

## ENG155: DAILY THEMES

Professor Finlayson; finlayson@rhodes.edu

Fall 2005 Class: Th 12:30-1:45 PM; Barret Library 214

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

R 2 – 3 PM in Barret 212 (Writing Center)

Writing Fellow: Allison Burris; CRN: 10288

*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:	Th, Sept 1:	<i>The New Yorker</i> ; EA Ch 2-4: Intro and Arguments from the Heart
Week 3:	Th, Sept 8:	<i>The New Yorker</i> ; EA Ch 5: Arguments of Value
Week 4:	Th, Sept 15:	<i>The New Yorker</i> ; EA Ch 6: Arguments of Character
Week 5:	Th, Sept 22:	<i>The New Yorker</i> ; EA Ch 7: Fact and Reason
Week 6:	Th, Sept 29:	<i>The New Yorker</i> ; EA Ch 8: Structuring Arguments
Week 7:	Th, Oct 6:	<i>The New Yorker</i> ; EA Ch 9: Definitions In class workshop. Paper due Monday, Oct 11 by 5 PM.
Week 8:	Th, Oct 13:	<i>The New Yorker</i> ; EA Ch 10: Evaluations
Week 9:	Th, Oct 20:	<i>The New Yorker</i> ; EA Ch 11: Causal Arguments
Week 10:	Th, Oct 27:	<i>The New Yorker</i> ; EA Ch 12: Proposals
Week 11:	Th, Nov 3:	<i>The New Yorker</i> ; EA Ch 13: Humorous Arguments
Week 12:	Th, Nov 10:	<i>The New Yorker</i> ; EA Ch 14: Figurative Language & Argument
Week 13:	Th, Nov 17:	Research discussion and timeline. EA. Ch 18: What Counts as Evidence
Week 14:	Th, Nov 24:	No class. THANKSGIVING BREAK.
Week 15:	Th, Dec 1:	Last class. EA. Chs 20-22: plagiarism/sources
Week 16:	Th, Dec 8:	<b>NO CLASS. Paper 5 due</b> by 5pm.

## **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.

## 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. *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 four independent (see exception below) 1-page, double-spaced papers each week, beginning Monday, August 29. 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 granted 15 "skips" to accommodate the larger writing projects. By the end of the semester, you should have approximately 55 one-page daily themes, including themes titled/designated as "SKIP," a midterm 5-page essay, and an 8-page final research paper. Please try to use your skips for NY3 and SA themes only (see below).

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 Wednesday, Dec.7 (keep this in mind as you plan your "skip" days). 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; and the sample assignments, each of which is meant to exercise a particular writing skill. Occasionally, I will substitute a specific topic for one of the *NY* or *SA* themes. Otherwise, here's what you'll be writing, in any order or combination (though you may not repeat a category in one week and must write at least one theme on each of the articles each week):

1. NY1: Critique of the assigned *New Yorker* reading #1. (submit prior to class)
2. NY2: Critique of the assigned *New Yorker* reading #2. (submit prior to class)
3. NY3: More commentary on one of the assigned readings. (may submit post class)
4. EA: Open theme applying rhetorical strategies from that week's *Everything's an Argument* reading.
5. SA: Sample assignment (include the number of the assignment; i.e. for #3: SA3)

*AFTER THANKSGIVING:* Your themes will all be steps in your research project. Please designate them as *RP*.

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 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 6<sup>th</sup> theme. **On the top of each theme, you must include your name, a title, the date, the week, file name, theme #1-45, and type: NY1, NY2, EA, SA1-30. 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  
Week 2: September 2  
**Name3.doc; Theme 3: NY3**  
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](\\fileserv1\Acad_Dept_Pgm\English\Finlayson_Rebecca) enter > drag and drop your file into In-Box (double check that it is Finlayson). I will either place them in the 155 OUT folder outside my office door or (more likely) return them in class. Make sure that you drag the Word file and not a shortcut. Because one of your themes each week will be written for your Fellow to read, please name those themes as follows: lastnametheme#.WF.doc

**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. Suggestion: Most students use 2-5 skip days for this week as they prepare their paper.

**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. Suggestion: As with the mid-term paper, many people save "skips" for the end of the semester so that they have more time to write the research paper.

**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 every week. Once the semester is underway, your Fellow will offer optional, though recommended, gatherings in Barret to discuss your work. 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 couple of weeks in the semester, I will only comment on your themes. Beginning around theme 10, 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.