

**RUTR 3340 / LASE 3559**

**Books Behind Bars:**

**Life, Literature, and Leadership**

“To be able to affect others, an artist has to be an explorer, and his work of art has to be a quest. If he has discovered everything, knows everything, and is just preaching or entertaining, he makes no effect. Only if he keeps searching, then the viewer, or listener, or reader fuses with him in his search.”

—from Leo Tolstoy’s diary, December 1900

“He who opens a school door, closes a prison.”

—Anonymous

**COURSE TIMES AND LOCATIONS**

**Tuesdays:**

* For the first four weeks, and during our final week, we meet from 12:30 to 4:15 in New Cabell Hall 236 (German department conference room)
* All remaining weeks we meet at 12:30 sharp in the parking lot of The Cavalier Inn, 105 North Emmet St., and travel to Beaumont Juvenile Correctional Center, returning by 5:15

**Thursdays:**

* We will meet from 12:30 to 1:45 in Maury 113

**Instructor Contact Information:** Professor Kaufman may be reached at akaufman@virginia.edu. In case of something urgent, he can be reached by phone at 818-723-2009. Ms. Patterson can be reached by email at monicapatterson6@gmail.com. She may also be reached on her cell phone at 610-246-0786.

**COURSE OBJECTIVES**

“Books Behind Bars” has a number of learning objectives. Some focus on tangible knowledge and skills while others are more abstract and of long-lasting benefit. Some of these objectives relate directly to the subject matter—Russian literature—while others are more broadly related to your professional and personal success in life.

Foundational Knowledge: What knowledge can you obtain in this course?

In this course you should learn to:

* Recognize key authors, works, themes, and characters from nineteenth-century and twentieth-century Russian literature
* Understand some of the social, economic, and cultural forces, which shape the author’s world view
* Learn enough about classical Russian writers to decide which ones you might like to pursue further
* Effectively apply various forms of literary analysis
* Understand some of the salient issues, and challenges of juvenile delinquency and its treatment in the U.S.

Application: What skills can you acquire in this course?

This course will help you to:

* Analyze a literary text from the point of view of both a reader and discussion leader
* Gain practical professional leadership abilities including skills in diplomacy, planning, organization, and reacting to problems “on-the-spot”
* Build effective working relationships
* Gain an increased ability to interact respectfully, tactfully, and honestly with people from different backgrounds and with different life experiences
* Resolve problems creatively as you confront unforeseen challenges
* Take risks and initiative while working in a relatively unstructured environment
* Learn how becoming a better listener can improve your personal and professional life

Integration: How will this course help you see connections?

This course will help you to:

* Discover connections between your academic study of literature and real-world social issues
* Apply the themes in literature to your own life
* Make connections between the study of literature and other disciplines and areas of interest
* Experience how literature studies can help form connections between people from different walks of life

Human Dimension/Caring: Why should you care about this course?

In this course you will learn to:

* Be more self-reflective and gain a deeper understanding of yourself
* Discover, articulate, and commit to your own values
* Develop increased empathy for the experiences of others
* Gain confidence in your ability to work in a real-world, professional environment
* Discover personal and professional skills and talents that you might not have known you had

Learning How to Learn: How can this course help you be a better learner?

This course should help you to:

* Take more responsibility for your own education now and in the future
* Read literature in a way that is more personally useful and relevant
* Realize your creative potential as you explore teaching and learning from various points of view
* Discover how learning deepens when your job is to teach others as well as to educate yourself

**COURSE STRUCTURE, ACTIVITIES, AND REQUIREMENTS**

To prepare you for this experience, during the first four weeks of the course you will spend time gaining knowledge of the literature and of the skills necessary to lead discussions with residents.

First, you will be discussing the literature itself. You will focus on the themes and other aspects of each work, much in the way that you would expect in a traditional literature class. Some of these discussions will be facilitated by the instructors, while others will be facilitated by students in small groups. This will give you practice and experience with leading discussions. You’ll learn how to formulate stimulating questions and activities as well as gain other skills, such as learning how and when to ask follow up questions, how to follow the thread of a discussion, and how to handle other issues that might come up. The goal of these first few weeks is not to have you “master” the art of facilitation, but to give you enough tools and exposure to facilitation that you will feel more comfortable and competent when you begin meeting with the residents.

The third and final element of your preparation involves gaining some understanding of the people you will be working with and the world you’ll be going into. To that end, you will attend an orientation at Beaumont Juvenile Correctional Center, during which you will learn more about the residents and learn about specific issues that might come up during your meetings, such as how to set boundaries and deal with unforeseen circumstances. You also will be asked to submit your fingerprints for a required volunteer background check.

