

Professor: Rebecca Finlayson
Office Phone/Voice Mail: 843-3445

Office: Palmer 309
Office Hours: T/Th 9:30-10:30

English 151, Sections A and C: Critical Thinking and Writing

T/Th 8:00-9:30 and 11:20-12:50, Room 203 Palmer

TEXTS: *The Short Prose Reader*, Eds. Muller and Wiener; *The Flamingo's Smile*, Stephen Jay Gould; *Goodbye, Columbus*, Phillip Roth; *Prozac Nation*, Elizabeth Wurtzel

Th, Aug. 27: Introduction.

Tues, Sept. 1: *The Short Prose Reader*

"A Hanging," Orwell, 148-153
"The Ambivalence of Abortion," Francke, 360-364
"Don't Fence Me In," Knight, 386-389
"America's Gambling Craze," Popkin, 181-184
"The Case for More Cops," Zuckerman, 399-401

Th, Sept. 3: *Reader*: "A Twofer's Lament," Cruz, 423-425

"The Myth of Meritocracy," Cose, 444-446
"Night Walker," Staples, 165-168
"The Place Where I Was Born," Walker, 209-211

Tues, Sept. 8: *Reader*:

"The Body of the Beholder," Ingrassia, 224-227
"The Unhandy Man," Rooney, 289-291
"I Want a Wife," Brady, 392-394
"Bright Girls," Jacoby, 371-374
"Women are Just Better," Quindlen, 426-428
"The Tapestry of Friendships," Goodman, 216-218

Th, Sept. 10: Due: Paper 1

Tues, Sept. 15: *Reader*: "Simplicity," Zinsser, 34-39

"Prison Studies," Malcolm X, 60-63
"A Word's Meaning," Naylor, 251-254
"Spanglish," Castro, 237-239

Th, Sept. 17: Advertisements

Tues, Sept. 22: Advertisements

Th, Sept. 24: Due: Paper 2.

Tues, Sept. 29: *The Flamingo's Smile*, Gould:

"The Flamingo's Smile," 23-39
"Sex and Size," 56-63
"Living with Connections," 64-77
"Adam's Navel," 99-113
"The Freezing of Noah," 114-125

Th, Oct. 1: *The Flamingo's Smile*, Gould:

"For Want of a Metaphor," 139-151
"Of Wasps and WASPS," 155-166
"Human Equality Is a Contingent Fact of History," 185-198

Tues, Oct. 6: *The Flamingo's Smile*, Gould:

"Losing the Edge," 215-224
"To Show an Ape," 263-280

"Bound by the Great Chain," 281-290

"The Hottentot Venus," 291-305

Due: Rewrite of Paper 1

Th, Oct. 8: *The Flamingo's Smile*, Gould:

"Carrie Buck's Daughter," 306-318
"Continuity," 427-437

Tues, Oct. 13: Roth: *The Conversion of the Jews*, 137-158

Epstein, 203-230. Due: Paper 3.

Th, Oct. 15: Roth: *Defender of the Faith*, 161-200

Eli, the Fanatic, 249-298

Tues, Oct. 20: **Fall Break, no class**

Th, Oct. 22: *Goodbye, Columbus*, Roth: 1-75

Tues, Oct. 27: *Goodbye, Columbus*, Roth: 75-136

Th, Oct. 29: **No class. Conferences.**

Tues, Nov. 3: In-class workshop for draft of Paper 4

Mid week: Evening viewing of film, *The Ice Storm*.

Th, Nov. 5: *The Ice Storm*. Due: Paper 4.

Tues, Nov. 10: *The Ice Storm*

Th, Nov. 12: *Prozac Nation*, Wurtzel, 1-91

Tues, Nov. 17: *Prozac Nation*, Presentations

Th, Nov. 19: *Prozac Nation*, Presentations

Tues, Nov. 24: *Presentations*

Th, Nov. 26: **Thanksgiving Break**

Tues, Dec. 1: *Prozac Nation*, Wurtzel, 243-351

Th, Dec. 3: In-class workshop for draft of Paper 5

Tues, Dec. 8: Due: Paper 5

POLICIES FOR 151A/C
 “Critical Thinking and Writing”
 Professor Finlayson

COURSE DESCRIPTION: "Critical Thinking and Writing" will develop your analytical thinking skills through close readings of a variety of texts and mediums and will strengthen your persuasive writing ability. We will examine a novel, short stories, a memoir, advertisements, a film, as well as essays about popular culture and science. Throughout the semester, we will concentrate on clear, logical writing, incorporating a range of rhetorical expression and covering many different topics.

ASSIGNMENTS: In addition to the formal papers outlined below, you will be responsible for active participation in class, for one presentation, and for maintaining a notebook of your written assignments.

