

Russian 345  
 Tolstoy and Dostoevsky  
 Take-home Final Examination  
 December 6, 2001

Dear students,

Please choose three flowers from the following bouquet and make an attractive arrangement of short essays. Include at least one flower for each of our two writers! Keep your remarks pertinent, clear, to-the-point, and refreshing. Spend only a few hours and do not be concerned about length. Do not worry about good essay form or introduction-content-conclusion; instead, write a few good paragraphs on each topic you choose. Don't be afraid of making sweeping statements, but be sure to illustrate them with one or two apt examples. You may consult your notes and texts, the library, and even your fellow students. Please do not copy directly from each other's work.

1) Answer the following letter as though you were Tolstoy:

Dear Count Tolstoy,

I really enjoy your weekly column and the solace you offer to so many millions. Now I find myself writing to you! I never thought it would be me. I am a Tulane premed student, aiming at Harvard Medical School, focus, focus, focus. I get only A's, and if there's a B on the horizon I threaten suicide and the fool professors give in. But that's not my problem. I have a girl friend with calm confiding eyes, I'm going to take her to Harvard with me. That's not my problem either. It's this girl Grusha in my Russian literature class (if I don't get an A I'm going to threaten suicide). She looks at me so intensely that I have to go out of the room and light up a cigarette. I find myself dreaming about her. She's a devil, I tell you, Count Tolstoy! Please help me, write me some words of solace. I really enjoyed *War and Peace*. I *must* get into Harvard Medical School. I have to get a new pair of glasses. Take care now,  
 Eddie in New Orleans

2) Discuss relative and absolute chronology in "The Death of Ivan Ilyich".

3) Discuss chapter headings in *The Brothers Karamazov*.

4) Discuss the notion of *evil* in *BK* in the context of the dialogue on theodicy in the novel. State some of the novel's varying views of its source, function, how and where it is manifested, and how it may be combatted. You may be as general as you please, but give examples from the text. Be comprehensive.

5) Discuss the figure of Marfa Petrovna in relation to Pulcheria Aleksandrovna, Dunya, and Svidrigailov. Why did Dusty need her and what does she do for the novel?

6) Discuss the role of non-Russian ethnic groups in Tolstoy. Give examples.

7) Discuss non-verbal semiotics in *BK*. Be comprehensive.

8) Discuss the meaning of the sale of the Ryabinin forest by Stiva in all its ramifications.

9) Discuss aural symbolism in *Crime and Punishment*.

10) Analyze the relationship between Ivan and Smerdyakov.

TAKE HOME and final paper or project are both due December 18, 2001.