Once these preparations are complete you will begin a series of ten weekly literature discussion meetings with the residents, travelling to Beaumont on Tuesday afternoons. The meetings last approximately one hour and a half, and it takes about an hour and ten minutes to travel there each way. No student is expected to lead a discussion by him or herself. You will be paired with a facilitation partner for the duration of the course and the two of you will meet with the same group of 2-3 ­­residents each week. The class will continue to meet on Thursdays at UVa to debrief and explore additional course material.

In addition to periodic response papers and regular group discussions, you will keep a reflective journal. This is the place for you to explore your thoughts and feelings about the readings and other experiences during this class. You will be asked to reflect frequently and explicitly on your interactions with the correctional center residents, as well as on what you are learning. You will be given the opportunity to write about your assumptions, expectations, and apprehensions. You will explore how your discussions affect your ideas not only about the literature, but about juvenile offenders, yourself, and what it means to read and study literature in a community context.

At the end of the semester, you will produce a Learning Portfolio and a Reflective Essay. The portfolio represents your intellectual and personal evolution in this course. The reflective essay describes what this experience has meant to you and how your portfolio reflects your unique journey through the world of Russian literature, juvenile justice, and self-discovery. In other words, you and your learning experience are the subject of this essay.

During the semester we will have guest speakers who will talk to us about various aspects of this learning experience. For instance, Professor Edith (Winx) Lawrence, founder of the Young Women Leaders Program (which is co-sponsored by the Curry School and the University Women’s Center), has agreed to give a workshop on how to be a good listener. We also hope to have a representative from the Virginia Department of Juvenile Justice speak to us about salient issues in the treatment of juvenile delinquency, and how the Books Behind Bars program fits into those efforts.

**READINGS**

In this class you’re going to have the opportunity to read slowly, carefully, and deeply. We’ll be reading a small number of short works (roughly eight stories and a handful of poems). These carefully chosen readings are among the acknowledged classics of Russian literature. Past experience has shown that the residents find them largely interesting, accessible, and provocative. This semester we will also be experimenting with some new readings

From the bizarre to the beautiful, the gritty to the godly, these works, and the characters that inhabit them, should inspire, challenge, and enlighten both UVa students and residents at Beaumont. The works have at least three features in common:

1. They are entertaining, powerfully written, provocative and have stood the test of time. They are classics.
2. They are short and thus you and the residents will be able to delve into them deeply.
3. They radiate with a moral-spiritual intensity and emotional boldness, and they encourage readers to ponder timeless human questions:

* What makes for a successful life?
* What is happiness?
* Is spiritual wealth more valuable than material wealth?
* Is selfless love possible?
* What does it mean to be a hero?
* How can I be true to myself?
* Who *am* I?
* How much should I care what society thinks about me?
* What is my responsibility to others?
* Does evil exist in the world? Inside me?
* Given that I am going to die, how should I live?

**Primary Works of Fiction**

All of these readings are available in Collab under Resources/Literature: Primary Works:

Stories:

-Nadezhda Mandelshtam, “Last Letter” from *Hope Abandoned* (1974)

-Varlam Shalamov, “My First Tooth” and “Handwriting” from *Kolyma Tales* (1970-76)

-Fyodor Sologub, “The Search” (1915)

-Alexander Solzhenitsyn, “Matryona’s Home” (1963)

-Leo Tolstoy, “How Much Land Does a Man Need?” (1885)

-Leo Tolstoy, “The Death of Ivan Ilyich”(1886)

-Ivan Turgenev, “Living Relic” from *Notes from a Hunter’s Album* (1852)

-Mikhail Zoshchenko, “The Lady Aristocrat” (1923), “The Bathhouse” (1925), and “The Adventures of a Monkey” (1945)

Poems

-Alexander Pushkin, “To a Poet” (1830), “I loved you” (1829), “To…” (1825), “Seclusion” (1819), “Exegi Monumentum” (1836)

-Mikhail Lermontov, “Native Land/Motherland” (1841), “The Sail” (1831), “Alone I set out on the road” (1841), “If you forget me,” “Farewell”

-Fyodor Tiutchev, “Silentium!” (1830), “You cannot understand Russia with your mind…”

-Karolina Pavlova, “Strange, the Way We Met” (1854)

**Secondary Literature**

You will also be assigned to read short selections from *A History of Russian Literature* (D.S. Mirsky) and *Handbook of Russian Literature* (Victor Terras, ed.), as well as some background material from other sources. These readings will be available in Collab under Resources.

