English 1B

Spring 2022

**Essay 2: The Short Story**

In your second essay, you will be analyzing the formal techniques and thematic terrain of one short story. You will be expected to probe the structural devices of a particular short story for its historical significance and speak to the contemporary, perhaps timeless appeal of the author’s subject matter. Your essay must be formatted correctly and written clearly. If you struggle with grammar, please seek help from me, from your peers, and from other resources available on campus.

**Essay Features:**

**Length**: 3-5 pages. Approximately 1000 words. If your essay is about 3 pages, you must go at least a couple of lines onto the fourth page and if your essay is about 5 pages, you should not write more than a couple of lines on the sixth page.

**Formatting**: Use a 12 Times New Roman Font, 1inch right/left hand margins, 1-inch top/bottom margins, double space, and do not skip an extra space between paragraphs. The margins and font will be the standard settings on your word processor.

**Sources**: You will be using one short storyfor this essay and one additional historical or formal research source.

**Peer Editing**: The peer editing workshop is absolutely required. You must have a completed rough draft with you on that day. Missing peer editing or not having a draft will affect your final essay grade.

**Vocabulary:** You must use at least five vocabulary words from the Introduction correctly and analytically. These words include: character, narrative, setting, description, and dialogue.

**Essay Topic Prompts (Choose One)**

1. Examine the dichotomy between the past and the present, as illustrated in the tension between how memory shapes imagination, and vice versa, in Otsuka, Oates, or Morrison.
2. Analyze the struggle between the desire for freedom and the predetermined orchestrations of fate in Baldwin, Packer, or Kafka.
3. Interpret the binary of good versus evil and the murkiness between virtuous deeds and the perverse pull of egoistic ones in either Updike, Oates, Diaz, or Morrison.
4. Explore the agonizing dilemma of truth versus fiction in the modern world, or the vividness of artistic representation versus the artificial liberties taken by the creative imagination, as portrayed either in Kafka, Diaz, Updike, or Marquez.
5. Analyze the division between the individual and their social world, or the way in which characters chafe against conforming to intrusive or overbearing social strictures in Marquez, Alexie, Lahiri, or Baldwin.
6. Reflect on the transformative power of love, considering its fragility, blindness, and its consolations, in Alexie, Lahiri, or Baldwin.