Purpose:
For this first paper assignment, consider the kinds of discussions we have been having both in class and on the blogs, and try to continue that in an essay. The first step is to choose the stories from the prompts below that most interest you – or that you see the most potential in. Then do a close reading of those texts – looking for the elements of fiction that are described in detail in the back of TASS. The goal is to draw a conclusion about the value of the text(s) for our own engagement in the world. In your paper be sure that you continuously point directly to specific passages in the text to support your ideas and claims.

Format:
All essays should be presented in MLA Format, and should be approximately 4-6 pages in length. The use of outside sources isn’t required (or even encouraged), but if you do employ outside material, be sure to cite your sources correctly in MLA format.

Prompts:

1. In Poe’s stories “The Fall of the House of Usher” and “The Oblong Box”, the narrators are profoundly affected by the events they describe. However, they seem to be affected even before the rather dramatic events of the conclusions. Why? What is Poe driving at here? And how does he get us there?

2. What can we infer about the relationship between class and/or gender and love and happiness in Chekhov’s Russia?

3. In the early Nick Adams stories, what does Nick learn about what it means to be a man? How do we see that play out in his adult years? Choose 2-4 stories to focus on.

4. Relate the vignettes between the Nick Adams stories to the stories themselves. What purpose do they serve – thematically, structurally, etc? What can we glean from them?

5. In your essay, assume the voice of one of the characters in one of the stories we have read together. Then using that voice, critique the actions/behavior of another character in a story by a different author (among the three that we have read so far). Use your critique to discuss the style of the author whose character you are critiquing.

Dates:
Draft: Tuesday March 6
Final: Thursday March 8