

ENG155: DAILY THEMES

Professor Finlayson; finlayson@rhodes.edu

Fall 2007 Class: Th 12:30-1:45 PM; Kennedy 104

Office hours: T 11-12 and 1-3 PM; Th 2-3 PM in Palmer 317; 843-3293

Writing Fellow: Emily Popp; CRN: 18077

The New Yorker; Everything's an Argument, Lunsford, Ruskiewicz, Walters

Course Description. The goal of this course is to develop your ability to read, think, and write critically, to employ discussion and writing as a means of exploring and refining ideas, and to express those ideas in effective prose. 155 will emphasize successive stages of the writing process, including pre-writing, drafting, and revision. At least one of your papers will involve the use of the library and research material and proper documentation.

Week	Themes	Date	Topic
Week 1	1	Th, Aug 23:	Information class. <i>The New Yorker; EA Ch 1-2: Intro and Arg from Heart</i>
Week 2	2-5	Th, Aug 30:	http://www.malcolmgldwell.com/pdf/suv.pdf
Week 3	6-8	Th, Sept 6:	<i>The New Yorker; EA Ch 3: Arguments of Character</i>
Week 4	9-12	Th, Sept 13:	<i>The New Yorker; EA Ch 4: Facts and Reason</i>
Week 5	13-16	Th, Sept 20:	<i>The New Yorker; EA Ch 5: Thinking Rhetorically</i>
Week 6	17-20	Th, Sept 27:	<i>The New Yorker; EA Ch 6: Structuring Arguments</i>
Week 7	0	Th, Oct 4:	Workshop (Midterm Paper due Mon, Feb 26). <i>EA Ch 7: Arg of Fact</i>
Week 8	21-24	Th, Oct 11:	<i>The New Yorker; EA Ch 8: Definitions</i>
Week 9	25-26	Th, Oct 18:	<i>The New Yorker; EA Ch 9: Evaluations</i>
Week 10	27-30	Th, Oct 25:	<i>The New Yorker; EA Chs 10-11: Causal Arguments & Proposals</i>
Week 11	31-34	Th, Nov 1:	<i>The New Yorker; EA Ch 12: Style in Arguments</i>
Week 12	35-38	Th, Nov 8:	<i>The New Yorker; EA Ch 14: Visual Arguments</i>
Week 13	39-40	Th, Nov 15:	Research discussion and timeline. <i>EA. Ch 16-17: Evidence - Fallacies</i>
Week 14	41-42	Th, Nov 22:	No class. THANKSGIVING BREAK.
Week 15	43-44	Th, Nov 29:	<i>EA. Chs 18-20: Intellectual Property, Using & Documenting Sources</i>
Week 16	0	Th, Dec 6:	No class. Paper 5 due by 5pm

ENG 155 ASSIGNMENTS AND POLICIES. PROFESSOR FINLAYSON

TEXTS

The primary text for this class is *The New Yorker* magazine, which I will distribute on Thursdays for the following week's reading. If the *NY* does not arrive in time, I will leave them outside my office for you to pick up asap (check your email). You will read approximately two essays for each class, and we typically will decide as a class which essays we'll read. I reserve the option of assigning an article from a previous issue either electronically or by copy. *The New Yorker* is an intellectual magazine, known for its accomplished writing. As such, it is sometimes challenging to read. You'll want to set aside at least 6 hours each week outside of class for reading essays and writing themes. Your magazine pages should be marked with your notes and questions because you'll be expected to contribute your comments in class (and you will need these notes as you write your themes). The secondary text for this class is *Everything's an Argument*, which is a guide to rhetoric. Because of the nature of the weekly primary text, I will make many spontaneous announcements in class and via email (for example, which essays or chapters to read for the following week). Make sure that you get this information and write it on your syllabus. You are responsible for knowing what we are reading. **Please check your email daily.**

DAILY THEMES WRITING. You will submit approximately four independent (see exception below) 1-page, double-spaced papers each week. Of the four pages you submit, two may be one "paper." In other words, if you'd like to combine two days of writing into one 2-page theme, and then write two additional, independent 1-page themes for the week, that's fine. Do keep in mind that the goal is for you to write on a daily basis. You are exempt from writing themes the weeks your larger writing projects are workshopped. By the end of the semester, you should have approximately 44 one-page daily themes, a midterm 5-page essay, and an 8-page final research paper.

