

**REES 208 FALL 2019  
FIRST YEAR SEMINAR  
OTHERNESS & BELONGING**



**INSTRUCTOR:** Roman Utkin

**MEETINGS:** Tues+Thurs

10:20-11:40AM; Fisk 414

**OFFICE HOURS:** Tues+Thurs

3:00-4:00PM, and by appointment

**EMAIL:** rutkin@wesleyan.edu

**OFFICE:** Fisk 408

### **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

“I am alone, I thought, and they are everyone” is one of the many haunting utterances of Fyodor Dostoevsky’s most famous anti-hero, the Underground Man. Like him, the other protagonists of this course are outcasts, dissidents, and strangers – jaded office clerks and repressed misanthropes, queer activists and “enemies of the state” – who refuse to conform to societal norms, disrupt conventions by saying the unsayable, and write and make art from the margins, the realm of undesirables. Focusing mainly on Russia and Eastern Europe, we will analyze representations of otherness and belonging in various genres of writing. We will explore narratives of undesirability through the thematic prisms of exile and immigration; gender and sexuality; mental illness; prison writing; ethnic difference; religion; and unrequited love. The concept of undesirability will also be our point of entry for constructing arguments about community, privilege, and a society without outsiders.

The writing assignments will include four essays (ca. 3-7 pp.), each drafted, peer-reviewed, and revised. The goal of the essays is to hone the skills of framing an argument, engaging with someone else’s ideas about otherness and belonging, and articulating an analysis of a given problem in concise and elegant prose. In addition to the four main writing assignments, the students will be asked to produce a number of short unrevised writing assignments, such as reading responses, brief secondary literature reviews, and close reading exercises. All students will be asked to nominate a text of any genre that grapples with the notions of otherness and belonging in salient ways. The class favorite will be included on the syllabus.

### **COURSE OBJECTIVES**

This class embraces the following learning outcomes:

- ❖ Reading texts closely and critically for analytic and rhetorical purposes;
- ❖ Making fair and effective use of the work of others;

- ❖ Drafting and revising arguments;
- ❖ Making smart use of the library's print and digital resources to serve scholarly interests and rhetorical goals;

## REQUIRED TEXTS

Fyodor Dostoevsky, *Notes from Underground*, trans. Richard Pevear and Larissa Volokhonsky (Afred A. Knopf, 2004)

Fyodor Dostoevsky, *Poor Folk*, trans. David McDuff (Penguin Classics, 1989)

Julia Akekseyeva, *Soviet Daughter: A Graphic Revolution* (Microcosm Publishing, 2017)

All other readings and class materials will be available on Moodle as pdf files.

\*\*Please check Moodle periodically; I will be uploading files as the course progresses\*\*

## RECOMMENDED TEXTS

Gerald Graff and Cathy Birkenstein, *They Say/I Say: The Moves That Matter in Academic Writing* (W.W. Norton and Co., 2014)

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS

### WRITING ASSIGNMENTS

You will be expected to complete FOUR in-depth writing assignments (abbreviated as W). All of them will go through a series of revisions and peer critique.

W 1 is a Summary Paper (ca. 1000 words)

W 2 is a Response Paper (ca. 1000-1200 words)

W 3 is a Position Paper (ca. 1000-1200 words)

W 4 is a Final Paper (ca. 1500-2000 words)

Additionally, you will be asked to write a few shorter pieces, including weekly responses on Moodle, close reading exercises, and a written evaluation (voting response) of your favorite Syllabus Nomination Presentation.

### ORAL PRESENTATIONS

While the focus of the course is on writing, public speaking is nevertheless an essential component of the class. Active class participation is one way to hone the craft of public speaking. In addition, you will be asked to select and present in front of your peers a reading (no limits on genre or medium) you feel would complement the topic of Otherness and Belonging. The Class Selection Winner will be included on the syllabus. At the end of the semester, during the last week, you will present your paper-in-progress at the Final Paper Conference.

## GRADING

Evaluation criteria will be specified in the prompt for each assignment.

