English 111

Reading Journal—Due Every Friday

This is a simple assignment that asks you to reflect, in writing, on what you have been reading and discussing during the week.

Each week you should write a minimum of three, a maximum of five, entries. Each entry should be approximately 300 words (about one page typed, double-spaced, with standard margins and font). It may be typed or hand-written. I prefer single sheets to notebooks.

The content is pretty open. I simply ask you to show me evidence of your thinking about the reading. It may build on class discussions or develop a new topic. One way to approach this is to use the journal to work out your understanding of the particular level we are currently focused on. For example, during week 2 your journal might consider some of the questions about theme in The Piano Lesson that we have talked about in class. However, it is not required that you do it this way.

My only requirement is that the journal show evidence of your original thinking about our reading. Do not simply copy ideas from class or from other sources. Feel free to use those ideas, but add your own interpretation or insights to them.

I will score the journal on a simple point system: 1 point for partial credit (too short, little evidence of original thinking, not related to the reading), 2 points for full credit, 3 points for extra credit (especially deep insights or original ideas, thoughtfulness, evidence of meaningful personal connection to the work, etc. I do not award extra credit for sheer volume, although that can be one indicator of deeper thinking.) The overall journal grade will be the sum of the total points earned divided by the total points possible, multiplied by 4 to get a grade on the 4.0 scale. Thus, if there are nine journal entries, the total number of points possible (a full score, or 4.0) is 18. Say you miss two weeks and get partial credit for one. Your total score would be 18 – 5 = 13. 13/18 = 0.72 X 4 = 2.9. This will then count for 5% of your final grade.