

## ENG151: CRITICAL THINKING AND WRITING

Professor Finlayson: Palmer 317; 843-3293; [finlayson@rhodes.edu](mailto:finlayson@rhodes.edu)

Writing Fellow: Michelle Hope; CRN: 10252

Fall 2005 Class: Tu/Th 9:30-10:45 am; Palmer 203

Office hours: T 11-12 and 1-2:30 in Palmer 317

Th 2-3 in Barret 212 @ the Writing Center

*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. 151 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.

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Week 1	Th, Aug 25:	Information class.
Week 2	Tu, Aug 30: Th, Sept 1:	<i>The New Yorker</i> ; EA Chs 1-3: pgs 3-21 and 27-45 and 51-61 <i>The New Yorker</i> ; EA Ch 4: Arguments from the Heart
Week 3	Tu, Sept 6:	<i>The New Yorker</i> Th, Sept 8: <i>The New Yorker</i> ; EA Ch 5: Arguments of Value
Week 4	Tu, Sept 13: Th, Sept 15:	Workshop Paper 1 (drafts due Mon, Sept 12 @ 9am) <b>Paper 1 due.</b> TBA & EA Ch 6: Arguments of Character
Week 5	Tu, Sept 20: Th, Sept 22:	<i>The New Yorker</i> . <i>The New Yorker</i> ; EA Ch 7: Fact and Reason
Week 6	Tu, Sept 27: Th, Sept 29:	<i>The New Yorker</i> <i>The New Yorker</i> ; EA Ch 8: Structuring Arguments
Week 7	Tu, Oct 4: Th, Oct 6:	<i>The New Yorker</i> <i>The New Yorker</i> ; EA Ch 9: Definition
Week 8	Tu, Oct 11: Th, Oct 13:	Workshop Paper 2 (drafts due Mon, Oct 10 @ 9am) <b>Paper 2 due.</b> TBA & EA Ch 10: Evaluations
Week 9	Tu, Oct 18: Th, Oct 20:	No class. FALL BREAK <i>The New Yorker</i> ; EA Ch 11: Causal Arguments
Week 10	Tu, Oct 25: Th, Oct 27:	<i>The New Yorker</i> <i>The New Yorker</i> ; EA Ch 12: Proposals
Week 11	Tu, Nov 1: Th, Nov 3:	<i>The New Yorker</i> The New Yorker; EA Ch. 13: Humorous Arguments
Week 12	Tu, Nov 8: Th, Nov 10:	Workshop Paper 3 (drafts due Mon, Nov 7 @ 9am via email) <b>Paper 3 due.</b> TBA & EA Ch 14: Figurative Lang. & Arg.
Week 13	Tu, Nov 15: Th, Nov 17:	Research paper discussion and timeline. EA. Chs 18-21: Evidence, Fallacies, Intellectual Property, Sources
Week 14	Tu, Nov 22: Th, Nov 24:	Proposals due. Library. No class. THANKSGIVING BREAK.
Week 15	Tu, Nov 28: Th, Dec 1:	No class. Professor/fellow conferences. No class. Professor/fellow conferences.
Week 16	Tu, Dec 6: Th, Dec 8:	Workshop Paper 4 (drafts due Mon, Dec 5 @ 9am). <b>LAST CLASS</b> <b>NO CLASS. Paper 4 due</b> by 5pm.

## ENG 151 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). I will periodically assign an article from a previous issue, and you will receive this as an email attachment or in class. You will read approximately one essay for each class, and we typically will decide as a class which essays we'll read. *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 and responding. 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 when you later write your paper). The secondary text for this class is a rhetoric guide titled *Everything's an Argument*.

Because of the nature of the weekly primary text, I may make spontaneous announcements in class or via email (for example, which essays or chapters to read for the following week). Make sure that you get this information and write it down as it may differ from the original syllabus. If you miss class, ask a classmate. You are responsible for knowing what we are reading. **Please check your email daily.**

### PAPERS—70%

There are 4 formal papers for this class. They should be typed with approximately *300 words per page* (i.e. Times Roman 12; 1" margins), double-spaced, pledged in full, and **must include a word count, your name, my name, and a critical title**. Proofread your papers for typos and grammar errors. For every error, your paper grade will suffer 0.1 point on a 4.0 scale. (A=4.0, A-=3.7, B+=3.3, etc.) For the most part, your first three papers will not include any outside sources, excepting your class text where appropriate. Only your final research paper will include outside sources, which should be documented in MLA format. All other paper formatting, including spacing, quoting, etc, also should also follow MLA style, which can be found in your text *Everything's an Argument*. Submit *only* hard copies of final drafts and *always* keep a spare hard copy of your paper. **Please plan ahead**; if your computer is known to crash or if you need to go to the lab for printing, give yourself plenty of time to accommodate potential last minute crises. *Late papers*: All papers are due *in class* on the day stipulated on the syllabus. Any unexcused late paper will be penalized 1/3 of a letter grade for every day late (A becomes A-, B+ becomes B). I will grant extensions in special circumstances. If you need an extension, you must contact me at least one class period before the paper is due. No exceptions. Failure to complete any of the four major papers for this class may result in failure of the class.

