Dostoevsky teaches us to distrust what people say. For you see everyone in Dostoevsky is lying pretty much all the time. This includes the narrator, the person or voice telling the story. That voice is lying too. In this course will become sensitive to the lie: it's not the fact that everyone is lying but how they are lying that is interesting.

Another useful thing Dostoevsky does for us is make us face what is truly despicable about human beings: what is wretched, what is unspeakable, evil masked by evil. Many writers can't really confront the worst things about people. Even though they may try, they come off as shallow. Look at him! He will satisfy any misanthropic bent we may have reaffirming that people are evil and not to be trusted.

Dostoevsky rejects idealism. Happiness really is money, sex and power. Yet he also embraces idealism: money, sex, and power only lead to despair. This is what is called a paradox, something we will examine closely in this course.

Dostoevsky is a great window to Russia. If you want to understand Russia, take this course!