

**The Ohio State University  
Colleges of the Arts and Sciences New Course Request**

College of Humanities

Academic Unit

Slavic

Book 3 Listing (e.g., Portuguese)

H 584 Dead Man Writing: Literary Representations of Capital Punishment

Number Title

Dead Man Writing

U

5

18-Character Title Abbreviation

Level

Credit Hours

Summer

Autumn X

Winter

Spring

Year 2008-2009

Proposed effective date, choose one quarter and put an "X" after it; and fill in the year. See the OAA curriculum manual for deadlines.

**A. Course Offerings Bulletin Information**

Follow the instructions in the OAA curriculum manual. If this is a course with decimal subdivisions, then use one New Course Request form for the generic information that will apply to all subdivisions; and use separate forms for each new decimal subdivision, including on each form the information that is unique to that subdivision. If the course offered is less than a quarter or a term, please complete the Flexibly Scheduled/Off Campus/Workshop Request form.

Description (*not to exceed 25 words*): Study of execution as a theme in literature of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Quarter offered: Autumn

Distribution of class time/contact hours: 2 2-hour classes

Quarter and contact/class time hours information should be omitted from Book 3 publication (yes or no): No

Prerequisite(s): None

Exclusion or limiting clause: None

Repeatable to a maximum of 0 credit hours.

Cross-listed with:

Grade Option (Please check): Letter  S/U  Progress  What course is last in the series? \_\_\_\_\_

Honors Statement: Yes  No

GEC: Yes  No

Admission Condition

Off-Campus: Yes  No

EM: Yes  No

Course: Yes  No

Embedded Honors Statement: Yes  No

Service Learning Course\*: Yes  No  \*To learn more about this option, please visit

<http://artsandsciences.osu.edu/currofc/>

Other General Course Information: Taught in English.

(e.g. "Taught in English." "Credit does not count toward BSBA degree.")

**B. General Information**

Subject Code 160400 Subsidy Level (V, G, T, B, M, D, or P) B

If you have questions, please email Jed Dickhaut at [dickhaut.1@osu.edu](mailto:dickhaut.1@osu.edu).

1. Provide the rationale for proposing this course:

This course will satisfy an elective course requirement of the Russian Major, Russian Minor, and Slavic Minor.

2. Please list Majors/Minors affected by the creation of this new course. Attach revisions of all affected programs. This course is (check one):  Required on major(s)/minor(s)  A choice on major(s)/minors(s)

An elective within major(s)/minor(s)  A general elective:

Russian Major, Russian Minor, Slavic Minor

3. Indicate the nature of the program adjustments, new funding, and/or withdrawals that make possible the implementation of this new course.  
 No adjustments

4. Is the approval of this request contingent upon the approval of other course requests or curricular requests?

Yes  No  List:

5. If this course is part of a sequence, list the number of the other course(s) in the sequence: \_\_\_\_\_

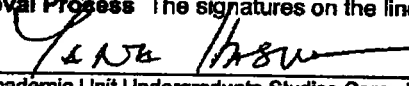
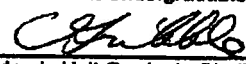

6. Expected section size: 15 Proposed number of sections per year: 1

7. Do you want prerequisites enforced electronically (see OAA manual for what can be enforced)? Yes  No

8. This course has been discussed with and has the concurrence of the following academic units needing this course or with academic units having directly related interests (List units and attach letters and/or forms):  
 Not Applicable

9. Attach a course syllabus that includes a topical outline of the course, student learning outcomes and/or course objectives, off-campus field experience, methods of evaluation, and other items as stated in the OAA curriculum manual and e-mail to [asccurrofc@osu.edu](mailto:asccurrofc@osu.edu).

**Approval Process** The signatures on the lines in ALL CAPS ( e.g. ACADEMIC UNIT) are required.

	Yana Hashamova	4/10/08
1. Academic Unit Undergraduate Studies Committee Chair	Printed Name	Date
	Charles Gribble	4/10/08
2. Academic Unit Graduate Studies Committee Chair	Printed Name	Date
	Daniel Collins	4/10/08
3. ACADEMIC UNIT CHAIR/DIRECTOR	Printed Name	Date

4. After the Academic Unit Chair/Director signs the request, forward the form to the ASC Curriculum Office, 4132 Smith Lab, 174 West 18<sup>th</sup> Ave. or fax it to 688-5678. Attach the syllabus and any supporting documentation in an e-mail to [asccurrofc@osu.edu](mailto:asccurrofc@osu.edu). The ASC Curriculum Office will forward the request to the appropriate committee.

