Comp II Essays
The paragraphs below explain in a general way what types of essays you’ll be writing for Comp II this semester. More detailed handouts for each one will be provided at the appropriate times. A different literary work must be used for each of these first three essays. It’s important to note that these first three essays are to be written without doing research. I am interested in hearing your own thoughts, not those of others. The last essay will require research, however, and you will be given lots of help for how to find articles of literary criticism.

Response Essay
Develop your personal response to a literary work. This essay should clarify your thoughts and feelings, consider what may have triggered these responses, and place your reading in the context of your individual history, other readings, and cultural background. There is an example of taking a journal response through the steps to a final essay in our textbook, pp. 37-51. In this and all essays for this class, you will be expected to quote correctly and accurately from the literary work, provide in-text citation, and include a typed Work Cited page at the end. Consult the Comp II Essay Guidelines in this syllabus for other required essay elements.

Compare/Contrast Essay
Compare and contrast (find similarities and differences) between yourself (or some aspect of your life) and the situation or characters (or one character) described in the work. Pay attention to the elements functioning in the work that help create the conflict and the meaning (theme), and look for these elements in yourself or your life. Again, remember to read over the Comp II Essay Guidelines sheet that is included in this syllabus package.

Element Analysis Essay
Examine a literary work with a more objective eye. You might analyze the style and structure of the piece or explore the writer’s use of formal elements (such as character, conflict, and setting in stories and plays; or persona, metaphor, and tone in poetry). You might wish to support a particular interpretation of a work (what you believe to be the main point of the work, what it seems to be saying about life or human nature or the condition of things), or you might evaluate how believable characters and their actions are. Read Chapter Four, pp. 146-171, in our textbook for the various ways you might wish to approach this essay. See in our textbook example essays that begin on pages 169 and 905.

Research Essay
Expand your understanding of a work you have already written about (in one of your first three essays) by investigating outside sources such as critical articles found in on-line databases such as EBSCOhost, biographies, history, interpretive essays, documentary films, or the Internet to learn more about the author, the time, or the popular and critical reception of a work that interests you. Examples of essays that take this approach are on pages 194 and 445. You will be expected to gather information; to paraphrase, quote, or summarize information; and to cite sources both in your essay and in a Works Cited listing. You will also be expected to provide one clean, fully readable copy of each source cited in your essay. A minimum of two outside resources is required. IMPORTANT NOTE: You will need to turn in two copies of your final draft of this essay.

Optional: Choose a graded essay to re-see and re-work in a substantial way. The grade earned for the major revision will be averaged with the previous grade and will constitute replace that essay’s original grade (see “Grades” in the syllabus for a point breakdown). Keep in mind that a major revision does not merely correct punctuation and grammar errors. Revisions that reflect only that kind of work will almost certainly receive a lower grade than the original. A major re-vision means re-seeing and improving the essay in all of composition’s four categories:
1. focus (thesis)
2. organization
3. development
4. mechanics and diction
Re-visit the Grading Criteria sheet, included in this syllabus, for detailed explanations of what you can do to improve your essay in each of these four areas. Also, plan to visit the Writing Center with your essay for answers to specific questions or challenges.

DON’T FORGET TO USE THE WRITING CENTER!