ENGL 1B Spring 2017 **Critical Analysis of Fiction**

**Overview:** This project is intended to help develop your abilities to understand and discuss fiction as another form of argument, in keeping with the general education goals for English 1B. More specifically, the goal is to “recognize how significant works illuminate enduring human concerns” and “respond to such works by writing both research-based critical analyses and personal responses.”

**Writing Prompt**: **Explain how the text’s *language, characters*, and/or *events* (plot points) lend insight to contemporary issues, concerns, and/or problems.** More specifically, discuss how this story sheds light our own society’s history of dealing with immigrants from all over the world who come for many different reasons and adapt to our society in different ways. Although this story is set in Ireland and is specifically addressed to an audience of people living there at a time of accelerated change, discuss what insights it offers to humanity in general about this **enduring human concern:** how basically decent people can struggle for ethical ways of dealing with “the other,” however that group is defined at any given time.

NOTE: If you are more familiar with another society (other than the US), feel free to write about how *that* society deals with this issue.

**Details:** This will be a 4-part exercise.

1) You will read the story at home and bring it to class with you, ready to discuss the questions.

2) You will have **20 minutes** **to discuss** it with your group and **40 minutes to write**. Aim for ***at least one solid page***, making a thoughtful and well-supported analysis of the **story’s meaning** using at least one element: **language, characters,** or **events in the story**.

3) Working from the in-class writing, type up a fuller, tidier analysis of the story at home. It should NOT take a new approach or make a new point, just finish what you started in class.

4) Turn in both the in-class, handwritten draft and the final draft. The final draft should be typed and submitted both on paper and on Canvas by the due date. **DUE: Wed 3/8** (on Canvas by **midnight 3/8**)

**Tips and clarifications**:

* Remember the task is to **do a** **brief analysis of this story’s themes**, NOT to evaluate, respond to, or refute the story’s message. Also, do not simply summarize the story. Not all stories have a point to make about social issues, but this one definitely does. Just explain how the writer gets that point across using *language, character depiction,* and/or *events*.
* Theme and context should be the focus. Consider both what was going on in Ireland when it was first published (as stated in the story’s forward) that was relevant to the story’s themes, *and* consider how it might be read by other audiences today (yourself, for instance).
* You can quote from the story, with proper citation, but use your own words for the rest of it. **Don’t use the phrasing of the prompt, for instance**. You can also refer to the forward and the short film (“New Boy”) based on another Roddy Doyle story from the same series, if you want.