

## ENG155: DAILY THEMES

Professor Finlayson; finlayson@rhodes.edu

Fall 2009 Class: Th 12:30-1:45 PM; Barret 216

Office hours: Mon and Thurs 930-11 AM and by appt in Palmer 317; 843-3293

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### *The New Yorker*

**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.

<b>Week</b>	<b>Theme #s (total)</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>
Week 1	1 (1)	Th, Aug 27:	Information class.
Week 2	2-5 (4)	Th, Sep 3:	<i>The New Yorker</i> . Argument. <a href="http://www.malcolmgladwell.com/pdf/suv.pdf">http://www.malcolmgladwell.com/pdf/suv.pdf</a>
Week 3	6-8 (3)	Th, Sep 10:	<i>The New Yorker</i> . Emotional Appeals.
Week 4	9-12 (4)	Th, Sep 17:	<i>The New Yorker</i> . Character/Values Appeals.
Week 5	13-16 (4)	Th, Sep 24:	<i>The New Yorker</i> . Facts and Reason
Week 6	17-20 (4)	Th, Oct 2:	<i>The New Yorker</i> . Structuring Arguments. Get paper assignment.
Week 7	0	Th, Oct 9:	Workshop (Midterm Paper due Mon, Oct 13)
Week 8	21-24 (4)	Th, Oct 16:	<i>The New Yorker</i> . Definition.
Week 9	25-26 (2)	Th, Oct 22:	<i>The New Yorker</i> . Evaluations.
Week 10	27-30 (4)	Th, Oct 29 :	<i>The New Yorker</i> . Style.
Week 11	31-34 (4)	Th, Nov 5:	<i>The New Yorker</i> . Figurative Language.
Week 12	35-37 (3)	Th, Nov 12:	Databases/Researching. Evidence.
Week 13	38-40 (3)	Th, Nov 19:	Intellectual Property.
Week 14	41 (1)	Th, Nov 26:	NO CLASS. Thanksgiving
Week 15	42-44 (3)	Th, Dec 3:	Last class.
Week 16	0	Mon, Dec 8:	Paper 5 due.

## ENG 155 ASSIGNMENTS AND POLICIES. PROFESSOR FINLAYSON

### TEXTS

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 (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 approximately four independent (see exception below) 1-page, double-spaced papers each week. 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 exempt from writing themes the weeks your larger writing projects are 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 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 Friday, Dec 4. 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 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 Tuesday 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. If you feel comfortable writing the theme before our class discussion, that's fine. Or you can wait until Thurs/Fri (after class) or write it for the following week's ARG. Still, you'll need to turn in the designated total number of themes for the week.
1x	Open	This category is technically "open," but it should be related to either our class discussion (ergo written after class Thursday) or the <i>New Yorker</i> more generally. You may either write a follow-up NY theme or commentary on what we discussed. I may assign a topic periodically. (If you attend your fellow's Tuesday session, you may submit this theme as "Tuesday session" and be exempt from actually writing anything). Also, if you'd like to choose an "unused" assignment from the "Argument" Theme list, feel free to do so. Please do not write about a NY article that is not assigned.

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

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 *300 words per page* (i.e. Times Roman 12; 1" margins), double-spaced. Make necessary adjustments to contain to 1 page when your prose sneak onto a second page. Proofread your papers for typos and grammar errors. 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. For electronically submitted themes, please title your e-file as follows: lastnametheme#type.doc; for example: jones6NY for a

NY response that is the 6<sup>th</sup> 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 Word Perfect file, I will not be able to open it and you will not get credit.

Jane Jones  
8/27/09  
**jones6arg.doc**  
Title of Theme

If you go to Elizabeth’s session, please indicate that in the filename so that I don’t end up printing all those (save trees!), for example, jones8session.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](\\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. You should keep electronic copies of ALL your themes and the hard copies that I return to you with comments.

**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.

**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.

**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 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. 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, I will only comment on your themes. Beginning around theme 5, 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. 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.”

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. 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.

