

FYWS 155: DAILY THEMES

Professor Finlayson; finlayson@rhodes.edu
CRN 13562; Fall 2012 Class: Th 12:30-1:45 PM; Kennedy 104
Office hours: Tues 1-3 PM; Th 2-3 PM and by appt in Palmer 317; 843-3293
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The New Yorker

<i>Week</i>	<i>Theme #s (total)</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Topic</i>
Week 1	1 (1)	Th, Aug 23:	Information class.
Week 2	2-5 (4):	Th, Aug 30:	<i>The New Yorker</i> . Reading <i>The New Yorker</i> .
Week 3	6-8 (3)	Th, Sep 6:	<i>The New Yorker</i> . Argument.
Week 4	9-12 (4)	Th, Sep 13:	<i>The New Yorker</i> . The Rhetorical Triangle.
Week 5	13-16 (4)	Th, Sep 20:	<i>The New Yorker</i> . The Reader.
Week 6	17-20 (4)	Th, Sep 27:	<i>The New Yorker</i> . The Writer. Paper assignment.
Week 7	0	Th, Oct 4:	Workshop (Midterm Paper due Mon, Oct 12)
Week 8	21-24 (4)	Th, Oct 11:	<i>The New Yorker</i> . The Text & Logic.
Week 9	25-27 (3)	Th, Oct 18:	<i>The New Yorker</i> . The Text & Structure.
Week 10	28-31 (4)	Th, Oct 25:	<i>The New Yorker</i> . The Text & Language/Expression.
Week 11	32-35 (4)	Th, Nov 1:	<i>The New Yorker</i> . Research Assignment.
Week 12	36-38 (3)	Th, Nov 8:	Databases/Researching. Evidence.
Week 13	39-41 (3)	Th, Nov 15:	Intellectual Property.
Week 14	42-43 (2)	Th, Nov 22:	NO CLASS. Thanksgiving
Week 15	44 (1)	Th, Nov 29:	Last class. Paper 5 due.

TEXT. The 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 hard 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 6-8 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). Because of the nature of the weekly primary text, I will make many spontaneous announcements in class and via email. 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 Rhodes email daily.**

DAILY THEMES WRITING. You will submit approximately four independent (see exception below) 1-page, double-spaced papers each week on days Sunday-Thursday (no submission Friday-Saturday). Of the four pages you submit, occasionally 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, though, that the goal is for you to write on a daily basis. You are exempt from writing themes the week your larger writing project is workshopped or due (see syllabus). 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 weeknight (i.e. excluding weekends and holidays). You can only turn in one theme per day (Sun-Thurs), and all themes must be submitted by Thursday, Dec 1. Turn in two-page themes on the second "day." Each week, the subjects of your daily themes should be inspired by several things: *The New Yorker*; your research interests, and the list of topical assignments. 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 Writing Fellow session and b/c you have a 2-pager—they must both be NY themes):

2x	NY	Critique of the assigned <i>New Yorker</i> readings. Submit one for each article prior to class.
1x	ARG	Nearly every week, we will be discussing a rhetorical mode or writing style and there will be a corresponding theme assignment. Ideally, you should plan to do this theme on Thursday, after our class discussion. If you feel confident writing it before our class meets, that's fine, too.
1x	OPEN	At the end of the semester, each of you will produce your own New Yorker article, the topic of which you will have considered and researched throughout the semester in the form of OPEN themes. You'll need to produce at least 3 exploratory themes, each on a different (and potential) research topic, sometime before Fall Break in October; from those, you will finalize your choice and all subsequent OPEN themes will document further investigation into the topic. I will provide you with a list of prompts to help you get started with these, but you are free to interpret this assignment as you like. And once we begin the research paper in earnest (mid Nov), I'll ask you to write specific themes related to your resources.

Although Daily Themes fosters a less restricted 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 *330 words per page* (i.e. Times Roman 12; 1" margins), double-spaced. Make necessary adjustments to contain to 1 page when your prose sneaks onto a second page. Proofread your papers for typos and grammar errors. Habitually 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 other than parenthetical citations for page numbers where appropriate. For electronically submitted themes, please title your e-file as follows: lastnametheme#type.doc; for example: draper6NY.doc for a NY response that is the 6th theme. **At the top of each theme, you must include your name, a title, the date, file name, and type: NY, ARG, OPEN or "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 corrupted file, I will not be able to open it and you will not get credit.