5. COLLEGE CURRICULUM COMMITTEE	Printed Name	Date
6. ARTS AND SCIENCES EXECUTIVE DEAN	Printed Name	Date
7. Graduate School (if appropriate)	Printed Name	Date
8. University Honors Center (if appropriate)	Printed Name	Date
9. Office of International Education (if appropriate)	Printed Name	Date
10. ACADEMIC AFFAIRS	Printed Name	Date

**PROPOSAL FORM FOR AN HONORS COURSE  
COLLEGES OF THE ARTS AND SCIENCES  
HONORS OFFICE**

**1. Type of Honors Course**

\_\_\_\_\_ Honors version of existing course

X            New honors course

**2. Course Bulletin Listing for Honors Course**

Department: Slavic and East European Languages and Literatures

Course number: H584

Course title: Dead Man Writing: Literary Representations of Capital Punishment

**3. Faculty Proposer**

Name: Alexander Burry

Address: 345 Hagerty Hall, 1775 College Road, Columbus OH 43210

Telephone: 614-247-7149

**4. Quarter and Year for Initial Offering**

Autumn 2008

**5. Name of Faculty Member Who Will Initially Instruct Course**

Alexander Burry

**6. Expected Annual and Quarterly Frequency of Subsequent Offerings**

Annual X            Quarterly \_\_\_\_\_

Autumn X            Winter \_\_\_\_\_            Spring \_\_\_\_\_            Summer \_\_\_\_\_

**7. Enrollment Limit per Honors Section**

Number: 15

**8. Prerequisites**

None

## PROPOSAL FORM FOR AN HONORS COURSE

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9. **Intended Audience for Honors Course** (Freshman, sophomore, specific area of study, open to students in any field of study, etc.)

Open to students at any level and in any field of study

10. **Required Documentation** (Please attach)

a. **Course Form**

\_\_\_\_\_ Version of existing course (Course Change form)

X            New course (New Course form)

b. **Syllabus for the Proposed Honors Course (attached)**

In addition to covering the substance of the course, the syllabus should contain a statement that addresses the specific goals and expectations of the course. It also should include information about assignments, tests, references, and a grading scale which indicates how assignments will be weighted. With respect to reading assignments, the syllabus should indicate the number of pages included in the reading(s) required for each class meeting and, in cases where there is a non-honors version of the course, also indicate which readings are different from or additional to those required in the non-honors version.

c. **Syllabus of Existing Non-Honors Course**

For comparative purposes, the Honors Committee requires a copy of a syllabus for the already existing non-honors course which will parallel the proposed honors version. If the proposal is for a new honors course, there obviously will be no syllabus for an already existing non-honors course available. In such cases, the proposer should include the syllabus from a non-honors course at a level comparable to the proposed course, so that the Committee has some standard within the department for comparative purposes.

d. **Statement of Qualitative Difference**

The Honors Committee expects that honors courses will differ from non-honors courses in a variety of ways and so requires that the proposer include a statement that addresses the following items (with particular attention to the differences between the two versions of the course, if a non-honors version exists):

1. How the specific goals of the course will be achieved.
2. The exposure to the basic material in the course, and ways in which added breadth and depth of material will be included.
3. The exposure to, and use of, methodology and research techniques, and especially the ways in which the course will provide exposure to the nature of scholarship in the field.

## PROPOSAL FORM FOR AN HONORS COURSE

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4. Amount and quality of work expected from students on papers, examination(s), and projects; and the method of grading that work.
5. The amount and kind of student/faculty contact, including how the course will offer a significant level of interaction and engagement between faculty and students, and how such engagement will be achieved.
6. How an environment will be fostered that facilitates intellectual exchange among students (if applicable).
7. Ways that creative thinking will be an essential aspect of the course requirements.
8. How the course will embrace, as appropriate, interdisciplinary work and study
9. Evidence of a pedagogical process that will demand a high level of intellectual output.

