**English 153 (102): In-class Essay**

Choose **ONE** of the following topics and write a clear, coherent, well-supported essay in response. Your essay will be evaluated for its argument, organization, quality of evidence, and stylistic clarity. You are permitted to bring in this assignment description (i.e. one sheet of paper, with as much writing on it as you choose) but no other books or notes, please. Please double-space your essay. You can use pen or pencil. Research is not required for this assignment but you will be graded on spelling, grammar, and mechanics.

1. Scholars who have studied Charlotte Brontë’s *Jane Eyre* generally agree that the novel’s female characters are highly constrained by the patriarchal social structures of their time and place.

Via an analysis of Rochester, however, develop and support and argument that engages in this debate: is Rochester empowered by patriarchy or is he also (albeit in different ways than, say, Jane or Bertha) constrained by it?

1. Who is St. John Rivers and what role does he play in Charlotte Brontë’s *Jane Eyre*?

More specifically: in an essay that focuses on his behaviours, his treatment of other characters, and his dreams/aspirations, consider whether St. John is (a) one of the only straightforwardly benevolent characters in the novel or (b) a character with a decidedly “dark” side.

1. Jane, in Charlotte Brontë’s *Jane Eyre*, has all the qualities and characteristics of a quintessential heroine—including (among others) intelligence, moral integrity, reliability, compassion, and generosity. Although vulnerable and victimized through much of the narrative, she triumphs in the end and earns the happiness that she so richly deserves.

In an essay that focuses sharply on Jane, as both character and narrator, consider whether or not the claims, above, are accurate. Is Jane as unambiguously wholesome as she would have readers believe or is she, in fact, more calculating, manipulative, and self-interested than she lets on?