Your themes are due by midnight each school day (i.e. excluding weekends and holidays). You can only turn in one theme per day (M-F), and all themes must be submitted by Friday, Nov 30. Each week, the subjects of your daily themes should be inspired by several things: *The New Yorker*; your personal and academic experience here at Rhodes. Here's what you'll be writing (always write your NY themes before class Thursday and always privilege them in short weeks; in other words, if you write only 2 themes in one week—i.e. b/c you attend a Tuesday session and b/c you have a 2-pager—they must both be NY themes):

- 2x **NY:** Critique of the assigned *New Yorker* readings. Submit one for each article prior to class.
- 1x **EA:** Identify and discuss the week's EA topic in either a NY reading or a campus issue or create your own argument that employs the week's EA strategy.
- 1x **Open/Session:** This category is technically "open," but it should be relevant to our class discussion (ergo written after class Thursday), either a follow-up NY theme or commentary on the rhetoric strategies we read/discussed. I may assign a topic periodically. (If you attend your fellow's Tuesday session, you may submit this theme as "Tuesday session" and be exempt from actually writing anything).

AFTER THANKSGIVING BREAK: *Your themes will all be steps in your research project.*

Although Daily Themes fosters a more unrestricted writing environment than other writing courses, you should always have a specific point to your writing. You can consider it a thesis, a rhetorical goal, or even just an analytical focus. In any case, your themes should produce ideas that are well-developed and supported. Avoid simply meandering aimlessly through a random thought.

Your writing should be typed with approximately 300 words per page (i.e. Times Roman 12; 1" margins), double-spaced. Proofread your papers for typos and grammar errors. Reckless errors or scant word count will affect your Daily Themes grade. Whenever you document a source, please use the MLA format, though you need not document our weekly readings. For electronically submitted themes, please title your e-file as follows: lastnametheme#.doc; for example: jones6 for the 6th theme. **On the top of each theme, you must include your name, a title, the date, file name, and type: NY, EA, Open or "Tuesday Session". It is imperative that you submit and document themes correctly, or I will not be able to access/read them and you will not receive credit.** For example, if I receive two themes with the same #, only one will count; if I receive a Word Perfect file, I will not be able to open it and you will not get credit.

Your Name

Date

Theme #. NY/EA/Open/Session

Title of theme

ELECTRONIC SUBMISSION. You will submit your themes to my faculty in-box. To get there: Start > Run > type \\fileserv1\Acad_Dept_Pgm\English\Finlayson_Rebecca enter > drag and drop your file into In-Box (double check that it is Finlayson). I will return them in class. Make sure that you drag the Word file and not a shortcut from your desktop. You should keep electronic copies of ALL your themes.

MIDTERM PAPER. Midway through the semester, you will write a 5-page essay, essentially an expansion of one of your earlier themes. In this paper, you will both critique a *NY* essay and offer your own argument.

RESEARCH PAPER & RESEARCH THEMES. In the final weeks of the semester, you will use your themes as building blocks to create a cohesive argumentative essay in the style of *The New Yorker's* own essays. These themes should not be the pages of your paper. Rather, you will draw from these themes to create your final essay. I will give you topics/choices for these themes.

CONFERENCES AND CLASS MEETINGS. Because our class gathers only once each week, it is your responsibility to meet with me and/or with your Writing Fellow for help and/or discussion. Once the semester is underway, your fellow will offer optional, though recommended, gatherings to discuss your work twice a month (if you attend you may effectively skip your Open theme for the week). In conferences with me, we'll discuss both your upcoming writing and the work you've already submitted. Please bring a folder of your themes whenever you meet with me or your fellow. We will meet officially as a class once each week on Thursday to discuss the reading and your writing. Please be prepared to have your themes read in class by your peers as we'll occasionally hold workshops and readings. If you have a theme that you'd like kept confidential for any reason, please indicate this on the theme itself (otherwise, it may appear in class).

GRADING POLICY. Your grade will be based largely on your efforts throughout the semester to write thoughtful and consistent daily themes. Although I won't grade each essay individually, I will be assessing your development and improvement from week to week, which will result in 60% of your final grade. For the first week of the semester, I will only comment on your themes. Beginning around theme 5, I'll comment and assign you a check/minus/plus so that you can begin to gauge your progress. You will receive an actual grade at mid term and at the end of the semester.

Your two longer papers will receive formal grades (10% for the mid-term paper; 20% for the research paper). Because of the limited class time, participation and attendance are imperative. 10% of your final grade will be based on your level of discussion in class, your thoughtful peer reviews in workshop, and your commitment to productive sessions with me and your Fellow. Because we only meet once each week, I expect perfect attendance. In the event of an emergency, please contact me as soon as possible (beforehand would be best). If you miss more than one class, your grade will drop by two-tiers (A becomes B+ and so on) for each day missed; if you miss more than three classes, you will fail the course. Please be on time. If you are absent or late, it is your responsibility to find out *from a classmate* what you missed.

HONOR CODE. All of your work for this course must adhere to the Rhodes honor code. If you are ever unsure if you might be violating the code, please contact me or another professor to find out.

