**Directions:** Using the stories from class, your lecture notes, and handouts from class, craft well-developed responses to **FOUR** of the following questions. You should do your best to make sure that you have provided a detailed answer for each of the **FOUR** questions you have chosen and checked your responses for proofreading/editing errors.

Each response should be AT LEAST A PARAGRAPH.

Responses should be typed and edited.

Responses should address ALL components of the essay question/prompt.

Each response should be backed up with evidence/support from the stories in question.

Each response should reflect the individual and original work of the writer creating it. (Do NOT copy someone else’s work or ideas from class or from the internet, etc. This will be considered academic dishonesty and will result in a zero.)

You may respond to a FIFTH question for extra credit. (For up to 20 points)

**Toni Morrison’s *Beloved***

1. What do you think Baby Suggs means when she says, “What’d be the point [of moving?]... Not a house in this country ain’t packed to the rafters with some dead Negro’s grief. We lucky this ghost is a baby.”
2. A major theme of the novel is the role of memory—its importance, its power, and its limitations. How do Sethe’s recollections about Sweet Home develop the theme of the power and complexity of memory?
3. Morrison continues to demand that the reader suspend belief in the common sense view of the way the world works when she tells us that “A fully dressed woman walked out of the water.”(p.50) How do you think Morrison wants us to respond to this?
4. Beloved’s devotion to and fascination with Sethe takes the form of an insatiable desire for stories about Sethe’s past. What’s the significance of the story of Seth’s earrings and wedding dress? (pp.58-60) What does this reveal about Sethe’s character and the circumstances of her life?

**Sherman Alexie’s *The Lone Ranger and Tonto Fistfight in Heaven***

1. What is the role of storytelling in Alexie’s stories? What kind of authority do they have? What do you think the stories are saying about the difference between stories and “the truth” or stories and history?
2. A good deal of Alexie’s stories take place in the past, either through Victor’s flashbacks or Thomas’s stories. What is the role of the past in these stories?
3. Alexie’s stories often address the stereotype of the stoic and “real” Native American. What physical attributes are tied into this stereotype, and how to the characters in the stories reinforce or defy these stereotypes?
4. How are traditional symbols of mainstream America (e.g. basketball , John Wayne) repurposed by Native Americans in Alexie’s stories?

**Cormac McCarthy’s *The Road***

1. Why do you think Cormac has chosen not to give his characters names? How do the generic labels of "the man" and "the boy" affect the way in which readers relate to them?
2. How is Cormac able to make the post-apocalyptic world of [*The Road*](http://www.oprah.com/oprahsbookclub/Readers-Guide-to-The-Road-by-Cormac-McCarthy) seem so real and utterly terrifying? Which descriptive passages are especially vivid and visceral in their depiction of this blasted landscape? What do you find to be the most horrifying features of this world and the survivors who inhabit it?
3. As the father is dying, he tells his son he must go on in order to "carry the fire." When the boy asks if the fire is real, the father says, "It's inside you. It was always there. I can see it" [p. 279]. What is this fire? Why is it so crucial that they not let it die?
4. What makes [the relationship between the boy and his father](http://www.oprah.com/oprahsbookclub/Fiction-and-Scientific-Themes-in-The-Road-by-Cormac-McCarthy/7) so powerful and poignant? What do they feel for each other? How do they maintain their affection for and faith in each other in such brutal conditions?