Don Draper
8/27/11
draper6arg.docx
Mad Men in Motion

If you go to your fellow's session, please indicate that in the filename so that I don't end up printing all those (save trees!), for example, draper8session.doc.

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](http://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. In OS X, open Fugu (if you do not already have it, download it from [_http://rsug.itd.umich.edu/software/fugu/_](http://rsug.itd.umich.edu/software/fugu/)) and enter _relay.rhodes.edu_ in the "Connect to" box and your Rhodes username in the "Username" box. Connect and navigate in the right window to the [_Finlayson_Rebecca\InBox_](#) folder as described above. In the left window, navigate to the

location on your computer of your file. Right-click it and select "Upload." You should keep electronic copies of ALL your themes and the hard copies that I return to you with comments. Please: ONLY email me a theme in an emergency.

OTHER WRITING/RESEARCH. 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.

In the final weeks of the semester, you will use your OPEN 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 suggested prompts for these themes.

CONFERENCES AND CLASS MEETINGS. Because our class gathers only once each week, it is your responsibility to meet periodically 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; see above). 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 individually 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.

GRADING POLICY. Your grade will be based largely on your efforts throughout the semester to write thoughtful and consistent daily themes. Of course, it will also be based on your writing achievement. I will be assessing the development and improvement of your themes from week to week, which will result in 60% of your final grade. For the first week of the semester, your Writing Fellow and I will only comment on your themes. Beginning around theme 6, we'll comment and I will assign you a check/minus/plus so that you can begin to gauge your progress. (If you have a confidential theme that you would prefer only *I* see, please make a note of your wish at the top of the page.) You will receive an actual grade at mid term and at the end of the semester. Per English department policy, failure to complete a major assignment can result in failure of the course. In this class, 10 themes count as one "major assignment," as do each of the larger papers. Finally, failure to properly cite your sources—ideas, language, data—in your formal midterm and research papers will also result in failure of the class.

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.

Department of English Expectations and Policies

A college course is more than simply a set of assignments; it is an intellectual process, one which requires active engagement from beginning to end in order to achieve its intended results. With this in mind, the Department of English has formulated a number of expectations and the policies that support them. If you have questions about how these policies relate to the syllabus for a particular course, you should address them to the instructor.

Attendance: The success of a course depends to a significant extent upon the presence of students alert and prepared to address the subject under discussion. Unavoidable absences should be discussed with the instructor, ideally before they occur. Excessive absences will result in a lowering of grade, in some cases to an F.

Deadlines: Writing assignments, tests, etc., are carefully scheduled as stages toward the fulfillment of the course's goals and cannot be indefinitely deferred without frustrating those goals. Brief extensions for good reasons may be permissible with the instructor's prior approval; otherwise, late assignments will be penalized and may result in their not being accepted for credit.

Submission of all work: All major assignments are integral to the goals of the course. Failure to complete any major assignment will result in a grade of F for the course.

Intellectual honesty: All work is assumed to be the student's own and produced exclusively for the course in which it is submitted. Papers written for one course, even if revised, are not to be submitted in another without the instructor's prior approval. Borrowing of ideas or language from other sources (including published material, other student papers, the internet or other electronic resources, etc.) must be carefully documented. Students are advised against posting their work on the internet since doing so may lead to suspicion of plagiarism. Students are advised to maintain drafts of their work to verify its originality. Cases of suspected plagiarism will be referred to the Honor Council, and the student if convicted will receive a grade of F in the course in addition to sanctions assigned by the Council. Clear evidence of plagiarism (failure to use quotation marks around verbatim or copied language, failure to adequately paraphrase, and failure to cite the source of quoted, paraphrased, or borrowed text and ideas), regardless of the Council hearing outcome, may likewise result in failure of the course. Carelessness in documenting sources, even if not technically plagiarism, will be penalized as the instructor deems appropriate. If you are uncertain about how or whether to document sources, consult your teacher.

