Instructor: Cameron Reid
Ext.: #2685
Office hours: Monday: 2-4 p.m., Wednesday: 4-5:30 p.m.
Class times: Monday, Wednesday, Friday: 5:30-6:30 p.m.

THE REBEL
(ENGLISH 108F, FALL 1996)

Through the history of literature, the “rebellious,” confrontational, dissenting acts (and attitudes) of both authors and their literary characters have become an important site of literary research for both students and critics of the Novel. That is, at the core of most plots, and at the emotional core of the characters that frequent those plots, one finds essential conflict between humans and their social or natural environments; one finds interpersonal struggle between members of a family, a community, a culture, or, between cultures, as a whole; one finds internal, personal, psychological strife; one finds that the novel (or story) itself, in its structure, story-telling techniques, visual presentation, and so on, stands in a subversive, “rebellious” relation to more established literary traditions. In short, one finds “friction,” conflict, contrast, and so on, across, potentially, a variety of principle elements within the literary work; and very often these novels emerge as both an exploration and a ‘working out’ of those essential conflicts. So within this crucial feature of the literary text there thematically emerges the figure of the “Rebel.”

This course focuses its attention specifically on those characters (and authors) that seem to initiate, to be submerged in, and to propel conflict in (and through) the novel. We will subsequently explore the greater value and implications of their actions (or circumstances) within society, literature and the actual novel itself. To this end we will read the following texts (in the order given):

*Gustave Flaubert, Madame Bovary
Henry Miller, Tropic Of Cancer
Jack Kerouac, On The Road
Ursula Le Guin, The Dispossessed
Jeanette Winterson, Sexing The Cherry

*(As well, throughout the term I will introduce a variety of individual “Rebel” types/figures drawn from politics, philosophy, literature, myth, and current events. You will be responsible on your exams and papers for knowing the issues discussed in class pertaining to these “Rebel” figures.)

*(We will begin with the Flaubert text, after a week’s introduction, beginning Wed. September 18; depending on your interest, we will spend roughly 3 to 4 classes on each work. I would like for our class to be as much discussion based as possible and composed of both lecture material and group work.)
Course Work:

1.) Midterm: 25% (Monday, October 21 -- in class)
2.) Final Exam: 35% (To be scheduled in the Exam period)
3.) Either, a comparative 6-8 page final Essay (topics will be distributed in mid-October) or a Journal of at least 8 pages that explores personal reactions to 4 of the texts and/or figures discussed in class: 40% (both due on the last day of classes).

(Note: Certain works on this reading list are graphic and profane: if this concerns you, be forewarned! This may not be your ideal class.)