

Crime and Punishment

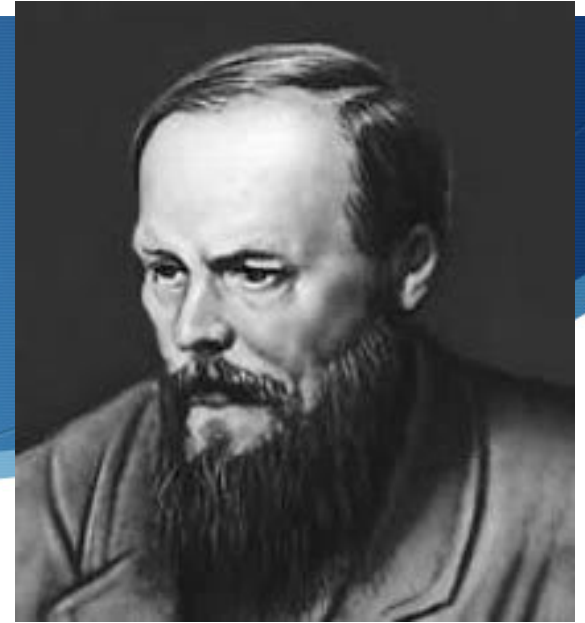
Unit Overview



Important Dates

- ◆ Quiz Part I Tues. Jan. 9
- ◆ Quiz Part II Fri. Jan. 13
- ◆ Quiz Part III & IV Wed. Jan. 18
- ◆ Quiz Part V & VI Tues. Jan. 24
- ◆ Peer Review Mon. Jan. 30
- ◆ Essay due Wed. Feb. 1

Fyodor Dostoevsky



- ◆ Considered a psychologist, philosopher, cultural reporter, and political prophet.
- ◆ Known for his psychological penetration into the human soul, he profoundly influenced the 20th century novel.
- ◆ Spent 4 years in fetters in a Siberian prison for being part of a Socialist group.
- ◆ Suffered from epileptic seizures and a gambling addiction.
- ◆ Wrote *The Brothers Karamazov* (1880)

The Times: Mid 19th Century

- ◆ Age of Realism: Mark Twain's contemporary
- ◆ Story reflects Russia's issues of the 1860's: crime and legal reform, the status of women, poverty and wealth, education, urban problems, the shape and problem of the future.
- ◆ Tsar Alexander II seemed amenable to reform, abolishing serfdom in 1861, yet there was little change.
- ◆ Attempts by the lower classes to gain more freedom provoked fears of anarchy, and the government remained extremely conservative.
- ◆ As Russia became more industrialized, the inadequacies of autocratic Tsarist rule became increasingly apparent. By the twentieth century conditions were ripe for a serious convulsion. (Russian Revolution 1917)

Style & Theme

- ◆ Dostoevsky presents interacting characters with contrasting views or ideas about freedom, socialism, atheism, good and evil, and happiness.
- ◆ Dostoevsky's central obsession was his characters' search for God.
- ◆ Hemingway said of F.D., “How can a man write so badly, so unbelievably badly, and make you feel so deeply?”
- ◆ Novels anticipated many of the ideas of Nietzsche (“Overman” or Uebermensch vs. other worldliness) and Freud (critical view of religion and interest in the subconscious mind).

Essay

- ◆ You will choose among several topics/prompts.
- ◆ You will use at least two different literary critics for support.
(Hello, Questia!)
- ◆ You are required to conference with me at least once.
- ◆ Essay is due Feb. 1, Wednesday

Essay Prompts

1. Describe the importance of the city to the plot. How does the city serve as a symbol of the society and of Raskolnikov's state of mind?
2. What impact do the descriptions of the various apartments—including those of Raskolnikov, Alyona, Sonya, Luzhin, and Dunya and Pulcheria Alexandrova—have on our understanding of the characters and the events that take place within them?
3. Compare the characters of Raskolnikov and Razumikhin. How does Razumikhin describe Raskolnikov, and vice versa? Does Razumikhin serve as Raskolnikov's foil? Are there other characters that are foils to Raskolnikov?
4. Discuss the use of foreshadowing in the novel. How does foreshadowing increase the level of suspense? Are there times when knowing what will happen later decreases the suspense? What effect does having the murder occur at the very beginning have on the structure of the novel?
5. Lebezyatnikov spouts a variety of theories about society. What role does he play in the novel? How might his character reflect Dostoevsky's own political experiences?
6. Discuss the development of the theme of religious redemption over the course of the novel.
7. How does Dostoevsky show the inherent conflicts between reason, emotion, and faith?