**Homework Questions for *Pygmalion* #1**

Note: This week I want you to choose TWO of the questions below to answer in writing, as homework. Please TYPE these and aim for a well-developed paragraph for each answer. This will be collected at the beginning of class, so please be prompt: late homework is not accepted, nor can it be emailed to me. Due: M 10/10

1. **Character**: The opening acts introduce the three central characters: Eliza, Higgins, and Pickering. Consider the men first.
2. From what we see so far, how would you characterize Higgins?
3. What is the most significant difference between Higgins and Pickering? (Hint: It chiefly has to do with how they each treat Eliza.)
4. **Historical/biographical context:**
5. What evidence do we get in the first two acts that this is a social satire criticizing a society for its rigid caste system? What evidence do we get that this system is in an era of change, when the caste system is becoming less rigid?
6. Bernard Shaw was, like Freddy, brought up in what he called the “shabby genteel” class, those whose families could claim some hereditary ties to the nobility but who lacked the money to live a comfortable, genteel life. Shaw was well into middle age before he began to earn a comfortable living, and then he married an Irish heiress. He wrote this play after he was rich and famous, though. How does this affect your reading of the play?
7. **Setting/Objects**: Shaw believed that the published script of a play should be made as novel-like as possible with the addition of elaborate stage directions. Consider what hints we get to the play’s themes from what he says about the setting and individual objects, such as Eliza’s hat. Be specific.
8. **Page to Screen:** Watch the full first scene (or first act, if you have the time) of a filmed version of the play on You Tube, ideally the Wendy Hiller/Leslie Howard version <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tmdPj_XbF30> but the Margot Kidder/Peter O’Toole version <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UhNk2eniBQ4> is pretty good, too (predictably). Discuss what the filmed version(s) add to your understanding and interpretation of the film. Is it different from what you imagined? If you have the time, you could watch the first scene of both filmed versions and compare them, as well. Note: Shaw himself wrote the screenplay and had a say in the casting of the Hiller/Howard production, but the other was made after his death and after the *My Fair Lady* Broadway production and film had come out.