Short Paper Assignments

Paper 1
Due: Oct 10 (Friday, electronic submission)
Length: 3-4 pages

Does Tolkien’s view of The Battle of Maldon or Beowulf (expressed in his play The Homecoming of Beorhtnoth, the essay Beowulf: The Monsters and the Critics, Sellic Spel, or his translation of and commentary on Beowulf) illuminate or inform your understanding of The Hobbit or The Lord of the Rings? If so, how? If not, why not?

Note: I am not asking you to compare Beowulf or Maldon with the others but to examine something Tolkien says or shows about one of these works and discuss how that idea shows up in or influences his own work.

Paper 2
Due: Nov 14 (Friday, electronic submission)
Length: 3-4 pages

Does The Lord of the Rings (LOTR) fulfill Tolkien’s own criteria for being considered a “fairy story” as he sets forth in his essay “On Fairy Stories” (OFS)? If you say “yes,” choose one important idea from OFS (e.g., Recover, Escape, eucatastrophe) and choose a scene, character, or other specific element from LOTR to illustrate and argue your view. If you think the book does not qualify, then explain why; tell me what criteria it does not meet, or in some other way argue that LOTR is not a fairy story.