ASSIGNMENT: Write a 1000-word critical analysis using one of the poetry analysis prompts below. For this paper assignment, we will continue to work with scholarly sources in order to use what specialists in the genre of poetry have to say and to build upon their work to frame our own views in our our own academic writing. From the Graff/Birkenstein readings (see "Introduction" and "Chapters 3-5" in the Course Documents area of the course) you've learned how to effectively read, quote, and respond to sources by furthering the conversation -- by either agreeing with a difference, by disagreeing with reasons, or agreeing and disagreeing simultaneously. Now it is time to demonstrate what you've learned by critically reading scholarly sources, effectively framing quotations from those sources, and presenting your original viewpoint by using one of the three ways to respond. For this assignment, you should search the TROY Library databases, identify two scholarly articles about the poetry you've selected, and frame and respond to at least one quotation from each of the two scholarly sources that address the specific topic from the prompts below.

Prompt #1: Compare and contrast any two poems in Backpack Literature that treat a similar theme. Let your comparison bring you to an evaluation of the poems. Which is the stronger, more satisfying one? Essay Outline: The introduction should identify the poems under consideration, their authors, and any necessary background information that is significantly relevant to the main focus of your essay. The introduction should conclude with your original idea (your thesis) presented as a response to an effectively framed quotation from one of the scholarly sources you found in the Troy Library databases (use the templates for introducing, explaining, and framing quotations in Graff/Birkenstein's Chapter Three -- pp. 42-50). Body paragraphs should support and develop your thesis with specific references to the poems, bolstered by effective responses to your scholarly articles. Use the templates in Graff/Birkenstein for introducing, explaining, and framing a quotation (Chapter Three -- pp. 42-50) and the templates for responding to sources in Graff/Birkenstein's Chapter Four -- pp. 55-66. Be sure to clarify what you "say" from what your source "says" by using the templates from Graff/Birkenstein's Chapter Five ("Distinguishing What You Say from What They Say" -- pp. 68-75). Your conclusion should place your original argument within a larger, meaningful context for your reader.

Prompt #2: Compare and contrast any two poems by a single poet in Backpack Literature. Look for two poems that share a characteristic thematic concern. Some examples might include Mortality in the work of Emily Dickinson, Women's Issues in the work of Sylvia Plath, or Nature in the work of Robert Frost, just to give you an idea of possible topics. See the Index on pp. 1179-1187 for a listing of works grouped by author to explore multiple poems by a single poet. Essay Outline: The introduction should identify the poet under consideration, the poems, and any necessary background information that is significantly relevant to the main focus of your essay. The introduction should conclude with your original idea (your thesis) presented as a response to an effectively framed quotation from one of the scholarly sources you found in the Troy Library databases (use the templates for introducing, explaining, and framing quotations in Graff/Birkenstein's Chapter Three -- pp. 42-50). Body paragraphs should support and develop your thesis with specific references to the play, bolstered by effective responses to your scholarly articles. Use the templates in Graff/Birkenstein for introducing, explaining, and framing a quotation (Chapter Three -- pp. 42-50) and the templates for responding to sources in Graff/Birkenstein's Chapter Four -- pp. 55-66. Be sure to clarify what you "say" from what your source "says" by using the templates from Graff/Birkenstein's Chapter Five ("Distinguishing What You Say from What They Say" -- pp. 68-75). Your conclusion should place your original argument within a larger, meaningful context for your reader.

SOURCE CITATION: Your essay must properly cite the poems and the two required scholarly sources. Correct source usage consists of two elements: (1) brief in-text citations for any idea or passage that is not your original idea; and (2) a properly formatted list of all Works Cited at the end of the essay. Your Writers Reference textbook contains sections on evaluating and using sources and avoiding plagiarism. Email me with any questions about allowable use.

FORMAT: The essay must conform to MLA standards: double-space, twelve-point font (Times New Roman or Courier), and one-inch margins on all pages. Your Writers Reference textbook contains sections on MLA format instructions and models.

EVALUATION:

15% Introduction: You effectively identify the poets and poems under consideration and provide brief and relevant background information if necessary.

15% Thesis: You state your main point (or argument) in 1-2 sentences. The thesis is the culmination of your introduction.

30% Organization. Your essay should follow that of a typical literary critique: Since your focus must be on critical analysis, your essay must contain well-structured supporting paragraphs that contain a topic sentence, quotes from the primary text (the poems you are writing about) and secondary sources (the two scholarly articles you are using to respond to), an explanation/discussion of the significance of the quotes you use in relation to your thesis, and a concluding sentence or two that situates the entire paragraph in relation to the thesis. Your thesis will focus on some kind of critical analysis of the primary texts (the poems), so your supporting paragraphs should be organized around each of the quotes you use, explaining the significance of the quotes and why (or how) they illustrate your main point, but you also need to make sure that your paragraphs contain strong transitions and at least six (or more) sentences.

10% Conclusion: Regardless of the argument you make, you want a conclusion that avoids summarizing what you've just said, and please avoid writing, “In conclusion.…” -- be creative! Your aim in a conclusion is to place the discussion in a larger context.

15% Grammar and mechanics: Your paper avoids basic grammar mistakes, such as dropped apostrophes in possessives, subject/verb disagreement, arbitrary tense switches, etc. The paper demonstrates a commitment to proofreading by avoiding easy-to-catch typos and word mistakes (effect for affect, for example). The paper adheres to MLA formatting style for in-text citations. Your paper uses the active voice rather than the passive voice and demonstrates an understanding of how to use active verbs (no "to be" verbs) and concise, concrete language.

15% Presentation: Your paper meets the minimum length criteria of 1000 words, is typed with a title and your name on it. Your title should reflect the main idea of your essay, not the assignment (don't title your work Essay #4). Your paper must be fully double-spaced throughout to allow room for my comments and editing or the paper will be returned ungraded.