Week 1	ARG			
1				
Week 2	NY	NY	ARG	OPEN
2				
3				
4				
5				
Week 3	NY	NY	ARG	
6				
7				
8				
Week 4	NY	NY	ARG	OPEN
9				
10				
11				
12				
Week 5	NY	NY	ARG	OPEN
13				
14				
15				
16				
Week 6	NY	NY	ARG	OPEN
17				
18				
19				
20				
Week 7	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Week 8	NY	NY	ARG	OPEN
21				
22				
23				
24				
Week 9	NY	NY	ARG	
25				
26				
27				
Week 10	NY	NY	ARG	OPEN
28				
29				
30				
31				

Week 11	NY	NY	ARG	OPEN
32				
33				
34				
35				
Week 12	RP	RP	RP	
36				
37				
38				
Week 13	RP	RP	RP	
39				
40				
41				
Week 14	RP	RP		
42				
43				
Week 15	Partic.			
44				

“ARGUMENT” THEMES

Week 1. MY WRITING HISTORY. Tell me something about yourself as a writer. Can you characterize your voice? What kind of writing is difficult / easy for you? What are your achievements as a writer? Your anxieties?

Week 2. READING THE NEW YORKER. After reading the articles assigned for the week, generally examine your first copy of the magazine, paying particular attention to the visual design and the article topics. Your theme will be an assessment of *The New Yorker* based on your experience with this issue (and not based on assumptions you might have about the magazine). Make some sort of argument regarding who the intended audience of the *New Yorker* is and what kind of general message the magazine’s editor seems to be projecting. Use specific examples (detailed descriptions) of aspects such as the cover image, the table of contents. You should address at least three separate categories and avoid addressing the ads.

Week 3. ARGUMENT. Find a provocative online advertisement/slogan/image to analyze (include a jpg or print screen with your theme). Who is the intended audience? What kinds of appeals is the ad making? What is its message? How does it “speak”? Who is the “writer” (in the broadest sense)?

Week 4. THE RHETORICAL TRIANGLE. Write the winning argument you had (or wish you had) with your parents or someone else about a recent disagreement. Keep in mind writer (you), reader (your parents), message (argument/topic). Explain how you used (or might have used) the rhetorical triangle.

Week 5. THE READER. Which of the NY articles that we have read so far most affected you as a reader (either positively or negatively). How did you feel about the topic after reading? How did you feel in relation to the topic? How did the writer succeed in making you feel that way? Identify specific moments in the text that triggered your response. If you’ve recently read another text that had a profound impact on you, feel free to use it for this theme instead of a NY one (be sure you provide enough context and quotations for me).

Week 6. THE WRITER. Employ your *own* ethos to write an argument of your choice. Suggestion: pick a mainstream but not overly popular controversial topic (i.e., free birth control distribution in high schools, Tennessee smoking ban, mandatory HPV vaccine for teenage girls). Figure out who you are as a writer in relation to the subject. You should consider your experience, your expertise, your general status/demographic (gender, age, education level, geographic background, religion, etc). Construct an argument dependent on your status as the writer.

Week 7. No Argument theme.

Week 8. THE TEXT & STRUCTURE/LOGOS. Write a letter to the editor of the Rhodes newspaper requesting that the administration make a policy change. Using facts and reason (logos), indicate the problems with the current policy and ways to amend it (residential life, grading system, Search/Life requirement, social policies, parking, foundation requirements, etc). Create a claim/reason/warrant for your thesis.

Week 9. No Argument theme.

Week 10. THE TEXT & LANGUAGE. Personify a vice or a virtue. You may choose from a traditional list (the seven deadly sins, for example, are pride, anger, envy, avarice, sloth, lechery, and gluttony), or you may choose a less traditional attribute. Describe the appearance and habitual actions of your allegorical figure as vividly as possible, using language that appeals to the senses. This is an exercise in figurative language.

Week 11. THE TEXT & EXPRESSION. For this theme, you will need to rewrite every sentence of a prior theme. Select one that needs revising at the sentence level. Read the feedback on that theme and revise accordingly. The revision should focus on style, expression, and clarity, not on content or even argument. We will spend time in class discussing the Paramedic Method. Use it for this theme.