Writing Notebook: Please purchase a three-ring binder in which to keep all writing done for this class with the exception of your formal papers. This writing will include the following: in-class assignments, homework, peer reviews, and paper drafts. All assignments except those done in-class should be typed. I will periodically record your fulfillment of these assignments either by collecting them on the day they are due or by collecting the entire binder on a specified date. The assignments will be graded as follows: *A* (for thoughtful work); *C* (for fulfillment); *F* (for non-fulfillment).

Presentation: In mid-November, you and a partner will give a 10-minute presentation in which you role-play and offer a researched thesis. In preparation for the presentation, you will write a one-page detailed outline along with a paragraph summary of your claims. You may use a variety of research methods for this presentation, including interviews and outside reading.

Papers: You will write five papers in this class. For Papers Four and Five, you will be required to turn in a draft for peer review on the class period before the formal paper is due. This draft will be graded as a writing assignment and will eventually go into your writing notebook. In addition, your revision of the draft will count towards your final grade on that paper. If you need help formulating a paper topic or structuring your paper, I will be available during office hours and by appointment.

- One: 2-3 page argumentative paper
- Two: 2-3 page critical paper on an advertisement
- Three: 2-3 page research/argumentative paper
- Four: 4-5 page critical paper on either *Goodbye, Columbus* or Roth's short stories
- Five: 6-8 page analytical paper on *The Ice Storm* and/or *Prozac Nation*

GRADING: All assignments--papers, exams, quizzes--are subject to the honor code. This means that, at the end of each assignment, you will write out the honor pledge in full and sign it. All work will be evaluated on the basis of the grading scale outlined on page 71 of the current Rhodes College Catalogue. If you have questions about a grade you receive, please come see me during office hours after the following class period. In other words, take a day or two to think about your questions. Your final grade for the course will be computed as follows:

- 10% for each: Papers 1, 2, and 3; Presentation; Notebook
- 20% for Paper 4
- 30% for Paper 5

ABSENCES: Attendance is not only mandatory but will also constitute a fairly large portion of your final grade. If you do not attend (and that includes arriving on time), your grade will suffer. Absences for emergencies are excused as long as they are verified and all work is promptly made up. Of course, religious holidays count as excusable absences. You are allowed three (3) absences free-of-charge; use them wisely. Beyond those three, any absences and/or habitual tardiness will cost your final course average two tenths of a point. If you miss more than nine classes, you will fail the course. If you miss class on the day a paper is due, please leave it outside my office door no later than 1pm that day, otherwise it will be considered late.

LATE PAPERS: All papers are due on the day stipulated on the syllabus. Any unexcused late paper will be penalized a two-tier reduction per day late; in other words, an A becomes a B+, a B+ becomes a B-, and so on. Note: Writing assignments are not subject to late reductions; they are considered “unfulfilled” if not turned in on the stipulated day.

PROBLEMS: Anytime you have a problem with an assignment, please contact me through telephone, voice mail, email, or by stopping by my office hours. The only way I can help is if you keep me informed.

PAPER REQUIREMENTS: All formal papers in this class are to be typed with approximately 250 words per page, double-spaced, pledged in full, and should include your name, my name, and a title. This is a writing course and thus I expect your papers to be fully proofread for grammar and spelling. Habitually reckless proofreading will result in a lower paper grade. Whenever you document a source, please use the MLA format. Finally, always keep a spare hard copy of your paper.

A NOTE ON PLAGIARISM

Most of the work you will do in this class involves the writing of papers that do not necessarily require extensive use of outside resources. I am primarily interested in your own response to the readings, not in knowledge gained through research. Clearly, though, it is virtually impossible to avoid the use of ideas and facts acquired in past reading or previous course work. How, then, can you avoid plagiarism?

Here's a simple rule of thumb: facts or opinions acquired during the writing of the assignment must be acknowledged. In other words, you probably don't need to cite general knowledge which you simply remember; on the other hand, you must provide citation for any facts and/or opinions which you have gleaned from specific sources. Keep in mind that citing your sources will never diminish, but will rather enhance, the integrity of your paper. (If your readers are ever inclined to doubt what you say, they can always go check the source; the absence of a citation on the other hand, might make them think you're hiding something.) The same rule of thumb applies to the use of notes and textbooks from past courses, either at Rhodes or in secondary school: what is remembered probably needs no acknowledgment, but what is re-read in preparing the paper has been researched and thus must be acknowledged. As suggested above, you shouldn't run into too much of this sort of thing in this class, since the essay or novel you're analyzing will be your primary text. Still, if you are at all confused about the requirements and guidelines of any given assignment, do not hesitate to consult me before you begin, so as to resolve any uncertainties concerning plagiarism.

Source: Plagiarism and the Honor System at Washington & Lee