Critical Analysis Essay

- **Select a film or piece of short fiction and have it approved by me.** Choose a universal theme from the work and argue whether it is portrayed effectively.

- Quite often, the themes of the film are shown best through the personal choices the characters make. That may be the best way to choose and display the theme’s importance. Consider the following issues:
  
  - The idea of perception versus reality
  - Personal choice and the consequences for those choices
  - Control: who has it; who wants it; and what are they willing to do to get it?

- Do not make a value judgement of whether the work is “good” or “bad.” Instead, comment on its effectiveness. For the purposes of this assignment, it does not matter whether you like the work or not.

- Treat this as a persuasive essay which takes a stand on the issue of whether the work effectively portrays its themes. Consider what message the artist is attempting to communicate. Continuously ask, “What is the significance of the detail from the text – how will it prove my thesis?”

- Focus on proving that message with specifics from the film or short story. Direct quotes from the text of the film or short story are MUCH stronger than re-telling the story.

- 1st or 2nd person, contractions and mis-used or misspelled words will result in a reduced grade.

- The work must be cited in proper MLA format. We will go over various citations in class. If you have any questions, please let me know; I have numerous resources at my disposal.

- **This essay should be between 3-5 pages.**

- **DO NOT** give a synopsis of the work. If you explain your analysis well, the reader will be able to infer what the film or short story is about.

- As you consider how to go about proving your thesis without re-telling the story, consider the following mindset: **You and I have just finished watching your film. As soon as it's over, you say, “This is what I think that was about.” My response is, “I don’t get it. I didn’t see that. Explain it to me.”** Since we have just finished watching the film, I don’t need you to re-tell the story. Instead, I need you to explain how you arrived at your interpretation.