THE REBEL

English 108F section 2, Winter 1997
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The concept of the rebellious figure is prevalent in most, if not all literatures of the world. However, the rebel has taken on special significance in American literature. The American rebel, perhaps due to the fact that the American state itself was formed by rebellion (or revolution), has become the central figure of that country's writing.

The characters in the works to be studied in this course form their rebellions along two different lines - rebels without a cause and rebels with a cause. In other words, the various central figures may be either caused to rebel, and may rebel to seek a specific goal, or their rebellions may seem to be totally without cause or purpose. Indeed, this course will examine how many of the novels we will study move along the tension between these two positions.

We will, in studying the various rebels in this course, attempt to define the place of the rebel within American writings, and perhaps begin to understand the rebel's place in literature as a whole. Attention will be given to the role of the rebel within the social dynamic - i.e. how each rebel rebels against the dominant social structure, and whether s/he succeeds.

The works we will be reading this term are as follows (in the order of how we will look at them):

Civil Disobedience, by Henry David Thoreau
Huckleberry Finn, by Mark Twain
Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, by Frederick Douglass
The Awakening, by Kate Chopin
Native Son, by Richard Wright
One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest, by Ken Kesey
On the Road, by Jack Kerouac
1½ to 2½ weeks (approximately) will be spent on each work. A schedule of the readings will be handed out - but this schedule may change slightly over the course of the term.

MARKING

The marks will be decided as follows:

Midterm: 20%
Final Essay (5-7 pgs.): 30%
Final Exam: 35%
Class Participation: 15%

Class participation is *absolutely* necessary in this class - while there will be no formal presentations, this class will be based on a discussion format (including some group work) rather than a straight lecture - everyone will learn more this way!
Summary Cards
(Explanation and Criteria)

EXPLANATION:

1.) You are asked to compose a one-page "Summary Card" for EACH of the 7 books that we examine throughout the semester.

2.) Respectively, each "Summary Card" will be worth 5% of your FINAL grade.

3.) The "Summary Cards" are due, in class, on the FIRST DAY that we, as a class, deal with the work. PLEASE HAND IN TWO COPIES OF YOUR "SUMMARY CARDS." ONE FOR MY FILES AND ONE TO BE RETURNED TO YOU WITH ANY COMMENTS I HAVE. THAT IS, IF YOU WANT COMMENTS AND NEED THE SUMMARY CARDS BACK (you will for reasons outlined below) HAND IN TWO COPIES.

4.) Assuming that you follow the following criteria, you will receive the full 5 marks (5%) for your "Summary Card":

5.) The "Summary Cards" will be typed, single or double-spaced (depending on how much you have to say), and FULLY complete.

6.) The "Summary Cards" will be composed of THREE separate sections: FIRST, a one or two paragraph summary of the principle elements within the novel, itself, to show me that you have read it (I'm not expecting a fully realized composition but will expect more than just "Thoreau went to Walden. Thoreau built a house." Though these things did happen, I want a little DETAIL that shows me that you know what is going on in the story); SECOND, a one-paragraph 'issue' that relates the book to the rebel theme and the course (i.e., a slightly detailed ISOLATION of a certain element, character, plot point, or whatever, within the work, itself, that relates to (and illustrates) your evolving perception of the rebel theme -- you should show me how the connection is made; FINALLY, two questions about the book in relation to the rebel theme (that is, ask yourself questions about how the book in its writing style, its characters, its story, its themes, or whatever, explains the rebel, or, defies the rebel, or, manifests a sort of rebellion in itself, or generally, asks and answers questions about the the theme of the rebel -- of course, I offer these various points of engagement with the books as suggestions only; you CHOOSE questions about the novels for yourself).

7.) So again, type up a one-page "Summary Card" and hand it in at the beginning of each unit, each book, and you will receive full marks. (The first "Summary Card" will be due on Wednesday January, 15, at the beginning of class for Thoreau's Walden; from there, I will keep you informed in class of when each card is due.)
THE CRITERIA FOR THE SUBMISSION OF "SUMMARY CARDS":

8.) I leave myself the option of giving you a "N/M" (NO MARK) when the assignment is not done in either its ENTIRETY, or, in the terms outlined above. That is, I will not accept hand-written, "slipshod" pieces of work that appear as if they were slapped together in a few minutes before class. You MUST complete the assignment, as requested, and give it the time it needs to do it properly (not alot of time, but some time).

9.) If you hand the "Summary Card" in one day late, and again, assuming that you fulfill the assignment, you will get 4 marks. If you hand it in 2 days late, 3 marks; 3 days late, 2 marks ... etc. After 5 days you will not receive marks for the assignment but still must hand in the "Summary Card." For the "Summary Cards" are the center-piece of this course, both in terms of class discussion and in terms of individual development. I see these cards as preliminary exercises that take each of us towards the writing of the final paper: in other words, to not hand them in tells me that you are not ready to write the final paper. Therefore, if you do not hand in any or all of the "Summary Cards," I will not mark your final paper. Also, the "question" portion of the "Summary Card" will be the basis for the largest part of your exam. That is, I will select 2 or 3 of the best questions that you individually ask on your "Summary Cards" throughout the semester and use them on your own personal exam (every student will therefore write a different exam). So again, to not hand in any or all of the "Summary Cards" means that you will not write an exam (there will be insufficient questions (compared with your other classmates) from which to choose. Clearly, it is to your advantage that "Summary Cards" be handed in, and handed in on time; even still, you must submit "Summary Cards" before, at any level, you can proceed in this course.

10.) While you can workshop these issues with other students, you cannot reproduce other peoples work on these "Summary Cards"; again, I reserve the right, in this instance, to give a "0" to all students involved -- with still a necessary re-write of the "Summary Card" expected -- if the work is plagiarized.

**(Note: I will be handing out at least 4 of my own "Summary Cards" to the class during the course of the semester on any or all of the following figures: Prometheus and Pandora, Shakespeare's "Richard III," Jean Genet's "Thief" (from The Thief's Journal), Nietzsche's "Pale Criminal" (from Thus Spake Zarathustra), Milton's "Satan" (from Paradise Lost), and so on -- we might, in fact, build the "Summary Card" ourselves through the class discussion; again, you will be equally responsible, as suggested above, for knowing the issues pertaining to these figures on your final term tests.)