The goals and requirements of Slavic H584 are substantially higher than non-honors offerings on the same level. Students are expected not only to absorb a variety of viewpoints on the topic of capital punishment itself, but also to advance their critical, speaking, and writing abilities in general. The high proportion of discussion compared to lecture, the limited enrollment, and the friendly classroom atmosphere ensure students a great deal of interaction through group discussions and individual presentations; they are expected to learn from and respond to each other as well as the instructor. The relatively large reading load (about 125-150 pages a week) and the intensive writing and research component make for an especially challenging experience. This amount of reading is considerably higher than courses on the 500-level in the department such as Russian 521, which assigned an average of 100 pages a week when it was taught recently (Spring 2006). The readings themselves are more challenging in the proposed honors course, since they include secondary as well as primary readings: the Russian 521 reading list, by contrast, contained only fiction. Requiring papers instead of exams in the proposed course creates an opportunity for more sustained thinking and writing, especially since a rough draft or outline of the final paper is required before the graded version. This evaluative method allows for greater feedback from the instructor and self-criticism on the part of the students. Since the students choose their own paper topics instead of responding to predetermined questions, they are encouraged to think, research, and argue independently and creatively rather than mechanically synthesizing lecture material. And because they are expected to incorporate criticism as well as primary texts into their final paper, they are evaluated on their ability to handle a greater diversity of texts and viewpoints than in other 500-level courses, which tend to require only close reading of fictional works.

### 11. Disposition

An original of the proposal and documentation should be sent to the Curriculum Office in 109 Brown Hall. Under normal circumstances, the Honors Committee and the college curriculum committee will respond to proposals within one month.

**Slavic H584 Dead Man Writing: Literary Representations of Capital Punishment**  
**Instructor: Alexander Burry, Slavic and East European Languages and Literatures**  
**Office: 345 Hagerty Hall (247-7149)**

**E-mail: burry.7@osu.edu**

**Course meetings: two meetings of 1 hr. 48 min. per week**

**Expected enrollment: 15**

### **Course Description**

The death penalty remains highly controversial to this day, dividing people along political, religious, and moral lines. In this course we will explore how this topic has been represented in literature. Many of the most famous writers of the past two centuries have made executions a central part of their works. In reading and discussing them, we will raise various questions: how have different societies justified the death penalty? How have writers tried to access the last moments of a person facing execution, and why does this particular psychological state inspire such great interest? What questions does the death penalty raise about human consciousness and morality? How does it relate to broader issues of the nature of writing, trauma, and justice? We will begin by reading ancient texts (Plato's description of Socrates's execution and the Gospel account of the crucifixion) and then link the motifs and problems in these works to literary descriptions of execution by Hugo, Dostoevsky, Tolstoy, Camus, Wiesel, and other writers. The course will be taught in English, and all readings will be in English.

### **Course Objectives**

- to explore how different societies have justified the use of capital punishment
- to examine the theme of capital punishment as a topos in modern literature
- to compare how writers from different cultures and time periods (Slavic and East European vs. West European and American) have dealt with this theme
- to write clearly and effectively on this subject, using primary and secondary readings, and incorporating independent research
- to relate capital punishment to larger issues involving creativity, justice, and trauma
- to use literature to reflect back on the contemporary death penalty debate

### **Course Structure**

The class will consist mostly of discussion, with brief periods of lecture beginning and ending most sessions. It will therefore depend largely on student participation, as well as oral presentations with discussions following. There will be no exams, but there will be two writing assignments: a midterm paper and a final paper. Reading assignments will average about 125-150 pages per week.

### **Grading**

Attendance (10%); Participation (10%); Oral Presentation (15%); Midterm Paper (25%); Final Paper (40%)

### **Grading Scale**

A 95+; A- 90-94; B+ 87-89; B 83-86; B- 80-82; C+ 77-79; C 73-76; C- 70-72; D 60-69; F 59-.

## **Method of Evaluation**

### **Midterm Paper**

The midterm paper will consist of a close reading of some aspect of the death penalty in one of the assigned literary works. It should be five typed, double-spaced pages in length, and must be submitted during the first class of the fifth week.

