



JOHN CABOT UNIVERSITY

COURSE CODE: "EN/LAW 235"
COURSE NAME: "Crime and Punishment in Literature"
SEMESTER & YEAR: Fall 2023

SYLLABUS

INSTRUCTOR: Stephanie Richards

EMAIL: srichards@johncabot.edu

HOURS: TTH 10:00 AM 11:15 AM

TOTAL NO. OF CONTACT HOURS: 45

CREDITS: 3

PREREQUISITES: Prerequisite: EN 110 with a grade of C or above. In addition, students must have completed one other English literature class or have Junior standing.

OFFICE HOURS: by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course explores the themes of crime and punishment in literature, with particular emphasis on the treatment of guilt (and the attendant concepts of legal and moral responsibility) as it is experienced by the individual consciousness of the perpetrator, the accused, the victim, the jailer, and the collective conscience of society. Students in the course will see how literature, through its unique methods and concerns, is able to alert the reader to different understandings of the social, moral, ethical, legal, and philosophical implications of what is only apparently a simple dichotomy between innocence and guilt, right and wrong, or good and evil. Each text or group of texts will be accompanied by an introductory definitional or theoretical reading from thinkers like Foucault, Benjamin, Arendt, and Nietzsche, that will serve as a guiding light in an exploration of the literary texts. This is a reading and writing intensive course.

SUMMARY OF COURSE CONTENT:

This course explores the themes of crime and punishment in modern literature, with particular emphasis on the treatment of guilt as it is experienced by the individual consciousness of the perpetrator ("Tell-tale Heart" by Edgar Allan Poe and Crime and Punishment by Fyodor Dostoevsky), of the accused (The Trial by Franz Kafka), and in the relation between jailer and prisoner (Invitation to a Beheading by Vladimir Nabokov). Some of the questions we will address are: How does each text define what constitutes a crime? Is there any wiggle-room or are definitions clear-cut (i.e., is crime understood and defined in absolute or in relative terms)? Do any of the texts speak to how responsibility for criminal acts is (or should be) apportioned between the individual, society, and institutions? What specific form does punishment take in each novel, and how is the form of the punishment related to the structure of the text? Where does the authority to punish come from in each case? Does it come from Force? Power? Law? Do the texts offer an explanation or a critique of the prevalent system determining crime and punishment? These and other questions will help us analyze the assigned authors and texts and understand their biases and motivations in dealing with problems of crime and punishment in the modern world.

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

Through a comparative analysis of the assigned texts students will have developed further their ability to find correlations, contrasts and contradictions between different sources to help them form an autonomous and critical understanding of a particular topic, issue, or problem.

TEXTBOOK:

Book Title	Author	Publisher	ISBN number	Library Call Number	Comments	Format	Local Bookstore	Online Purchase
Crime and Punishment	Fyodor Dostoevsky	Vintage	0679734503		Please find this at Almost Corner Bookstore or online. It is important you use the translation by Pevear and Volokhonsky		Almost Corner Bookshop	
In Cold Blood	Truman Capote	Penguin	0141182571		Please find this at Almost Corner Bookshop or online.		Almost Corner Bookshop	
The Complete Novels: includes The Trial, Amerika, and The Castle	Franz Kafka	Vintage	0099518449		Please find this at the Almost Corner Bookshop or online. It is important you get the Edw in Muir translation.		Almost Corner Bookshop	
Invitation to a Beheading	Vladimir Nabokov	Penguin	0141185600		Please find this at Almost Corner Bookshop or online. It is important you use Dmitri Nabokov's translation.		Almost Corner Bookshop	

REQUIRED RESERVED READING:

NONE

RECOMMENDED RESERVED READING:

NONE

GRADING POLICY**-ASSESSMENT METHODS:**

Assignment	Guidelines	Weight
Paper 1 - Short Paper	800-1000 word analytical paper — topics will be provided by the professor. If you wish to write on another topic, it must be approved by the professor. Students will submit an outline, which they will receive feedback on and which will count for a percentage of the paper grade. Essays should include research and conform to MLA standards.	15%
Paper 2 - Long Paper	2500-3000 word analytical paper — topics will be provided by the professor. If you wish to write on another topic, it must be approved by the professor. Students will submit an outline, which they will receive feedback on and which will count as a percentage of the final paper grade. Essays should include research and conform to MLA standards.	25%
In-class writing assignment	800-1000 words. The assignment is in two parts. 1) You will be given a passage to analyze and write about in-class. 2) You will revise the in-class writing at home.	15%
Quizzes	Each novel will be followed by a quiz on general information taken from your reading and our class discussions of the texts, e.g., character names, plot details, major ideas, publication information	10%
Presentation	Students will do one 5-7 minute presentation on an academic article.	10%
Participation	Students are required to attend and participate in class. Participation requires having read the assigned materials and being prepared to speak about them. Your grade will be lowered if you miss more than three classes. Five absences constitute an automatic fail.	5%
Final Exam		20%

-ASSESSMENT CRITERIA:

A Work of this quality directly addresses the question or problem raised and provides a coherent argument displaying an extensive knowledge of relevant information or content. This type of work demonstrates the ability to critically evaluate concepts and theory and has an element of novelty and originality. There is clear evidence of a significant amount of reading beyond that required for the course.

