ENG 351

Instructor: Dr. Kate Lechler

**Paper #1**

**Due Date**: March 6

In order to spread out these topics evenly, only 7 students will be assigned to each topic. I will give you 2 days to look over these options; on Wednesday, you will choose your topic in class.

1) **Fiction or Poetry Option**:

For this assignment, you will write a 1500-2000 word original short story or 3-5 poems based on a fairy tale or tales of your choosing.

Then you will write 500-1000 word reflection about how you came up with an idea, how you developed and revised it, and how your story/poems fit fairy tale models. Consider Propp’s 31 functions and 7 character types, Joseph Campbell’s “hero’s journey,” and the Aarne/Thompson categories.

2) **Analysis Paper**:

Read a novel adaptation of a fairy tale.

Analyze it in a 2000-word literary analysis, paying special attention to how the adaptation uses and modifies its source (the original fairy tale). Using the techniques and critical lenses that we learn and discuss in class, examine and evaluate an element of the story and come to a conclusion through your examination.

3) **Cultural Variants Comparison**:

Read variants of the same story from 4 different cultures (representing at least 2 different continents). In 2000 words, compare and contrast these variants. How do these variants differ? What unites them? What do the variations suggest about the values or practices of the countries or cultures represented?

2000 words

4) **Connecting Tales Essay**:

In 2000 words, bring together two or three different fairy tales and examine a common element. Students may examine any versions of the fairy tales presented in syllabus or other materials upon instructor’s approval.

**Options 2-4:**

These papers craft a close reading that explains some aspect about the text’s relationship to its source, or texts’ relationship to each other. They put the tools of the class to work, but these tools are not the explicit focus of your analysis. In other words, we love to read and write about literature not because we are primarily fascinated with poetic meter or because we want to break down characterization or dig out symbols. These are tools that help us get at the issues that really matter—*what are these works saying about humanity and how do* *these works contribute to literary history?*

You may focus on explicating the assigned text’s theme or its form or a combination of both. You may refer to other texts, but the focus of your argument should draw evidence from the assigned work of fiction or poetry to say something about its historical, literary, or cultural significance.

To assist your argument about the text’s historical, literary, or cultural significance, you will need to conduct research in peer-reviewed journals or books. Helpful resources that contain Peer-Reviewed Journals and Books on Literature: UMiss’s College Library, MLA Database, Project MUSE, and JSTOR. You need to refer to at least 2 academic sources for this paper.

**Evaluation Criteria:**

Your essay must be a minimum of 2000 words, typed and double-spaced in 12 pt Times New Roman, using MLA format.

It should include a helpful and engaging title.

It must have a clear, debatable central point (thesis), supported and developed with plenty of detail, analysis, and research, as needed.

It should integrate 2 academic sources for support.

It should answer the “So What?” question.

**Suggested Format:**

• **Introduction**: Pique your reader’s interest and focus your argument. You do not need to include a plot summary; assume your reader is familiar with the text. Introduce the aspect of the historical, literary, or cultural context that your analysis will illuminate.

o **Thesis**: Place your thesis in the first or second paragraph. This thesis should be analytical rather than purely descriptive. For example, here is a thesis about

§ a text’s literary significance: “Jane Doe’s short story ‘Family’ redefines American realism through its experimentation with plot.”

§ a text’s historical significance: “Jane Doe’s short story ‘Family’ responds to what many conservatives in the 1990s described as the ‘Crisis of the Family.’ The story criticizes this political debate through its portrayal of the protagonist.”

§ a text’s cultural significance: “Jane Doe’s negative portrayal of American divorce in her story “Family” ultimately crafts an argument for a new, more expansive way to define the American family.”

o **Focus**! Be careful your thesis doesn’t bite off more than a 6-8 page paper can reasonably argue.

o **Interest**! Make sure your reader understands (implicitly or explicitly) what makes this argument worthwhile. What will the reader gain from reading your argument?

• **Body**: The paper’s support (approximately pages 2-8). Start each paragraph with a clear topic sentence that connects the evidence with a portion of the thesis.

• **Conclusion**: Can be brief—one paragraph. Wrap up your argument. You might consider talking about other issues your argument raises—aspect your focus did not allow you cover, but would be important for a longer paper. Finally, double check to make sure your concluding remarks match your thesis statement. Have you shifted directions? Come to a more specific set of conclusions? If so, revise your thesis to reflect these changes.

Before passing in each paper I encourage you to drop by my office hours to chat about your paper, look over your thesis statement, etc. I also strongly encourage you to use the Writing Center. Although you will be revising these papers, put your very best effort into these initial drafts.