### **Final Paper**

The final paper must include outside research (at least four sources, two of which may be from the internet) as well as close analysis of one or two texts on the death penalty. You may develop it from the midterm paper or use a different topic. The paper should be 10-12 typed, double-spaced pages in length, and should be submitted as a hard copy by Monday of finals week, 5:00pm. To get full credit for the final paper, you must hand in a rough draft or outline of it on Monday of Week 10; this will be returned with comments in the last class. Handing this in on time entitles you to 5 points out of the 40 the assignment is worth; the other 35 are based on the quality of the final version.

### **Attendance**

You must attend every session of the course, barring serious illness, family emergencies, or religious holidays. Documentation must be provided in all of these cases. The 10 points of the grade will be calculated based on the percentage of days attended (18 out of 20 days attended would yield 9 out of 10 points). Latenesses to class count as half an absence.

### **Participation**

You are required to participate actively, enthusiastically, and in a collegial manner in all sessions. This involves reading all materials by the date indicated and preparing thoughtful responses based on the texts and themes of the course ahead of time. The following criteria will be used to establish participation grades:

- A (10/10 points): clear evidence of preparation, frequent voluntary participation, and significant contribution to nearly all class discussions.
- B (8/10): clear evidence of preparation, participation in about two thirds of the classes.
- C (6/10): evidence of preparation, but little voluntary participation (fewer than half of the classes).
- D (5/10): inconsistent preparation, little or no contribution to class discussions.

### **Oral Presentation**

Each student will be responsible for a 5-10-minute oral presentation to the class on a primary or secondary reading. A list of presentation topics will be distributed on the first day of class, out of which students will choose their three favorites; the instructor will determine assignments based on these responses. The presentation should consist of a brief summary of the author's point of view, your opinion, and a question or two for the class to consider. They will be graded on content and presentation style.

## Readings

(an asterisk indicates that the writer is Slavic or East European)

### Primary Texts

- The Code of Hammurabi* (excerpts) (1760 BC)  
*The Holy Bible* (excerpts) (various times)  
Plato, *Dialogues* (excerpts) (4<sup>th</sup> c. BC)  
Victor Hugo, *The Last Day of a Condemned Man* (1830)  
\*Fyodor Dostoevsky, *The Idiot* (1868) (Part I)  
\*Fyodor Dostoevsky, Dec. 22, 1849 letter to brother  
\*Lev Tolstoy, *War and Peace* (1869) (excerpts)  
Jean-Paul Sartre, "The Wall" (1939)  
Albert Camus, *The Stranger* (1942)  
\*Julius Fučík, *Notes from the Gallows* (1943)  
\*Elie Wiesel, *Dawn* (1961)  
\*Simon Wiesenthal, *The Sunflower* (1969)  
Anaïs Nin, "The Woman on the Dunes" (1979)

### Secondary Texts (Essays and Criticism)

- Cesare Beccaria, *On Crimes and Punishments* (1764) (excerpts)  
John Stuart Mill, "Speech in Favor of Capital Punishment" (1868)  
\*Lev Tolstoy, *I Cannot Be Silent* (1908)  
H.L. Mencken, "The Penalty of Death" (1926)  
George Orwell, "A Hanging" (1931), "Shooting an Elephant" (1936)  
Albert Camus, *Resistance, Rebellion, and Death* (1960) (excerpts)  
Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish* (1975) (excerpts)  
Sigmund Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (1920) (excerpts)  
Ernest van den Haag, "The Ultimate Punishment: A Defense" (1986)  
Shoshana Felman and Dori Laub, *Testimony* (1991, excerpts)  
Camille Naish, *Death Comes to the Maiden* (1991) (excerpts)  
Helen Prejean, *Dead Man Walking* (1993) (excerpts)

### Obtaining the readings

Books are available at SBX (1806 N. High St.). There is also a coursepack with shorter readings that may be purchased in the Slavic Department office (400 Hagerty Hall).



**Academic Integrity**

It is the responsibility of the Committee on Academic Misconduct to investigate or establish procedures for the investigation of all reported cases of student academic misconduct. The term "academic misconduct" includes all forms of student academic misconduct wherever committed; illustrated by, but not limited to, cases of plagiarism and dishonest practices in connection with examinations. Instructors shall report all instances of alleged academic misconduct to the committee (Faculty Rule 3335-5-487). For additional information, see the Code of Student Conduct ([http://studentaffairs.osu.edu/info\\_for\\_students/csc.asp](http://studentaffairs.osu.edu/info_for_students/csc.asp)).

