

**ENG350W: Seminar in Continental European Literature**  
**The European *Bildungsroman***

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Office hours: Mondays 2-3, Thursdays 9:30-10:30, and by appointment

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TTh 11-12:15

Burgess 101

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**Course description:**

Nothing better characterizes the emotional life of a young, artistic soul than that wonderful five-letter word, *angst*. The tortured musings of love-struck poets, the frustrations of budding artists, the rejection of parental authority—these issues have been dealt with in depth by some of the most powerful and provocative writers of the last two hundred years. The topic of this year’s seminar is the European *Bildungsroman*, or “novel of formation”—a genre of literature in which the central idea is a young person’s transition to adulthood, usually involving misguided love affairs, dashed ideals, and a general process of disillusionment. We will explore the cheerful process of coming to terms with “the real world” in literary texts by several major European authors, with an emphasis on literature of the nineteenth century.

You may notice that the syllabus contains no literature by women. And, if you have had classes with me in the past, you may find this surprising. One of the issues that I hope we will discuss this semester is the representation of women in this genre, and why, in nineteenth-century Europe, it may have been more readily suited to male authors (and characters) than female. It should be noted, too, that a handful of novels by English women—such as Charlotte Brontë’s *Jane Eyre*, George Eliot’s *Middlemarch*, and any number of Jane Austen novels—could be considered *Bildungsromans*. Sadly, however, this is a course in *Continental* European Literature. Still, if you are familiar with these works, fruitful comparisons between them and the texts studied in this seminar can be made.

**Course books:**

Dostoevsky, Fyodor. *Crime and Punishment*. Trans. David McDuff. London: Penguin, 2003.

Flaubert, Gustav. *Sentimental Education*. Penguin.

Goethe. *The Sorrows of Young Werther*. Trans. Burton Pike. New York: Modern Library, 2005.

Lermontov, Mikhail. *A Hero of Our Time*. Trans. Natasha Randall. New York: Penguin, 2009.

Rilke, Rainer Maria. *Letters to a Young Poet*. Dover.

Stendhal. *The Red and the Black*. Trans. Catherine Slater. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009.

Turgenev. *Fathers and Sons*. Trans. Richard Freeborn. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008.

Vesaas, Tarjei. *The Ice Palace*. Trans. Elizabeth Rokkan. London: Peter Owen, 2009.

**Expectations**

**Tardiness and absences:** I expect you to come to class on time; frequent tardiness will affect your attendance record. More than three absences will adversely affect your grade; this *includes* absences for illness and athletic events. Whenever you miss class, you are responsible for getting notes, assignments, and any other work that you might have missed. **Six absences (20% of the course) will result in an automatic failure for the course.**

**Absences may be made up.** If you would like to make up an absence, please contact me. You will be assigned to write a report on a scholarly article about the text under consideration. Guidelines for make-up work are on the last page of the syllabus.

**Texting** or other cell phone use during class will not be tolerated and is grounds for dismissal from the classroom.

**Participation:** This course is a seminar; it will therefore be largely discussion-driven, and I expect active participation by every student. Please prepare for class by doing all of the assigned readings and making some notes on issues of interest to you. I strongly encourage marking up your books—make note of interesting words, phrases, or passages as you read. Trying out your ideas in class is an excellent way to push your thinking further than you might be able to do on your own, which can be invaluable when it comes to working through a paper topic.

Participation includes speaking up in class, of course, but your participation will also be assessed by your demonstrated engagement with the course: taking notes, paying attention, getting involved in group work, asking questions, and responding thoughtfully to your peers without dominating the discussion.

**Assignments** for this course will include three papers and a presentation. A tentative breakdown of assignments can be found on pages 4-6 of the syllabus.

**Grades** will be determined according to the following rubric:

Paper 1	20%
Paper 2	20%
Paper 3	30%
Presentation (please hand in your notes)	20%
Participation	10%

### **Academic Dishonesty**

Academic dishonesty constitutes a major breach of the trust that exists between the instructor and the student. It includes passing off another's ideas as one's own, any attempt to gain information about a test or exam prior to the test or exam date without the instructor's consent, and providing unauthorized assistance on a test, exam, paper, or other assignment to another student. Copying text directly off of the Internet obviously constitutes cheating, but so does rewriting materials found on-line in one's "own words" but without proper attribution. Any time that a person uses—in any way—another person's words or ideas without appropriately crediting them is an instance of plagiarism. Cheating on any assignment—no matter how seemingly trivial—will result in a failing grade for this course. Students who fail for academic dishonesty will not have the option of withdrawing. If you have ANY doubt about what plagiarism means, or about how to appropriately document sources in your work, please contact me; I will be happy to help.