Your final grade will be calculated in the following way:

Participation (in class & online)	20%
Syllabus Nomination Presentation	10%
W 1	10%
W 2	15%
W 3	15%
W 4	20%
Final Paper Conference	10% (your presentation and active engagement in the conference, i.e. providing thoughtful feedback and asking questions)

## GUIDELINES FOR SUBMISSION OF WRITTEN WORK

- All writing should be double-spaced, in 12pt Times New Roman font, with one-inch margins. Put your name, the course number, and the date at the top of the first page. All pages must be numbered.
- Most of the time, you will be asked to submit your work via Moodle or email, but if I request a hard copy of an assignment, please don't forget to staple your work.
- When submitting assignments electronically, **your files should be in the .doc format** and named in the following way: YourName\_AssignmentName\_FYS\_F19, e.g. Utkin\_W1Draft\_FYS\_F19.
- Remember to proofread.
- When citing ideas and/or texts that are not your own, please acknowledge that using a standard citation format. (We will review different citation formats in class.)
- Drafts of writing assignments and Peer Critiques are required. They will be evaluated on a Pass/Fail grading scale.
- Failure to submit a Draft or a Peer Critique on time results in a failing grade for the assignment.
- Bullet point lists, outlines, and other such listicles do not count as drafts. I reserve the right to determine what constitutes a draft.
- Final versions of your writing assignments must demonstrate a substantial revision from their draft forms.
- Late Work: If you fail to submit an assignment on time, your grade will be lowered by 1/3 of a letter for each hour of delay (A → A- → B+, etc.).

## POLICY ON ATTENDANCE

Attendance in this class is mandatory. You are allowed up to TWO absences in class, no questions asked. However, please notify me in writing before missing a class meeting. Please choose your absences wisely, keeping in mind that absences due to illness and athletic

commitments count. More than the allowed two unexcused absences will have a negative impact on your final grade. If you have a family emergency or serious illness, please contact your Class Dean immediately. 2023 Class Dean is Jennifer Wood [jpwood@wesleyan.edu](mailto:jpwood@wesleyan.edu)

## **ACADEMIC HONESTY, NOTES OF ACKNOWLEDGEMENT, AND THE HONOR CODE**

I expect you to adhere to [Wesleyan's Honor Code](#) in all of your work.

All of the writing that you do for the course must be your own, but you are welcome to get feedback on your writing from anyone in the Wesleyan community. I encourage you to speak to others about your drafts: classmates, friends, peer writing tutors, etc.

We will talk about plagiarism in class, but if you have any questions about what constitutes plagiarism or proper citation, please feel free to ask!

As defined in the Student Handbook, “Plagiarism is the presentation of another person’s words, ideas, images, data, or research as one’s own. Plagiarism is more than lifting a text word-for-word, even from sources in the public domain. Paraphrasing or using any content or terms coined by others without proper acknowledgment also constitutes plagiarism.”

Also, I will ask you to include a Note of Acknowledgement in the final versions of your writing assignments – a footnote where you thank those who have helped you to think about, revise, and edit your work, along with an affirmation of your adherence to the Wesleyan Honor Code. As a Wesleyan student, you will be participating in a scholarly community as a reader and writer. We often imagine that scholarly work happens when academics sit in solitude surrounded by piles of books (which is true to an extent), but more often, our ideas evolve in conversation with other people. This Note of Acknowledgement is an opportunity to acknowledge the way that members of your community—readers, tutors, librarians, friends, and others—have helped you to refine your ideas and your writing.

## **ACCOMMODATIONS**

### Students with Disabilities

Wesleyan University is committed to ensuring that all qualified students with disabilities are afforded an equal opportunity to participate in, and benefit from, its programs and services. To receive accommodations, a student must have a disability as defined by the ADA. Since accommodations may require early planning and generally are not provided retroactively, please contact Accessibility Services as soon as possible.

If you have a disability, or think that you might have a disability, please contact [Accessibility Services](#) in order to arrange an appointment to discuss your needs and the process for requesting accommodations. Accessibility Services is located in North College, rooms 021/022, or can be reached by email ([accessibility@wesleyan.edu](mailto:accessibility@wesleyan.edu)) or phone (860-685-5581).

### Spiritual Life

If any assignments conflict with a major religious holiday for your faith, please let me know as soon as possible and we can discuss necessary accommodations. Please look carefully at the syllabus during the first week of class. If any of the assignments conflict with a major religious

holiday for your faith, then please let me know. I will make every effort to make the necessary accommodations.

## A NOTE ON RESOURCES

### THE WRITING WORKSHOP

I encourage you to take advantage of the support and services available at the [Wesleyan Writing Workshop](#). While we will be spending plenty of time on our writing in class, you should feel free to seek out additional readers and resources as you write and revise (and revise, and revise). Peer tutors will help you organize your thoughts, identify and improve weak areas in your writing, and create strategies for completing writing tasks. At various points in the semester you may be required to visit the Writing Center.

You can sign up for an appointment [here](#).

Wesleyan also offers wonderful resources for non-native speakers of English. I would be happy to help arrange a meeting with one of our ESL coordinators.

