ENGL 50: Essay 1

Write an essay (1,500 words) in which you do one of the following:

1. **The Sonnet:** Consider the history and development of the sonnet and write an essay in which you examine at least one way the poetry changes from the 14th century to the 16th (e.g., from Petrarch to Sidney, Shakespeare, Spenser).  How does the imagery evolve in the early modern period? What does that show us about the change in cultural values? Does it explain why the sonnet was such a popular form?  In addition to the assigned reading, our textbook contains translations of several of Petrarch's poems on pages 128-130. Reading these may help you to note what seemed important to Petrarch, which you can then compare to what happens in poetry by Elizabethan poets.
2. **Examine/Argue for a Particular Form:** Since the midterm, we have read speeches, poems of various kinds, a play, travel literature, and other assorted prose documents. Select 3 different forms and construct an argument where you evaluate the efficacy of a particular form over others in swaying people’s hearts and minds.
3. **Argument of Your Choosing.** In this class so far, we have discussed many works that deal with the same themes in different ways. For example, we have discussed the nature of good and evil, the role of women, themes related to exploration and discovery, etc. Construct an essay in which you make an argument about the way in which a particular image or idea functions over three different authors’ works. Make sure your essay offers some significant insight on the way in which the authors deploy this image or idea.

PLEASE NOTE: Use only materials we have read since the midterm for this assignment. Also, DO NOT USE SECONDARY MATERIALS (i.e., online sources).

Remember:

Number your pages

Use a title to center your work

Proofread carefully

Use quotations from the text and analyze them for evidence