**Students with Disabilities**

Any student who feels that he or she may need an accommodation due to a disability should contact me privately to discuss his or her specific needs. Students with documented disabilities may contact the Office for Disability Services at 614-292-3307 in 150 Pomerene Hall to coordinate reasonable accommodations. More information is available at the internet address of this office (<http://www.ods.ohio-state.edu>).

**Schedule of Class Discussions and Assignments**  
(subject to change)

**Week One**  
**Ancient Laws**

- Introduction to the course
- The contemporary death penalty debate
- The Code of Hammurabi
- The Hebrew Bible on capital punishment

**Reading Assignment:** Plato, *Dialogues* (selections); *The Holy Bible* (selections)  
(total reading: approximately 75 pages)

**Week Two**  
**Execution in the Ancient World: Christ and Socrates**

- Socrates's execution
- The Gospel accounts of the crucifixion
- Christianity and the death penalty

**Reading Assignment:** Cesare Beccaria, *On Crimes and Punishments* (selections); Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish* (selections); Hugo, *The Last Day of a Condemned Man* (approximately 150 pages)

**Week Three**  
**Public and Private Spectacles: Capital Punishment in the Nineteenth Century**

- The Enlightenment and the death penalty: Beccaria
- Romanticism: Hugo's arguments against capital punishment
- Writing and execution: fantastic realism

**Reading Assignment:** Dostoevsky, *The Idiot* (Part I); Dostoevsky, Dec. 22, 1849 letter to brother (approximately 150 pages)

**Week Four**  
**The Last Five Minutes: Dostoevsky's Averted Execution**

- Capital punishment in Tsarist Russia
- Dostoevsky and the Petrashevsky incident
- Dostoevsky and Hugo
- Narrating near execution
- Execution and resurrection

**Reading Assignment:** Tolstoy, *War and Peace* (excerpts); Tolstoy, *I Cannot Be Silent*; Orwell, "A Hanging" and "Shooting an Elephant" (approximately 100 pages)

**Writing Assignment:** Midterm paper due Monday of Week Five (in class)

**Week Five**  
**Tolstoianism and Execution**

- Witnessing execution
- Tolstoianism and capital punishment: execution as murder
- Colonialism and execution

**Reading Assignment:** Sartre, "The Wall"; Camus, *The Stranger*; Camus, *Resistance, Rebellion, and Death* (excerpts); Mencken, "The Penalty of Death"; Mill, "Speech in Favor of Capital Punishment" (approximately 175 pages)

**Week Six**  
**Existentialism, War, and the Death Penalty**

- Opposing abolition
- Sartre and the Spanish Civil war
- Existentialism and its controversies
- Camus and Dostoevsky
- Execution and the absurd

**Reading Assignment:** Wiesenthal, *The Sunflower*; Wiesel, *Dawn* (approximately 200 pages)

**Week Seven**  
**Executing the Enemy: Capital Punishment and the Holocaust**

- The Holocaust and the difficulty of representation
- Wiesel and the problem of testimony
- *Night* and *Dawn*: execution and trauma

**Reading Assignment:** Fučík, *Notes from the Gallows* (approximately 125 pages)

**Week Eight**  
**Testimony or Fabrication? The Case of Fučík**

- The genre of the ante-mortem statement
- Fučík as Communist legend

**Reading Assignment:** Nin, "Woman in the Dunes"; Naish, *Death Comes to the Maiden* (excerpts); Prejean, *Dead Man Walking* (excerpts); van den Haag, "The Ultimate Punishment: A Defense" (approximately 100 pages)

**Week Nine**  
**Execution, Sex, and Gender**

- Execution of women throughout history
- Marie Antoinette and the Terror
- Execution and erotica
- Death row firsthand
- Religion and the death penalty in America

**Writing Assignment**

Rough draft or outline of research paper due Monday of Week Ten

**Week Ten**  
**Final Thoughts**

- Screening of *Dead Man Walking* (dir. Tim Robbins)
- Discussion of final papers
- Conclusions: capital punishment today and in the future

**Writing Assignment**

10-12-page research paper due 5:00pm, Monday of finals week: bring a hard copy to my office (345 Hagerty) or the department office (400 Hagerty)