We have read the following works of short fiction this semester:
- “Marriage is a Private Affair”
- “Everyday Use”
- “A Good Man Is Hard to Find” (which we read at the beginning of the term)
- “Hills Like White Elephants”
- “The Rocking-Horse Winner”
- “Spunk”

Select one of the topics below and write an analytical essay on it:

- In several of the above short stories, weather, climate, or natural forces illustrate a character’s behavior patterns, decisions, or thought processes. Write an essay discussing nature symbols in at least three stories.
- Several of the stories listed above include ironic elements associated with religion. Those ironies may be illustrated by someone’s behavior or statement of belief, or the irony may be inherent in a symbol or image. Discuss these ironies, analyzing more than one story, in an essay.
- In some of the stories listed above, a character has a physical condition that signifies his/her personality, beliefs, or decisions. Discuss those traits and their symbols, drawing on evidence from at least two stories, in an analytical essay.

As you organize your thoughts, be sure that you have addressed one of the above topics completely. Review my remarks in our discussions of these stories, and review our screencast videos. Keep in mind, though, that the intent of this assignment is not to see how well you can regurgitate what I’ve told you about these stories. It’s to see how well you can develop a claim about short fiction and support that claim with evidence from the literature and from secondary sources.

For this essay, you will have to conduct research of secondary sources. Your research requirements are as follows:

- Your essay must draw information from reliable secondary sources of literary criticism and biography. Consult the subject guides page of Lane Library’s website for the appropriate databases for your research.
- The following sources—even if you find them using our library’s databases—are unacceptable:
  - Study guides such as Cliff Notes, Spark Notes, Magill’s, Masterplots, and other similar study tools.
  - General information sources, such as Britannica, WorldCat, About.com, Answers.com, Yahoo.
  - Wiki’s, including but not limited to, Wikipedia.
  - Sources sponsored by commercial companies, such as television networks. Examples would be History.com and Biography.com.
- I recommend the following sources as you conduct your research: Twentieth-Century Literary Criticism, Contemporary Literary Criticism, Short Story Criticism, Contemporary Authors Online, books on the short story authors published by the Twain publishing group, articles published in the journals listed on the “Literary Criticism” subject guides page. Many other reliable sources exist in our library and through GIL Universal. Consult our librarians for further assistance with your research, and always check with me if you have questions.

Your essay should meet the following criteria:

- It should lead with a catchy hook.
- It should have a clear thesis statement in the opening paragraph.
- Its paragraphs should be logically arranged; sentences within them should be coherent, and they should avoid repetition.
- Its body paragraphs must be developed with concrete, specific examples which come from the stories analyzed and from your secondary sources.
- It should demonstrate clear understanding of the literature being analyzed.
• It should employ an engaging writing style, using sentence variety, precise diction, and critical thinking indicative of a college student.
• It should have a conclusion that reiterates the thesis and ends with a satisfying sense of completion.
• It should show evidence of careful proofreading, including correct documentation of sources in the text and on the works cited page.

Type the essay on a word processor; double space the paper, and type in a 12 point standard font. Name the document in the following manner: last name, first initial, type of assignment. Example: remlernshortfiction or remlernresearchessay.

The paper will be graded according to the departmental guidelines, provided on our D2L course home page.

Type your essay all in one document. Do not create a separate document for your works cited page. When you save your document, name it according to the guidelines on the syllabus: last name, first initial, name of assignment. Here’s an example: remlernpoetryessay.

Take note of the following:
• It might take a few minutes to upload your essay to the dropbox. If you wait until 11:59 to submit your essay, you might not get it in by the deadline. Give yourself time to submit on time. I will not take late papers.
• Be sure you’re submitting the correct document. If you mistakenly upload the wrong essay, I must grade what I receive. I will not give you additional time to submit the correct document.
• Be sure you’re submitting a document I can open. If you forget to save your document as a Microsoft Word file (.doc or .docx) or in Rich Text Format (.rtf) I won’t be able to open that document, so I won’t be able to grade it. I will not give you additional time to submit the correct document.
• Sometimes students submit their essays, revise a little bit more, and then resubmit. If you decide to do so, you’ll have multiple documents in your dropbox folder. I will grade the most recent document you submit. Do not send me emails asking, “Please grade this one, not that one.” It’s up to you to organize your work.

Submit your paper using the Dropbox tool in Desire2Learn (D2L). You should submit it in the shortfiction/research folder no later than 11:59 PM, ET, Sunday, May 4th. You will be wise not to wait until the last minute to submit your paper. Give yourself a few minutes to work with the electronic tools, just in case you run into some glitches.