Close Reading Assignment:

For this assignment you will conduct a short close reading essay that argues your interpretation of a particular aspect of one of the stories listed on our Website. You many not write your paper on the story we are discussing in class but are free to choose any of the others. Your argument should focus on a single aspect of the story and then analyze this piece of the story and its importance within a social context. You may choose to focus on a single character, important passage, piece of landscape, integral dialogue, use of setting, language, or description as the focus of your argument. For example, you could argue that Jimmy’s cancer in “The Approximate Size of my Favorite Tumor” is a symbol for the dying Native culture. You could discuss humor as a healing mechanism, or the final exchange between Norma and Jimmy and what you think it really means. You will be responsible for using at least 3 pieces of supporting evidence from your primary text and 1 from a secondary text that supports your thesis argument as you construct your essay. All evidence must be integrated using proper MLA 8 formatting.

Your essay should do the following:

• Pose a clear thesis in your introductory paragraph. If it falls outside the initial paragraph there should be sound rhetorical reasoning for its positioning elsewhere. This short format of this paper will most likely necessitate a thesis that is on the first page.

• Present a short summary of the story, not exceeding five sentences. Your work is analysis not summary. I do not want a book report or review.

• Use textual examples, including quotes and scene summaries. You must use at least three examples directly from the text to support your argument. Again, these examples should not be used to summarize the story, but rather help to interpret it.

• Incorporate at least one secondary source retrieved from the USD library's databases or Google Books, or another previously approved and properly vetted source.

• Include a works cited page.

**Purpose:** To produce a thorough and creative reading of any important aspect of one of our short stories supported by textual evidence and scholarly research. If you feel strongly about using another text, you should discuss this with me prior to beginning your work for *possible a*pproval. I reserve the right to limit essays to website posted readings only.

**Audience:** Your instructor and peers are your primary audience.

**Research:** Make sure you are properly citing any and all research. Works cited and parenthetical citations should be formatted according to MLA specifications.

**Length:** 900-1500 words, excluding works cited page for Sophomores; 600-1200 words for Freshman

The writing process will follow the format below:

**Topic and Thesis statement**. This is simply a brief outline of what your topic will be (what story will you analyze and what specific aspect within that story) and a proposed rough draft of your thesis statement (not sentence). Bring this to class on Friday 6-8.

**The Critical Inquiry.** This is a second step in the compilation of your argument. For this assignment, cut and paste the questions below into a new document and in place of my answers, delete them and submit your own. Answer each of the questions regarding your subject. Bring the completed Inquiry to class on 6-13-18.

**What Is Your Topic?**

What is your story? What specific aspect within that story will you discuss?

**Why is this particular aspect important?**

What is the social context of your story? Wy is the element within the text noteworthy? Why does it merit examination? What does it mean within a broader social context?

**What Evidence Do You Have to Support These Reasons and Your Side?**

Within the primary text can you find at least 3 pieces of evidence that support your claim? What are those textual pieces of evidence? Place those moments within this answer and discuss how you plan to use them within your paper. What one piece of external evidence will you plan to use for your paper? What is the source and how will it help your argument? Complete a works cited entry for this secondary source. Then, explain how you will use it within your paper.

**What Frame Can You Build for Your Essay?**

What is a clever way to get your audience’s attention and introduce the story and important social context that you are writing about? Consider which of the following methods may be best to start your essay:

*A question to ask; a story (real or imagined) to illustrate; a statement, statistic, or fact to startle; a quotation by a recognizable person to establish importance and credibility.*

Once you have settled on an effective opening, consider your conclusion. How can you return to that question, story, statement, or quotation to provide your audience with a new take on the issue? Appeal to your readers’ emotions by revisiting ideas of context that you considered earlier (i.e., how the issue and its resolution affects the reader).

**The First Draft**

This is quite simply a first rough draft of your paper that is at least 2 pages in length. Obviously, the more information you provide, the more beneficial your feedback will be. While this draft does not need to be perfect (it is a draft), it should contain proper MLA 8 citations and conventions. The final draft must still comply to the 3-5 page expectations, even if the draft is shorter. The first draft is due Wednesday 6-20-18.

**The Final Draft**

The typed first draft of your unit 1 essay may be one to two pages in length, but the **final draft** of the essay should be three to five full pages in length, excluding your bibliographic page (which will list your **mandatory** **one** **sources**, print or electronic, that you cited in your essay). Please use 12-point, Times New Roman font, double spacing (with spacing after paragraph 0), and 1” left and right margins for both the first and final drafts (MLA 8). The expectation for this draft is that your work has gone through at least one full revision and multiple stages of development to create a fully-rendered, well-conceived, and articulate argument by definition. The final draft and presentation of the final draft (guidelines to follow) must be submitted for the final week of classes during your scheduled presentation day. TBD.