Engl 103 A8, Spring 2018, Dr. Chowdhury

**The Literary Analysis Essay Assignment** (25%)

**Assignment Description:**

* Write an essay (font 11-12 Times New Roman, double-spaced, three-four pages long) based on any one of the topics given below.
* Your essay must have a clearly stated thesis and support in the shape of carefully integrated and analyzed textual details.
* Although research is not required for this assignment, you should demonstrate a reasonable grasp of the historical and cultural context pertinent to the text you have chosen to write about whenever such a context shapes the meaning significantly and has been discussed in class. In this regard, you should cite the lecture notes.
* If you choose to use any other source, please cite it properly. *Wikipedia* or other similar anonymous and “free” internet sources are not allowed. Use sources found through the University of Alberta Libraries catalogues or the databases available on the U of A Libraries homepage instead.
* The essay must be documented and formatted according to the MLA style.

**The Audience**:

You are writing this essay for the professor as well as your classmates who have also read the same literary text(s) that you are writing about. Although they have read the same text(s), they may have different takes on it/them—ranging from slightly different to very different—, and, therefore, they expect you to convince them that your reading is also valid and well-informed.

**Due dates**: see course outline file on eClass for dues dates for first and final drafts.

**Additional guidelines**: *failure to follow any one of these guidelines will result in mark deductions of up to 5%*.

•The essay (both first and final drafts) must be typed in Times New Roman 11-12, double spaced throughout with one-inch margin all around and stapled.

•The student’s name and number, course number and section, instructor’s last name, and due date must appear at the top left-hand corner of the essay.

•A relevant and interesting essay title should appear centered between the body of the essay and the student information.

•Student’s last name and page number should appear in a header box on the top right-hand corner of every page

• ***Pointless*** ***plot summary must be avoided*.**

• First draft read and commented on by a classmate must be handed in with the final draft.

**The Essay Topics**:

1. How do “Richard Cory” by Edwin Arlington Robinson, “The American Dream” by Ron Wallace, and “American Dreams” by Louis Simpson critique certain aspects of the American Dream?
2. Compare and contrast the two speakers in “On Being Brought from Africa to America” and “A Letter from Phillis Wheatley,” respectively. Which of the two is a more complex and well-rounded character? What makes her so?
3. Write an essay critically examining the significance of various parts of the setting in “Barn Burning” by William Faulkner: the court rooms, the De Spain mansion, the Snopes dwelling, the town, the plowed field, and the forest.

1. How does “Volar” by Judith Ortiz Cofer suggest that the narrator’s unnamed parents are the real super heroes rather than Supergirl whom the narrator admired so much as a little girl?
2. How does “Cathedral” by Raymond Carver suggest that the narrator has unidentified mental disabilities that make him even more vulnerable to abuse and discrimination than Robert, the blind man, so much so that even Robert treats him with condescension?
3. In “Barn Burning,” what does the animal imagery frequently employed by the third-person narrator as well as the horses and the mules the narrator frequently refers to signify?
4. Critically examine the symbolic significance of the TV shows about cathedrals, the cathedrals on the screen, and the act of drawing a cathedral collaboratively on a paper shopping bag in “Cathedral” by Raymond Carver?