**Other readings**  
In addition to the primary literature and secondary literature, there also will be some short readings about teaching, education, and juvenile delinquency. All of these readings will be available in collab under Resources.

**COURSE JOURNAL**

In this class you are required to keep a journal. It should be separate from your class notes. This will be a primary venue for regular writing exercises. At various times during the semester, you will be asked to hand in your entries.

Given that writing longhand is more tactile, and perhaps stimulates different senses than composing on a computer, I suggest you purchase a notebook and write the entries by hand. This year you will also have the option of keeping an electronic journal option, whereby you would make your entries into a Word document.

The journal is your opportunity to respond to suggested discussion questions, to reflect, to analyze, to integrate, to explore, and to test the boundaries of your thoughts and feelings related to the contents of the class. For some of the entries, you will be asked to respond to specific, prompted questions, or do short creative writing exercises (e.g., a personal letter to an author, an alternate ending to a story). And for some of the entries you’ll have the flexibility to write about whatever you wish.

You should aim for at least one entry per week, around 250-300 words per entry. Some weeks might you might write a little less, others weeks a little more depending on your level of inspiration and time availability. But try for somewhere in that range, which usually comes out to at least a page or more of prose per week. By the end of the semester you should have at least 14 entries total.

Finally, please remember to *date* each entry. This will help you when you prepare your Learning Portfolio and Personal Reflection Essay at the end of the semester. Also, although it’s not required, I encourage you to come up with a *title or theme* for each entry you’ve written. Past students find this to be an enjoyable creative exercise, as well as a useful tool for grasping the bigger picture, the patterns, and the overarching thrust of your thoughts.

**COLLAB RESPONSES**

I will sometimes ask you to prepare short written assignments that you will post in Collab, **no later than 9 am on the day of Tuesday’s class** or **9 am on the day of Thursday’s class**. Note that these Collab responses are separate from your weekly journal entries.

**Note**: You will receive each week’s assignment by email no later than Saturday of the previous week. That should give you plenty of time to plan for the coming week. Assignments will be divided into four sections: Reading, Writing, Thinking, and Weekly Journal.

**MID-SEMESTER SELF-ASSESSMENT ESSAY (3-5 pages)**

Shortly after fall break you will be asked to submit an essay in which you assess your own learning up to that point in the class. In what areas do you think you’ve grown most up to this point in the class? What’s the most important thing you’ve learned? In which area/s would you still like to improve? What can you do to help make that happen? You will receive more detailed instructions at the time of the assignment.

**LEARNING PORTFOLIO AND PERSONAL REFLECTION ESSAY (5-7 pages)**

For the final paper you will start by creating a portfolio of your (written) work to represent your own intellectual, creative, and emotional evolution in this course. Then you will write a reflective essay explaining what this collection as a whole means to you and how this portfolio reflects your own journey through the world of Russian literature and juvenile justice. You will receive more detailed instructions at the time of the assignment.

Please remember that a good 5-7 page paper starts off as a longer draft that gets honed and rewritten. Give yourself a good week of planning and thinking, writing, rewriting, and polishing.

**ACADEMIC COMPONENT**

* Class attendance and active participation
* Weekly Journal (minimum of 14 pages total for the semester)
* Collab Responses
* Mid-Semester Self-Evaluation Essay (3-5 pages)
* Learning Portfolio and Personal Reflection Essay (5-7 pages)

**SERVICE COMPONENT**

* Responsibility to the residents: regular attendance of meetings at Beaumont
* Responsibility to the class: weekly car sign-ups and materials sign-ups, timely responsiveness to communication, fulfilling speaker role at final meeting

**ASSESSMENT**

In this class our focus is going to be on learning rather than on grading. Although we are required to assign grades at the end of the semester, we have designed the class in such a way that grades are not the primary motivation for your work. Furthermore, each one of you has been carefully chosen for this class on the basis of a university-wide application process. We already know that you have a strong desire to be here, that you want to learn and work hard, and that you will succeed.

You will take responsibility for your own learning in this class, and you will be actively involved in the assessment of your own work. Self-assessment is a core principle of the Books Behind Bars class.

How will you know that you’re learning? Not because a grade tells you so, but because you can observe growth in facilitation, as well as in your evolving insights into Russian literature, yourself, the world of juvenile justice—into life itself.

Did you notice something about the literature, about yourself, about life, that you hadn’t noticed before? Have any of the expectations or paradigms you held before been disrupted? Did you have an experience in class, while reading, while writing in your journals, while meeting with the residents that stimulated, excited, or provoked you? And did you process that experience in your journal and/or in class discussion in such a way that you gained some insight from it? If so, then learning has taken place.

