**INSIGHT ESSAY (Due January 10th) GUIDELINES**

Students are required to write an essay responding to the following question: If you could choose a single insight to represent your view of the human condition as discussed this term, what would it be? Present this insight and explain it in such a way that an uninitiated reader can understand and appreciate it.

**insight**
Noun
1. a penetrating understanding, as of a complex situation or problem
2. the ability to perceive clearly or deeply the inner nature of things

The following remarks concerning the content of the essays may help clarify the insight question:

1. Insights are somewhat personal (yet, not an exercise in emotive discourse); what is insightful to one person may be patently obvious to another, or another might be oblivious as to why the insight is insightful. Thus, while I am concerned with what your insight is, I am more concerned with your response to the last part of the assignment: “explain [your insight] in such a way that an uninitiated reader can understand and appreciate it.”

2. You should express your insight in conceptual terms; I am not simply asking why your insight is
personally important to you. These essays should not be autobiographies. Do not write
about what kind of person you always were and why you are different now. Insights deal
with how we understand the world and ourselves; though they do have an impact on who we
are—what we think influences how we act—essays should focus on the conceptual level. I
want to see more thinking, and far less emoting, asserting or opining. Consider many of the essays we have read this year to get a sense of communicating the conceptual.

3. Essays must focus on a single insight. A list of things learned in the class is
inappropriate. It is unnecessary to recount the journey through the course. Also, if you must spend time explaining how your insight was formed over time, do this briefly. Simply state
your insight in an introductory paragraph and then get to the business of explaining it. Be
sure to state your insight in clear and explicit terms.

Additional thoughts on the insight paper:

The insight paper in simplest form is the marriage of your insight and the human condition. More simply, your view of the human condition. While the context paper is rooted in the literature and is scholarly in nature, the insight paper is rooted in you (born from within).

An insight paper may focus on the subjective nature of meaning and the self, or death and life being synonymous, or the individual in relation to the crowd, or the dehumanizing effects of time, or the dehumanizing nature of society, or love as a means to tolerate suffering, or the beauty of the multifaceted self, or suffering as a necessary means to happiness, or the absurdity of absurdity, etc. etc. etc. The point here is that when thinking of the insight paper, the options are practically limitless as long as you are thinking human condition.

I expect the insight paper to be meaningful, perhaps even more meaningful than the context paper, as it reflects you, your self, your soul, your being, your view of the human condition (remember though, express your insight in conceptual terms).

Remember to present this insight and explain it in such a way that an uninitiated reader can understand and appreciate it. This means provide any necessary contextual framework (i.e. referencing Steppenwolf when discussing the multifaceted self as opposed to the unified self or referencing Kierkegaard when discussing the individual). Ultimately, you decide if the contextual framework is necessary.

Insight essays are due January 10th. Late essays will not be accepted. The insight essay should be 3-5 pages in length, single spaced.

**CREATIVE FINAL (Due January 17th)**

* You have an option of doing either a written or visual piece (or a combination of the two).
* Your subject: The human condition/existentialism
* Your angle: The subject as communicated by those whom we've read or the subject as seen entirely through your unique, subjective lens (a complement to your insight paper).
* Your means of communication: Written (short story or play; no fewer than 3 pages, no more than 10) or Visual... In deciding between written or visual, you should choose the one that will allow you the best opportunity for creative success here. Note, only choose the visual route if your visual will be nothing short of extraordinary :) and the same goes for the written route...
* In short, your creative piece presents you with another means through which to communicate an understanding of this course.