## CLASS SCHEDULE

*Note:* The schedule is subject to change. Readings are listed by discussion date; please come prepared. Pages for readings, guidelines for writing assignments, as well as any changes, will be posted on Moodle.

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|--------------|----------|---|
| <b>09.03</b> | Tuesday  | Introductions & Course Overview<br>Writing in high school vs. writing in college  |
| <b>09.05</b> | Thursday | Nikolai Gogol, "The Overcoat," trans. Constance Garnett, pp. 304-34<br>Graff & Birkenstein, "Demystifying Academic Conversation," pp. xvi-xxv<br>and "I Take Your Point," 163-166<br><i>Recommended:</i> Wolfe & Wilder, "What Is Literary Analysis?" pp. 12-28<br>(skim) |
| <b>09.10</b> | Tuesday  | Graffy, <i>Gogol's The Overcoat</i> , pp. 102-119<br>Viktor Shklovsky, "Art as Device"<br><i>Recommended:</i> Wolfe and Wilder, "Digging Deeper," pp. 82-107 (skim)   |
| <b>09.12</b> | Thursday | Fyodor Dostoevsky, <i>Poor Folk</i> , pp. 3-45  |
| <b>09.17</b> | Tuesday  | Fyodor Dostoevsky, <i>Poor Folk</i> , pp. 46-77   |
|              |          | ➤ <b>W1 Draft</b> DUE Wednesday, Sept. 18 by 9:00 p.m.  |
| <b>09.19</b> | Thursday | Fyodor Dostoevsky, <i>Poor Folk</i> , pp. 77-129  |
| <b>09.24</b> | Tuesday  | Fyodor Dostoevsky, <i>Notes from Underground</i> , pp. 3-41 (Part I)  |

- **W1 Peer Critique** DUE in class

**09.26** Thursday     *No Class*

- **W1 Final Version** DUE Friday, Sept. 27 by 9:00 p.m.

**10.01** Tuesday     Fyodor Dostoevsky, *Notes from Underground*, pp. 42-130 (Part II)  
 Berman, *All That Is Solid Melts into Air*, pp. 219-228  
 Jackson, "Aristotelean Movement & Design in Part Two of *Notes from the Underground*," pp. 171-188  
 Graff & Birkenstein, "They Say," pp. 19-54

**10.03** Thursday     Leo Tolstoy, "The Death of Ivan Ilyich," pp. 83-128

**10.08** Tuesday     John Bayley, "Ivan Ilyich," pp. 412-14  
 Vladimir Nabokov, "Ivan Ilyich's Life," pp. 426-427  
 Graff & Birkenstein, "I Say," pp. 53-100 (skim)

**10.10** Thursday     Workshop on W2

- **W2 Draft** DUE Friday, Oct. 11 by 9:00 p.m.

**10.15** Tuesday     Syllabus Nomination Presentations

- **W2 Peer Critique** DUE Tuesday, Oct. 15 by 9:00 p.m.

**10.17** Thursday     Syllabus Nomination Presentations

- **Voting Response** DUE Friday, Oct. 18 by 5:00 p.m.
- **W2 Final** DUE Friday, Oct. 18 by 10:00 p.m.

**10.22** Tuesday     *No Class Fall Break*

**10.24** Thursday     Syllabus Nomination Winner TBA

**10.29** Tuesday     Reading TBA

**10.31** Thursday     Workshop on developing the idea for W 3  
 Graff & Birkenstein, "Tying It All Together," pp. 103-43 (skim)

**11.05** Tuesday     Linda Nochlin, "Art and the Conditions of Exile: Men/Women, Emigration/Expatriation"  
 Joseph Brodsky, "The Condition We Call Exile"

- **W3 Draft** DUE Monday, Nov. 4 by 9:00 p.m.

**11.07** Thursday     *No Class*. Independent Meetings for Peer Critique

➤ **W3 Peer Critique** DUE Thursday, Nov. 7 in class

**11.12** Tuesday     Julia Alekseyeva, *Soviet Daughter: A Graphic Revolution*

**11.14** Thursday     Marianne Hirsh, “Past Lives: Postmemories in Exile”

➤ **W3 Final** DUE Monday, Nov. 18 by 9:00 p.m.

**11.19** Tuesday     Reading TBA

**11.21** Thursday     Reading TBA

**11.26** Tuesday     *No Class*

**11.28** Thursday     *No Class Thanksgiving*

**12.03** Tuesday     W4 Peer Critique Workshop

**12.05** Thursday     W4 Peer Critique Workshop

➤ **W4 Final** DUE Friday, December 13 by 5:00 p.m.