

**The Three Rs:  
Revolutions, Rebellions, Resistance**

**PART I:  
Foundations**



**Instructors:** Professor Mike Amey and Professor Rachel Martin

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**Location:** Online via Zoom

**Time:** The last Thursday of every month, 9:30 – 11:00

**Blog:** <https://thespoilers.blog/> This is a work in progress. The instructors will be publishing their own stuff here as well as material relevant to the books under discussion.

**Disclaimer:**

*Amelioration* A lexeme develops a positive sense of approval. *Revolutionary*, once associated in the capitalist mind with an undesirable overthrowing of the status quo, is now widely used by advertisers as a signal of desirable novelty.

David Crystal

When I originally proposed this course of study for the Spoilers, I thought that I would be able to provide a much broader examination of revolutions, rebellions and resistance than is actually being offered here. The reality is that the words “revolution,” “rebellion,” and “resistance” are simply too broad, and our time too limited. A full and complete discussion of these terms should include names like Mary Wollstonecraft, Sojourner Truth, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Angela Davis, and Nawal El Sadaawi. Readings should be dedicated to Chief Joseph of the Wal-lam-wat-kain, Geronimo of the

Apache, Chief Sitting Bull of the Lakota, and Russell Means, also of the Lakota, as well as, institutions, like the American Indian Movement, and moments in history, like the siege at Wounded Knee in 1872. A complete discussion would dedicate more time to slave uprisings, and talk about Martin Luther King Jr., Malcolm X, Fred Hampton, the Black Panthers, and Black Liver Matter movement. The work of people like Barbara Gittings, Harvey Milk, and Audre Lord would be discussed, along with the Stonewall Riots. The Indian Rebellion of 1857 and the

work of men and women like Mahatma Ghandi would need to be examined, as would the Matabeleland Rebellion and the work of men and women like Nelson Mandela. We would also need to discuss the Rojava Revolution, and so much more. Beyond that, a full discussion would also need to take into consideration revolutions that are not political in nature – the Scientific Revolution, the Industrial Revolution, and the Information Revolution to name a few.

“What signify a few lives lost in a century or two? The tree of liberty must be refreshed from time to time with the blood of patriots and tyrants. It is its natural manure”

Thomas Jefferson, 1787

We cannot do it all – at least not this semester – so consider this course a down payment on courses to come, and forgive the choices I have made.

Don't you know  
They're talkin' bout a revolution  
It sounds like a whisper  
Don't you know  
They're talkin' bout a revolution  
It sounds like a whisper  
While they're standing in the welfare lines  
Crying at the doorsteps of those armies of  
salvation  
Wasting time in the unemployment lines  
Sitting around waiting for a promotion  
Don't you know  
They're talkin' bout a revolution  
It sounds like a whisper  
Poor people gonna rise up  
And get their share  
Poor people gonna rise up  
And take what's theirs

Tracy Chapman

### Course Aim:

This course aims to explore, via literature, the causes and consequences of revolutions, rebellions, and resistance, real and imaginary, as well as the experiences of participants, and finally the ongoing ramifications of revolutions, rebellions, and resistance.

### Course Prerequisites/Co-requisites

A willingness to read books and talk about them.

### General Goals of all Spoilers Classes:

The primary objectives of the Spoilers classes are:

- 1) to engender in students an appreciation of literature and its role in illuminating all aspects of the human condition;
- 2) to teach students how to use literary theory and reading strategies to explore literature;
- 3) to familiarize students with terminology used to discuss literature and the conventions used to write about literature;
- 4) to help students discover the connections between literature and other academic disciplines;

5) to develop and foster in students the ability to think critically and to express their ideas cogently

**“Required” Texts** (Any edition of these texts are acceptable. I have put these in the order that we will be reading them, and in chronological order.):

*1 Maccabees* (available online [here](#) or [here](#))

Fast, Howard. *My Glorious Brothers*.

Carpentier, Alejo. *The Kingdom of this World*.

Styron, William. *The Confessions of Nat Turner*.

Chinodya, Shimmer. *Harvest of Thorns*.

Le Guin, Ursula K. *The Word for World is Forest*.

### **Additional Material and Email Use:**

Handouts, supplemental readings, or links to online sources may be handed out by the professor or made available via email.

Please be sure you are on the class email listserv to receive these. We also announce class cancelations via email.

### **Grading:**

This is the best kind of class – a class for the love of learning – so there are no grades or credit to be earned. Just come and enjoy.

**Class Reading Schedule** (This is a flexible schedule, which means that, as necessary, discussions may continue on to subsequent weeks. The schedule may also change, but we will inform you of any major changes in advance.)

28 January – *1 Maccabees* and *My Glorious Brothers*

25 February – *The Kingdom of this World*

25 March – *The Confessions of Nat Turner*

29 April – *Harvest of Thorns* and *The Word for World is Forest*

*Easter, 1916*

*BY WILLIAM BUTLER YEATS*

*I have met them at close of day  
 Coming with vivid faces  
 From counter or desk among grey  
 Eighteenth-century houses.  
 I have passed with a nod of the head  
 Or polite meaningless words,  
 Or have lingered awhile and said  
 Polite meaningless words,  
 And thought before I had done  
 Of a mocking tale or a gibe  
 To please a companion  
 Around the fire at the club,  
 Being certain that they and I  
 But lived where motley is worn:  
 All changed, changed utterly:  
 A terrible beauty is born.*

*That woman's days were spent  
 In ignorant good-will,  
 Her nights in argument  
 Until her voice grew shrill.  
 What voice more sweet than hers  
 When, young and beautiful,  
 She rode to harriers?  
 This man had kept a school  
 And rode our wingèd horse;*

*This other his helper and friend  
 Was coming into his force;  
 He might have won fame in the end,  
 So sensitive his nature seemed,  
 So daring and sweet his thought.  
 This other man I had dreamed  
 A drunken, vainglorious lout.  
 He had done most bitter wrong  
 To some who are near my heart,  
 Yet I number him in the song;  
 He, too, has resigned his part  
 In the casual comedy;  
 He, too, has been changed in his turn,  
 Transformed utterly:  
 A terrible beauty is born.*

*Hearts with one purpose alone  
 Through summer and winter seem  
 Enchanted to a stone  
 To trouble the living stream.  
 The horse that comes from the road,  
 The rider, the birds that range  
 From cloud to tumbling cloud,  
 Minute by minute they change;  
 A shadow of cloud on the stream  
 Changes minute by minute;  
 A horse-hoof slides on the brim,  
 And a horse plashes within it;*

*The long-legged moor-hens dive,  
And hens to moor-cocks call;  
Minute by minute they live:  
The stone's in the midst of all.*

*A terrible beauty is born.*

*Too long a sacrifice  
Can make a stone of the heart.  
O when may it suffice?  
That is Heaven's part, our part  
To murmur name upon name,  
As a mother names her child  
When sleep at last has come  
On limbs that had run wild.  
What is it but nightfall?  
No, no, not night but death;  
Was it needless death after all?  
For England may keep faith  
For all that is done and said.  
We know their dream; enough  
To know they dreamed and are dead;  
And what if excess of love  
Bewildered them till they died?  
I write it out in a verse—  
MacDonagh and MacBride  
And Connolly and Pearse  
Now and in time to be,  
Wherever green is worn,  
Are changed, changed utterly:*