

Response Paper Assignments
ENGL 2323: British Literature I
Dr. Brian McFadden
Fall 2023

Due dates: 5:00 PM on September 22, October 27, December 1, either in a paper copy delivered to me directly or a copy emailed to me at brian.mcfadden@ttu.edu

The response papers should be short 1.5-2 page (500-600 word) expository essays on some aspect of a) any work that we have read in class or b) a work from the *Longman Anthology* or some other source that we have not read in class but could fit into our theme of the Battle of the Sexes in early English literature (check with me before doing this option for suggestions). You should not merely express your emotional reaction to the piece ("I liked/hated/was shaken by X") but should argue why you found something significant in terms of what we are looking at in the class (e.g. "I was struck by the *Beowulf*-poet's failure to name several female characters because....") If you have an emotional reaction based on an intellectual or literary component of the text, that's fine, but be sure to frame your emotional response as a critical argument. The due dates are in place to insure that you spread out the papers over the semester, but you may turn a paper in at any time before the due dates.

Requirements:

- 1.5 to 2 pages, double-spaced, twelve-point type, one-inch margins, quoted properly, with textual evidence (and in a paper this short, use concise quotations so that you have room to argue your point)
- a well-defined thesis and concise support for it
- serious reflection on the text
- grammatically and mechanically correct prose
- academic honesty

Remember that you are trying to argue a point here; impressionistic, vague aesthetic judgments are not what we are after, but an explanation of what you found striking about how the author (whether known or anonymous) is trying to make his or her point (i.e. not how good the work is, but how good it is at saying what you think the author is trying to say with it). In a paper of this length, the tighter the focus the better – you really will have to read for detail in these assignments! Go for depth rather than breadth.

I will post an example on the course website.