- Paper 1: 10% (1000 words ~ 3 pages)
- Paper 2: 15% (1500 words ~ 5 pages)
- Paper 3: 20% (1800 words ~ 6 pages)
- Paper 4: 25% (2500 words ~ 8 pages + presentation)

Your first two papers will examine/critique and/or expand on an essay we've read for class from *The New Yorker*. The last two papers will produce original arguments using the rhetorical strategies of the essays. Each class period will be devoted to discussing these essays, so I encourage you to take notes that you may later use for writing your paper. When grading your papers, I will focus primarily on your ability to construct a viable and supported thesis from the text or issue you are analyzing. This means that I'll want to see a thesis that is, in fact, arguable, followed by a good deal of evidence (i.e. quotations) that proves your position. I'll also be looking for stylistic things like helpful transitions (connections made between ideas), word choice, use of metaphor and tone, etc. I deduct 0.1 points from your final paper grade for each grammatical error (including typos); in other words, *proofread carefully*.

### CONFERENCES

At some point in the semester, everyone is required to work on at least one draft with the Writing Fellow and also to meet with me regarding the formulating or writing of one paper (though you aren't required to bring me a draft). Failure to meet either of these requirements will result in a 2/3 deduction from your participation grade. Please don't wait until the end of the semester to schedule your conferences (you may not be able to get an appointment).

### WORKSHOP/DRAFT

We will workshop approximately 4-5 drafts in the class period before a final paper draft is due (this should not be the draft that you work on with the Writing Fellow). At the beginning of the semester, you'll sign up for which paper you'd like in workshop. If your paper is to be in workshop, you will need to submit an electronic copy of your paper draft to me via email no later than 9 AM on the Monday preceding the workshop. If your draft is not in at that time, your final paper grade for that draft will suffer a full letter grade. There are no formal "extensions" for drafts due to the nature of the

assignment/workshop; however, you may switch with someone if you are unable to write your draft for the workshop for which you have signed up. Just keep me informed about any changes.

After submissions are in, a packet with anonymous drafts for workshop will be emailed to the class for you to download. The file will be in PDF format; be sure you have Adobe Reader (free from [www.adobe.com](http://www.adobe.com)) to access the file. If you are having difficulty, contact ITS Helpdesk. Each student, including draft writers, must print, read, and comment on the packet for the workshop on Tuesday (sometimes I will include a “review” or instruction sheet). During workshop, the writers will receive comments suggesting ways to revise both from peers and me. ***Your final paper grade will suffer if you don't revise the draft.*** When you turn in your revised, final paper that has been workshopped, you must also submit the following: the workshop draft with my comments, your peers’ “review” sheets (though not the drafts that accompanied them), and a statement of revision (what you focused on as you revised).

### **RESPONSES—15%**

You will write three responses during the course of the semester. Each one is worth 5% of your final grade. Two will be 1-page, single-spaced informal responses (400-500 words) to the *NY* reading for that day. Each response should begin with a specific question about the essay’s argument (or point), and the body of the paper should be your reply. Consider the response to be a “critique” of the article, rather than a critique of the topic itself. In other words, your comments should focus on how well the author made a point and the writing strategies used to make that point. Be careful not to simply summarize the essay. You should be prepared to offer a brief “presentation” of your ideas to the class that day.

Although the responses are a chance for you to explore an idea that you haven’t fully developed yet and they are not “formal” papers, these 1-pagers should be well written and should propose some sort of supported argument assessing the author’s strategies and ability. A response may also be used subsequently as a platform for one of your formal papers.

The third response will summarize the reading assignment for that day in our *EA* textbook and will be distributed to the entire class as a “handout.” Come prepared to present your summary to the class that day. I will give you some guidelines for this assignment.

Responses are due by 8 a.m. on the day for which you’ve signed up. Please email them to me as attached MSWord documents with the title “yourname response #.doc” or, if necessary, you may deposit a hard copy in the 151 folder outside my office door. If you send an e-file *not* in the appropriate format or program, I will not be able to read it and you will get a **zero** for the assignment. You may want to do a test run with a friend before you send the file to me. You may switch your response due date with a classmate, if the need arises, but be sure to inform me of any changes.

### **QUIZZES AND INFORMAL ASSIGNMENTS—5%**

Many class periods will open with a brief quiz designed to determine if you have done the reading assigned for that day. You must come prepared and informed; this means reading *well*—not skimming—and taking notes. The quizzes will ask significant questions, though ones that you should be able to answer easily if you spent time on your reading. In most cases the quizzes will be Pass/Fail. Periodically, I may assign outside reading or additional (brief) writing assignments. Also, for every day that you fail to bring your text(s) to class, you will receive an additional “Fail” in this grading category. Your final 10% grade will be an average of your semester total.

### **PARTICIPATION—10%**

Class participation is an integral part of ENG 151, and it is formally included as a part of your final grade. Actively participating means the following: completing thoughtful written homework assignments, engaging in in-class writing (group or individual), joining frequently in class or group discussions with provocative and articulate comments and questions. I encourage you to take this aspect of the course seriously because your grade will reflect it.

### **ABSENCES**

I grant you two “free/excused” absences regardless of cause. Please use these skips wisely: plan ahead. Beyond those two, *each* additional absence will cost your final course average three tenths of a point. If you would like to appeal for additional excused absences beyond your two “free” absences, you will need to go through the Dean of Students office and file a formal request, which may or may not be granted, depending on the circumstances. If you physically miss more than six 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 2pm that day, otherwise it will be considered late. Note: ***you are responsible for finding out from a classmate*** what happened in class the day you were absent or late; please do not ask me. For every day you are late, your final grade for the course will suffer .1 point. Do not bother coming at all if you are more than 10 minutes late.

Each day it will be your responsibility to sign the attendance notebook. If your signature is not there for a particular day, you will be counted absent. If you are late, you will need to find the notebook, sign it, and document your tardiness.

## **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. 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.