

Take-home Essay
ENGL 120 Final Exam
Due via email by 3:30 p.m. on Thursday, December 4

In this three-page essay, please answer one of the following questions, using quotes from your chosen primary texts and properly citing them with parenthetical citations. You do *not* need to use secondary sources in your response. What I am looking for is close reading and insightful, original analysis.

1. Choose two short stories: one from the 19th century and one from the 20th century. After choosing a unifying theme across these texts concerning *family*, select two clear sentences from each text and juxtapose them, reading each sentence critically, inquiring into the care with which the author composed each and every word in the sentence. This essay question asks you to look at the “form” of a short story by asking you focus tightly on one evocative sentence in each story, one that reveals so much about the larger aspects of the story and the author’s writerly approach. After isolating these sentences, examine how these authors’ crafts differ and how their style is evidence of their era. Also, discuss how the unifying theme of “family” is differently delivered via the construction itself (even on the sentence level) of the stories you’ve chosen. You can of course quote other sentences in the text, but the two you’ve chosen as your emblematic ones should be foregrounded early in the essay and revisited throughout.

2. Some prose texts read like poetry, and some poetic texts read like prose. Find an example of each – one from the first half of the semester and one from the second half – and discuss *how* you know the genre of literature to which the texts belongs, even though some “blurring” in the domain of style exists in the text. You will want to isolate specific passages in each of your texts: the poetry piece and the prose piece. By carefully examining the style, you should be able to offer revelations about how the text is able to deliver the message it does, in the genre form to which it purportedly belongs.