WRITING ASSIGNMENT #1: Short Story Analysis

DUE DATES:
- Wednesday, September 23rd – Typed First Draft (3-4 pages)
- Wednesday 30th – Final Draft Packet (all materials–title page, typed minimum 4 page final draft, 1st draft, 2 feedback sheets)

Your first formal essay assignment of this semester will involve writing a short story analysis that will be at least 4 double-spaced typed pages. Carefully read the story and the topic several times and plan out your ideas prior to writing your first draft. Feel free to discuss your ideas and drafts with me. Also, go to the Writing/Reading Lab and/or Basic Skills Lab in the Learning Center (Bldg. 5) to get some assistance on your essay.

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ESSAY TOPIC

Through the protagonists in the stories below, we are allowed to understand something about their perceptions of the people around them, the society in which they live, and their place in that society. Choose one of the stories below and discuss what you believe is revealed about the protagonist’s perceptions of him/herself, of others, or of the society in which he/she lives. In your essay, you will support your ideas by exploring and analyzing specifics about the protagonist’s character, other characters, the events (plot) of the story, and other key elements of fiction (such as point of view, setting, and symbol) as they relate to and reinforce your points.

Choose one of the following stories in A Little Literature for your short story analysis:
- “The Chrysanthemums” (Steinbeck)
- “The Story of an Hour” (Chopin)
- “A & P” (Updike)
- “Misery” (Chekhov)
- “A Rose for Emily” (Faulkner)
- “Everyday Use” (Walker)

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Your final draft will be graded on the following:
1) an original and insightful thesis statement that clearly reveals your main idea about the protagonist’s perceptions
2) accurate use of information (examples, details, quotes, etc.) from the story to support your ideas
3) insightful and sophisticated analysis, interpretation, and discussion of the story (Show your own insight!)
4) development of your ideas with coherent and clear explanations (DO NOT JUST SUMMARIZE THE STORY’S EVENTS. USE DETAILS FROM THE STORY ONLY AS EVIDENCE TO SUPPORT YOUR POINTS/IDEAS. YOUR OWN IDEAS AND EXPLANATIONS ABOUT THE STORY’S DETAILS ARE NEEDED TO GIVE THE DETAILS MEANING AND TO SHOW THEIR IMPORTANCE. DO NOT USE PERSONAL EXPERIENCES TO SUPPORT YOUR POINTS. THERE IS NO PLACE FOR PERSONAL EXPERIENCE IN LITERARY ANALYSIS.)
5) unity (Information, ideas, analysis, explanations and so forth must always focus on proving your thesis.)
6) coherence (Use transitions to link ideas between your paragraphs and within your paragraphs.)
7) organization (Ideas must follow a logical organizational pattern. Don’t jump around from one idea to the next. Have a clear, logical progression in your thoughts.)
8) clarity and presentation—word usage, sentences, logic, format, structure and so on
9) editing and correctness—spelling, grammar, sentence structures and variety, and other mechanical aspects—Get help outside of class for this!
10) accurate and correct citations and formatting of quoted material and Works Cited page using MLA format
11) an original and creative title for your essay