### **ADA Statement**

Any Eureka College student with a disability or other special circumstances requiring accommodations or other considerations in order to successfully complete the requirements

of this course is requested to identify him/herself to the instructor and discuss the matter privately. This disclosure should be made within the first week of the course.

### **Learning Center**

The Learning Center, located on the first floor of Alumni Hall, provides academic services to all Eureka College students. Consultations are available in the areas of math and writing. Study groups, individual academic counseling and course specific tutoring sessions are also available by contacting Jason Zimmerman, Director of the Learning Center, by e-mail or by calling 6520. The Learning Center's hours will be posted around campus within the first two weeks of classes.

I strongly encourage you to take your papers to the Learning Center's Writing Tutors; this is an excellent—and *free*—service that can greatly improve the effectiveness of your written work.

### **Course synopsis** (subject to change)

Tu 1/12	Introduction and a brief discussion of the Byronic hero
Th 1/14	Johan Wolfgang von Goethe, <i>The Sorrows of Young Werther</i> (1774), pp. 7-67
Tu 1/19	Goethe, pp. 71-149 (end)
Th 1/21	Mikhail Lermontov, <i>A Hero of Our Time</i> (1840), pp. 1-44; <b>Presentation 1</b>
Tu 1/26	Lermontov, pp. 45-130
Th 1/28	Lermontov, pp. 130-169 (end) Discuss paper-writing skills, strategies, and requirements (in class)
Tu 2/2	Ivan Turgenev, <i>Fathers and Sons</i> (1862), pp. 1-104; <b>Presentation 2</b>
Th 2/4	Turgenev, pp. 105-201 (end)
Tu 2/9	Stendhal, <i>The Red and the Black</i> (1830), pp. 1-114; <b>Presentation 3<sup>1</sup></b>
Th 2/11	Stendhal, pp. 115-176 <b>Paper 1 due</b>
Tu 2/16	Stendhal, pp. 177-240
Th 2/18	Stendhal, pp. 241-349
Tu 2/23	Stendhal, pp. 349-435; <b>Presentation 4</b>
Th 2/25	Stendhal, pp. 436-529
Tu 3/2	Fyodor Dostoevsky, <i>Crime and Punishment</i> (1866), pp. 3-106; <b>Presentation 5</b>
Th 3/4	Dostoevsky, pp. 107-232
Tu 3/9	<b>Spring Break</b>
Th 3/11	<b>Spring Break</b>

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<sup>1</sup> The student who is presenting on this date may turn in his/her first paper on Tuesday, February 16.

Tu 3/16	Dostoevsky, pp. 233-332; <b>Presentation 6</b>
Th 3/18	Dostoevsky, pp. 333-428
Tu 3/23	Dostoevsky, pp. 429-520
Th 3/25	Dostoevsky, pp. 521-656 (end)
Tu 3/30	Gustave Flaubert, <i>Sentimental Education</i> (1869), pp. 5-109; <b>Presentation 7<sup>2</sup></b>
	<b>Paper 2 due</b>
Th 4/1	Flaubert, pp. 113-183
Tu 4/6	Flaubert, pp. 184-306; <b>Presentation 8</b>
Th 4/8	Flaubert, pp. 309-365
Tu 4/13	Flaubert, pp. 366-460 (end)
Th 4/15	Rilke, <i>Letters to a Young Poet</i> (1929), entire text; <b>Presentation 9</b>
Tu 4/20	Tarjei Vesaas, <i>The Ice Palace</i> (1963), pp. 7-97; <b>Presentation 10</b>
Th 4/22	Vesaas, pp. 98-176 (end)
Tu 4/27	Catch-up <i>or</i> a film (TBA)

**Paper 3 is due in my office by 3 pm on Friday, April 30.**

### ***Assignments:***

#### **Presentation:**

Each student will be responsible for presenting a text at one point during the course of the semester. The presentation sign-up sheet will be circulated on the second day of class.<sup>3</sup>

Your presentation will have four components.

- (1) Introduce the author and work: do some preliminary research into his background. (Approx. 5 minutes.)
- (2) You should also have read at least one (non-Internet; you should use Melick's databases, such as EBSCO and JStor) article about the text. Summarize the article's argument and respond to it. (If you are presenting on 2/23 (4), 3/16 (6), or 4/6 (8), and do not need to introduce the author, then I would like you to introduce a second scholarly article, instead.) (Approx. 5 minutes per article.)<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> The student who is presenting on this date may turn in his/her second paper on Tuesday, April 6.

