ENG155: DAILY THEMES
Professor Finlayson: Palmer 317; 843-3293
Thursday 1-2:30pm; Palmer 203
Office hours: Mon 10-12pm; Tues 1-2pm; Wed 1-2pm & by appt
finlayson@rhodes.edu

The New Yorker; Everything’s an Argument, Lunsford, Ruszkiewicz, Walters

COURSE DESCRIPTION. English 155 is an alternative to English 151 offered to outstanding and committed first-year writers. Like 151, Daily Themes focuses on the ability to read and think critically, to employ discussion and writing as a means of exploring and refining ideas, and to express those ideas in effective prose. Students will meet as a group once a week and individually with the professor once a week. Students will turn in 5 one-page themes each week, and the daily themes will be the basis for two longer papers, including an expository essay at mid term and a research paper at the end of the semester.

Th, Aug 29 (-4): Information class.

Th, Sept 5 (5):
   The New Yorker
   Everything’s an Argument. Ch 9: Definition

Th, Sept 12 (5):
   The New Yorker
   EA. Ch 5: Arguments of Value

Th, Sept 19 (5):
   The New Yorker
   EA. Ch 14: Figurative Language and Argument

Th, Sept 28 (5):
   The New Yorker
   EA. Ch 7: Fact and Reason

Th, Oct 3 (5):
   The New Yorker
   EA. Ch 4: Arguments from the Heart

Th, Oct 10 (5):
   The New Yorker
   EA. Ch 5: Arguments of Character

Th, Oct 17 (5-5=0):
   In-class WORKSHOP. Mid-term paper due 5pm Friday, Oct 18. (= 5 themes)

Th, Oct 24 (3):
   The New Yorker (3 themes due this week due to Fall Break)

Th, Oct 31 (5):
   The New Yorker
   EA. Ch 13: Humorous Arguments

Th, Nov 7 (5):
   The New Yorker
   EA. Ch 11: Causal Arguments

Th, Nov 14 (5):
   The New Yorker
   EA. Ch 10: Evaluations

Th, Nov 21 (5-2=3):
   The New Yorker. Research Questions due early this week. EA. Ch 18: What Counts as Evidence (= 2)

Th, Nov 28 (5-3=2):
   No Class. Thanksgiving Break. Research Proposal due sometime before break. (= 3 themes)
   EA. Chs 20-22: plagiarism/sources

Th, Dec 5 (5-8=-3):
   In-class WORKSHOP. Last class. Research Paper due before Thursday, Dec 12. (=8 themes)
ENG 155 POLICIES. PROFESSOR FINLAYSON

WRITING. You will write five 1-page, double-spaced papers each week. If you’d like to occasionally (no more than 5x in the semester) combine 2-3 days of writing into one 2-3-page essay, that’s fine. However, keep in mind that the goal is for you to write on a daily basis. By the end of the semester, you should have approximately 46 one-page daily themes.

You may leave each day’s paper outside my office in the folder “155 IN” at any time or deposit it in my faculty “inbox” on the academic volume; I will comment on the papers and put them in the folder “155 OUT” or reply by email to electronic files as soon as possible. Your themes are due by midnight each day. Twice during the semester, you will use one or more of your daily themes to produce a longer, argumentative paper, one of which will be researched and will include a list of works cited. Each week, the subjects of your daily themes should be inspired by several things: The New Yorker; your personal, social, and academic experience here at Rhodes; and the sample assignments, each of which is meant to exercise a particular writing skill. In stunted weeks, write your themes in the order below. In other words, if there are only 2 themes due on a particular week, they should both be responses to the New Yorker. Occasionally, I will substitute a specific topic for one of the responses. Otherwise, here’s what you’ll be writing, in any order:

1. Critique of the assigned New Yorker reading.
2. Response to same NY reading or another text in NY (can be topical or critical response)
3. Open theme applying rhetorical strategies from that week’s Everything’s an Argument reading.
4. Sample assignment (you may repeat the “letter to the editor” as often as you like).
5. Open theme.

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. To help with your writing strategies, I have assigned readings from the book Everything’s an Argument and ask that you apply this reading (“argument of value,” for example) to a theme each week.

Your writing should be typed with approximately 300 words per page (i.e. Times Roman 12; 1” margins), double-spaced, and must include, your name, my name, a title, theme # and type (i.e. Open Response, Assigned NY Response, etc) for the week and corresponding date. Proofread your papers for typos and grammar errors. Reckless proofreading will affect your Daily Themes grade. Whenever you document a source, please use the MLA format. Please submit hard copies of your writing and always keep a spare copy.

CONFERENCES AND CLASS MEETINGS. Because our class gathers only once each week, it is your responsibility to meet with me and/or with one of the tutors in the Writing Center for help and/or discussion every week. In your conference with me, we’ll discuss both your upcoming writing and the work you’ve already submitted. The goal of these conferences is to find ways of developing your writing through planning, organizing, documenting, revising, and so on, rather than to correct grammar or mechanics. We will meet as a group 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, 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 couple of weeks of the semester, I will only comment on your themes. Henceforth, I’ll comment and assign you a check/minus/plus so that you can begin to gauge your progress.

You are granted four free “skips” for written daily themes; after that, your grade will suffer. 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 conferences with me and the WC tutors. 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 an entire letter grade (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.