ENG 310 Reading Responses

**When are they due?**

You may turn in your Reading Responses whenever you are inspired to do so, although at least four of the eight must be turned in before the midterm. The goal of a Reading Response is to showcase your ability to find meaning in a literary text *on your own*, so I encourage you to turn in your responses before class discussion. If, however, class discussion did not cover (or fully explore) a topic that you want to write about, you are welcome to “look back” at a past reading assignment in your Reading Response. (Indeed, we may briefly note an idea in class that you feel deserves further analysis and exploration. Or, you may disagree with the general view put forth during class and desire an opportunity to voice your opposing ideas in a concrete way.) It is always acceptable to compare past readings or previous class discussions to a new section of text. You may enjoy elaborating on how “new” pieces of text repeat or challenge earlier ideas or themes.

**How long should each response be?**

One page, typed in 12-point Times New Roman font. It is all right if you write a little more than this, but try to keep responses under 2 pages. (If you just can’t help yourself once or twice during the semester and must continue your analysis, go for it. Perhaps the Reading Response will turn into an early draft of your Research Essay?) Responses that seem short or truncated (notably less than a full page) are likely to receive fewer points, unless you are really good at being succinct.

**What should I write about?**

Responses should be based on the assigned reading. They may involve:

\* character analyses (gender, class, race, personality type, etc.)

\* explorations of significant settings

\* a discussion of a narrative “voice”

\* an analysis of the author’s writing style

\* a discussion of the novel as part of the mystery genre

\* a brief comparison of the reading to a previously studied work

\* a reaction to (or summary of) a piece of supplementary material (perhaps included in your text)

\* a discussion of any brief research you have conducted a) on the author of the piece or b) on the time and place in which it was written

\* an analysis of the novel’s “detective” character(s)

\* a discussion of how the novel deals with violence and cruelty

\* a discussion of heroism or noble action

\* a discussion of any political or social message that is embedded within the text

\* an exploration of a recurring image

\* some fresh idea of your own!

**How can I make a good grade?**

1)Try to think critically and originally; try to say something believable yet insightful. 2) Use good grammar and punctuation. 3) Use specific quotes and examples from the text to back up your claims. 4) Don’t bite off more than you can chew! These are short writing assignments. Choose an image, a page of dialogue, or a single moment in the text that will help you to convey your thoughts.