Obsession with History: Russian Writers Confront the Past*

03.01 Narrative, Consciousness, and Interiority
Tolstoy, *War and Peace* and “The History of Yesterday”
Boris Eikhenbaum, *Molodoi Tolstoi*
Dorrit Cohn, *Transparent Minds: Narrative Modes for Presenting Consciousness in Fiction*
Irina Paperno, “Tolstoy’s Diaries: The Inaccessible Self”

III. The Dostoevskian Novel: *The Brothers Karamazov*

03.22 Bildungsroman
Dostoevsky, *The Brothers Karamazov*
Mikhail Bakhtin, “The Bildungsroman and Its Significance in the History of Realism”
Franco Moretti, *The Way of the World: The Bildungsroman in European Culture*
Ilya Kliger, “Shapes of History and the Enigmatic Hero in Dostoevsky”

03.29 Plot and the Melodramatic Imagination
Dostoevsky, *The Brothers Karamazov*
Peter Brooks, *The Melodramatic Imagination: Balzac, Henry James, Melodrama, and the Mode of Excess*
Peter Brooks, *Reading for the Plot: Design and Intention in Narrative*

04.05 Order and Chaos
Dostoevsky, *The Brothers Karamazov* and *The Diary of a Writer*
Gary Saul Morson, *The Boundaries of Genre: Dostoevsky’s Diary of a Writer and the Traditions of Literary Utopia*
Robert Louis Jackson, *Dostoevsky’s Quest for Form: A Study of his Philosophy of Art*

04.12 The Novel and Faith
Dostoevsky, *The Brothers Karamazov*
Michael Holquist, *Dostoevsky and the Novel*
Rowan Williams, *Dostoevsky: Language, Faith, and Fiction*
Kate Holland, “Novelizing Religious Experience: The Generic Landscape of *The Brothers Karamazov*”

04.19 Conclusion: Endings
Osip Mandelstam, “Konets romana”