You will know that you’re learning, because you did a better job facilitating a discussion at Beaumont than you did in previous weeks, and you can articulate the reasons why. And if you weren’t as successful, then what did you learn from that failure that you will use next time? Whether the result was positive or negative, what did the experience teach you, and how will you apply those lessons to the next discussion? Reflecting thoughtfully about such questions is the essence of experiential learning in this class.

You’ll know you’ve learned, because your final essay contains ideas and insights that you didn’t have or couldn’t have articulated sixteen weeks earlier. And perhaps, as many students of the course have reported, you will know because you have been permanently changed in ways you did not foresee.

**Grading Principles**

Although our focus will be on learning rather grading, you might find it helpful to know some of the general principles guiding the final grading decision:

* Diligence. We will look to see whether you have completed all of the course requirements, as described in the “Summary of Course Requirements” above.
* Growth and improvement over the course of the semester are more important than your performance on any single assignment. This ensures that you feel comfortable taking risks, trying out new things, and even failing, without the fear that these failures will negatively affect the assessment of your work.
* Your Final Learning Portfolio and Essay will provide an excellent opportunity for you to pull together the many different strands of your experience in this class and demonstrate all that you have learned by the end of semester.
* The totality of your work in this class will be taken into consideration, not just your written work or your discussion facilitation. Because of the multi-faceted nature of the class, there will be many opportunities for you to demonstrate your learning.
* Reflection on successes and failures. Far more important than whether you “succeed” or “fail” during the facilitation of a discussion is whether you reflect honestly and clearly on those successes and failures, and then incorporate those reflections into your future meetings.
* Unique learning outcomes for each student. Although there are a number of course objectives, as described above, not all of them will be equally applicable to every one of you. Each of you brings a unique set of skills, passions, and perspectives to this class, which will be reflected in your unique learning outcomes. There is no single profile of the “successful” Books Behind Bars student.

**CLASS SCHEDULE**

The schedule below is tentative. In a course such as this, we attempt to tailor the experience to the needs of the students, and so we may make changes from time to time. Also, unexpected things sometimes occur that require adjustments to the schedule. By the end of each week, you will receive a detailed email with the assignments for the following week so you should have ample opportunity to prepare. We will also inform you of any schedule changes in class, if possible.

Week 1

**Tuesday, August 23 –Class 1**

* Introduction to Books Behind Bars
  + Assignment/Exercise: A Work that had an Impact on Me
* Russian literature and the “Accursed Questions” of life
  + Assignment/Exercise: Accursed Questions
* “To a Poet”: Finding your personal connection to the text
* Syllabus: Core principles of Books Behind Bars

**Thursday, August 25 – Class 2: What is Success?**

* Lecture/Discussion: Leo Tolstoy, “How Much Land Does a Man Need?”
* Exercise: Questioning practice
* Facilitation: Creating Good Questions

Week 2

**Tuesday, August 30 – Class 3: What is happiness?**

* Ivan Turgenev, “Living Relic”
* Student-led discussions: “Living Relic”
  + Facilitation debriefs
* Facilitation – “Follow Ups”

**Thursday, September 1**—**Class 4**: Winx Lawrence workshop on listening

Week 3

**Tuesday, Sept 6 – Class 5: Student orientation at Beaumont**

Meet between 12:20 and 12:30 in Cavalier Inn Parking Lot. Leave as a caravan at 12:30 pm sharp. Bring your driver’s license

**Thursday, Sept 8 – Class 6: Juvenile Justice and the Arts**

* Orientation debrief
* Readings and discussion: Issues in juvenile justice and the arts
* Facilitation considerations
* Introducing intriguing activities

Week 4

**Tuesday, Sept 13 – Class 7: Given that I’m going to die, how should I live?**

* Student-led discussions: “The Death of Ivan Ilych”
  + - Facilitation debriefs
* Lecture/Discussion: Leo Tolstoy, “The Death of Ivan Ilyich”
* Literary Analysis Mini Workshop: Core ideas in Literature
* Announcement of partners
* Introducing the lesson plan

**Thursday, Sept 15—Class 8: Final Preparations for Meeting at Beaumont**

* Parker Palmer, *The Courage to Teach* (tentative)
* Final preparations for the first meeting with the residents
* Introducing the Post-meeting Evaluation
* Intriguing activities sharing

Week 5

**Tuesday, September 20 – Meeting 1 at Beaumont**

* Meeting 1 at Beaumont: Leo Tolstoy, “How Much Land Does a Man Need?”

