**Essay #2: Human Relationships and**

**Experience in Short Fiction**

Edgar Degas, the eminent Impressionist painter, once said, “Art is not what you see, but what you make others see.” Degas is pointing out that, through their “art,” filmmakers, photographers, poets, composers, painters, sculptors, novelists and short-story authors convey insights and perceptions about life to their audience—truths that their audience might not otherwise understand. By experiencing art, people can gain new understanding about lovers and life partners, about families and coming of age, about war and survival, about courage and fear, about innocence and experience, about conflict and intimacy, about work and stress, about joy and despair, about selfishness and responsibility.

This semester, we have read ten short stories by eight different authors who have helped us “see” human relationships in different ways:

Kate Chopin’s “The Story of an Hour”

William Faulkner’s “A Rose for Emily”

Ralph Ellison’s “Battle Royal”

May-Lee Chai’s “Saving Sourdi”

Raymond Carver’s “Popular Mechanics”

Raymond Carver’s “A Small, Good Thing”

Dagoberto Gilb’s “Romero’s Shirt”

Dagoberto Gilb’s “Shout”

Ernest Hemingway’s “Soldier’s Home”

Tim O’Brien’s “The Things They Carried”

Your task in this essay is to **explain what** **the authors of** **three to five of these short stories** **have** **taught you about human experience and relationships. Make sure to show how the authors use one or two literary elements to convey those insights.** Use your charts and notes from class to review the stories and choose the stories that you want to write about.

**What are the requirements of this essay?**

Your double-spaced essay (of approximately five to seven pages) should include:

* proper MLA form
* an introduction paragraph with necessary background information that prepares your reader for your thesis.
* body paragraphs with underlined topic sentences and lots of supporting detail
* quotations that are properly introduced, documented and explained
* paraphrases that are properly documented
* a brief conclusion paragraph that answers “So what?” That is, why is what you wrote about in your essay something that your readers should think about? How does it relate to their lives? Avoid “you.”
* ample analysis and detailed discussion of your ideas (explain, explain, explain!)
* a Works Cited page
* long, flowing sentences that use varied sentence styles
* carefully proofread prose