

**Final Exam Paper 2: 50 points**

Answer **two** of the four questions below. Support the points you make with ample evidence from the selections you choose to discuss. Be careful not to reproduce the contents of a previous test. Also, do not discuss any selection more than one time, and be sure to discuss at least one work of non-fiction within this paper. The reading list is given on page two of the exam.

1. E. M. Forster remarked that in the hands of a skilled writer, flat characters, despite their bad reputation, can be a wonderful tool. Compare **two** stories that employ flat characters, and show how the very fact that they don't evolve and that they are reduced to a few simple traits contributes to the story's power and effectiveness. How do the flat characters help the author communicate the main theme of the story?
2. Literary critics have pointed out that late 20<sup>th</sup>-century American literature tends to be devoid of hope; "we find no sense of a desirable future" (Kathryn Hume). Judging from the texts that we've read, is this true for 21<sup>st</sup>-century literature as well? Compare **two** texts from this term and discuss how pessimistic they are. How do setting, plot, narration, and/or characterization contribute or don't contribute to a bleak atmosphere or message? Is there a sense of emptiness and meaninglessness as far as the future is concerned, or do the protagonists know what a good future would look like but think they can't have it? How is this related to the themes of the stories?
3. The title of this course and the way it was organized seem to suggest that there is a clear distinction between works of fiction (those based on the imagination) and works of non-fiction (those based on fact). In reality, however, many skilled writers blur this distinction. Choose **two** of the selections from the course readings that you feel best illustrate this blurring between fiction and fact and discuss the features and/or techniques that account for this. How does this blurring contribute to the overall effect of each work? What advantages might the author hope to gain by questioning the supposed distinction?
4. Each of the short stories we read this semester was paired with a work of non-fiction that addressed a related issue, explored a similar theme, or was written by the same author. The goal in pairing these complementary works was to provide a richer and more complex view of the issues or themes presented. It was hoped that the work of non-fiction would enhance appreciation and understanding of the work of fiction and vice versa. Choose one such pairing from the table below that you feel effectively achieved this goal, and discuss how each work shed light on the other to produce a bigger picture of the issues, ideas, and themes both works shared.

**Fiction****Non-fiction**

"Five Short Stories" – Lydia Davis	"The Man at the River" – Dave Eggers
"Late Returns" – Joe Hill	"Who's Your Daddy?" – Joe Hill
"Bad Dreams" – Tessa Hadley	"In the Shadow of a Fairy Tale" – Leslie Jamison "What My Mother and I Don't Talk About" – Michele Filgate
"Snuff" – Jodi Angel	"Walkabout" – Jeffrey Eugenides
"Protozoa" – Ella Martinsen Gorham	"I Won't Be Marginalized by Online Harassment" – Kelly Marie Tran "I Invented the Term 'Sadfishing'" – Rebecca Reid
"Audition" – Saïd Sayrafiezadeh	"The Future Has an Ancient Heart" – Sugar "Positive Obsession" – Octavia Butler
"Bettering Myself" – Ottessa Moshfegh	"Miscellaneous Files: Ottessa Moshfegh" – Mary Wang "Dry January" – Scaachi Koul
"Admiral" – T. C. Boyle	"Lola's Story" – Alex Tizon
"Heads of the Colored People" – Nafissa Thompson-Spires	"I Am a Big Black Man Who Will Never Own a Gun Because I Know I Would Use It" – Kiese Laymon
"Omakase" – Weike Wang	"The Impact of Microaggressions and Why They Matter" – Simba Runyowa
"The Manga Artist" – Doug Henderson	"Full House" – David Sedaris "In Defense of Graphic Novels and Those Who Read Them" – Liesl Shurtliff
"Pity and Shame" – Ursula K. Le Guin	