<sup>3</sup> It is highly recommended that you begin working on your presentation early and that you come talk to me about it at some point.

<sup>4</sup> Please do talk to me if you have any trouble finding sources for your presentation. While most of the texts under consideration are much-studied in academic circles, some—especially *The Ice Palace*—are not. I'd be happy to help you find some articles.

- (3) Your presentation should also advance some of your own tentative interpretations of or ideas about the text. These ideas can be exploratory and need not be in any way definitive—just talk about what you find interesting in the work. (Approx. 5 minutes.)
- (4) Finally, suggest three discussion questions that you think will help us to get started talking about that day’s reading. These questions can ask us to compare the text to ones that we’ve read earlier in the semester, to focus on individual passages, or just propose some larger themes or topics that we might want to explore.

Please turn in a copy of your presentation notes at the end of class. These will help me in grading your presentation. You will therefore want to make sure that your notes are comprehensible to the reader—although you needn’t (indeed, shouldn’t) write everything out and they needn’t be in complete sentences. Be sure to include full citations (in MLA style) for all of your sources.

### **Papers:**

All papers must be thesis-driven. A good thesis in a literature class should be *specific* (NOT “there are similarities and differences between X and Y”), get at something that is *debatable or not obvious* about the text (NOT a plot summary), and also *suggest why the argument that you’re making is important*. What is its significance? How does it help us to better understand the text(s) as a whole? Or what does it reveal about some literary issue? Avoid sweeping historical generalizations, however, even as you weigh the historical/cultural import of what you see in the text(s). The latter is a tricky line to walk; please feel free to talk to me if you’re not sure where it is.

Be sure to cite the text in MLA style any time you refer to a specific passage or event—not just when you quote. This is very important!

Your thesis should respond to some part (not all) of the prompts given below and/or on the prompts. Papers should be in Times New Roman or a similar font (12-point) with regular margins. “Five pages” means five *full* pages (or close to it)—not four pages and a sentence. Use ample textual support and cite the text every time you refer to a specific passage—not just when you’re quoting. As the due dates for the papers approach, I may add further possible topics to the following.

**Paper 1:** 5-7 pages. The Hero. Compare the heroes of two of the texts that we have studied (*Werther, Hero, Fathers*). What conflicts do they encounter? How do they deal with them? How do they relate to the people around them (family, lovers, rivals)? What do these heroes suggest about the status of the individual in his (or her) society? What responses to social restrictions do they suggest or warn us away from? You do not need to answer all of these questions, of course; they are just intended as prompts to get you thinking about a viable thesis.

**Paper 2:** 5-7 pages. In this paper, you must use at least two outside (scholarly) sources or theoretical texts as well as the primary texts read in class. Please check your sources with me if you have any questions about their credibility.

Topic 1: The individual in crisis. How do Julien and/or Raskolnikov deal with the alienation that they feel from their societies? What do their actions suggest about nineteenth-century European bourgeois society?

Topic 2: The representation of women. How are women treated in two of the texts that we have read (one of which must be *Red* or *Crime*)? To what extent are they accorded subjectivity? Are they fully developed characters, or do they exist only to further the development of the heroes?

Topic 3: Open topic. Check with me about the viability of your idea at least one week before the paper is due.

**Paper 3:** 8-12 pages; open topic. I will provide a list of suggestions that come out of our class discussions, but you may also come up with your own idea. Clear your thesis and a tentative outline/sketch of the paper with me at least a week before it's due. At least five secondary sources must be used in this paper.

### **Make-up work:**

If you would like to make up for an absence, please email me as soon as possible. I will send you the title and author of an article available either in Melick or through JStor or Ebsco. Your assignment will be to write a summary of the article's argument and a response to it. Write-ups should be at least two (full) pages long, double-spaced, with normal margins, in Times New Roman 12-point font or the equivalent (no Courier! And avoid other big, space-devouring fonts, please. Two pages of text should come to about 550-600 words.).

You must tell me via email that you would like to make up the absence by the date that you return to class (please send me an email even if you speak to me in person; I'm liable to forget otherwise).

Make-up work is due one week after I send you the article reference; after that, it will not be accepted.

Missing six class meetings, even if you have made up the work for some of those meetings, will result in an automatic failure for the course.