**Thursday, Sept 22 – Class 9:**

* Debriefing at UVa: Debriefs include reactions, insights, critical moments, self–assessment and next steps
* Lecture/Discussion Ivan Turgenev, “Living Relic”

Week 6

**Tuesday, Sept 27 – Meeting 2 at Beaumont**

* Meeting 2 at Beaumont: Ivan Turgenev, “Living Relic”

**Thursday, Sept 29 – Class 10:**

* Debriefing at UVa
* Questions about mid-semester self-evaluation, due the following week
* Reflecting on the reflective journal
* Read introduction to *The Portable Nineteenth-Century Russian Reader*
* Read introduction to *The Portable Twentieth-Century Russian Reader*
* *Hand in course journals*

Week 7

**Tuesday, October 4 – NO CLASS, FALL BREAK**

**Thursday, October 6 – Class 11: Analyzing character**

* Lecture/Discussion: Alexander Solzhenitsyn, “Matryona’s Home”
* Literary Analysis Workshop: Analyzing Character

**Friday, October 6**

*Mid-semester essay due in collab*

Week 8

**Tuesday, October 11 – Meeting 3 at Beaumont**

* Meeting 3 at Beaumont: Leo Tolstoy, *The Death of Ivan Ilyich*

**Thursday, October 13 – Class 12**

* Debriefing at UVa
* Lecture/Discussion: Alexander Pushkin, “To a Poet” and Mikhail Lermontov, “Native Land”
* Literary analysis workshop: Appreciating Poetry

Week 9

**Tuesday, October 18: Meeting 4 at Beaumont**

* Meeting 4 at Beaumont: “To a Poet” and other poetry of your and residents’ choosing

**Thursday, October 20 –Class 13**

* Debriefing at UVa
* Guest Lecturer: Deron Phipps, Director of Policy and Planning, Virginia Department of Juvenile Justice

Week 10

**Tuesday, October 25 – Meeting 5 at Beaumont**

* Meeting 5 at Beaumont: Poetry of your and residents’ choosing

**Thursday, October 27 – Class 14: Literature as a Reflection of History**

* Debriefing at UVa
* Lecture/discussion: Fyodor Sologub, “The Search”
* Literary analysis workshop: Historical context

Week 11

**Tuesday, November 1 – Meeting 6 at Beaumont**

* Meeting 6 at Beaumont: Fyodor Sologub, “The Search”

**Thursday, November 3 – Class 15:**

* Debriefing at UVa
* Meeting 7 at Beaumont: Mikhail Zoshchenko, “The Lady Aristocrat,” “The Bathhouse,” “The Adventures of a Monkey”
* Literary analysis workshop: literature after the Russian Revolution: Humor as freedom
* Reread introduction to the *Twentieth-Century Russian Reader*

Week 12

**Tuesday, November 8 – Meeting 7 at Beaumont**

* Meeting 7 at Beaumont: Mikhail Zoshchenko, “The Lady Aristocrat,” “The Bathhouse,” “The Adventures of a Monkey”

**Thursday, November 10 – Class 16**

* Debriefing at UVa
* Varlam Shalamov, “My First Tooth” and “Handwriting” (from *Kolyma Tales*) and Nadezhda Mandelshtam, “Last Letter” (from *Hope Abandoned*)
* Discussion: Prison as seen by those who live it and those they leave behind

Week 13

**Tuesday, November 15 – Meeting 8 at Beaumont**

* Meeting 8 at Beaumont: Varlam Shalamov, “My First Tooth” and “Handwriting” (from *Kolyma Tales*) and Nadezhda Mandelshtam, “Last Letter” (from *Hope Abandoned*)

**Thursday, November 17 – Class 17**

* Debriefing at UVa
* Preparations for final meeting with the residents
* To be determined

Week 14

**Tuesday, November 22 –Meeting 9 at Beaumont**

* Meeting 9 at Beaumont: Alexander Solzhenitsyn, “Matryona’s Home”

**Thursday, November 24 – NO CLASS, THANKSGIVING**

Week 15

**Tuesday, November 29 – Meeting 10 at Beaumont**

* Meeting 10 at Beaumont: Final meeting at Beaumont, wrap-up party, and goodbyes

**Thursday, December 1 – Class 18**

* Debriefing at UVa
* Russian literature as a whole

Week 16

**Tuesday, December 6 – Class 19: Wrap Up**

* Final class at UVa: Making sense of your experience

**Wednesday, Dec 14**

Learning Portfolio and Reflection Essay Due

Final Course Journal Due