B This is highly competent level of performance and directly addresses the question or problem raised. There is a demonstration of some ability to critically evaluate theory and concepts and relate them to practice. Discussions reflect the student's own arguments and are not simply a repetition of standard lecture and reference material. The work does not suffer from any major errors or omissions and provides evidence of reading beyond the required assignments.

C This is an acceptable level of performance and provides answers that are clear but limited, reflecting the information offered in the lectures and reference readings.

D This level of performance demonstrates that the student lacks a coherent grasp of the material. Important information is omitted and irrelevant points included. In effect, the student has barely done enough to persuade the instructor that s/he should not fail.

F This work fails to show any knowledge or understanding of the issues raised in the question. Most of the material in the answer is irrelevant.

-ATTENDANCE REQUIREMENTS:**ATTENDANCE REQUIREMENTS AND EXAMINATION POLICY**

You cannot make-up a major exam (midterm or final) without the permission of the Dean's Office. The Dean's Office will grant such permission only when the absence was caused by a serious impediment, such as a documented illness, hospitalization or death in the immediate family (in which you must attend the funeral) or other situations of similar gravity. Absences due to other meaningful conflicts, such as job interviews, family celebrations, travel difficulties, student misunderstandings or personal convenience, will not be excused. Students who will be absent from a major exam must notify the Dean's Office prior to that exam. Absences from class due to the observance of a religious holiday will normally be excused. Individual students who will have to miss class to observe a religious holiday should notify the instructor by the end of the

Add/Drop period to make prior arrangements for making up any work that will be missed. Three absences, the student's grade will be lowered. Five absences is an automatic fail.

ACADEMIC HONESTY

As stated in the university catalog, any student who commits an act of academic dishonesty will receive a failing grade on the work in which the dishonesty occurred. In addition, acts of academic dishonesty, irrespective of the weight of the assignment, may result in the student receiving a failing grade in the course. Instances of academic dishonesty will be reported to the Dean of Academic Affairs. A student who is reported twice for academic dishonesty is subject to summary dismissal from the University. In such a case, the Academic Council will then make a recommendation to the President, who will make the final decision.

STUDENTS WITH LEARNING OR OTHER DISABILITIES

John Cabot University does not discriminate on the basis of disability or handicap. Students with approved accommodations must inform their professors at the beginning of the term. Please see the website for the complete policy.

SCHEDULE

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Week 1 Introduction to Crime in Literature

Defining crime and its representations in literature; Historical and cultural contexts of crime in literature; Excerpts from gothic novels *Mysteries of Udolpho* (Radcliffe), *Northanger Abbey* (Austen), and *Turn of the Screw* (James)

Week 1 The psychology of crime in fiction: "Tell-tale Heart" and "Fall of the House of Usher" (Poe)

Week 2 The psychology of crime in fiction and the first 'crime novel': *Crime and Punishment* (Dostoevsky), (Part One, Ch. 1-5)

Week 2 *Crime and Punishment* (Part One, Ch. 4 - Part Two, Ch. 3).

Week 3 *Crime and Punishment* (Part Two, Ch. 3 - Part Two, Ch. 7)

Week 3 *Crime and Punishment* (Part Three) In-class writing

Week 4 *Crime and Punishment* (Part Four, Ch. 6 - Part Five, Ch. 4)

Week 4 *Crime and Punishment* (Part Five, Ch. 5 - Part Six, Ch. 3).

Week 5 *Crime and Punishment* (Part Six, Ch. 7 - Epilogue)

Week 5 Conclusions on Dostoevsky

Week 6 *In Cold Blood* pp. 1-80

Week 6 In Cold Blood pp. 81-160

Week 7 In Cold Blood pp. 161-240

Week 7 In Cold Blood pp. 240-320

Week 8 Conclusions on Capote. Short paper due.

Week 8 Existential Crime and Punishment: The Trial (Arrest; Conversation; Initial Inquiry; In the Empty Courtroom)

Week 9 The Trial (The Flogger; The Uncle - Leni)

Week 9 The Trial (Lawyer, Manufacturer; Block, The Merchant)

Week 10 The Trial (In the Cathedral; The End) Concluding thoughts on Kafka

Week 10 Existential Crime and Punishment: Invitation to a Beheading

Week 11 Invitation to a Beheading

Week 11 Invitation to a Beheading

Week 12 Invitation to a Beheading

Week 12 Invitation to a Beheading

Week 13 Invitation to a Beheading

Week 13 Concluding thoughts on Nabokov

Week 14 Paper workshop

Week 14 Paper workshop

Final Exam Long Paper Due