Thematic Unit For

Crime and Punishment

Dreams

This trilogy contains some extreme religious overtones. All the other children trust in Teacher’s interpretation of The Book, which is a scrapbook/dream journal she puts together from anything in print they happen to find, and anything said in their sleep. They consider the Book sacred. Their dreams become scripture.

This is a fun site for exploration of meaning of dreams. There is a discussion board if students wish to post descriptions of their dreams, and they can look up various events to find what they “signify” or predict.

This book also deals deeply with religion and dreams. In this story, Asher’s ancestor appears several times to him by way of dreams, offering an opportunity to discuss the amount of credibility we should place on dreams. To what extent should we believe what people tell us in our dreams?

Punishment for Crimes

This story follows Stanley Yelnats, who has been wrongfully convicted of stealing a pair of shoes. Stanley’s great-great-grandfather is cursed for failing to fulfill a promise. Also, the killing of a negro for kissing a white woman and her subsequent turning to a life of crime. There are many good issues to be discussed in this novel that relate to crime and punishment.

Angelo condemns Claudio to death for having intercourse out of wedlock with his betrothed lover. Angelo is tricked into having sex with his betrothed, and thus is hypocritical in carrying out the sentence, yet he tries to anyway. The Duke returns and straightens out the matter. This deals very much with hypocrisy in sentencing and carrying out punishment. It also deals with the question of whether consensual sex out of wedlock should be considered a crime.

The eponymous heroine, an officer in the Salvation Army, is the daughter of Andrew Undershaft, a wealthy armaments manufacturer. When the Army accepts donations from Undershaft and a whiskey distiller, whose money Barbara regards as tainted, she resigns in disgust, but eventually sees the truth of her father's reasoning that social iniquity derives from

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poverty; it is only through accumulating wealth and power that people can help each other. This also deals somewhat with Raskolnikov’s theory of the superman.

**Insanity**

An interesting perspective on mental disorders. A woman is taken to a summer home to recover from an illness. She ends up spending so much time in a room with yellow wallpaper that she eventually loses her mind.

Also on DVD: Warner Bros. Pictures ; screen play by Julius J. and Philip G. Epstein ; directed by Frank Capra.
Two elderly women that run a bed and breakfast, along with their clinically insane nephew Teddy, kill elderly gentlemen who seem depressed when they stay the night by lacing their drinks with arsenic. Teddy, who believes he is Teddy Roosevelt, buries the “victims of cholera” he believes were working on the Panama Canal.

The narrator kills an old man. He explains to the reader that he is nervous, not crazy. When the police come to investigate, the narrator believes he hears the old man’s watch ticking. Afraid the investigators will hear it, he tries to cover it up, but eventually bursts out with a confession.

**Other works by Dostoyevsky**

*Notes from the Underground*
This book is an argument supporting the view that irrationality has its merits. We are in danger of ignoring our own desires in favor of a popular or dominate view. What the underground man is proposing is to be aware of the danger of buying into the proposition that there is a collective 'common good', that all people are essentially the same and desire the same things. He goes on to warn that if the men of 'science' are correct, if our desires and interests are the same, if our behavior can be recorded on some central data base, where all we have to do to understand how we should behave is by logging onto this data base, what hope does humankind have of experiencing individual needs, creativity, adventure and innovation? According to the underground man, absolutely no hope at all.

*The Idiot*
Prince Myshkin, a saintly man, is thrust into the heart of a society obsessed with wealth, power, and sexual conquest. He soon finds himself at the center of a violent love triangle in which a notorious woman and a beautiful young girl become rivals for his affections. Extortion, scandal, and murder follow, as Dostoevsky's "positively good man" clashes with the emptiness of a society that cannot accommodate his moral idealism.

*The Best Short Stories of Fyodor Dostoyevsky*
Works emphasizing **DREAMS**

Works dealing with **INSANITY**

Works dealing with **PUNISHMENT FOR CRIMES**

Other works by **DOSTOYEVSKY**

http://www.sleeps.com/dreams.html