



CVSP 295  
Final Examination

Modern Russian Literature

June 2005  
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Choose one of the 3 questions below and write a clear and well document essay (analysis+examples from the texts to support your critique).

- I. Examine the Biblical saying that "man lives not by bread alone" which the Grand Inquisitor throws at Christ in The Brothers Karamasov (p. 290 / 5 lines from the bottom. Explain it; see how it applies to the specific passage and to the novel as a whole.
1. What is Dostoyevsky's basic attitude towards this saying?
  2. How would Tolstoy's Anna or Levin react to the saying?
  3. What about any other author or authors we read?
  4. How would Soljenitsyne's Ivan understand it? What would he say about it?

II. On "Fantastic Realism"

There is a tendency in the tradition of the Russian novel and short story to question the reliability of our perceptions and to stand nervously on the threshold of an abyss which opens up as soon as confidence in the solidity of the prosaic world is eroded. The Russian novel and short story from Gogol onwards often show that beyond the abyss is a world which seems to be structured by the arbitrariness of dream, fantasy, madness. This has been referred to as "fantastic realism". Study the function of this kind of realism with examples from Gogol, Tolstoy and Dostoyevsky.

In your conclusion examine briefly Chekov's and Soljenitsyne's type of Realism in contrast to the above.

III. On Moral Freedom

Examine the concept of Moral Freedom in its presence or absence in the 5 authors we have read. Give examples from the 5 texts.

GOOD LUCK!

